



The Attitude Towards National art In the Early Years of the Soviet Government In Turkestan

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Abstract: The article covers the policy of the Soviet government in the early years based on archival sources. It mentions that the government used stage art to communicate its policies, decisions and orders to the people, and that it controlled the artistic idea of stage works displayed through its orders.

Key words: People's Commissariat of Education, troupe, theater, music, performing arts, repertoire

INTRODUCTION

The Bolsheviks, who came to power in October 1917, tried to take control of all sectors. The decisions made in the political and social spheres also affected the cultural sphere. During this period, the administrative-command policy intensified and the totalitarian system influenced both the performing arts and other areas of culture. The state used the performing arts for propaganda purposes to convey its policies, decisions and orders to the people. However, their development went only for their own ideas. No measures were taken for their social and economic status. This can be seen if we pay attention to the cultural events of the twenties of the twentieth century. Existing archival documents, sources and memoirs also confirm these opinions.

MAIN PART

Today, archival documents stored in the National Archive of Uzbekistan and the Research Institute of Art History contain valuable information such as government decisions and orders, various projects developed in the field of art, economic estimates, as well as monthly salaries. of stage workers, titles, and statements of stage artists.

After the October Revolution of 1917, the Soviet government merged them into the People's Commissariat of Education in order to make effective use of the country's cultural and educational forces. As a result, the activities of all cultural and educational organisations-institutions, their buildings, property and employees would be transferred to the People's Commissariat of Education. On 1 August 1919, a decree of the People's Commissariat of Education stated *that "any undertaking concerning the field of culture among the population would be supported by the People's Commissariat with equipment, finances and even personnel"*[1].

Also an appeal to the people was prepared by the cultural and educational department of the military commissariat of Turkestan in order to arouse public interest in work in the field of theatre. In it: *"It is as honourable to work in the theatre as to work on a machine tool", «Whoever has talent, interest and desire, let him come to the theatre to work»* [2]. Because the acting profession is considered by the local population as a profession that does not comply with Shariah norms or

as an unnecessary profession. At the same time, starting from 30 May 1919, by a special decision of the Turkestan military-revolutionary department, all workers of the artistic field were considered for military service under the motto "**for the performance of their duties**" [3]. Because they were intended to be used for propaganda purposes. As a result of the execution of this decision, Muslim troupe "*O'lka*" under the leadership of **Hamza**, "*Turon*" under the leadership of **Mannon Uygur** (soon called "Soviet Drama Troupe named after K. Marx" - S. Nazarov), "*Kokon theatre-music troupe*" under the leadership of **M. Mirokilov**, Andijan "**Uzbek theatre troupe**" formed with the direct assistance of Hamza was transferred to the political department of the Turkestan armed forces. Also included in the military record are the people's court, singers, dancers, even clowns and artists. They were attached to propaganda foreign brigades and performed their performing arts in special agitation trains to the fronts or in front of local Red Army units and local residents[4].

Military service included not only theatre groups or singers, but also musical ensembles serving the interests of the government operating in the country and attracting public attention.

There were 11 professional detachments operating on the Turkestan front. In June-September 1919 alone, 78 concerts, 31 plays and 94 cinema sessions were shown, attended by 177,800 people [5]. In these performances Hamza's songs such as "*Yasha Sho'ro!*", "*Yasha Davron*", "*Uyg'on*", "*Hoy, hoy otamiz*", "*Hoy ishchi*", "*Ayol sadosi*" ("*Women's voice*"), "*Kapital*", "*Boy ila xizmatchi*", "*Tuhmatchilar jazosi*", "*Turkiston tabibi*" were shown. New songs on military themes, such as "*Postda*", "*Sakchi*", "*Kizil Askar Batir*", were also performed at the concerts, mostly on motifs of national music.

Uzbek artists also performed a number of musical works of Russian, Azerbaijani, Tatar and other nations. Such a change of repertoire by local artists was an innovation in Uzbek stage art. The Uzbek musical ensemble performed Russian waltzes and songs.

In September 1919, the art department took a special place in the People's Commissariat of Education in Turkestan. This department was divided into 3 directions - musical (Muso), theatre (Teo) and fine arts (Izo). The aim and mission of the music department was to create a network of special and general music schools, to introduce music education among children of the local population, to introduce the local population to European art by organising concerts and choirs [6]. The Music Department directed its activities directly from the People's Commissariat of National Education and managed musical organisations.

The main goal of the theatre department was to develop the craft among the local population and penetrate into towns and villages. To carry out these works it was necessary to create a local theatre base and provide it with technical and financial support.

On November 15, 1920, at the meeting of the theatre department of the People's Commissariat of Education, the K. Marx troupe was given the name "**The State Theatre of Uzbek pattern**"[7]. Assigning the theatre the status of an exemplary state theatre also had its own peculiarities. "*The theatre - the State Theatre was obliged to help the Party and the government in the enlightenment of the Uzbek people, to assist in the propaganda of the Party's policy, to be an exemplary theatre, showing an example to all theatre groups of the republic*"[8].

It is worth noting that on December 31, 1920, the People's Commissariat of Education established the Turkestan Political-Educational Committee - *Turkpolitprosvet* - to unite all political and propaganda-educational activities in the country, to provide cultural and educational workers working in various organisations in the sphere of economic and political development of the country [9]. All temporary and permanent political and educational institutions in the country are under the control of the committee.

On 7 May 1921, at a meeting of the Small Congress of People's Commissars, it was deemed necessary for propaganda and "enlightenment" among the local population in the country, and in view of the economic difficulties in the country, entertainment venues were transferred to a self-supporting system as a temporary measure [10]. But due to the difficult economic situation in the country, the stage art during this period experienced great difficulties.

The Uzbek state theatre Namuna was also deprived of state subsidy*. The director Mannon Uygur was also forced to reduce the number of actors to 11 due to non-payment of salaries. Such a difficult financial situation in the country also affected other theatre groups. For example, the Andijan theatre had to give up to 50 per cent of its proceeds to stage a new play. In some cases, there was even a dispersal of troupe members [11].

Stagehands either lost their jobs altogether or chose other financial means in such harsh economic conditions. For example, musician Ashirali Yusupov from Andijan joined a Chinese troupe of mobile goatboylakchi (magicians) [12].

On 12 May, three days after the transfer of theatrical institutions to self-financing, the People's Commissariat of the TASSR issued order (circular) No. 1291. The order was addressed to the regional and city political and educational departments. The Soviet government intended to improve the material situation of people in difficult economic conditions, to replace the existing policy of food distribution with food allowances, and to expand the activities of co-operatives [13]. The government knew that the expected results could not be achieved if the decrees and orders were not fully understood by the people. To this end, the government paid great attention to propaganda among the population. The People's Commissariat of Education proposed to involve in propaganda work, in addition to the press and oral types, clubs, clubs, theatres and recommended the effective use of the activities of artists.

The 1920s are characterised by an abundance of consistently publicised laws and orders in the sphere. One such document, the decree on the establishment of the Art and Repertoire Commission in 1921, is noteworthy [14]. According to an archive source, given the existing shortcomings in the repertoire, each troupe and amateur clubs in the country should submit to the commission the stage works to be performed, and only after passing the inspection would the performance of a pesa be permissible. It should be noted that many stage works have passed the inspection in a short period of time. The plays that do not serve the interest of the state have been removed from the repertoire. After the investigation, the commission was recommended to create new stage works of heroic character, enlightening the daily life of the local population, instructive, revealing the "shortcomings" of religion, educational and political content against the rich and mullahs [15].

It is worth noting that the government made good use of the performing arts to showcase the freedoms given to women. After all, the actresses who first appeared on stage did not belong to the Uzbek nation. For example, Tamarakhonim, who was called the "first swallow" of Uzbek stage art, was of Armenian ethnicity, Mrs Maksuma was a Tatar, and Maria Kuznetsova was of Russian ethnicity. Since they grew up in an Uzbek neighbourhood, they spoke Uzbek fluently on stage. Thanks to these actresses, Uzbek girls were attracted to the Uzbek stage.

The government had a great need for female actresses. This is confirmed by archival documents. A. Azmetev, an employee of the Art Department of the Maarif Commissariat of the city of Samarkand and district, in his document dated 10 January 1920: *"...there are very few women in the theatre sector in Turkestan, so it is necessary to attract as many of them as possible to the sector by any means. It will take a quarter of a century to see local Uzbek girls on the stage. For this reason, we have to look for actresses among the Tatars for the female role in the play. In order*

to attract them to the stage, we need to create privileges for them compared to men, to give them awards" [19].

Even male employees in state institutions reacted negatively to women's work. For example, when forming the troupe led by Mukhiddindinari Yakubov, an official of the People's Commissariat of Education stated his request not to include Tamarakhonim in a commanding tone. As for Tamarakhonim, she joined the troupe despite her love for the stage[20].

Khalfa from Khorezm* Onajon Safarova aroused strong opposition from a certain part of the population, especially local religious figures, because she created a song called "Paranji", which urged women to drop the veil. Therefore, the performance of this song as propaganda intensified the protest of religious fanatics. Under pressure from fanatics, the government of Khorezm arrested O. Safarov, and he was exiled to Muynak Island in the Aral Sea [21].

In TASSR, work was carried out to unite all local entertainers with the award of a special certificate. Only certified artists could play music. For example, citizen Umar Boboev had a certificate issued by the repertoire committee of Turklit*. The certificate gave the right to perform political-educational and propaganda music, stories on such topics as the new school, the eradication of illiteracy and against existing vices in the life of the local population, and the role of women in society.[22] The certificate was issued by the Türklit Committee.

In May 1924, the 13th Congress of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks (b) would take place. The said spoke of the need to use the theatre arts for the broad propaganda of Soviet ideology. For this purpose it was considered necessary to organise a repertoire on revolutionary themes, to improve and deepen the craftsmanship and at the same time to attract literary artists. In order to reinforce the decision of the 13th Congress of the Central Committee of the RCP(b) in June 1925, it adopted a resolution "*Party policy in the field of fiction*"[23]. The result of this decision was the emergence of "Soviet dramaturgy" and the increase of its potential in the theatre repertoire. As a result of the implementation of these decisions, works glorifying Soviet reality were staged.

The documents developed by the government were formed on the basis of a clear ideological programme. The established programmes united the figures of literature and art, who were forced to work only on the government's assignment.

To discuss this decision, a meeting of the Uzbek stage art collective was convened, which was also attended by representatives of the Uzbek theatre. They explained the shortcomings in this area in their reports to the meeting. For example, Mannon Uygur emphasised in his speech that attention should be paid to several issues. First of all, he touched upon the personnel issue and said that only 6 out of 10 actresses were working, and one of the main problems was the lack of a building for the Uzbek drama troupe and the lack of management of the theatre by the directorate. In fact, the actors had to work even in such severe frosts that as a result, 30-40 per cent of them fell ill [24]. Several other issues to be addressed in the Uyghur Uzbek scene expressed the idea of creating studios for the development of Uzbek dramaturgy. The basic age limit for artists on the Uzbek stage did not exceed 20 years old. In turn, the Uighurs proposed to establish two permanent Uzbek theatres in Samarkand and Tashkent and to allocate a special building for them[25].

Urmanjonov, who also took part in the meeting, also mentioned in his report that there is no special building for Uzbek theatre. He even gave the example that in some cases performances are staged in mosques and madrasas, acting in completely inappropriate and difficult conditions [26]. It is worth mentioning that due to the cold, when actors fell ill, they had to be replaced by other actors. This situation affected the artistic level of the performances. Also, sometimes on the day of the performance, several actors became seriously ill and the production of the play was stopped.

In his speech, the speaker said: *"Russian and Uzbek theatres are not given equal attention. For example, the Russian theatre's cast is fully confirmed, while ours is not"*. He took the initiative to increase the number of theatres to two or three and to create an amateur theatre [27].

Mukhiddingori Yakubov, who participated in the meeting, also touched upon a number of shortcomings in this area. In his speech, he said that Uzbek stage art in its new form is at the stage of development and needs the support of relevant organisations. For example, *"The Uzbek music troupe has been repeatedly organised since its establishment under the People's Commissariat of the People's Commissariat of Education and still lacks a permanent base. More attention should be paid to the expansion and development of Uzbek troupes. National issues, conditions and requirements are not taken into account. We have no help from relevant institutions in terms of material and moral issues."* [28] He voiced his objection. He also pointed out that the artistic department of the People's Commissariat of the People's Commissariat only dealt with documents and that all the work on the ground should be done by other official organisations, not just the directorate. *"We have formed a troupe and all the work is done by two people. Under such conditions it is impossible to create an ideologically stable repertoire. There is no help for us and the staff of the Drama Theatre in these matters. The help manifests itself only through criticism and reproaches. Material support is insufficient. There is a shortage of personnel in the cultural sphere. For this purpose it is necessary to open a Music Institute in the future or to organise a national opera and operetta at the conservatory"*. [29]

It is worth noting that from the first years of Soviet power the personnel issue was considered one of the urgent tasks. At first, theatre studios and art schools were opened. But these educational institutions were short-term and were not designed to produce highly qualified specialists. To this end, in these years Uzbek actors and directors were sent for training to the cities of Moscow and Baku, centres for the development of theatrical art.

But in many cases they faced economic difficulties. The following information about this can be found in the archive. In particular, on 4 February 1926, students of the Moscow Theatre Studio applied to the working executive committee of the Tashkent region. The statement indicated that they had applied in writing several times during the period of their studies, but were in a difficult financial situation due to lack of material support. [30] Despite such difficulties, they continued their education.

During the summer holidays, students were allowed to perform stage works in the cities of Samarkand and Kokand. They, in turn, had to show stage works of artistic and dramatic content directed against religion and serving Soviet propaganda. The Main Politburo of Turkestan, in turn, undertook to provide this team with a privileged place for stage performances, equalise tax collection, etc. [31]

According to the regulations of the Repertoire Board (*Glavrepertkom*), all theatres in the country could not stage works without the permission of this institution. The Board had the right to issue instructions and amend them. Even non-compliance with the provisions of the Regulations entailed criminal liability [32]. In order to implement the decisions and orders of the government, stage works were adapted to the realities of the time. The government's policy was reflected in the productions.

Resolution No. 147 of the 2nd meeting of the theatre council of the Central Asian bureau of the All-Union Central Council of the Central Asian Theatre Union* in 1928 [33] dealt with the general preparation for the winter season, issues of folk art, amateur theatre circles, and the general improvement of theatre activities. Among other things, in order to attract the working class to the theatre, the price of tickets was reduced, and a system of coupons and subscriptions was introduced

in Moscow-style workers' organisations with preferential tickets. Allocation of at least 50% of seats to workers in all theatres of the republic. Prices with 50 per cent discount are distributed proportionally from the first line to the last. Major issues are large-scale provision of brand credit method and realisation of subscription sales. Trade unions have been advised to purchase tickets for performances of a particular organisation. Even the introduction of cheap public canteens through co-operatives was envisaged. In all theatres, the artistic council consisted of theatre managers, a director, a representative of RABIS*, 2-3 stage workers, 2-3 workers, representatives of the Komsomol, the People's Commissariat and the press. The main purpose of the council was to attract workers to the theatre and to determine their artistic requirements and views, as well as to supervise and check theatrical activities. It was determined that the coverage of theatre issues in the pages of the press was insufficient and that in future it should be revealed with the workers' opinions. [34]

It should be noted that until 1929, the Uzbek State Drama Troupe (theatre) was constantly touring. In order to successfully implement the requirements for stage art, the Narkompros turned it into a stationary-permanent theatre. New and important tasks were reflected in the decision of the Narkompros to make the theatre work under stable conditions[35]. Firstly, the repertoire of the theatre should include works that illuminate the atmosphere of the ideological "enduring" period and attract a wide audience to the theatre on the basis of the chosen repertoire;

- high artistic level of each work prepared for the exhibition;
- demonstration of samples of european classical dramaturgy, which have artistic and educational value and reflect the soviet reality;
- organisation of an "artistic council" in the theatre from representatives of party, soviet and public organisations;
- attracting more spectators to the theatre by creating various benefits for employees;
- familiarising the audience with mature artistic works of russian, azerbaijani, tatar and other russian folk dramaturgy is the main task of the theatre staff.

CONCLUSION

In general, since the 20s of the 20th century, Uzbek stage art has become a sphere based on administrative orders, subject to government decrees and regulations. The government took over theatre productions and their artistic ideas by its decrees. This led to a one-sided development of the theatre repertoire later on, which could not move away from the Soviet ideology. Nevertheless, Uzbek stage art rose to a new stage. During this period, despite the pressure of political ideology, a new generation of stage art was formed.

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