

THE IMPORTANCE OF HISTORICAL THOUGHT IN UNDERSTANDING NATIONAL IDENTITY

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Abstract

This article provides a comparative study of philosophical views on the role of historical thinking in understanding national identity. It also analyzes the emphasis on historical thinking in a dangerous situation in the context of globalization and the further development of national identity in young people as one of the most correct paradigms.

Keywords: Historical thinking, historical memory, historical knowledge, understanding of identity, national pride, national idea, national spirit, spirituality, paradigm.

Introduction

A new era has begun in the history of our country—an era of development, the Third Renaissance, characterized by profound changes and processes of modernization. Our people have traversed a difficult yet honorable path in building a democratic state governed by the rule of law and a free civil society. During the years of independence, significant efforts have been made to revive national spirituality and to develop it in accordance with the demands of the time. Democratic reforms are being consistently deepened. The construction of a new society depends прежде всего on the younger generation—their spiritual world, consciousness, thinking, and professional skills. Therefore, historical thinking plays a vital role in shaping the national idea, fostering high moral qualities among the younger generation, awakening national consciousness and sound reasoning, educating them in the spirit of ideological responsibility for the destiny of the Motherland, the people, and independence, as well as in promoting the overall spiritual revival of society.

A broad opportunity has been created for studying the centuries-old and exceptionally rich historical, scientific, cultural, and religious values and heritage of the Uzbek people and for utilizing them as a shared and invaluable asset. In the course of the reforms being implemented in Uzbekistan, this process is realized in such directions as spiritual and cultural life, which includes education, cultural heritage, historical experience, religious, moral, and educational views, lifestyle, social relations, science, national holidays, festivals, traditions and customs, art, and literature. Through these spiritual and cultural values, the unique ethnic characteristics of a people and a nation, as well as their contribution to world civilization, are effectively reflected and assessed.

Literature Review and Methodology

The significance of historical thinking in understanding national identity was first explored by European scholars such as R. Collingwood, M. Bloch, K. Jaspers, A. Toynbee, and R. Aron. In Uzbekistan, this issue has been studied by scholars including N. Juraev, N. Shermammedova, N. Muhammadiev, and M. Melikova.

Discussion

Today, the attitude toward historical science in Uzbekistan has risen to the level of state policy. An objective and scientific study of the history of our country, based on new ways of thinking and supported by the analysis of primary sources, has become increasingly necessary. This, in turn, poses serious challenges for historians. Addressing this issue, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev emphasized the importance of educating young people in the spirit of patriotism and national pride, which requires high-quality teaching of history and the expansion of scholarly research in this field. In particular, he stated: “National history must be created with a national spirit; otherwise, it will not have an educational impact. We must teach our youth to learn from history, draw conclusions, and equip them with historical knowledge and historical thinking.” Accordingly, relevant authorities were tasked with developing a concept for the advancement of historical science in Uzbekistan up to 2030. The study, promotion, and wide application of the history of Uzbekistan, the cultural heritage of our ancestors, and their significant contribution to world civilization—especially within the spheres of education and upbringing—play a crucial role in fostering a comprehensively developed younger generation. History, as the foundation of spirituality and the reality of the past, enhances national pride and dignity, strengthens feelings of patriotism, and historical memory serves as a powerful force that helps individuals realize their identity, reinforce their will, and broaden their worldview.

As is well known, the contemporary world is characterized by intense competition and an escalating clash of interests. Processes of globalization, alongside unprecedented opportunities for humanity, also generate unexpected challenges. Threats to national identity and spiritual values are increasing. In various ways, especially among young people, self-centered thinking, neglect of work and family responsibilities, and a consumerist mentality are being skillfully promoted.

The threats of terrorism, extremism, transnational and cybercrime, human trafficking, and drug trafficking are also intensifying. In certain regions, instability is deliberately created and feelings of dissatisfaction are artificially fueled.

In such a dangerous situation, one of the most appropriate paradigms is to place emphasis on historical thinking and, through this, to further strengthen national identity among young people.

“As self-awareness begins, first and foremost, with the study of the past and need to know history,” writes N. Juraev. “Indeed, every person who understands themselves strives to learn about the family into which they were born, who their ancestors were, what they did, and how they lived. They live with pride in their virtues and heritage.” Historical thinking serves as a guarantee of self-awareness. An individual who possesses certain knowledge, a well-formed worldview, and an independent approach to events and phenomena seeks to find their place in existence, within society, and in their social environment.

Results

The formation of national identity and historical worldview often emerges spontaneously as a natural aspiration and movement arising from social needs. However, when this process is not consciously and systematically organized, it frequently becomes ineffective or acquires distorted and destructive forms as a result of external ideological interference. For instance, such socio-psychological phenomena as historical nihilism, skepticism toward the heritage of ancestors, subordination to the historical

leadership of other nations, and historical marginalization are typical outcomes of the spontaneous formation of national identity and historical worldview. Such tendencies must not be allowed.

National identity is a complex process involving a wide range of factors, including national ideas, national spiritual values, science, literature and art, mass media, political parties, and other social institutions. These factors contribute to the development and transpersonalization of historical consciousness and historical worldview. Therefore, in the process of understanding national identity, it is essential to examine separately the factors and mechanisms that shape historical consciousness and historical worldview.

It should also be noted that certain shortcomings are evident in the formation of the national idea. As Doctor of Philosophy, Professor N. Shermammedova points out, “during the years of independence, substantial positive work has been carried out in shaping the national idea. However, unfortunately, these efforts have not always been effective. For this reason, it is necessary to study more deeply the concrete and pressing interests and concerns of our people.”

Particular attention should be given to the role of national spiritual values in the development of historical worldview, as these values serve as a crucial factor in understanding national identity and defining historical consciousness. Strengthening the influence of national values on the development of national identity and historical worldview requires further advancement of national culture and the arts. In this regard, the Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PP-4038 dated November 28, 2018, “On Approval of the Concept for the Further Development of National Culture in the Republic of Uzbekistan,” and the Presidential Decree No. PF-6000 dated May 26, 2020, “On Measures to Further Enhance the Role and Influence of Culture and Art in the Life of Society,” have become significant milestones. In particular, these documents identify key objectives such as preserving historical and cultural heritage and widely utilizing it in educating the younger generation, instilling national and universal values in youth, maintaining national cultural traditions, and supporting folk creativity.

The emphasis on the restoration and development of historically preserved national values at the level of state policy undoubtedly contributes to a deeper understanding of national identity and the development of historical worldview among the population, especially among young people. In Uzbekistan, the development of national spirituality, language and culture, self-awareness, national feelings, pride, and patriotism, as well as the clarification of the content and essence of spiritual security, plays a vital role in educating a harmonious generation. Contemporary national spirituality and values of the Uzbek people represent a continuation of historical spiritual traditions and include friendship, hospitality, humanity, humanism, moral depth, initiative, virtue, generosity, politeness, self-control, empathy, openness, optimism, sincerity, kindness, courage, honesty, respect for parents and elders, diligence, respect for the past, faith, national pride, understanding of independence, patriotism, nationalism, and other national, spiritual, and moral virtues. This clearly demonstrates that the Uzbek people possess outstanding human qualities and unique traditions that are recognized worldwide.

In conclusion, needs and interests act as significant driving forces in the formation of national identity and historical worldview. The need to understand history and the impulses arising from self-development play a decisive role in this process. Within the framework of national identity, the formation of a historical worldview can be effectively achieved through national ideas and spiritual

values. While the national idea serves as a source of confidence and conviction for historical worldview, national spiritual values function as a motivating force that reinforces and sustains it.

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