The Formation of the First Libraries in Uzbekistan and the Role of Increasing the Cultural and Educational Awareness of the Population

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Abstract: The history and processes of the establishment of the first libraries in Uzbekistan have not yet been fully studied. Preliminary views were expressed on the mission of libraries in raising the ideological and political awareness of the population and the tasks of libraries. This article provides scientific research and analysis on the development of libraries as a cultural and educational organization and the history of library science. Opinions were expressed and historical materials were provided on the activities of the staff of the first libraries and the role of libraries in the political and ideological processes.

Keywords: librarianship, education, jadid, club, political and economic process, institution, public, analysis, activity, book fund, cultural level.

In the twentieth century, in order to further develop the system of cultural, educational, political and ideological work of the people of Turkestan, special attention was paid to the activities of clubs and libraries. Mass propaganda was an important means of propagating the policy of the party and the Soviet state among the general public at that time. Libraries and reading rooms mainly served to raise the ideological and political consciousness of the masses. They did not have publications in libraries that contradicted Soviet ideology. As a result, insufficient attention is paid to knowledge and works on Uzbek national culture, history, and spiritual heritage. Jadid organizations in Tashkent, Kokand, Samarkand, and Andijan, on the one hand, carried out the independence movement, and on the other hand, established libraries with a collection of national historical works. The great poet of Turkestan founded Jadidism in Andijan, Cholpon established the “Turan Library” in his homeland [1: 267].

Initiatives that serve to enhance such a spiritual world of the common people were not welcomed by government officials. Because the population would gather in libraries and enjoy the spirituality, raising the aesthetic culture. Libraries are divided into public, technical and various special libraries, educational institutions, libraries, scientific libraries, depending on their functions, activities, the composition of book funds. The activities of public libraries are aimed at meeting the demand of the population for books in various fields. In order to increase the socioeconomic and educational activity of the people and make them active members of the party, an out-of-school department was established under the People's Commissariat of Education to manage all cultural and educational activities. They were members of reading rooms and libraries. At that time, there were about 1,000 literacy schools, many libraries, reading rooms, clubs, red teahouses, women's clubs. At the II Congress of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan adopted a special resolution on “Club work”, which stressed the need to use the activities of libraries and reading rooms to raise the cultural level and activity of the club’s working people. The department of library work under the Commissariat of Public Education has great opportunities and privileges, organizes public libraries and reading rooms, mobile libraries, provides them with methodological assistance, and helps to train library staff. As a result, the
number of libraries in the Autonomous Republic of Turkestann at the beginning of 1924 was 122 with a book fund of 616,000, 132 clubs with 21, red teahouses with about 200, and the number of reading rooms was 58. Large public libraries, in particular, have grown rapidly. In particular, the social prestige of libraries in cities such as the State General Library of Turkestann (100 thousand), the General Library of Turkestann State University (23 thousand), Andijan, Kokand and Namangan has increased. In Bukhara, for example, in 1924, 14 libraries, drama theaters, museums and clubs served the population. The first club and library were established in Khiva in the summer of 1920 in the building of the former khan's palace. Clubs and libraries have also been built in New Urgench, Dashoguz, Khojaly, Kungrad and other cities of the Karakalpak ASSR. By 1923, 8 clubs and houses of culture, 5 public libraries, 4 red teahouses and cinemas in the Khorezm Republic provided cultural and educational services to the population [2: 230].

As the number of libraries increased, so did their duties and responsibilities. First, there were problems in the social system, and second, libraries were in a much more economically disadvantaged state. At the same time, there were no experienced specialists, and the socio-economic situation of the time required the training of existing staff. The issue of training library staff was raised in 1926 at the I Congress of Club and Library Staff of Uzbekistan, which noted the importance of training librarians for remote rural areas, and the implementation of the decisions of the Congress will be monitored. On February 1, 1927, a six-month training course for library staff was organized in Tashkent. In January 1934, the Republican Committee of Science raised the issue of organizing higher levels of training courses for librarians. An 8-month course was organized to retrain middle-level librarians. In it, employees were trained inseparably from production [3: 125]. The methodology of the training system was developed by the center and had a superficial approach to the activities of libraries and reading rooms without a proper analysis of local conditions. The main principle was to give them “orders” from the center and to prepare the people in accordance with the Soviet ideology. As a result of the destruction of many publications in libraries that contradicted the Soviet ideology, unique works on the Uzbek national culture, history, especially Jadid philosophy and spiritual heritage, which aroused the consciousness of many peoples, were removed from scientific and artistic circulation. Due to the complication of the socio-economic situation, the number of cultural and educational institutions in the country has sharply decreased due to the transfer of out-of-school institutions of the People’s Commissariat of Education from the state budget to the local budget. The number of political educational institutions in 1922 was much smaller than in the previous year, the number of illiteracy schools decreased from 3,000 to 50, the number of libraries from 164 to 66, and the number of adult courses from 40 to 1. Of the clubs with nearly a hundred libraries, only a few dozen remain. However, since then, these figures have risen rapidly. Libraries have been enriched with ideologically “mature” literature developed by former central publications. Books were received from the Central Book Chamber of the RSFSR, the Book Chamber of Ukraine and other institutions. The number of students also increased. In particular, the number of students in the Turkestann State General Library increased from 3,953 in 1920 to 61,887 in 1921. By the 1920s, the working methods and forms of the library institution had also changed and improved into socio-economic life. The population began to participate not only in reading the book, but also in discussing it. Clubs and libraries began to hold events such as “Reading aloud”, “Book Week”, “Science and Religion”, “Science and Life”, “New Life”. It should be noted that the political and ideological work carried out by libraries has played a significant role in raising the general literacy of the population, the formation of spiritual, educational, literary and artistic image [4: 89,90].

Not all areas also provided opportunities for librarians. Only in socio-economically developed areas were clubs and libraries enriched with new literature. Because most of them were in Russian, the locals could not read these books.
The use of library facilities was particularly difficult in rural areas. The reasons for this were:

1. Very low level of literacy of the population (ie, in relation to the Russian language).
2. Lack of literature in the local language.
3. Lack of specialists in this field.

Therefore, the activities of mobile libraries have played an important role in rural areas. In 1928, there were only 74 libraries with a book fund of 44,000 for the four million Uzbek rural population. That is why the Soviet state paid special attention to strengthening its influence in the countryside, to increase the number of libraries and literature in them for in-depth analysis of socio-economic problems. In 1928-1929, the number of publications increased from 22 (131.4 thousand books) to 161 (308.8 thousand books). In 1919, a permanent commission for the protection of transitional monuments was established in Samarkand, and later in Tashkent, a committee for museum affairs, monuments of the past, art and nature protection began to function. In Tashkent, the staff of the Oriental Department of the State Public Library has done a great job of collecting books and ancient Oriental manuscripts in the languages of the peoples of the Near and Middle East, many of which contained valuable information on the rich historical past of Central Asia. As early as 1919, the Central Department of Archives (now the Central State Archive of the Republic of Uzbekistan) was established in Tashkent [5: 149].

Of course, these reforms are beginning to bear fruit. However, due to socio-economic problems, experienced staff in culture and education has become scarce, and the material base of libraries, clubs, rent offices has deteriorated. In addition to being housed in uncomfortable rooms, many did not have the necessary equipment, books, and instruction manuals. At that time, workers and collective farmers went to libraries, clubs, and rented houses in search of answers to their questions, where they listened to lectures, received relevant information about what was happening, watched documentaries, and read posters. There was a growing interest in books as a source of knowledge for the general public. From July 15, 1935 to January 1, 1936, the All-Union competition was held to get the name of the district for the best organization of “Library work in the village”. It was attended not only by libraries from Uzbekistan, but also houses of culture and clubs. The Republican competition was an impetus to expand the network of libraries and improve their work. During the competition, 18 new district libraries, 68 rural libraries and 122 club libraries were opened. In 1937, the number of libraries reached 895. However, with the increase in the number of libraries, it was necessary to improve the library work in the republic. Therefore, in 1937, the resolution “On library work in the Republic” was adopted. According to the resolution, the work of libraries in cities and rural areas is unsatisfactory, libraries are in short supply, book stocks are poor, and library staff do not have special information. The opening of the library technical school in 1937 helped to improve the library work in the republic. Librarians also tried to increase their knowledge and skills using the available opportunities. They have also been active in public affairs. Employees of libraries in Tashkent wrote in their appeals: “We call on the staff of all libraries and political and educational institutions in the country, including in the Fergana region, to take an active part in providing and organizing cultural services to the builders of the Greater Fergana Canal” [6: 128]. Librarians were sometimes involved in public affairs voluntarily and sometimes compulsorily. In 1937, there were 895 libraries in the country, and in 1941 this number increased to 1,748. The war greatly complicated the work of cultural and educational institutions. A new period of difficulties has begun in socio-economic life. The network of libraries, clubs and museums has shrunk significantly, and funding for them has also declined. At the end of 1941, 669 out of 994 cultural and educational institutions in Uzbekistan were functioning, and the funds allocated to them decreased from 16 million soums to 8.7 million soums [7: 29,33].

However, despite these difficulties, the conditions of the war required cultural and enlightenment workers to expand the existing forms and methods of political and educational work and to find more popular forms. Many cultural and educational institutions, relying on youth and trade union activists, in collaboration with creative intellectuals, have done very effective work to meet the
Growing needs of the population. With the motto of All for War, the club and its libraries organized many cultural and educational events to give spirit and strength to the population during the war. During the war years, libraries in Uzbekistan also intensified their efforts to promote the books of Soviet and foreign masters of art, to expose the abominable image of fascism and its patrons - the enemies of humanity, the burners of books on universal civilization. The staff of the libraries read lectures to the population, had interesting and touching conversations about the great examples of the bravery of our fighters, about the heroic construction and victories, about the inevitability of the destruction of Nazi Germany. In addition, they helped readers to acquire knowledge in one or another branch of science and technology, took an active part in the implementation of the planned measures for the development of culture and economy of the collective farm, district and city. During the war, there were 440 libraries in the country, excluding libraries of scientific institutions and various enterprises. Despite the fact that the network of libraries was significantly reduced at the beginning of the war, and most of the rural libraries and children's libraries were closed, in 1942 there were 193 public libraries in the country [8: 43,44].

At that time, librarians in Uzbekistan overcame the difficulties caused by the war, to raise awareness among the urban and rural population, to promote books, to increase the number of mobile libraries, to organize book exhibitions, to hold readers' conferences, to fully meet the growing needs of books. duties were standing. “Political and educational work with the working people in libraries has been carried out at a high level, where librarians are able to skillfully involve active readers in the general work, always relying on the support of the public. The distribution of books, especially on politics and defense, has increased, and the range of regular readers has expanded. If in 1941 libraries gave 89,528 books to swimmers, that number exceeded 105,000 in 1942 [9:44]. Multifaceted cultural and educational work has been carried out in collective and state farms, mahallas, red teahouses and housing administrations. The books in the series “Club Employee Library” and “Club Employee Library”, published by the state cultural, educational and trade union publications, play an important role in raising the ideological and creative level of cultural and educational work with the public. The methodological assistance provided to the staff of cultural and educational institutions by the central and regional methodical offices on cultural and educational work has been strengthened year by year. The libraries of the republic are well equipped with propaganda points, red teahouses, hospitals, and military units. At the end of 1943, there were a total of 293 public libraries in the country, of which 100 were regional, 120 district, 61 city and 22 children's libraries. Their book fund was 1 million 209 thousand 580 volumes. During the ten years after the war, the staff of the House of Culture gave 7,890 lectures and 285 lectures in clubs and libraries. They conducted 8907 individual and group interviews, and organized 285 meeting nights. Beginning in the 1950s, the “residual” principle of financing the cultural sector began to take shape. Expenditures on socio-cultural activities in 1940 accounted for 67.9% of the remaining expenditures of the state budget of Uzbekistan, in 1950 this figure was 64.4%, in 1960 – 50%, in 1970 – 49.6%, in 1980 – 46 , Decreased by 9%. Even the changes that took place under the influence of restructuring in the second half of the 1980s did not significantly change the declining trends in the financing of the socio-cultural sector.

In 1959, the number of club establishments in the country reached 342 in cities and towns, 2,691 in rural areas, 3,205 in public libraries and a total of 1,910 cinemas [10: 49]. The policy of “reconstruction” has also affected the activities of cultural and educational functions. This was especially true of the material and technical base of cultural and educational institutions. Due to the “residual” principle of spending on culture, in 1985–1990 there was a decrease in the number of cultural facilities. For example, during this period, the number of clubs in the country decreased by 55, and the number of libraries – by 99. Therefore, in 1989, only 3.6 soums per capita was allocated for cultural and educational purposes in Uzbekistan. This figure was the lowest among the union republics. The above figures were only organizational aspects of the issue [11: 657].
Socio-economic problems, the lack of a clear and correct distribution of money to the republics of the Union, the activities of libraries did not develop proportionately. Although the rates were high, the existing libraries did not have sufficient facilities for cultural recreation of the population. Then, in October 1961, it was decided to increase the salaries of library and club staff. The directors of rural clubs have almost doubled, and the staff of houses of culture and clubs have begun to receive an overpayment of 70–80 per cent. The salaries of library staff have also increased. By 1966, a network of libraries had emerged in every major settlement, village council, kolkhoz, and sovkhoz. In particular, 1176 collective farms and 1109 club libraries were reorganized. On the basis of the Resolution “On measures to improve the work of cultural and educational institutions in rural areas and the development of their network” (1968), such libraries began to be transformed into public public libraries. In the process of centralization of library networks in Uzbekistan, a number of measures have been taken to establish new library branches and regulate the existing library network. The network of public libraries in Uzbekistan has also grown. In 1971, there were 5,820 such libraries, while in 1975–1980, 2,142 new libraries were opened in settlements where there were no library outlets. By the decision of the boards of the Ministries of Culture and Agriculture of Uzbekistan on January 26, 1976, 628 collective farm libraries were included in the centralized library system, 86 libraries of 213 clubs were transformed into branches of the centralized library system. In 1980, there were 6,836 libraries, including 4,783 and 5,548 in rural areas. Modern libraries have been built in Samarkand, Fergana and Bukhara. The number of newspapers published increased by 32 in the ninth five-year period alone. 30 of them were published in Uzbek [12: 64].

In accordance with the order of the Minister of Culture of Uzbekistan dated December 11, 1965 “On the transformation of the Tashkent City Library for the Blind into the Central Library for the Blind”, the Central Library was opened on January 1, 1966. In 1966–1969, sections of Braille literature were established in the libraries of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, Kashkadarya, Andijan, Bukhara, Namangan, Samarkand, Surkhandarya, Fergana and Khorezm regions [13: 63]. In general, in the process of regulation of library branches in the republic (until the end of 1972) 2804 public libraries were opened. More than 200 libraries have been relocated from small settlements to large ones, more than 500 libraries have been reorganized, 69 branches have been established, and the number of mobile libraries has reached 5,552 [14: 153].

By 1990, only the 1960 level had been reached on this indicator, indicating that the much-needed socio-cultural needs and interests of the population had not been adequately met. As a result, the financial situation of socio-cultural institutions has also deteriorated, which naturally has had a negative impact on the level of socio-cultural work. By 1989, 27.9% of club facilities and 25.9% of libraries in the country were in need of major repairs, 3% of clubs and 3.8% of libraries were in a state of emergency [15: 255]. Sociological research shows that by the beginning of the 21st century, the number of libraries in all former Soviet republics, including Uzbekistan, has decreased by 15.4% (for example, the Ministry of Culture had 6,746 public libraries in 1990, compared to 5,710 in 2003 formed). This negative process is also observed in the number of books per person and in the quantitative indicators of the total book fund [16: 40]. State and public organizations are divided into two groups, the first is the home type of cultural activity, the second is the outdoor activity in clubs, libraries, museums, exhibitions and other cultural and educational institutions. type. “Cultural and educational activities” are, first of all, the activities of cultural and educational institutions, houses of culture, parks, museums, libraries. At the time of independence, the system of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Uzbekistan had the following libraries:

1. Republican Library.
2. Regional Library. They provide methodological assistance to national, regional, city, district and rural libraries.
3. City, district libraries are divided into the following types.
4. Rural libraries.
5. Children’s libraries.

6. Club-libraries on the budget of the House of Culture [17: 91].

During the years of independence, the stock of libraries in the country with a total fund of more than one hundred and forty million books has increased by almost one and a half times. During the years of independence, the number of libraries has decreased. According to the research of the librarian, Doctor of Sociological Sciences, Professor A. Umarov, in 1990 the number of libraries under the Ministry of Culture was 6765, the book fund was 82997.6, the number of books per person was 4, in 2000 this figure was 5710, 64026, dropped to 2.5. The number of libraries operating during the Soviet era has declined by 15.4 percent over the past decade. In addition, cases of use of library buildings for other purposes were also observed. In the Fergana region alone, 17 libraries have been sold for this purpose. There are also cases of neglect of library construction [18: 12,13]. Based on the above analysis, we must emphasize that libraries are the main place of influence on the spiritual world of our people, both in the former Soviet Union and after independence. Even today, there are small libraries in cultural and art institutions. Readers were organized in a club system, but their transformation into a separate library system depended on factors in the political and economic stages. Fairness, enlightenment, encouragement of artistic and aesthetic creativity in reading rooms and clubs have made them a stable place in the socio-cultural life of our people.

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