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From The History Of The Public Education System Of The Uzbek Ssr In The End Of The 20th Century

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ABSTRACT
This article analyzes the changes that occurred in the field of education in the late twentieth century in the Uzbek SSR, as well as the reforms implemented within the system during this period. It examines the process of students' learning in schools, cases of school dropout, and the impact of cotton monoculture on educational policy, which led to the underdevelopment of school education or the slow growth in the number of schools relative to the population.

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Introduction

The final years of the twentieth century are recognized as a distinct stage in the development of the education system of Uzbekistan. From a historical perspective, this period has been recorded as a time of stagnation in the country's socio-economic and cultural life. The processes of education and upbringing, which form the foundation of the educational system, became highly ideologized during this time. Educating the younger generation in line with scientific and technological progress, modern production processes, and the ideological demands of society became one of the priority objectives of state policy.

In general, the insufficient allocation of state funding to the education sector led to numerous problems, as noted above. As is widely acknowledged, this resulted in serious challenges in school education during the first years of Uzbekistan's independence.

Furthermore, during the period under study, limited state attention to the quality and effectiveness of education in schools, as well as the involvement of students in agricultural and construction work outside school hours, had a significant negative impact on the learning process.

Literature Review and Methodology

To date, numerous scholarly studies have been conducted on the condition of the education system in mid-twentieth-century Uzbekistan. Among them is the work of Qodirov E. K. titled *From the History of the Development of General Education Schools in Uzbekistan*, which discusses a number of reforms implemented in school education during the war years. However, the book was published in 1979 during the Soviet period and therefore provides limited information on communist ideological influences and certain shortcomings in the school system.

Similarly, in the dissertation of Haydarov Z., *Socio-Economic and Cultural History of Namangan Region in the Soviet and Independence Periods: A Comparative Analysis*, considerable data are presented on the

education sector of Namangan region during the Soviet era. Nevertheless, the dissertation contains relatively limited analysis of the state of public education in the Uzbek SSR in the mid-twentieth century.
In addition, periodicals such as the journal "Sovet maktabi" [Soviet school] and the newspaper "O'qituvchilar" [Teachers] are of significant importance for studying this topic, as many relevant materials are drawn from their articles. Archival sources also play a crucial role, particularly the collections (R-94, R-1619 and others) of the National Archive of Uzbekistan, which are directly related to the history of education.

Results and Discussion

At the end of the 1970s, in order to improve students' moral outlook and organize their leisure time meaningfully, "Pioneer" camps were established across the republic during the 1978–1979 academic year. During this period, these camps were divided into three categories. Urban pioneer camps, organized by district (city) departments of public education, Komsomol committees, and trade union organizations (located at schools, parks, squares, and residential administration areas), numbered 354 and hosted 114,575 students. Collective farm and inter-collective farm pioneer camps, financed by kolkhoz funds, numbered 428 and accommodated 154,427 students. School-based camps for pioneers and senior students numbered 265 and served 49,402 students. In addition, 5,569 students from grades 9–11 of secondary schools also participated in these camps[1.1]. Regionally, the situation was assessed as unsatisfactory in the Karakalpak SSR, Jizzakh Region, and Surkhandarya Region.
For example, in the Karakalpak ASSR, urban pioneer camps under the jurisdiction of district (city) departments of public education, Komsomol committees, and trade union organizations numbered 15, hosting 2,257 students. Collective farm and inter-collective farm pioneer camps, financed by kolkhoz funds, numbered 16 and accommodated 2,200 students. School-based camps for pioneers and senior students numbered only 1, hosting 70 students [2.2].
In Jizzakh Region, there was only one urban pioneer camp under the jurisdiction of the district (city) department of public education, which hosted 70 students. Similarly, there was one collective farm and inter-collective farm pioneer camp, financed by kolkhoz funds, accommodating 587 students[3.5]. In Surkhandarya, there were only 43 collective farm and inter-collective farm pioneer camps, financed by kolkhoz funds, where 11,295 students spent their summer holidays [4.9].
In addition, every year during the summer holidays, hundreds of thousands of students participated in production work. Most of them joined repair brigades and were involved in preparing schools for the new academic year. For example, in the summer of 1978, 146 industrial brigades and 198 construction brigades, formed from students of rural schools, were active. In rural areas, 2,612,000 students worked in production brigades based at kolkhozes and sovkhozes[5.2].
As a result, senior students in schools gained practical skills in agriculture, production, and construction during their holidays, preparing them to become specialists in these fields. However, as noted above, this also led to a significant increase in absenteeism and school dropouts among senior students.
For example, the 8th issue of the *Uchqun* newspaper published in 1981 reported that in Namangan district, career guidance offices established in schools were effectively teaching students vocational skills, directing them toward professions, and fostering an interest in agricultural occupations. Notable activities were carried out in schools numbered 3, 8, 13, 16, 20, 23, 27, and 35. In that year, 19 student cotton-growing brigades, 11 sericulture units, and 2 vegetable-growing units operated in the district schools, with 1,350 students learning specializations such as cotton cultivation, sericulture, livestock management, and horticulture. In addition, 497 students at the district interschool training and production complex studied carpentry, sewing, cooking, typing, and small-scale retail skills[6.2].
By the 1980s, alongside many other sectors, the education system reached a peak in terms of planned expansions. In the USSR, during the tenth five-year plan alone, 11,303 new schools with a total capacity of 6,719,000 students were commissioned. During this period, 8,392 new school buildings were constructed in rural areas to accommodate 3,743,000 students.

In the Uzbek SSR specifically, the network of rural schools developed rapidly. During the tenth five-year plan, 3,063 general education schools with a total capacity of 1,522,800 students were opened in Uzbekistan, of which 1,700 schools with 540,000 student places were built by kolkhozes [7.12].

Another distinctive feature of this period was that financing for the development of the material and technical base of schools across the republic was largely transferred from the state to sponsoring organizations. This significantly reduced the government's direct responsibilities toward education during times of economic difficulty.

This approach can be illustrated by the example of Khorezm Region. There, a plan for 1983–1985 aimed at strengthening the support of enterprises, organizations, kolkhozes, and sovkhozes for general education schools, preschool institutions, and extracurricular facilities was approved by the regional party committee and executive committee. The prospective plan included the construction of schools with 14,312 student places, preschool institutions for 10,670 children, and interschool training-production complexes for 1,430 students. Additionally, the plan provided for 3,100-seat cafeterias, 29 sports halls, 36 shooting ranges, 33 swimming pools, and pioneer camps with 2,240 places. Financial allocations included 599,000 soums for school repairs, 2,154,000 soums for free student meals, and 1,342,000 soums for other activities[8.4].

Furthermore, in 1984, 55,500,000 rubles were planned to be allocated for the development of the material and technical base of schools, but in practice, 71,147,000 rubles were spent. In the same year, 19,027,100 rubles were spent on supplying furniture and desks to schools across the republic[9.19].

During the tenth and eleventh five-year plans, more than 459,000 square meters of residential buildings were constructed across the republic for teachers using all available financial resources. Each year, loans were provided to teachers to build individual houses. However, it should be noted that a significant portion of education staff, especially those without housing, continued to live in inadequate conditions. Due to the lack of housing, some young specialists were unable to work at their assigned schools.

In addition, the plan for sending teachers to sanatoriums was overfulfilled: 2,426 teachers stayed in holiday homes, more than 30,200 education staff used 1–2 day rest facilities, 7,700 visited tourist bases, and 3,129 benefited from therapeutic food programs. Approximately 18,000 teachers and education staff traveled to cities within the republic, over 900 participated in trips abroad, and 2,365 stayed at winter holiday resorts[10.28-29].

Starting from the 1984–1985 academic year, a new system was introduced in school education. According to this system, five schools in each region opened experimental classes, and the enrollment process for six-year-old children was organized. Taking this into account, for the 1985–1986 academic year, a set of textbooks for first-grade students was planned in 5,000 copies, and for the 1986–1987 academic year, 50,000 copies of textbooks were scheduled to be published. [11.28-29].

In order to strengthen the "School–Enterprise" partnership, students were sent to training-production complexes. In the 1984–1985 academic year, Namangan city had five such complexes, where students received vocational training in 32 different specialties[12.21].

In Samarkand Region, 433,366 students received education in 931 general education schools and 74 interschool training-production complexes across 45 different professions. By fostering students' interest in vocational skills, at the end of the 1984 academic year, out of 26,138 students who completed the 10th grade, 14,883 boys and girls were successfully employed[13.1].

The employment of students was considered one of the most commendable achievements of this period. In many issues highlighted in our research, the Soviet state, particularly in the territories of the USSR including the Uzbek SSR, placed great emphasis on creating a large or fully-fledged working class, and in practice, this goal was largely achieved.

During the studied period, combined expenditures on science, culture, and public education did not exceed 2.7% of the budget. The main educational and upbringing tasks facing the national education system largely depended on the quality of teaching staff. By the mid-1980s, approximately 80% of teachers in urban day general education schools held higher education degrees. The situation in rural areas was somewhat worse, with a shortage of qualified teachers. Due to this shortage, teachers of one subject were often forced to teach additional subjects, which negatively affected the quality of students' knowledge. Additionally, students

being involved in agricultural work for 3–4 months led to a decline in educational standards and a deterioration in the quality of learning[14.293-294].

By the late 1980s, more than half of rural schools were housed in adapted buildings, one-third of which were unsuitable. Out of over 2,000 general education schools, more than 2,000 lacked sports halls, 635 had no cafeterias, and 374 had no workshops[15.22].

Between 1985 and 1990 in Uzbekistan, new educational institutions were initially planned for 3,693,000 students, but under the directive of the central authorities, this number was reduced to 920,000 places. During these years, 14 pedagogical institutes and 38 secondary specialized educational institutions across the republic trained an average of 17,000 young teachers annually. Despite this, the number of active school teachers steadily declined due to limitations within the education system and the prevailing ideological constraints.

In 1970, the number of higher education graduates was 334,000, which increased to 508,000 by 1990. Regarding general education schools, there were 8,111 schools with 4,406,300 students in 1978, and by 1990, the number of general education schools had risen to 9,000[16.60]. However, more than 1,700 of these schools were classified as being in a state of disrepair.

Conclusion

The education reforms initiated in the mid-1980s had primarily symbolic significance; rather than addressing existing problems, they aimed to conceal them from the general public and present a polished image. In reality, the intended goals of the reforms were to elevate the "Soviet education system" to an international standard, improve the quality of knowledge among teachers and students, democratize and humanize education. However, these goals were not achieved. The main reason was that the reforms were based on the dying communist doctrine and the mentality of an authoritarian society. Moreover, such reforms could not succeed on mere promises—they required a strong material foundation, which was not provided, resulting in the expected outcomes not being realized.

In summary, many initiatives undertaken in the final years of the Soviet period proved largely ineffective in practice. While enrollment and school construction efforts reached their peak, the daily living conditions of education staff worsened compared to previous periods, and overall living standards declined. This era has thus been historically recorded as the period that laid the groundwork for the significant challenges faced by Uzbekistan's school education in the early years of independence.

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