

ANALYSIS OF OFFICIAL SOURCES PROVIDING INFORMATION ON THE ACTIVITIES OF MEDICAL INSTITUTIONS IN TURKESTAN

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Abstract: *The article analyzes the source significance of official archival documents reflecting the activities of the healthcare system during the period of the Turkestan ASSR. Based on documents preserved in the National Archive of Uzbekistan related to the People’s Commissariat of Health and subordinate medical institutions, the organizational structure, functions of healthcare institutions, and processes of combating epidemics are examined. The research findings are of great importance for identifying the historical condition of the healthcare system during the period of the Turkestan ASSR.*

Keywords: *Turkestan ASSR, healthcare system, medical institutions, official documents, archival sources, source studies.*

INTRODUCTION

The healthcare system is an important component of social development, and official documents serve as the main source in studying its history. The healthcare system formed during the period of the Turkestan ASSR functioned under complex political and social conditions, which are thoroughly reflected in archival documents. In particular, official documents related to the activities of medical institutions make it possible to identify the real state of the healthcare sector.

It should be noted that collection file no. 260 preserved in the archive contains such documents as “Informational report to the Turkestan Representation in Moscow on the activities of the People’s Commissariat of Health of the Turkestan Republic,” “On the state of public health and the organization of medical assistance to the population of the Turkestan Republic for 1921–1922,” “Informational report on the activities of the People’s Commissariat of Health of the Turkestan Republic,” quarterly reports entitled “Report to the People’s Commissar of Health” and “Report to the Council of People’s Commissars on the activities of the People’s Commissariat of Health from January to April 1, 1923,” and many other documents.

These sources contain valuable information about the activities of medical institutions and hospitals in Turkestan, their condition, and their technical equipment. Archival documents also include information on the history of hospitals in Turkestan. According to these materials, in 1918 the People’s Commissariat of Health of Turkestan inherited a very limited number of small hospitals and outpatient clinics from the period of the Russian Empire, most of which were located in the Russian quarters of cities. A document entitled “Report of the People’s Commissariat of Health of the Turkestan ASSR to the Chairman of the Turkestan Commission on the condition of repairs of medical institutions” has been preserved. The document reports that many medical institutions, particularly hospitals and

outpatient clinics, were built of raw bricks during the imperial period and had become largely unusable by the time of the Turkestan ASSR. Due to water leakage through roofs every year, significant expenses were required to replace them. In addition, population growth increased the demand for more hospitals and repairs. Although 6,000,000 rubles were required for repair work, these funds were not allocated. At the same time, there was a great need for medical buildings and sanitary-hygienic centers throughout the region. These problems and issues were reflected in numerous reports of republican officials. Statistical tables included in the reports provide important data on outpatient clinics, hospitals, and disinfection chambers operating in the region.

According to the documents, in 1918 there were four hospitals with 210 beds, a psychiatric reception facility, and 146 beds in four districts of the Syrdarya region. The commissariat consisted of 10 departments and 27 subdivisions, employing a total of 322 staff members. An auxiliary warehouse also operated under the People's Commissariat of Health of Turkestan, and reports contained information on its activities. Documents provide detailed data on the staffing of the main warehouse departments, which included five divisions: Department 1 (Accounting) – 16 employees (chief accountant, deputy, accountants responsible for selection and valuation of goods, an expediter, clerk, cashier, and support staff); Department 2 (Chemical dry goods storage for poisons, alkaloids, and plant-based products) – 8 employees (department head, assistant, pharmacy salesperson, pharmacy attendant); Department 3 (Basement storage for liquid chemicals and strong galenic preparations) – 5 employees; Department 4 (Storage of dressing materials, patient care items, pharmaceutical raw materials, and equipment) – 6 employees, including an equipment technician; Department 5 (Expedition) – 8 employees. In addition, the management of Department 4 included a bandage preparation unit (Bintorezko), employing 7 workers. Collection file no. 260 also contains a report entitled “Informational report to the Turkestan Representation in Moscow on the activities of the People's Commissariat of Health of the Turkestan Republic,” covering the period from October 1, 1921, to October 1, 1922. According to this report, staff reductions were implemented by December 1921, leaving 138 administrative staff positions, and 8 subordinate divisions were abolished. The Sanitary Construction Administration was dissolved and replaced by a Repair and Construction Bureau consisting of 15 staff members. In provincial health departments, 37 staff positions remained, while district departments retained 16 positions each. More detailed information on this issue is provided in a report preserved in the Turkestan Statistical Administration. The report, sent to Gosplan on November 2, 1922 (covering October 1, 1921 – October 1, 1922), states that as of October 1, 1921, the People's Commissariat of Health consisted of 10 departments and 27 subdivisions with a total of 322 employees, of whom 127 worked in the Sanitary Construction Bureau. By December of that year, only 138 employees remained, and by April 1922 the number was reduced to 70, with only 6 departments remaining out of the original 10.

Following the reductions beginning in May 1921, a mass dismissal of personnel (referred to in the documents as “demobilization”) began. As a result, 131 employees across the republic were dismissed, including doctors over 50 years old, dentists over 35, medical

assistants over 45, and midwives. In this extraordinary situation, the People's Commissariat of Health coordinated dismissal measures with the People's Commissariat of Social Welfare. However, the documents do not provide detailed information on the specific measures taken.

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