

## The Development of Archival Institutions in the Years of Independence

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### Abstract

Archival documents functioning as "storing humanity memory", the activity of archive institutions which are significant articulations of intellectual potentiality play significant role to solve this actual scientific problem. In present days, the archives of Uzbekistan, which have approximately 150 year-history play significant role in the development of contemporary science and social life. Because, as an institution incarnating documentary information relating to the activity of state and society, archives are considered to be a specific "laboratory" of History. Having survived the Soviet policy of centralization and the residual principle of financing the activities of the archives, in modern Uzbekistan the regulatory and legal framework of archives has been radically reformed, international relations of archives on informatization and improving services are strengthening, and the qualified archival specialists are trained. Uzbekistan remained the system of direct subordination of the Main Archive Department concerning with archival affairs to the highest governmental executive body: to the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The main objective of the Agreement is the exchange of information, research and development, description, study of archival collections containing documents relating to the issue of "Holocaust" and its history. Gradually from the tackling of internal logistical problems, the State Archive of Uzbekistan began to turn to the issues of improving the quality of acquisition, accounting, preservation and creation of appropriate conditions for the use of archival documents.

**Keywords:** Uzbekistan; Archival institution; Management system; Training specialists; International relations; Reform; Development perspective

### Introduction

#### For a foreigner

The Republic of Uzbekistan occupies an important geopolitical position and is the largest state in Central Asia. The territory of Uzbekistan is 447.4 thousand sq. kilometers and in its size, it exceeds the territory of such countries as Great Britain, Belgium, Denmark, Switzerland and Austria, if taken combined. Five states border with the Republic of: Uzbekistan: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Afghanistan. Today, the population of Uzbekistan is more than 31 million people. Uzbekistan was formerly a constituent republic of the Soviet Union. The independence of the Republic was proclaimed on August 31, 1991.

Being the most socio-economically developed country in Central Asia, Uzbekistan has a rich intellectual, spiritual and material cultural heritage. In Uzbekistan has established a coherent system of archival institutions, represented by the Agency "Uzarchive" and its regional administration offices, a network of governmental and non-governmental archives; specific interdepartmental archives on-staff documents, as well as a significant number of departmental archives.

#### Modern management system of archives

There have been conducted few researches in Uzbekistan illustrating condition and activity of archives, which are found to be a great historical heritage which is considered one of the little studied fields [1]. Whereas, improving the activity of archives in the years of

independence have become one of the priority tasks raised to Public level. This sphere has been reformed and reforms are still being held. Developing this sphere is becoming one of the main directions of agenda as an actual and important task. These conditions prove the actuality and necessity of studying scientifically the activity of archives in Uzbekistan from historical point of view and the issues to analyze achievements and problems in archive affair. Because, a research in this field creates an opportunity to prepare theoretical and practical recommendations aimed to define perspective directions of further development of archive system in our country as well as to identify existing problems in preserving huge historical, cultural heritage and using them.

As opposed to some of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS countries), where the post-Soviet era saw widespread decline of subordination authority, and thus of the status of the State Archival Service Agencies (Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan), Uzbekistan remained the system of direct subordination of the Main Archive Department concerning with archival affairs to the highest governmental executive body: to the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

On 3 February 2004 according to the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers "On further improvement of the management of archival affairs in the Republic of Uzbekistan", the Main Archive Department "Uzglavarchive" was transformed into the Agency "Uzarchive."

The General Director, who appointed and dismissed by the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan, heads the Agency «Uzarchive». The three consultative bodies function under the Agency. They are the Scientific Council, the Public Council and the Collegium (collegiate organ). The Scientific Council includes the members of the Agency, directors of the three central state archives, as well as leading specialists of scientific-research and educational institutions of the

Republic. Chairman of the Scientific Council is the General Director of the Agency "Uzarchive."

Being an advisory body of the agency, at the meetings of the Scientific Council, carried out at least twice a year, scientific and methodological issues are considering of improvement and further development of archives, the main trends and actual problems of scientific research in the field of records management, archival affairs and archeography (study and publication of early texts). In addition, the methodical recommendations are discussing for improving the scientific reference system of state archives and enhance using of archival documents. The feedback and recommendations are given to the publication of research results in the field of record management, archival science, archaeography archive, history of government agencies, source studies and other related disciplines.

The main task of the Public Council is public discussion of global aims of development of archival affairs in the Republic. To this end, the Public Council includes more than 58 representatives of various ministries and departments, among them: 28 representatives of the state archives, 16 workers of various ministries and agencies, 10 representatives from research institutes and leading universities of the Republic, two representatives of the National Library of Uzbekistan and the History Museum of Uzbekistan and two representatives of public organizations of the Republic. In the composition of the Public Council, special attention is paid to the professionalism and working skills of the candidates in the field of records management and archives.

Significant changes in the activities of the Agency "Uzarchive" and its territorial archival administrative offices took place after the adoption of the Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers "On additional measures for further development of archives in the Republic of Uzbekistan" dated 26 August 2008, №194. The structure of the central apparatus of the Agency "Uzarchive" the following changes were introduced: a new department "Electronic Archives and Records Management" was formed and the department "Publications and use of the documents" was transformed into the department "Documents Using and Information Services."

Due to the cardinal changes in the archival system of modern Uzbekistan in the period of independence, the classification of archives received an official reinforcement in new legal and normative documents. Today the system of archives of Uzbekistan is constituted by governing bodies of archiving, the Public and non-governmental Archive as well as departmental archives.

### Archival institutions of Uzbekistan

There are 103 public archives. From those four has republican level: 1) Central state archive Republic of Uzbekistan, 2) Central state archive film, photo and audio documentation Republic of Uzbekistan, 3) Central state archive the scientific, technical and medical documentation Republic of Uzbekistan; 4) Central state archive of the Republic of Kara-Kalpak. Also 12 regional governmental archives, 1 Tashkent state governmental archive and 76 district governmental archives. If at the beginning of the 1990s 5.4 million units of storage of documents were stored in the state archives, today the total volume of documents of the National Archival Fund is of over 8.6 million units of storage. Today in the framework of the Program and targets for the development of the national archival affairs and records management until 2011, there were built and put into operation 20 standard buildings for the regional state archives. The buildings of three central

state archives were fully reconstructed and renovated and additional archives were built, and buildings occupied by them were transferred to their own property. Every year, from the sources of acquisition the state archives accept for preservation more than 200 thousand document stock-keeping units.

The trend of expanding the network of archives is due to the increase of their status and the attention to the issue of preservation of archival documents. The growth of significance of the archives can be traced in terms of execution of various types of queries. For example, if in 1991 the State Archives on the basis of archival documents executed over 18,000 of socio-legal inquiries of citizens and more than 1,200 of thematic requests of legal entities, by the end of 2016 the total number of executed social-legal inquiries of citizens amounted to over 164 thousand, and thematic inquiries about 10 thousand request.

In addition, by municipal administration - *hakimiyat* organized 110 interdepartmental self-supporting archives of documents on staff (APSDIEs). According to statistical data, state archives performed people's 112 thousand social and legal appeals in 2011 and 300 thousand ones were examined by APSDIEs while this data reached 164 300 in State Archives and over 330 thousand at APSDIEs [2]. However, there are several serious problems in activities of these archives. In particular, 78% from them are filled with documents, most of buildings and archive depositories do not meet the required standards, receiving rooms of visitors, the material and technical resources, spectra of the rendered services require cardinal updates. Furthermore, being attached these archives only clerically and methodically to "Uzarchive" Agency, not being provided with budgetary funds, depositing over 50% of liquidated enterprises sources are creating a number of serious economic difficulties.

The development of private sector DE monopolization and liberation of economy in the republic, as well as the growth of the number of non-governmental organizations, institutions and enterprises has led to the rise of non-governmental archives' number and it reached 47 in 2010 [3]. However, since they were established on the contrary of the Law "About Archival Affairs" and normative regulations required by the Cabinet of Ministers, 40 were recognized non-conforming to the established regulations and were liquidated by 2014 [4].

Besides that, special attention is paid to strengthen the cooperation of archives with profile research institutes to develop joint projects to work out educational and methodical literature and information manuals, to involve young specialists in archives. The research shows the suggestions to conduct fundamental, practical and innovative projects between archives and research institutes, to foster the affairs to publish scientific works, to review the regulations of using archival documents, to reorganize the process to eliminate confidentiality of archival documents.

However, according to archive management statistics, about 10,000 departmental archives function in the Republic, which store more than 2 million units of storage of documents of the National Archival Fund. From these departmental archives of 14 ministries has rule eternal keeping own documents.

### Training of Specialists

The problem of providing qualified personnel for Archives is one of the most pressing in Uzbekistan. In recent years, the number of employees of state archives has increased dramatically. Before 1991,

about 700 employees worked in the state archives, now the staffs are 1412 (200%).

At the same time, a number of problems gathered during the activity of archival institutions determine to accentuate specially to the policy of preparing personnel. Considering requirement of the Public Records Offices for qualified specialists, in the frame the National program for personnel in four higher and 28 secondary specialized educational institutions of the republic are preparing specialists with the higher and secondary education for the first time organized the years of independence. About one thousand archivists and filing clerks have been enhancing their qualification at short-term training courses at two Central State Archives of the republic since 2007. These and other measures exert positive influence on the problem of providing archival organizations with qualified personnel. Notwithstanding this fact, according to the information given in 2016 by "UzArchive" Agency, 332 archive personnel (23,5%) of 895 have higher degree and only 56 (6%) of them have specialty in the sphere. In addition, only 42 (9%) of 563 (40%) personnel with secondary specialized education have specialty on archival affair [5]. In view of this provision, the Agency "Uzarchive" provides significant assistance in training skilled personnel-archivists by specialty. As a result of close cooperation of the Archival Administration with the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Special Education of the Republic a good system of training archival specialists was established. According to statistics, 28 specialized colleges annually deliver more than 800 young cadres in "Documentation and archival science" [6].

At the same time, at the National University of Uzbekistan named after Mirzo Ulugbek (NUUz), Bukhara State University, as well as in Namangan State University the bachelors are training in the discipline 5220300 - "Archival science". In 2014-2015 academic years, at Tashkent University of Information Technology a new specialty of the Master's program was start: "Digital libraries and archives" [7].

A special trend of the "Uzarchive" Agency's strategy in the organization of the state and departmental archives is forming of a system of regular training of employees of various organizations, companies and institutions on archives and records management. For example, since 2007, the Central State Archive organized short courses "Fundamentals of organization of the departmental archives", and the Central State Archive cinema, photo and sound records - "Modern methods and culture of record keeping." Every year, more than 770 specialists from different departments of the Republic are training on these courses.

In general, the problem of training of archival specialists, overdue for several decades and became urgent, which had an inhibiting effect on the development of the system has found an adequate solution in the period of independence, namely, because of reforming the education system and archival affairs of the Republic. Along with the state archives, higher and secondary special educational institutions and research institutes of the country are actively involved in dealing with this problem [8-11]. Stage-by-stage training of the specialists of secondary and higher education, followed by further training in the professional improvement at field studies (production practices) allow you to set an inextricable link between the educational process and work.

## International Relation of Archives

From the first days of establishing independent Archival Service of the Republic, the need for the development of interstate relations

between archive services of both CIS-countries and non-CIS countries has actualized. The establishment of international relations, defining the principles and directions of cooperation was fostered by and an important role was played by official meetings of directors of state archive services, international refresher courses for archival staff, as well as symposia, conferences, round tables and special projects devoted to topical problems of development of archival work.

Since 1999, each year the employees of state archives of Uzbekistan have been involved in international training courses at the National Archives of Malaysia on "Management", "Conservation and binding" paper medium documents organized by the international organization MITCA and by the National Archives of Korea (NAK) «Documentary Heritage: preservation and management» organized with the support of the international organization KOICA [12-15].

A telling impact on the development of international relations has the inclusion of the Uzbek Archival Administration in the International Council on Archives (ISA). On 28 May 2009, by the decision of the meeting of the International Council on Archives, held in Algeria, the Agency "Uzarchive" was accept for membership in the Council on the "A" category. In 2012, from the 3rd to the 7th October, the XIIIth General Conference of Euro-Asian Regional Branch (EURASICA) of the International Council on Archives was held in Tashkent.

The improvement and modernization of the archives of Uzbekistan of special importance is the development and implementation of joint international projects with leading research and educational centers of the world. Since 2003, the Uzbek Archival Administration cooperates with the United States Holocaust Memorial Council and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington. The main objective of the Agreement is the exchange of information, research and development, description, study of archival collections containing documents relating to the issue of "Holocaust" and its history. The archives of Uzbekistan identified and described the archival documents related to the resettlement of Jews during the Second World War to Uzbekistan [16].

On 21 August 2008, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan signed a Decree "On Measures for Reconstruction of the Central State Archives of the Republic of Uzbekistan, and Their Technical Modernization, Involving the Grant of the Government of the Republic of Korea." This document was aimed at the expansion of international cooperation in the field of information technology, strengthening the material-technical base of the three central state archives of the Republic (TsGA RUz, TsGA NTMD, TsGA KFFD RUz), the formation of electronic archival holdings, equipping of archival materials. In accordance with the Resolution the project "Computerization of central state archives of the Republic of Uzbekistan" was develop, server rooms were arranged, as well as rooms for input of bibliographic data and laboratories for digitizing documents, equipped with special computers and scanners; the program "Electron Records Archive Management System" was developed and implemented. In addition, within the framework of the project, three minibuses "Hyundai Starex" were allocated to archives and the air-conditioning system was fully renovated [17,18].

Since 2011-2013, the Agency "Uzarchive" in collaboration with the Institute of History of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Martin Luther University. (Germany), with the financial support of the Volkswagen Foundation implemented the international research project "The Archives Talk: Writing the Social

History of Pre-Soviet Central Asia". Structurally, the project consisted of the following parts: 1) research; 2) education, and 3) archive-documentary part. Within the limits of the project, the Orientalists were prepared in reading and archival description of archival documents in Persian, Arabic and Chagatai languages. In addition, for the digitization and preservation extension of the Oriental documents TsGA of Uzbekistan provided the following: a special scanner for large-format documents, a separate scanner for microfilms and a projector for reading microfilms. All this significantly improved the technical equipment and the quality of services of the archive [19].

From 2014 Agency "Uzarchive" has cooperation with Turkish International Cooperation Agency (TICA) in program of restoration of the archival documents. In this program 10 manager of archives trained in Turkish governmental archives.

Prospects of development of archives Despite success achieved in archiving in the republic during the years of independence, on the bases of research results there have been designated a number of actual problems requiring their solutions and the following recommendation have been worked out to solve them:

Although a number of governmental decrees in the sphere of archival affair have been issued in the republic in the years of independence, archive funds illustrating contemporary history have not entirely been created due to not presenting documents qualitatively and in time owing to insufficient attention to archival affairs at organization in practice. As the solution of the problem it is recommended to reduce terms of departmental storage of documents of National Archival funds at organizational archival funds, to increase staff units of departmental archives and to strengthen works on involvement of qualified specialists with higher education, and also to review system of material promotion of archivists in accordance with Article 24 of the Laws "About archiving" of the Republic of Uzbekistan;

On the basis of approved state programs on improving material and technical equipment of archives, a number of archives have been reconstructed and more than 20 new buildings have been built in the years of independence. Nevertheless, there are some cases such as not following moisture and necessary temperature requirements in the majority of Public Records Offices of the republic to store documents, deficiency of modern equipment in depositories, absence of introducing new technologies for restoration, accounting, search and control of archive documents. As the solution of this problem, It would be desirable to increase the volume of financing archives' activity not only by public account, but also involving foreign investments;

To enrich National Archive funds of the Republic of Uzbekistan with documents, replenishment of written historical heritage, to bring copies of archive documents which are stored in archival funds of the USA, Turkey, India, Russia, etc. for National archival fund have stopped in recent years. From this point of view, it is necessary to renew and improve the activities of the Special Commission under Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan that functioned on searching, finding and returning archive documents carried out from the republic during the different historical periods; in order to provide the fulfilment of social and legal requests of citizens to archives' activities timely and qualitatively, it is necessary to transfer the archives of all personnel documents under state control which are stored in interdepartmental self-supporting archives, to provide them with the special buildings and technical equipment and to transfer personal documents which are stored in state archives to them. It will create favorable conditions for centralization and improvement of works on

implementation of requests of citizens; taking into consideration the integration of archival affair and history as one of the actual problems of present days, it is recommended the revival of mutual relations to publish guide books and catalogues that present researchers information about structure and contents of the documents, internal activity and problems of archives considered principal source base of historical researches, to strengthen collaboration of archives and research institutions to review research topics. Moreover, it is required active participation of republican society of historians to review legislative-regulatory bases of using archival documents in Uzbekistan, their further liberalization and entire reforms [20]. Such scientific cooperation will promote identification of common problems and ways of their decision; considerably will facilitate work of two directions: archives and scientific institutions of a historical profile, which were interconnected with each other; it is necessary to write modern teaching books and manuals, in particular, to provide constant connection of education and practice, to introduce foreign experience into education and practical activities, to work out innovation projects on publishing textbooks and manuals in corporation with educational institutions in different specialties to involve newly graduated specialists to archives and to eliminate labour turnover to solve existing problems, to improve the quality of selecting and getting fixed up in a job experienced specialists, to educate people for the second specialty, to improve the structure of retraining and improving the qualification; it is recommended broadening interactive services of Public Archives of the republic on the basis of studying the experience of creating websites of leading archives of the world, such as digitalizing archival documents, fostering the processes of affairs held to create electronic inventories, guidebooks, and catalogs of archives [21,22].

## Conclusion

In total, reforming of the management system of archival affairs, empowering and enhancing the status of the state archives in the post-Soviet period, vesting the Agency "Uzarchive" with the authority of the state body responsible for the implementation of a unified state policy in the field of archives and records management, leads to enhancement of its administrative functions and thereby to reducing departmental disunity in the archival affairs. Gradually from the tackling of internal logistical problems, the State Archive of Uzbekistan began to turn to the issues of improving the quality of acquisition, accounting, preservation and creation of appropriate conditions for the use of archival documents.

The extension of international relations helps the local archivists to get out of a kind of "information blockade" established by the totalitarian regime against foreign archiving, extremely limited not only the range of theoretical sources, but also the practice of studying the world experience and establish professional contacts and cooperation between archival professionals. In addition, international projects also create conditions for solving the financial problems of the introduction of information technologies, which are of great importance for the improvement of the work of archives.

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