

**ISSUES OF IMPROVING THE ASPIRANTURA SYSTEM IN THE UZBEK SSR  
DURING THE 1940S–1950S**

**(based on documents preserved in the Bukhara Regional State Archive)**

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**Abstract:** In this article, the researcher provides a comprehensive analysis of the Soviet government's state policy toward the postgraduate (aspirantura) stage, which constituted a key component of the scientific personnel training system in the Uzbek SSR during the years of the Second World War (1941–1945). The study also examines the substance and significance of a set of normative and legal documents aimed at organizing, coordinating, and improving scientific research activities. These processes are investigated on the basis of documents preserved in the fonds of the Bukhara Regional State Archive. Particular attention is given to the organizational and legal measures implemented to preserve and develop scientific potential under wartime conditions, the operational mechanisms of the aspirantura institution, as well as their practical implementation at the regional level, all of which are elucidated from a scholarly perspective.

**Key words:** Uzbek SSR, Soviet government, scientific policy, postgraduate studies, researcher, resolution, directive, instruction.

**Introduction.** In the Uzbek SSR during the years 1941–1945, measures were undertaken to improve the aspirantura system, enabling researchers to engage in scientific research detached from production, with the aim of expanding the scope and enhancing the quality of research. Nevertheless, in 1941–1942 the enrollment plan for aspirantura was implemented unsatisfactorily. Scientific and educational work with aspirants was not properly organized. Inspections conducted by the All-Union Committee for Higher Education under the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR revealed that many heads of state institutions and directors of higher education institutions failed to pay sufficient attention to work with aspirants. As a result, a significant number of aspirants, including those in their final year of study, were found to have severed their ties with higher education institutions.

In order to resolve the existing problems, the All-Union Committee for Higher Education under the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR issued Directive No. D-09-45<sup>1</sup> of December 18, 1942, "On the Registration of Aspirants," addressed to people's commissariats (departments) and directors of higher education institutions. This directive mandated the establishment of a proper registration procedure for aspirants; the restoration of contact with aspirants who had left higher education institutions during the war years; the implementation of measures to return successful aspirants to higher education institutions; the organization of aspirants' academic activities and the creation of the necessary conditions for the completion of their dissertation research; the establishment of supervision over aspirants' work by directors, heads of

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<sup>1</sup> Bukhara Regional State Archive (BRSA), Fund 532-C, Inventory 1, File 78, Sheet 34.

departments, and academic supervisors; and the submission of information on the fulfillment of aspirants' research plans to the Committee for Higher Education.

By Resolution No. 168-r of January 5, 1943, the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR instructed the People's Commissariat of Trade of the USSR, beginning in January 1943, to supply aspirants of higher education institutions with food products according to the norms established for specially designated organizations as stipulated in the Resolution of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR No. 2148 of October 19, 1941.<sup>2</sup> The implementation of this resolution was intended to prevent interruptions in scientific research activities and to ensure their continuity under wartime conditions.

**Materials and Methods.** Based on the characteristics of the collected sources, this study employs archival analysis and analytical methods grounded in the principles of historicism, objectivity, and scientific rigor. These approaches were selected to ensure a systematic examination of Soviet science policy, the regulation of the aspirantura system, and the practical implementation of normative and legal documents in the Uzbek SSR during the years 1941–1945.

**Results and Discussion.** An instruction entitled “On the Report of the Academic Councils of Higher Education Institutions and Research Institutes on the Conferment of Academic Degrees”, No. US-52-1, was issued on 5 June 1943 by the All-Union Committee for Higher Education under the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR.

In the instruction sent for implementation to the directors of higher education institutions and research institutes granted the right to confer academic degrees, the issue of evaluating the work of departments in the preparation of dissertations was raised.<sup>3</sup>

It was stipulated that the role and significance of the academic council should be increased.

In order to organize the admission processes for the postgraduate (aspirantura) stage and to select the best candidates, the Order No. 189 of 14 July 1943<sup>4</sup>, entitled “On the Plan for Admission to Aspirantura in Higher Education Institutions in 1943”, of the All-Union Committee for Higher Education under the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR was approved. The order established the plan for admission to aspirantura of higher education institutions across the territory of the Union, distributed among people's commissariats and departments.

In addition, on the basis of a personal list submitted by the Committee for Higher Education under the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR, it was ensured that 250 aspirants of higher education institutions of the Union were granted deferment from mobilization into the ranks of the Red Army. Heads of state, cooperative and public enterprises, as well as institutions, were assigned the obligation to grant applicants participating in aspirantura entrance examinations 15 days of unpaid leave.

In the order approved with the signatures of the Deputy Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR V. Molotov and the Head of the Affairs Department of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR M. Smirnyukov, it was stated that aspirants admitted to the aspirantura stage exclusively for the purpose of engaging in scientific research must be dismissed

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<sup>2</sup> Bukhara Regional State Archive (BRSA), Fund 532-C, Inventory 1, File 59, Sheet 5.

<sup>3</sup> Bukhara Regional State Archive (BRSA), Fund 532-C, Inventory 1, File 78, Sheet 65

<sup>4</sup> Bukhara Regional State Archive (BRSA), Fund 532-C, Inventory 1, File 78, Sheet 106.

from the employment in which they had been working prior to admission, no later than one month from the date of notification of admission.

The order also included such important issues as: determining a new admission plan for aspirantura by higher education institutions and specialties; approving the admission plan for part-time aspirantura distributed among higher education institutions, people's commissariats and specialties; the necessity for directors of higher education institutions to involve assistants and university instructors who do not possess academic degrees but have distinguished themselves in educational and scientific work; taking necessary measures to return second- and third-year aspirants who had temporarily severed ties with higher education institutions and to resume classes with them from the new academic year; and organizing distance learning for aspirants who could not be returned to universities due to working conditions in production.

As a solution to the problems of training scientific personnel in higher education institutions, on the basis of the Order of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR No. 13986-r of 23 July 1943 "On Improving the Training of Pedagogical Personnel in the Uzbek SSR," the All-Union Committee for Higher Education under the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR adopted Order No. 212 of 5 August 1943 "On Improving the Training of Pedagogical Personnel in the Uzbek SSR."<sup>5</sup>

Clause 4 of this order provided for increasing the admission plan for aspirants in 1943 to 40 persons at the Central Asian State University and to 10 persons at the Tashkent Pedagogical Institute, as well as for submitting to the Committee, no later than 1 September 1943, for approval a plan for the distribution of additional aspirantura positions by specific specialties. Supervision over the implementation of these measures was assigned to the Rector of the Central Asian State University T. Sarimsakov and the Director of the Tashkent Pedagogical Institute K. Karimov, while Clause 6 of the order stipulated that all expenses related to the above measures were to be covered from the funds allocated for public education in the 1943 budget of the Council of People's Commissars of the Uzbek SSR.

Another document related to this field is the Directive Letter No. D-09-34 of 28 May 1943 of the All-Union Committee for Higher Education under the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR, entitled "On the Procedure for Submitting Annual Reports of Higher Education Institutions," sent for implementation to directors of higher education institutions.<sup>6</sup> Clause 10 of the letter covers the aspirantura stage and assigns the tasks of developing and implementing the admission plan, as well as studying the contingent of aspirants by specialties (with full-time and part-time students considered separately).

Clause 11 is devoted to the training of scientific and pedagogical personnel at the level of departments of higher education institutions, the development and analysis of plans and topics of scientific research work, the financing of research, and the introduction of completed scientific research into production.

As revealed during inspections related to dissertation defenses conducted in July–August 1943 by academic councils of higher education institutions (research institutes), applicants for academic degrees were allowed to defend dissertations without submitting dissertation abstracts,

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<sup>5</sup> Bukhara Regional State Archive (BRSA), Fund 532-C, Inventory 1, File 78, Sheet 110.

<sup>6</sup> Bukhara Regional State Archive (BRSA), Fund 532-C, Inventory 1, File 78, Sheet 46.

in violation of Clause 12 of the Instruction “*On the Procedure for Applying Decisions of the Council of People’s Commissars of the USSR,*” and in non-compliance with the instructions of 20 March 1937 and 26 April 1938. In this connection, it was also established that in a number of cases the requirement of Clause 38 of the Instruction, concerning the submission of abstracts of doctoral dissertations to the Higher Attestation Commission, was not fulfilled.

In the directive letter No. US-52-1 of 25 August 1943, entitled “*On the Submission of Materials of Dissertations Defended by Dissertants,*”<sup>7</sup> submitted by the All-Union Committee for Higher Education under the Council of People’s Commissars of the USSR to the directors of universities (research institutes) granted the right to accept dissertations for defense, the requirement was set to strictly comply with the demand of Clause 12 of the Instruction and not to permit dissertation defenses before applicants for academic degrees submit the dissertation abstract.

In accordance with the requirements imposed on aspirants, new specialties were formed at higher education institutions for the aspirantura stage “in accordance with necessity.” In 1943, quotas for admission to aspirantura were increased. In particular, in that year the Tashkent Institute of Irrigation and Agricultural Mechanization Engineers admitted aspirants in the following fields:

1. Operation of hydromelioration systems,
2. Hydraulic engineering structures,
3. Construction materials and works,
4. Engineering structures;

the Central Asian Industrial Institute admitted aspirants in the specialties of:

1. Electrical machines,
2. Metal-cutting machine tools,
3. Prospecting for mineral resources,
4. Mining mechanics,
5. Mechanical engineering technology,
6. Electrical measuring technology,
7. Electrification of industrial enterprises;

the Tashkent Law Institute admitted aspirants in the specialties of:

1. Civil law and procedure,
2. Criminal procedure,
3. Land-water and collective farm law,
4. History of state and law,
5. Theory of state and law,
6. International law.

Entrance examinations for applicants were conducted in the course “*Fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism,*” a foreign language, and a specialized subject. In the Uzbek SSR, scientific research

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<sup>7</sup> Bukhara Regional State Archive (BRSA), Fund 532-C, Inventory 1, File 78, Sheet 66.

topics were organized in accordance with Soviet ideology and material interests, so that the aim was not to positively resolve the problems of the population, but to orient research toward the needs of the USSR (industry and ideology).<sup>8</sup>

By Resolution No. 178 of 18 February 1944 of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR, the Regulation "On the Scientific Research Activities of Higher Education Institutions" was approved. The Regulation defined the main tasks of scientific research activities of higher education institutions as follows: to most fully involve academic teaching staff in conducting scientific research aimed at the development of the national economy, strengthening the country's defense, and further advancement of science and culture in the Soviet Union; to enhance the scientific qualifications of academic teaching staff; to familiarize higher education students in practice with posing and solving scientific and technical problems and to involve the most talented among them in conducting scientific research.

By Decision No. D-45 of 21 November 1947 issued by the Minister of Higher Education of the USSR, requirements for defended candidate dissertations were established.<sup>9</sup>

For the purpose of providing higher education institutions, research institutes, and enterprises of the Uzbek SSR with highly qualified scientific personnel, the issue of implementing Resolution No. 3756 of 4 November 1947 of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, entitled "On the Training of Highly Qualified Scientific Personnel at the Academy of Sciences of the USSR," was assigned as a task, and Resolution No. 170 of 24 January 1948 of the Council of Ministers of the Uzbek SSR, entitled "On the Training of Highly Qualified Scientific Personnel," was also approved, in which issues of improving aspirantura were discussed. In particular, doctoral programs at the Academy of Sciences of the Uzbek SSR, the Central Asian State University, and the Molotov Tashkent Medical Institute were terminated.

It was stipulated that practical assistance be provided to Uzbek doctoral candidates attached to institutes of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR in the cities of Moscow and Leningrad, as well as to other educational and scientific institutions; that heads of educational and scientific institutions whose employees were sent to the doctoral program of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR create the necessary conditions for the timely completion of dissertation work by those sent; that underperforming doctoral candidates be dismissed from doctoral studies.

The directors of the Academy of Sciences of the Uzbek SSR (Sarimsakov), the Central Asian State University (Umarov), the Tashkent Medical Institute (Turakulov), the Central Asian Industrial Institute (Niyazov), and educational and scientific institutions of the Uzbek SSR were assigned the task of providing regular scientific and practical assistance to young candidates of sciences working on doctoral dissertations in preparation for admission to the doctoral program of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, as well as ensuring systematic monitoring and supervision by the Academy of Sciences of the Uzbek SSR over doctoral candidates' work on

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<sup>8</sup> S.Sh. Nasillov. Sovet hokimiyatining O'zbekiston SSRdagi ilm-fan siyosati. Iqtidorli talabalar, magistrantlar, tayanch doktorantlar va doktorantlarning "Tafakkur va talqin" mavzusidagi respublika miqyosidagi ilmiy-amaliy anjuman to'plami, II qism. Buxoro – 2023. 7-12 b.

<sup>9</sup> Bukhara Regional State Archive (BRSA), Fund 532-C, Inventory 1, File 59, Sheet 116.

doctoral dissertations. For this purpose, it was established that doctoral candidates submit semi-annual reports to the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences of the Uzbek SSR.<sup>10</sup>

By the Council of Ministers of the Uzbek SSR, Resolution No. 1447 of 6 July 1948, entitled “On the Training of Scientific-Pedagogical and Scientific Personnel through Aspirantura,” was adopted.

In accordance with Resolution No. 1709 of 22 May 1948 of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, entitled “On the Training of Scientific-Pedagogical and Scientific Personnel through Aspirantura,” the Council of Ministers of the Uzbek SSR assigned overall supervision of the training of scientific-pedagogical and scientific personnel through the aspirantura of higher education institutions and republic-subordinated research institutions to the Academy of Sciences of the Uzbek SSR and the ministries (departments) of the Uzbek SSR, and assigned to the ministries (departments) of the Uzbek SSR the task of permitting instructors of higher education institutions who did not possess academic degrees but were working on dissertations to be attached, for a fixed term (up to one year), to higher education institutions and research institutions in order to complete their scientific work, with the aim of expanding the training of candidates of sciences from among teachers and instructors.<sup>11</sup>

**Conclusions:** The legal documents forming the basis of the history of Soviet science policy in the Uzbek SSR are of significant importance for the study of Uzbekistan’s past, as they provide an opportunity to examine the mechanisms of state regulation, control, and guidance of the scientific sphere within a concrete historical context. For this reason, researchers addressing this period should engage in a thorough and critical analysis of archival sources in their studies. In particular, scholarly literature on science and higher education produced during the years 1941–1945 was largely dominated by Soviet ideological discourse rather than critical assessments of the actual conditions of the sector, which limited the possibility of an objective evaluation of existing problems. An analysis of archival materials preserved in the Bukhara Regional State Archive demonstrates that, although numerous orders, decrees, and resolutions were adopted concerning the training of scientific personnel in higher education institutions of the Uzbek SSR, their implementation often remained formal in nature. As a result, a number of systemic problems – such as the insufficient material and technical base, the shortage of qualified academic supervisors, and the decline in personnel resources under wartime conditions – were not resolved in a consistent or effective manner. In this regard, archival sources serve as an essential means of revealing the declarative character of Soviet science policy and of providing a more accurate and evidence-based understanding of the practical challenges inherent in the system of scientific personnel training during the period under review.

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<sup>10</sup> Fund 532, Inventory 1, File 70, Sheet 30.

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