

Media Coverage of Problems and Changes in Uzbek Literature during the “Perestroika” Period

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Annotation:

This article describes the process of changes in the Uzbek literature in the second half of the 80s of the 20th century and a description of the real realities in the Uzbek literature of the “Perestroika” period. During this period, journalism rose to a leading position in Uzbek literature. Problems in the field of literary criticism and their understanding by the local intelligentsia, as well as issues of coverage of these processes on the pages of the periodical press are analyzed.

Keywords: “Perestroika” of glasnost, literature, ideology, journalism, change, literary heritage, writer, slogan.

Introduction

In the mid-1980s, a new path for fundamentally reforming Soviet society, known as the policy of “Perestroika” (Restructuring), was announced. It is important to emphasize that during this period, a certain degree of openness and democratization paved the way for the media to extensively cover pressing socio-economic, ecological, cultural, and spiritual issues that required urgent solutions, as well as the factors that led to them. In particular, the cultural sphere in Uzbekistan also began to undergo changes during the Perestroika years. Specifically, Uzbek literature underwent a transformation, focusing on depicting real-life truths, shedding light on hidden aspects of life, and reflecting on past events from an ideological perspective, transitioning from being a passive observer of societal life to an active participant. Notably, during these years, journalism took a leading role in Uzbek literature.

Materials and Methods

A number of writers and public figures, through their journalistic works, infused Uzbek literature with a spirit of concern for the fate of the nation. One of the significant achievements of this literary

movement was the restoration of historical truths about the victims of repression. It is well known that the Soviet state consistently subjected national intellectuals, scholars, and cultural figures to severe repression, systematically purging them from societal life. Figures such as Cholpon, A. Kodiriy, U. Nosir, Fitrat, A. Avloniy, and M. Behbudiy were unjustly accused and artificially erased from the history of our literature. During Perestroika, the issue of studying literary heritage more broadly and objectively became a pressing matter for creative and intellectual circles. Articles addressing this issue were published in the press. It is worth noting that rehabilitating the literary legacy of writers who had been artificially removed from literary history was not an easy task.

Results and Discussions

Local "guardians" of the Soviet system strongly opposed the rehabilitation of these writers and the return of their works to the people. During this period, many local intellectuals criticized the one-sided approach to studying literary heritage, arguing that it led to a superficial and biased interpretation of classical literature, dividing our classical poets into progressive and reactionary, religious-mystical and democratic, palace poets and people's poets.¹ For example, O. Sharofiddinov emphasized the need for freedom in literature, the study of Yassavi's works, the reinterpretation of the Jadid movement, and the importance of studying the works of Cholpon and Fitrat.²

In 1987, a commission was established to study the literary heritage of Cholpon and Fitrat, marking a positive turn in this regard. In July of that year, the Institute of Language and Literature of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan, in collaboration with the Writers' Union of Uzbekistan and the newspaper "Uzbek Literature and Art," held a roundtable discussion on the topic "Perestroika and the Methodological Issues of Studying Cultural Heritage."³ The discussion focused on scientifically studying, objectively presenting, and disseminating the works of Yassavi, Husayniy, Amiriy, Abulgaziy, Cholpon, Fitrat, and others. From January 22 to 25, 1988, a meeting was held at the Institute of Language and Literature with the participation of literary scholars, philosophers, and historians from the republic to discuss issues related to the study of literary heritage and the Jadid movement⁴. The commission for studying the literary heritage of Cholpon and Fitrat concluded that their works should be published in three stages, and the task of preparing their works for publication was entrusted to the Institute of Language and Literature of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan.

Intellectuals' efforts to study the works of the Jadids and thereby reduce the "white spots" in history were positively received by intellectuals from other republics.

In particular, a major roundtable discussion on "Issues of Jadidism" was held at the Institute of Language and Literature in 1988, where prominent scholars from other republics participated and shared their views.

From the second half of the 1980s, as a result of the activities of intellectuals, a broad approach to the literary environment of the Middle Ages and the 1920s-1930s was adopted, and many previously suppressed works of poets and writers began to see the light of day. Mass media played an active role in this process. The process of enriching the people with past literary heritage and fostering national self-awareness gained momentum. It is important to note that the Soviet system's repression of intellectuals continued until the late 1980s. Until then, prominent scientists, writers, journalists, and party and state officials were under intense pressure and control. Writers were

¹ Воҳидов Э. Адолат туйғуси, инсон кадр-қиммати // Ўзбекистон адабиёти ва санъати. 1987 йил 24 апрел.

² Шарофитдинов О. Ҳақиқатга садоқат // Ўзбекистон адабиёти ва санъати. 1987 йил 15 май.

³ Замон ва маданий мерос // Ўзбекистон адабиёти ва санъати. 1987 йил 10 июл.

⁴ Турдиев Ш. Жади́дизм масалаларига бағишланган мунозара // Ўзбек тили ва адабиёти. 1988. -№ 2. - Б.74.

accused of portraying life in a negative light and distorting life's realities⁵. This was because literature was subject to strict thematic guidelines, such as the achievements after the revolution, the progressive significance of Tsarist Russia's conquest of Turkestan, the image of the "genius" Lenin, friendship among peoples, the fight against religion, the organizational role of women, and the inevitability of communism's victory. The party's control over intellectuals in philosophy, history, literature, and other social sciences remained in place until independence was achieved.

Any movement toward national self-awareness was artificially hindered, and efforts to suppress such movements continued even during the Perestroika years. For example, at the third plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan in October 1986, the falsification of literature, art, and history, the deification of national history and culture, and the lack of attention to class, scientific, and objective principles in evaluating historical figures were sharply criticized. It was emphasized that ideological interests were being ignored in assessing events. For instance, at the general meeting of the Academy of Sciences of the Uzbek SSR on November 10, 1986, the activities of scholars from various fields were criticized, and it was noted that the ideological processes in youth education were insufficient. Positive assessments of figures like Amir Timur and Babur Mirza were not revised, and the glorification of the past continued. Scholars were criticized for not taking measures to prevent this.⁶ For example, the work "Immortal Cliffs" by M. Mahmudov, published in the "Sharq Yulduzi" journal by the Writers' Union of Uzbekistan, was cited as a vivid example of distorting national and historical realities, glorifying the past.⁷

In general, during the Perestroika years, the works of many writers and poets focused on exposing the ills of colonial policies. For example, E. Vohidov's "Donishqishlok Latifalari" (Satirical Poems) and A. Oripov's "Panjkom" (The Five-Year Plan) drew readers' attention to the unpleasant realities of Soviet society and people's lives. Writers skillfully depicted the complex fates of ordinary people, revealing the realities of the Soviet era.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the democratization and openness of the Perestroika years led to the widespread discussion of spiritual and cultural issues in all aspects of republican life and the strengthening of national self-awareness. This process was driven by the efforts of local intellectuals, who re-evaluated and rehabilitated many victims of the Soviet system. Numerous intellectual and creative figures exposed the ills and negative consequences of colonial policies in their poetry and prose, reflecting on the years of Soviet rule.

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⁵ Ёкубов О. Қишлоқдаги фожиа // Ўзбекистон адабиёти ва санъати. 1987 йил 28 август.

⁶ Общее собрание Академии наук Узбекской ССР // Общественные науки в Узбекистане. 1986. – № 11. – С. 3-13.

⁷ Общее собрание Академии наук Узбекской ССР // Общественные науки в Узбекистане. 1986. – №11. – С.9.

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