

BETWEEN THE PAST AND PRESENT: FRENCH HISTORIOGRAPHY OF SCHOOL HISTORY TEXTBOOKS

Shaimardanova Z.D., d.h.s.

Kazak Abylai khan University of International Relations and World Languages, Almaty, Kazakhstan

Abstract

French historiography reflects the key questions of the history of Kazakhstan: the global confrontation between the Russian Empire - the Soviet authorities and the local population of the XIX - XX centuries, e.g. the "Accession of Kazakh steppes to the Russian", fight of Kazakh people for the preservation of statehood and ethnic integrity etc. However, this view from this side, is often objective. In an example, a French explorer named J. Uhrès, in an article titled: "Russian colonization in the history books of post-Soviet Central Asia" made an analysis by comparing it with textbooks on the history of Kazakhstan, published in the Soviet period and in the period of its independence. Interpretation of the key issues of national history has undergone modifications due to peculiarities of the historical development of the Russian Empire, the USSR Kazakhstan and Kazakhstan as a sovereign state.

Keywords: Kazakhstan, the Russian Empire, accession of Kazakh steppes, independence

Introduction

Changes in the political situation of 1980-1990's entails changes in source studying and historiographic situation, that requires researchers to search for new and alternative methods of history investigation, allowing them to overcome the interdisciplinary boundaries, using advances in related disciplines during the study of Russian colonization period, Soviet and post-Soviet period, and the period of Kazakhstan independence.

Modern Kazakhstani history is in the process of rethinking its theoretical and methodological paradigms, gaining an essential importance in connection with the implementation of the state program. Therefore, the main objective of "the people in the flow of history" is the reconstruction of the conceptual foundations of Kazakhstani historical science. In this context,

the French experiences of studying the history of Kazakhstan is of interest in the sense that the French historical science has overcome peculiar and specific stage of critical revision of its own paradigmatic foundations (school "Annales" and others).

In French historiography, national issues such as the history of global confrontation between the Russian Empire and the Soviet authorities on one hand, and the local citizens in the XIX - XX centuries, on the other hand, and the dramatic struggle of the Kazakh people for the preservation of statehood and ethnic integrity were reflected. Thus, this view from this side is often the objective one. For example, the positive influence of the Soviet government in social issues include the increase in the level of literacy, the development of schools, education and healthcare systems, and the improvement of the living standards of the population. Therefore, the analysis of this historical experience has a practical value in the contemporary political and social life of the Republic of Kazakhstan, especially at this stage of the developmental process.

Accession of the Kazakh steppes to Russia

In the context of the contemplation of the exterior look at the history of Kazakhstan, French historiography examines the problem of "accession of the Kazakh steppes to Russia". However, this topic is of current interest to Kazakhstani historians and provides the historiography of all countries as a terminological and conceptual argument, which has been exacerbated since independence was gained after the collapse of the colonial system, which was centralized in the form of "Sovietism".

From the point of view of the collective memory creation, the history in France is of strategic importance, as it plays the role of the institution, which task is to observe the development of knowledge and its functions in the university and the academic field, where the history serves as a tool of civic consciousness development. From this, the second assignment of history flows out - as the basis for the reproduction of national values by means of education, first at school and then at University.

In the article by the French researcher J.Uhrès: "Russian colonization in the history books of post-Soviet Central Asia", published in the "Notebooks on eastern Mediterranean and Turkic-Iranian world", a comparative analysis of school textbooks on the history of Kazakhstan, published in the Soviet period and the period of independence (Bekmakhanov, 1957) was given.

French researcher, studying the problem of "the accession of Kazakh lands" to Russia in terms of law, considers that "the accession" was devoid of all legitimacy (Uhrès, 2002). Educating the dynamics of the discussions about the process of "the accession of Kazakh steppes" to the Russian

Empire (accession, then integration of peripheries, pressure), the researcher concluded that with the accession, "the control from Russian center, appointed by the interests of the central government would get started. Events of the past continued in the political organization of the USSR" (Uhrès, 2002). According to J.Uhrès, today Kazakhstani historians tend to dispute the Soviet theories concerning relations between Russia and the Kazakh steppes. With regards to common economic and military interests, the theory of convergence of people should lead to the "voluntary inclusion" into Russia, giving the progressive character to "accession" as an instrument of struggle against feudal tyranny of the khans and social emancipation (Uhrès, 2002). In the history books of independent Kazakhstan, "accession" is presented as a "tragic period" in the history with the most negative definitions (Ayagan. 2010). Before independence, the younger generation did not know the history of their ancestors very well, as it was only taught with the aim of the formation of a sense of love with the Soviet motherland. The essence of this approach for the study of history in schools helps to determine the degree of its availability to form the patriotic feeling through history.

Textbooks of independent Kazakhstan demonstrate Russia as an enemy, causing the formation in younger generation of a negative image of Russia, as independent Kazakhstan is building, excepting the power of center, but not Russians. This interpretation has been formulated in order to avoid the development of a negative attitude towards Russians, who live in Kazakhstan, as considered by the researcher. Textbook clarifies that the approaches formulated in relation to the "Russian invaders" or "Russian chauvinism" have no relation to the people, but concerns only the government and leaders representing it. Authors of new Kazakh textbooks have no other choice than to present their ancestors as national heroes, fighting for independence. Hence, the need to reinforce the sense of independence and the current state of the constancy of the Kazakh people's character for many generations is predetermined.

In finding a "national" basis in the ethnic sense, the new post-Soviet states in Central Asia were separated on time by this principle, that now seems obvious and the legitimacy of which is not disputed. This identity construction revises history, including its colonial past, and was repeatedly interpreted by Soviet historiography. The standpoint of national historiographies on the Russian colonization changed depending on the time and state ideology. Rewriting of the history confirms that the region was conquered by force. Russia, designated as the author of colonization, is criticized more ruthlessly depending on the remoteness of this or that country. Statement of the fact of military conquest qualifies Russia as a

figure around which crystallizes the desire for independence associated with the national feeling.

Expansion in SSSR Period

Uhrès J. carefully studied the issue on the basis of a comparative analysis of the textbooks on the history of Kazakhstan, published in the Soviet period and the period of independence. Noteworthy was his approach in the context of Russian military advance and influence on the Central Asian lands. The period when the Kazakh people lived in the Russian environment, which was influenced by the number of Kazakhs and other national identities, first – decreased in number, and secondly – increased in number. Tsarist policy evolved, adapted different strategies depending on the time period, and was slightly changed by the Bolshevik policy, which was finished by the sovietization of Kazakhstan. Geographical space of Kazakhs earlier than other regions of Central Asia, and the most long-lasting in time was under Russian influence and control. Kazakhs were fully incorporated into the Russian Empire and colonized, while the Uzbeks have always presented a protectorate until their absorption in USSR. The researcher identified the factors that influenced the process of accession: geographically close proximity of the Kazakh steppes to Russian territories, the presence of the Russian population in the Kazakh steppes since the XVI century; and in the military - Junggar threat and armed attacks in the south. Before making vows of allegiance, Kazakhs defended their lands by themselves.

French historiography states that the interpretation of imperial expansion in the USSR developed in favor of the tasks of the Communist ideology, which served the ideals of law, and respect for nations in the context of a dogmatic theory of friendship between peoples. However, the opinions of national historiography at different periods of the history of Kazakhstan in the USSR in relation to Russian conquest and colonization has changed: annexation, absorption of Kazakh lands by Russian, intervention and integration into the empire in order to be in military security, ease of trade exchanges, union of territories and trade routes under one political power. In addition, the rethinking of national history has led to the conclusion that the region was conquered by force. Today, Kazakh historians tend to distrust the Soviet theories of relations between Russia and the Kazakh steppes. Common economic and military interests and the theory of bringing people together should lead to "voluntary entry" by Russia, giving the progressive nature of "accession" as an instrument of struggle against feudal tyranny and social emancipation of the khans.

Theoretical and methodological approach of the history of Kazakhstan – is the desire of the East to establish economic ties with Russia, which allegedly motivate the establishment of diplomatic relations.

Exchange of ambassadors between the two political regions took place in the XVII century, when Junior Juz became a vassal for Russia. Modern French researchers criticize the position of the modern national history, which is written in the interests of independent Kazakhstan: the struggle against Jungars for the independence of the three Zhuzes and the integrity of Kazakh state, justifying the actions of AbulKhair Khan. They believe that such an interpretation does not meet with the objectives of independence. Moreover, this resulted to doubt and paradox of Kazakh ruling elite, which opted for the dependence on Russia, as a powerful nation when there are other neighboring nations.

Modern French historiography holds onto the opinion that "the accession of Kazakhstan" to Russia was the tactics and a temporary alliance of local Kazakh power, which was later broken, but served as the basis of the final rapprochement with Russia in the first half of the XIX century. French researchers have questioned that it was so, and believe that the main reason for the opposition of the people, is primarily because people wanted independence that is peculiar to all the conquered people, even if the political elite had reasons to make another choice.

Finally, the new textbooks, according to J.Uhrès, present that the relationship between "Russian - Kazakh steppe" was a long rapprochement of people, and a voluntary convergence, but with a negative tinge. Russia – is the author of all the atrocities that have passed through the Kazakh steppe. Finally, in the Kazakh historiography, the statement of fact of military conquest relates to Russia as enemies, which seeks to protect its ethnic population living in the newly independent Central Asian states and Kazakhstan, which have become national minorities here (Uhrès, 2002).

Conclusion

The interpretation of the problems of "the accession of Kazakhstan" to Russia has undergone modifications due to the peculiarities of the historical development of the Russian Empire, of Kazakhstan in the USSR, and Kazakhstan as a sovereign state. Interpretation of this problem from the theory of the aggressive nature of the "accession of Kazakhstan" to Russia brought about the theory of national minorities of Russians in the Central Asia region of CIS and Kazakhstan after the failure of the policy of Russian colonization and Sovietization.

Questions by the national liberation movement in the Kazakh steppes also raised a conceptual and terminological dispute in French historiography: rebellion, protest movement, insubordination, etc. We are talking about the uprising in 1916, sparked by the mobilization of the Kazakhs to the front in June 1916. In the article "Un aperçu de la construction de la république kazakhe", X. Hallez (researcher CETOBAC (EHESS / Graduate School of

Social Sciences Research, Paris) writes: "... the revolt passed across the steppe, but with a difference depending on the region. We can not speak about the national rebellion, or the existence of a united front. Movement took the form of likely mass civil disobedience, organized by each tribe independently. Political role of tribes was affirmed by force throughout the summer. Two contradictions were revealed, the first one – the contradiction between some tribes and the intelligentsia, who took the opposite positions. Some called for the implementation of a royal decree, due to fear of reprisals ... The second factor – socio- economic ... Rebellion revealed the worsening of economic situation and the difference of interests of the most vulnerable classes – the poor and the rich landowners" (Hallez, 2013).

Therefore, the theme of the national liberation movement in the interpretations of the foreign historiography on the example of Kazakhstani history textbooks of the Soviet period and the period of independence of the state requires a special independent study.

Considering a stable interest of foreign historians to the history of Kazakhstan aimed on the studying of its problems, which are considered controversial and undergoing indoctrination in the Soviet period of the country's history, the achievements of French historiography may be useful for further research of the patriotic history, as well as the interaction of Kazakhstani and the world historical science.

References:

- Bekmakhanov, Ermuhan. PrisoedinenieKazakhstana kRossii. Moskva: AN USSR, 1957, 342 s.
- Uhrès, Johann. La conquête russe dans les manuels d'histoire d'Asie centrale post-soviétique, Cahiers d'études sur la Méditerranée orientale et le monde turco-iranienne, 2002, № 34, pp. 59-75.
- Ayagan B.G., Abzhanov H.M. i dr. Sovremennaya istoria Kazakhstana, Almaty, 2010, 432 s.
- Hallez, Xavier. Un aperçu de la construction de la république kazakhe. Intern. scientific-practical. conf. "Héritage of Abylai khan: the interrelation and continuity of ideas", dedicated to 300th Abylai khan anniversary, Almaty, 2013, pp. 44-51.