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Views on the Relationship between Nature and Society in World History

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Abstract: The development of science and technology on our planet has led mankind to look at nature differently. Human activity, which does not take into account the possibilities of nature and the laws of its development, is reflected in one of the so-called "Roads of the XXI century" research by the Club of Rome. Ozone layer depletion and so on.

Keywords: Nature, Society, Attitude, History, World History.

1. Introduction

It should be noted that it is technology and technology that have become the main factors influencing the definition of promising concepts and theories of social development. Biotechnology has played a special role in this process, turning nature into a tool under human control. If in the eighteenth century nature was considered a "catalog of organic forms created by a rational creator," in the nineteenth century it was interpreted as a battlefield for the survival of living beings. As a result, large-scale negative ecological changes began to occur in nature, and by the beginning of the twentieth century, 20 percent of the earth’s ecosystems had been destroyed. By the second half of the twentieth century, the share of partially and completely degraded ecosystems exceeded 63 percent [21].

2. The Main Results and Findings

The concept of nature conservation has taken on different meanings in different eras. International protection of the environment appeared in the early nineteenth century. Initially, this issue was manifested in the form of equal use of natural resources between the two countries. Such environmental relations are part of general agreements between the two countries. The first conservation agreements were devoted to regulating the use of wildlife and its protection. The first such treaty was signed in Paris in 1902, which provided for the protection of birds that benefited the agriculture of Western European countries, and the slaughter of birds that were considered harmful. The treaty was revised in 1950 to protect birds that were previously considered harmful.

An international conference held in Bern, Switzerland, on November 17-19, 1913, raised environmental issues to the level of a category of special issues of international law. From this period, the concept of environmental protection began to spread, and nature protection began to be understood as passive protection, that is, the conservation of nature, separating certain places, plant, animal species, etc. from economic use.

As the increasing use of natural resources in production and the threat of their depletion became apparent, the concept of nature protection and the task of nature conservation expanded, and by the middle of the twentieth century, nature protection became one of the important tasks of human society.

Well-known ecologist-jurist VVPetrov notes that they have the following theories on the nature and content of ecological worldviews to date [13]: naturalistic; consumption; alarmism; causes of environmental crisis; action strategy; growth and organic development; global governance; theory of environmental revolutions; protection and development; socialist theory and others. In particular, the concept of consumption is based on the promotion of the idea that the laws of society are based on the laws of nature or that people rule over nature. Proponents of this idea have brought society’s attitude toward nature into the form of economic attitudes. The essence of this concept is that nature is a "warehouse", which is reflected in the need to attract resources for the formation of wealth and the development of material production [9].

The concept of alarmism - (from the English "alarmism" - panic) reflects the views that show the inevitability of an ecological crisis due to population growth, unsustainable use of resources, degradation of biodiversity and environmental pollution. Proponents of this concept today are scientists, workers, various professionals working in the field of household services and sports, who are not united in a particular party and do not have a clear program, but are trying to prevent an environmental crisis.

The concept of the causes of the ecological crisis - the causes of the ecological crisis are considered to be scientific and technological progress and rapid population growth. Its proponents are pushing for the idea of managing the
demographic situation and planning the population based on natural resources in order to overcome the ecological crisis.

The concept of non-interference in nature is the opposite approach to the concept of consumption in relation to nature, which is manifested in more purely theoretical aspects. This is because in the process of social development, it is impossible for man not to interfere with nature, not to have a negative or positive effect on it. Proponents of this concept argue that all processes in nature are carried out on the basis of objective laws, and any intervention in order to correct any of its "defects" has serious consequences for both man and nature [9].

Representatives of the concept of growth margins and organic development recommend setting scientific and technical and human growth limits according to the capabilities of the planet’s resources, or limiting such science-based growth to a specific region, territory, or administrative boundary. This concept was formed in response to the acute state of natural imbalance in the 1960s and 1970s.

The concept of the doctrine of the noosphere was put forward by academician VI Vernadsky, who from the early years of the twentieth century pushed the question of the role of man in global development to science. According to VI Vernadsky, the human mind should become the main force and take responsibility for the subsequent fate of the development of nature. Proponents of this concept argue that human mental energy should be spent on a fair approach to the environment, the planet, and the universe in general [3].

By the 21st century, a new UN concept of sustainable development and environmental protection has emerged [12]. The concept of sustainable development recognizes that environmental problems can only be solved in an integrated manner at the local, national, regional and global levels by finding solutions to socio-economic problems.

It should be noted that by the twentieth century, under the influence of genetics, the environment was considered as a programmed system, and it was believed that they could be reprogrammed on the basis of scientific advances. However, the effects of the environmental crisis of the 1960s forced the scientific community to reconsider the “path” of scientific and technological progress.

It is known that the concept of ecological crisis reflects the consequences of the crisis of humanity, as well as the deterioration of the relationship "Nature-man-society" as a result of increasing human impact on the environment. In particular, Albert Einstein said: "The further development of mankind depends not on technical success, but on its moral values."

On June 5, 1972, the first World Conference on the Environment of the United Nations (UN) was held in Stockholm. 5 important decisions and documents were adopted at the conference. These are: the Stockholm Declaration; action plan, recommendation on the establishment of UNEP; Declaration of June 5 as "World Environment Day" and the establishment of the World Environment Fund.

In 1983, at the initiative of the UN Secretary-General, the International Commission on Environment and Development was established. The Prime Minister of Norway G.Ch. This commission, headed by Brundtland, published a report in 1987 entitled “Our Common Future”. The document states that major environmental problems cannot be solved in isolation from economic, social and political problems. The Commission advocated the need to move to a period of environmentally sound economic and environmental development. For the first time, the report highlighted the need for society to move towards sustainable development.

Sustainable development is a development that takes place without compromising the vital needs of the current generation to meet the needs of future generations [20]. The simplest definition of sustainable development is that it will continue in the near future. In general, the balanced and co-development of nature, society and the economy ensures sustainable development.

On June 3-14, 1992, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. It adopted the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development.

The UN Millennium Summit was held in New York on September 6-8, 2000, and the Millennium Declaration was adopted. At the Millennium Summit, leaders from 189 countries pledged to make the world a better place for humanity as they discussed the fight against poverty, improving basic services, improving public health and protecting the environment. As a result of the summit, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which serve as a basis for measuring development processes, were unanimously approved.
It should be noted that in the context of the global environmental crisis, the study of the effects of human economic activities on the environment has become one of the main tasks of history. Research in this area, along with the study of environmental crises in historical periods, has provided an opportunity to gain historical knowledge about the basic foundations and evolution of the conflict between humanity and nature. At the beginning of the 21st century, experts began to call this period the centenary of the environment.

It is this process, although the common goal of uniting everyone on the path of "preserving humanity on the land of Kurraj", that from the second half of the twentieth century, historical knowledge began to play an important role in natural, technical, social and humanitarian research on global environmental issues. This is primarily due to the fact that the basis of the relationship (in particular, the contradictions) in the system "Nature-Society" and its evolution has become the object of historical research.

It is known that after the first meeting of world historians in Paris in 1900, the World Congress of Historians was held every 5 years on global problems of historiography. At the XX World Congress of Historians in Sydney in 2005, the topic "The interaction of man and nature in history" was included in the top 3 issues to be discussed by representatives of the world historian community [7].

The application of the knowledge of the natural sciences from the point of view of history allows historians to redefine to a certain extent the traversed period of human development. Adding natural knowledge to historical knowledge helps to understand the various factors that serve the impact of the natural world on human history. It is these factors, in turn, that contribute to the impact on nature through the evolution of human views in relation to political, economic, and cultural processes. Thus, the natural sciences, in particular ecology, play a supporting role in the structure of the history of the environmental problem. At the same time, the role of biologists in understanding the crisis in man’s relationship with nature cannot be denied. In particular, it was not until the early 1960s that the public's attention to conservation issues in the United States came under pressure from studies such as biologist R. Carson's Silent Spring [15].

The involvement of knowledge of the natural sciences in historical research has enabled historians to observe the past from a different perspective. It can be concluded that the impact of ecology on history is inevitable, but the science of history is no less influential on natural science. This is because only the humanities can explain that the main source of environmental problems is related to the level of human culture. Since environmental problems are related to the socio-political, economic, and cultural life of mankind, the natural sciences cannot independently understand the root of the problem.

In the context of the history of environmental problems, the views of F. Spear are also important, he proposes a new chronology of human history through the concept of "ecological regime". According to F. Spear, in the history of modern civilization there have been 3 major changes in the ecological regime [16]:

1. Domestication of fire;
2. Transition to farming mode;
3. Transition to industrial mode.

Modern researchers of the history of ecology, directly related to the analysis of the history of human economic activity, divide the history of evolutionary development of the system "Nature-Society" into the following socio-ecological stages [14]:

1. The stage of hunting and gathering culture. This stage covers the period from the earliest times to 10-8 thousand years BC. It is known that in the early stages of human society, people initially lived a long time by gathering and hunting. This means that humanity is completely dependent on natural conditions and the availability of food. It is estimated that an average group of 20 people dumped 10 tons of waste per year during this period. Forty thousand years ago, the population of our planet exceeded 10 million people. In the following period, as mankind developed the system of assimilation, there was an improvement in labor and hunting tools, the formation of agriculture and animal husbandry. This situation shows that while the problem of food supply is being addressed in a sense, the impact of humanity on the environment is local [8].
2. The stage of agrarian culture. Ten thousand years ago, when the population of the planet exceeded 50 million people, a sedentary lifestyle laid the foundation for the development of urban culture. During this period, the impact of humanity on the environment gradually increased. During the agrarian phase, which lasted until the end of the 18th century, the anthropogenic impact on nature increased significantly compared to the early
periods. In particular, these processes can be reflected in deforestation, salinization, desertification, extinction of plant and animal species, and other factors.

Well-known British economist T.R. Malthus wrote in his book, The Experience of Population Law, that the world's population had risen from 230 million at the beginning of the century to 300 million at the beginning of the 1st millennium. In the Middle Ages, the world's population exceeded 0.5 billion. Although the rural population was large during this period, the cities played a leading role in influencing nature.

3. Industrial society stage. This phase lasted from the end of the 18th century to the middle of the 19th century. During this period, the scale of anthropogenic metabolism increased as humanity used a variety of natural resources. This has led to another leap of anthropogenic impact on nature. Until the nineteenth century, the prevailing view was that "nature is given to humanity for unlimited use, and the strengthening of domination over nature will lead to an increase in human wealth."

In his research on the impact of man on nature, the British historian A.J. Toynbee quoted the President of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, A. Ewing, as saying that the benefits of industry make human life more interesting, fuller, richer and more comfortable. He noted that at a time when humanity had dominated nature through industry, it had not yet mastered the art of morality, and that it had dominated nature without mastering the art of self-government due to its spiritual backwardness. [19]

4. Postindustrial stage. At this stage, beginning in the second half of the 19th century, the use of natural resources to meet the needs of the world's growing population increased, some plant and animal species became extinct, and environmental pollution increased. According to the data, in 1800 there were 954 million people on the planet, and by 1900 their number had risen to 1633 million. During this period, a number of works reflecting the historical analysis of the environmental consequences of economic development were published. These include Louis Momferd's Technology and Civilization, Urban Culture, GN Smith's The Virgin Land, and the 1956 International Symposium on the Role of Man in Land Change. They reflect a wide range of human past and present technological influences on nature.

It should be noted that the technological impact of man on nature has attracted the attention of experts. Writing about technology, Arthur McEvoy, a Western expert on the subject, based on the scientific interests of historians, argues that it is a means of interacting with nature, separating man from other creatures in nature [11].

5. According to experts, from the second half of the twentieth century began the transition to the stage of development of society Noosphere (noos - mind, sphere - shell). During this period, there was a "demographic explosion" on our planet. The relationship between society and nature has intensified and global environmental problems have arisen.

3. Conclusion

In short, as the increasing use of natural resources in production and the threat of their depletion became apparent, the concept of nature conservation and the task of nature conservation expanded, and by the middle of the twentieth century nature conservation had become one of the important tasks of human society. The emergence of signs of a global environmental crisis since the 1960s has led to the issue of global environmental security being put on the agenda while attracting the attention of all mankind. By the 21st century, the planet has moved from global environmental security to the concept of sustainable development.

In the second half of the twentieth century, the growing scientific interest in the historical analysis of the interaction of society and nature was reflected in a number of works on the history of the environment. Today, in a professional approach to the history of the environment, it has become necessary for historians to cooperate with representatives of other disciplines.

References

UN Millennium Declaration of 08.09.2000. (www.undp.org.)


