



SOURCES AS A MIRROR OF SOCIAL HISTORY

Maxliyo Misrbekova

Lecturer at Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages

Abstract

This article analyzes the relationship between the theory of historical knowledge and ideological approaches. It highlights how, during the Soviet era, the science of history was divided into two major directions—Soviet and Western historiography—focusing on their conflicting methodologies and scientific perspectives. The article reveals how Soviet historiography was conducted under ideological pressure, often distorting historical truth. The religious and idealistic foundations of the philosophy of history in Western historiography, particularly through Augustine's theory of linear history, are examined. Furthermore, the current stage of Uzbek historiography is evaluated from a comparative perspective with the historical thought of neighboring countries, emphasizing its pursuit of accuracy and objectivity. The article substantiates the necessity for history as a science to be free from ideology and underlines the decisive role of impartiality in historical knowledge.

Keywords: Historiography, Soviet science, Western science, ideology, historical knowledge, Augustine, philosophy of history, methodology, impartiality, ideological pressure, Uzbek historiography.

Introduction

History holds a significant place in the development of society as an inseparable part of human thought, worldview, and self-awareness. Every era and every political system has interpreted historical truth according to its own socio-political interests. In particular, during the former Soviet Union, the ideological pressure imposed on the science of history severely limited the objectivity of historical understanding. In that period, history was not merely a field of academic research but was transformed into a means of promoting Marxist-Leninist ideology. The science of history was divided into two main directions—



Soviet and Western—neither of which shared common ground in terms of methodological approaches, scientific viewpoints, or interpretations of socio-political realities. Soviet historiography denied the objective approaches of Western scholars, accusing them of falsifying science. In reality, however, the distortion of history was a distinctive feature of the Soviet ideological policy itself, where scholarly objectivity was sacrificed in favor of ideological interests. Today, the necessity for a renewed and objective approach to historical knowledge has become increasingly relevant. This is because history is not only a study of the past—it also plays a crucial role in shaping current social relations, fostering intercultural understanding, and ensuring peace and tolerance among nations. Conversely, an incorrect, ideologically-driven interpretation of history can negatively affect human consciousness and lead to dangerous socio-political consequences. This article analyzes the essence of the theory of historical knowledge, the issues of studying history under ideological pressure, the methodological differences between Western and Soviet historiography, and the theory of history proposed by Augustine, which holds a significant place in Western historical philosophy. Additionally, the current state of historiography in Uzbekistan is compared with the historical perspectives of neighboring countries.

During the Soviet regime, the science of history was divided into two main groups:

1. Soviet science
2. Western science

There was no consensus between the two in terms of methodology, scientific perspective, or interpretation of the socio-political context. Soviet social and humanitarian sciences were based on Marxist ideas and did not recognize the objective views of Western scholars, instead accusing them of falsifying scientific truth. However, in practice, it was the Soviet historians themselves who distorted history under the ideological pressure of the Communist Party.

The theory of socio-historical knowledge is directly linked to how the subject of knowledge relates to social life and the history of society. In this context, the historian (as the subject) is an individual equipped with certain academic preparation aimed at understanding the history of society. If this subject is



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socially shaped and interested in understanding the object of study, then his or her interest inevitably stems from certain ideological (doctrinal) demands. If this interest is grounded in the pursuit of pure scientific knowledge, then there is reason to believe and hope for the impartiality of the research. However, if the researcher's objective is to serve class-based or even party-oriented ideology, then the impartiality of the research becomes secondary. This issue can also be observed in the natural sciences. For example, during the Soviet era, even the study of nature was ideologized in order to portray the Soviet system as superior. The competition with the United States in space exploration, the arms race, and scientific contests in the Arctic and Antarctic regions are clear examples of this phenomenon.

In such cases—whether in the natural or social sciences—the theory of knowledge, as a philosophy of science, continues to remain one of the most contentious social knots. However, an ideological approach to science, particularly the ideologization of history, stands as a major obstacle to objectivity. As in the natural sciences, history is undoubtedly subject to religious, political-ideological, and even moral demands. Indeed, weapons of mass destruction threaten not only the natural balance of the world but also the very existence of humanity. The use of biological weapons endangers not only ecological equilibrium but also leads to human catastrophe. These pose serious moral and socio-political threats.

Similarly, ideological pressure on historical scholarship results in the distortion of actual history, which in turn can poison public consciousness and lead to flawed social conclusions. Eventually, this may trigger not only internal discord within a society but also inter-societal and inter-state conflicts.

Therefore, it is of paramount importance to place objective demands on the process of historical inquiry. In this regard, when comparing the work of Uzbek historians with that of neighboring nations in the region, a stark contrast becomes evident. In Uzbekistan, the current methodological foundations of historiography aim at constructing an objective and truthful narrative of history. In contrast, in the historiography of certain neighboring countries, one can observe ideologized narratives driven by political claims. These narratives often seek to elevate the titular nation by asserting its superiority, antiquity, or exclusive status as the



rightful heir of the entire region, while simultaneously fostering disdain for other ethnic groups. Such tendencies serve not scholarship but rather nationalism and ethnocentric chauvinism. In the early medieval Western historiography, Augustine was among the first to propose the concept of linear historical development. This notion was rooted in ideas derived from the Bible, presenting history as a process directed and governed by God, ultimately progressing toward a predetermined end. However, Augustine also advanced progressive ideas such as the inevitability of development, the irreversibility of the past, and the superiority of each new stage of civilization over the previous one. His assertion that the fall of Rome was a “divine punishment” for the increasing sins of the Romans stemmed from the religious worldview of his time, particularly in connection with the persecution of Christians by the Roman Empire.

Augustine’s theory of history introduced five fundamental ideas that continue to influence historical thought to this day:

1. **The universality of history** – All historical processes are of universal significance but are predetermined and require divine guidance.
2. **Inadequacy of conventional terminology** – Terms like year, century, event, or civilization are insufficient for interpreting history, as it is a series of divinely preordained events, each positioned at a specific point in a sacred timeline.
3. **Irreversibility** – History does not repeat itself but follows a single, unidirectional line to its conclusion.
4. **Dynamic nature** – Linear history is dynamic because it is moving toward a predetermined final goal and progresses internally until that point is reached.
5. **Subjective and logical foundations** – History contains both subjective and logical elements, each requiring independent scholarly investigation.

It is evident that Augustine’s approach to history oscillated between idealism, objectivism, and subjectivism. Nevertheless, the rational dimensions of his theories had a profound impact on the development of historical thought.

Among modern contributions to historical philosophy, the Italian historian Giambattista Vico holds a significant place. Vico helped elevate history to the status of a science. According to his spiral theory, every civilization passes through a similar cycle, albeit in a spiraling trajectory, with each stage



representing progress and advancement to a higher qualitative level than the one before.

In general, Western classical historiography is characterized by a variety of often contradictory approaches and methodologies, culminating in the emergence of the Marxist formational approach in the mid-19th century. A major shortcoming of the formational perspective is that it conceptualizes each formation as a separate, isolated stage, while in reality, development is continuous. Each stage contains the seeds of the dynamics that drive the next phase of progress.

Today, Uzbek historiography is evolving toward an objective study of the past by prioritizing the civilizational essence of development. This approach marks a significant departure from earlier ideologically constrained frameworks, seeking instead a more balanced and comprehensive understanding of historical processes.

Based on the above, it is appropriate to draw attention to the following point:

There are three main approaches to historical research:

1. The **first approach** interprets societal development as a material-natural historical process that unfolds in accordance with objective laws, independent of human will or consciousness.
2. The **second approach** regards historical development as a result of human activity.

In the first view, human actions seem to be absorbed within natural processes, whereas in the second, the historical process is analyzed by examining both the object and the subject – i.e., human agency and historical creativity.

When combining the essence and outcomes of both these approaches, one arrives at a materialistic perspective on history.

3. The **third and most significant approach** evaluates humans as products of history – outcomes matured within historical processes. This implies that individuals are subordinate to society, and history is understood as the progression of humanity from its origins to the present day. Hence, the concepts of “man and history” and “history and man” form the third dimension of historical processes. This understanding allows for a deeper comprehension of history and the realization of its humanistic purposes, turning history into a source of insight and a safeguard against repeating past mistakes.



At the center of Christian thought lies the great drama between sin and redemption. In Islamic thought, life is also seen as governed by the dual forces of sin and virtue, with corresponding punishment or reward. Life, experienced in the space between sin and redemption, is situated within the framework of time, and only those events defined in temporal terms are considered part of history. In order to comprehend history in a holistic and national sense, it is essential to restore the imagery of a nation's past at the level of collective memory. In essence, this is what constitutes **historical memory**.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the formation and development of historical epistemology is significantly shaped by ideological approaches, religious-philosophical views, and methodological frameworks. The theories proposed by thinkers such as Augustine and Vico in Western historiography had a profound influence on the development of historical thought. Their idealistic, subjective, and at times rational views on history laid the foundation for modern historical concepts.

It is now evident that Soviet historiography, conducted under ideological pressure, distorted historical reality and undermined the objectivity of historical knowledge. In contrast, contemporary Uzbek historiography has entered a new phase in terms of content, grounded in principles of truth and objectivity, and seeks to interpret history as a civilizational process.

Today, there are three primary approaches to historical research, each reflecting a different perspective on historical processes. When these approaches are integrated, they allow for a more comprehensive understanding of historical truth. In particular, the notions of "man and history" and "history and man" promote a humanistic approach in historical thought. Deep understanding of history and its preservation as a form of national memory have become essential tools in shaping the collective consciousness of society.

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