

Discussion About Artistic Heritage and Writing Skills (Based on the Materials of the Press of Karakalpakstan of the 1930s)

Nurjanov SU¹

Abstract: In the 1920s, a group of poets and writers of Karakalpakstan was formed, who united around a single newspaper. In the 1930s, the ideological framework for the development of culture and art, imposed by the Soviet government, caused discussions about the directions of development of Karakalpak literature.

Keywords: newspaper, Writers' Union, propaganda, ideology, repression.

At the beginning of 1942, the government decided for the first time to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the classic of Karakalpak literature Berdakh. A special commission was formed in the Union of Writers of Karakalpakstan to prepare this event, which was scheduled to be held in June 1942. It was proposed to widely promote Berdakh's poetic heritage in newspapers and among the local population.

However, this event did not mean the characteristic path of formation and development of Karakalpak literature in the pre-war years. During this period, there was an acute discussion about the state and ways of developing the literature of Karakalpakstan, which is most clearly highlighted on the pages of the republican newspapers "Kyzyl Karakalpakstan" and "Sovietskaiya Karakalpakskaya" of those years.

Back in the second half of the 1920s, prose and poetic works by Karakalpak authors began to be published on the pages of the handwritten magazine "Kyzyl Mugallim", wall and periodicals [1]. By that time, the periodical press of Karakalpakstan was just getting on its feet: in 1925-1926, despite the full support and state subsidies, the newspaper was not systematically published, it did not have its own face. The directives of the Soviet party bodies indicated that it was difficult to establish "the type of newspaper, hence the uncertainty and randomness in the content, selection of materials, inaccessibility of language, poor coverage of the main tasks and practical activities of the parties and the Soviet government in the KAO, etc." [2]. The material and technical base of the printing house also remained weak, which did not allow the newspaper to become a full-fledged periodical: in 1924-1927, "Yerkin Karakalpak" was published only 67 times, since the allocated funds for the organization of the newspaper and the re-equipment of the printing house were used for other purposes [3].

Therefore, wall newspapers played a big role in the formation of a new generation of poets and writers of Karakalpakstan in the 1920s. Wall newspapers since 1925 began to be organized at regional institutions and educational institutions, the number of which reached 10, of which 3 were in Russian. In total, 13 wall newspapers were published on the territory of Karakalpakstan by 1927. They were mostly published in urban centers. Several issues of the newspaper "The Atheist" – the organ of the Turtkul branch of the Society of Friends of the Union of Atheists, published from the beginning of 1925 and from April to August, 6 issues were published. The newspaper was printed on a glass microscope, 4 pages (sometimes 6 pages) in size, 22x36 cm. The newspaper was partly distributed by subscription, and was also displayed in the window. The periodicity of the publication is once a month, the language is Russian, signed for printing by the editorial board. The prevalence of other wall newspapers was also limited, since they were mainly published at city institutions and educational institutions and had a limited circle of readers. It was in them that the works of young Karakalpak

¹ Karakalpak Scientific Research Institute of Humanities of the Karakalpak Branch of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Nukus



poets and writers were printed. Unfortunately, due to the absence of the entire complex of such publications, their study is not possible.

Subsequently, with the strengthening of the material and technical base of the newspaper "Yerkin Karakalpak", renamed "Miyetkesh Karakalpak" in the early 1930s, then "Kyzyl Karakalpakstan", the work of young poets and writers became the property of the readership. People's Writer of Uzbekistan Zh. Aimurzaev remembered that thanks to the newspaper, the Union of Writers of Karakalpakstan was formed, since back in the late 1920s - early 1930s, young writers and poets gathered around the newspaper. The fact is that back in 1925, after a letter from IV Stalin about the newspaper "Ak Zhol" [4], the Agitation and Propaganda Department of the Kazakh Regional Committee of the RCP(b) adopted a "Temporary regulation on the press", where the functions of the Press Department were defined. In particular, it was pointed out that press workers should exercise leadership over the activities of associations and organizations engaged in literary and other creative works [5].

Zh. Aimurzaev recalls that a literary circle was organized at the newspaper, which, at the suggestion of Kasym Avezov, was headed by Seifulgabit Majitov and Seitmurat Paluanov, and in the thirties corresponding poets Myrzagali Daribayev, Kashkyn Shalymbetov, Mirzek Kalimbetov, Nagmet Kuzenbayev, Almukhambet Bekmukhambetov were invited to work in the newspaper [6]. This role of the press is also noted by Prof. S. Akhmetov in his monograph [7].

On April 23, 1932, the Central Committee of the CPSU (b) adopted a resolution on the restructuring of literary and artistic organizations, which was crucial for the processes in the cultural front in the conditions of Karakalpakstan. With the transformation of the Karakalpak Autonomous Okrug into the Karakalpak ASSR and its entry into the RSFSR, a new stage of formation of young personnel in the field of literature, science and education system began. According to the resolution of the Karakalpak Regional Committee of the CPSU (b) of June 19, 1932, the Organizing Committee of the Writers' Union was formed, headed by the honorary Chairman K. Avezov.

The discussion about the state of literature and the ways of its development in Karakalpakstan began a little earlier – in the late 1920s - early 1930s. On the pages of the periodical press, it took place for the first time in connection with the publication of materials about S. Majitov [8]. The name of S. Majitov is widely known in Karakalpak literature and historiography. Poet, novelist, playwright, educator, teacher – this is an incomplete list of what he is known for in our history. In the 1920s, his name was personified with the ideas of enlightenment and literacy, associated with the publication of a newspaper, enlightenment and drama. The activity of S. Majitov is largely consonant with the ideas and thoughts that were put forward and implemented by the Jadids of the early twentieth century. He worked for a long time in the editorial office of the newspaper "Yerkin Karakalpak", was one of the first authors of textbooks in the Karakalpak language and the Latinized Karakalpak alphabet, was engaged in creative work. However, he was not allowed to finish his work: he was arrested in 1930 as a counter-revolutionary-nationalist writer, although S. Majitov had an indisputable authority both among writers and the entire enlightened public. After 8 months, he was acquitted, but from that moment a general campaign of the creative intelligentsia against him and his work, called "majitovschina", began.

It became most widespread at the end of 1934 and 1935. This was a difficult period in the life of S. Madzhitov: he was accused of introducing the Bai-nationalist ideology into Karakalpak literature, of planting the ideas of pan-Turkism, and much more. etc. On the eve of the First Congress of Writers of Karakalpakia, a resolution was adopted by the Bureau of the Karakalpak Regional Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks on May 4, 1934 "On the work of the Union of Writers of the KKASSR", which was published in print in May 1935 [9]. It stated that "during the years of Soviet power until recent years, there were writers who mainly (S. Madzhitov) reflected feudal, bourgeois-nationalist ideology in their work." In it, in particular, S. Madzhitov was accused of reflecting feudal, bourgeois-nationalist ideology in his work. The resolution indicated that full support should be provided to the new generation of poets and writers, such as I. Fazylov, A. Begimov and others, while it was noted that "due to their low political level, the creative growth of young



proletarian writers of Karakalpakia and Karakalpak literature in general is still far away lags behind the grandiose tasks of socialist construction.”

S. Madzhitov was supported only by K. Avezov, who spoke positively about his work, despite the fact that during the “purge” of 1934 he was forced to justify himself that “with his support Madzhitova gave him the opportunity to distribute nationalist literature.” Then his statement to the chairman of the republican commission for the purge of the Karakalpak party organization Zaitsev and the resolution of this commission “On the purge of comrade. Avezov - former chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the KKASSR” were published in the pages of the republican press. “About Madzhitov's nationalist deviations,” he wrote in his statement, “although my comrades told me about this for a long time, until now I have not given him a decisive rebuff and have not exposed him in the press.” In the resolution of the republican purge commission signed by Zaitsev and Mayevsky, they especially highlighted the issue of their support for the writer Madzhitov, “who pursued a clearly bourgeois-nationalist ideology in his works.” Only by admitting these and his other “mistakes” was K. Avezov, let's say, forgiven and the commission made a decision “to consider him verified.”

The majority of poets and writers spoke out against “Majitism”. I. Sagitov, in an article on the pages of the newspaper “Kyzyl Karakalpakstan” dated February 2, 1936, wrote that literary criticism lags far behind the development of Karakalpak literature itself. He spoke rather sharply negatively about the work of S. Madzhitov, pointing out that “our literature today has grown in the fight against the Bai-nationalist ideology - Majitism” and calls for continuing an uncompromising fight against it, since “the influence of Majitism still remains among our young writers”

In 1937, a devastating article was published in “Soviet Karakalpakstan” about the activities of the Union of Writers, Writers and Poets of Karakalpakstan. The author of the article, a certain A. Mukh-n, categorically states that “The Union (of Writers) does not actually exist.” The activities of the Writers' Union were subject to such an assessment due to confusion and lack of support for poets and writers. Following this publication, I. Sagitov's article “To eliminate the backlog of Karakalpak literature” was published in “Soviet Karakalpakia”. Sharply criticizing the current situation in the writing community, the author notes that “many of them stopped writing (Fazylov, Zahiri, Seitmamutov). Over the past two years, our writers have not produced a single work of any significant artistic value” [10].

This was a kind of signal of the beginning of repression in the writing workshop. On July 27, 1937, the newspaper “Soviet Karakalpakstan” reprinted the editorial of “Pravda” under the title “Bolshevik press - Stalinist cadres loyal to the parties.” It indicates the presence of enemies of the people who “infiltrated the press into leading positions, as well as into the press departments of some party bodies,” who allegedly did their best to block the path of young journalistic cadres and ignored the labor movement. The arrest of the head of the agitation, propaganda and press department of the Karakalpak regional committee A. Kulenov in September 1937 was one of a chain of similar events. At this time, almost all the leading nomenklatura workers of the Soviet-party apparatus of Karakalpakstan were arrested.

The day before the arrest of A. Kulenov, on September 15, “Soviet Karakalpakia” came out with a large revealing article “Let's defeat the enemies of the people” on the front page. It reported that “the enemies of the people have done a lot of mischief on the intellectual front.” They infiltrated organizations such as KKGIZ. This vile company of Trotskyist-Bukharin degenerates and counter-revolutionary nationalists has penetrated all the editorial offices of republican newspapers.” The article “exposed” the subversive activities of agitation and propaganda workers, journalists, and printing workers.

After the arrest of A. Kulenov, widespread persecution of journalists began, followed by arrests. Staff members and leading journalists were arrested, those who stood at the origins of the newspaper business in Karakalpakstan - K. Avezov, S. Madzhitov, A. Aiteshev, A. Kudabaev, as well as the first journalists Kh. Abdikhalykov, Zh. Zakhiriy (Sarsenbaev), Zh. Rakhmatullaev and others. A number of



journalists of “Soviet Karakalpakia” were also arrested - SN Efremov, IN Zuborov, RL Bogomolny, as well as photographer LI Gaikorovich, who was disappointed in 1938, however rehabilitated in 1940.

Soon, in the issue of the newspaper “Soviet Karakalpakstan” dated September 20, 1937, an article was published “The sabotage work of the enemies of the people on the moral front,” in which the enemies of the people in the publishing and press system were “exposed.” The Writers' Union was particularly criticized. “It is characteristic,” the material stated, “that until the last days, the board of the writers' union included the seasoned nationalist Kulenov, and the members of the union are still notorious nationalists Irmanov Karabai and Madzhitov. And such writers as Fazylov, Davkarayev and Dzhapakov were in the closest relations with the counter-revolutionary nationalists – Allabergenov, Ishimbetov and Tureev.” Also, J. Zahiri, I. Fazylov, T. Seitmamutov and K. Auezov were accused of “patronizing bourgeois nationalists – Madzhitov and Irmanov.”

These materials are of decisive importance in the history of the literary life of Karakalpakstan at that time, however, in a purely scientific and theoretical sense, discussions about literature and poetry continued on the pages of the press, for example, N. Daukaraev (“Karakalpak poetry khakynda”), the same I. Sagitov (““Debiyattyň theory”, Artyka Shamuratova (“Korkem Adebijaty kornekli kritikaga zaryur”). Photographs of poets and bakhshy were also published (for example, M. Daribaeva, D. Nazbergenova, Zhapak bakhshy). By the way, the debate about the creative heritage of S. Madzhitov continued after the death of the figure: in 1939, on the pages of the magazine “Karakalpakstan Adebijaty xəm Arts” M. Daribaev accused “enemies of the people ” of all the sins and problems of drama and theater in Karakalpakstan. He discussed that “enemies of the people” had penetrated all spheres of government, “actively promoting their incorrect plays. Therefore, Madzhitov's play “Bagdagul” did not leave the stage until he was completely exposed” [11].

In 1941, when the “wave of repression” subsided somewhat, including in the creative life of the republic, “Kyzyl Karakalpakstan” published an article by the instructor of the propaganda and agitation department of the regional party committee K. Amandykov [12]. The publication of this material was associated with the adoption of a resolution of the Karakalpak regional committee of the Communist Party (b) of Uzbekistan dated January 21, 1941 on the immediate tasks of writers in the new conditions. The author writes about the state of affairs in the Writers' Union of Karakalpakstan (which consisted of about 30 people), analyzes the creative process, and points out some mistakes in the activities of this organization. In particular, the author points out the lack of connection with the life of the people, problems in training, and the education of a new galaxy of young writers and poets.

This was discussed at the general meeting of writers living in Turtkul and press workers of Karakalpakstan in March 1941, a message about which was written by “Kyzyl Karakalpakstan”. The author of the message is Dali N. (Nazbergenov), who spoke about the meeting at the Union of Writers of Karakalpakstan and criticizes the main speaker M. Daribaev, pointing out that many of the issues covered in his report have long been set on edge and the time has come to resolve them. “It is necessary to point out,” writes the author of the article, “that the reason for our party's demand to restructure the work of the Writers' Union is as follows: the board of the Writers' Union was unable to organize work with young authors, divorced from the work of folk poets, did not pay attention to increasing the political self-awareness of writers, members The board of the Writers' Union was composed of people who have nothing to do with literature, the absence of literary criticism , the lack of plans for the work of the board itself.” The author of the material also criticizes the editors of the magazine “Karakalpakstan ədebijaty xəm arts” for publishing works with continuations, which take up a lot of space and do not allow young authors to be published.

Those who spoke at the meeting criticized the “older generation” - Nazhim Daukaraev, Nauryz Zhapakov, Tazhiakhmet Seitmamutov and others, indicated that they “write little, have not given anything worthwhile lately.” The author is surprised by their position, that they did not respond to criticism and did not express their attitude to the issues discussed. In my opinion, the “passivity” of the “older generation” of writers and poets of Karakalpakstan at that time (although at that time N. Daukaraev was 36 years old, N. Zhapakov was 27) is associated with an atmosphere of fear inspired by the policy of persecution and physical destruction. For example, N. Daukaraev, as “ideologically



unreliable,” was constantly under the supervision of the NKVD, and N. Zhapakov was under investigation for almost 11 months (from July 4, 1938 to May 31, 1939) [13].

As we see, in the context of studying the literary life of Karakalpakstan, an analysis of the domestic periodical press of the 1930s shows that from a historical point of view, newspapers are a much more “living” source of information than state and party documents. Newspaper articles directly reflect the time, the historical background of the era, and the daily life of writers. At the same time, despite the general direction of the periodical press under the Soviet system, the periodicals of Karakalpakstan, reflecting national processes, at the same time make it possible to shed light on some aspects of the “literary workshop”. The totality of already published, as well as newly discovered archival and epistolary materials, allows us to expand the overall picture of the situation in the development of Karakalpak literature as a whole, tests to the complex path of socialist realism in Karakalpak literature, the formation of literary criticism, and the influence of government policies on Karakalpak literature.

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