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THE “MULLAH NASRADDIN” LITERARY SCHOOL IN THE MIRROR OF THE IRANIAN LITERATURE

The Socio-Political Situation in Iran at the Time of the Revolution. Early years of the 19-th century cannot be considered good for Iranian people. In this period Iran suffered political and military disorder originated from lack of power, as well as confusion and tension after Karimkhan Zand's death. As a result of collapse of the Safavid dynasty and weakening academic and military power, plus increasing pressure of western states claiming to control different countries including Iran because of its special geopolitical position, a difficult situation awaited for the state. Princes and noblemen oppressed people when having the absolute power in his hand “Zillullah” (“shadow of God”) ruled the country as he wished, whereas ordinary people suffered from all kinds of crises.

In such a situation a small spark was enough to stimulate a rebellion. This spark was lash punishment sentenced to 2 seyids (men of the Prophet's generation) and 17 merchants by the mayor of Teheran who accused them in raising the price of sugar. Soon, people rose up giving birth to a new movement which was actually the first revolution in Iran (12 December 1912) (1, 3).

King Muzaffaraddin – “the old child” and “the 12 years old caviler” (2) was forced, after many debates and intrigues and powerful revolutionary movement, to sign the revolution order and to give order for establishment of the National Council.

The Literary Situation in Iran at the time of the Revolution. From very old times way of expression in social, moral, personal and other topics in the Iranian literature was not prose, but poetry. Beginning from the middle of the 18-th century, the school of “the Literary Return” was supported by many poets in order to put an end to a style called “Hindi Sabki” – a poetic style with lot of difficult phrases, confusing literary meanings. However, the literary works created within this stream were, at the best, remarkable imitations of

the notable works written by representatives of the “Khorasani” and “Iraqi” literary schools of past centuries (1, 506).

During a long period the Iranian literature never took into consideration masses of ordinary people – neither in poetry, nor in prose. So, literary works usually were written in high language of elite people and scriptures of 16-18-th centuries are full of long, imitative and complicated sentences, as well as difficult Arabic phrases.

Mirza Abulgaseem Farahani (1779-1835) - a well-read literary man, politician and state secretary was the first representative of literature who stressed the importance of putting aside complicated Arabic phrases, praises and compliments while writing official letters in Persian and used a new, easily understandable style in his writings when most of literati tended to write in the old, difficult style.

Later, great and well-known names of the revolution period as Talibov, M.F.Akhundov, Zeynalabidin Maraghali and others took into consideration usage of simple, easily understandable language in the European countries and popularized simple style in literature. For example, Zeynalabidin Maraghali's “Ibraheembek's Zeynalabidin Maraghali Travel book” “has simple prose and positively impresses readers, though some phrases and words in it used mostly by Iranians living in Istanbul and Egypt” (3, 1240).

Created for the rich, princes and the elite people, most of literature works written in the period of Gajars, specially, poems were helpless to reflect ordinary people's situation and life style. So, beside this official style, there was created another – non-official poetic style which described realistic life, deep sorrow and human joy. Such a poem “always was formed as a result of poetic needs and social expectations and memorized by vast masses before being written thanks to its nakedness of

reality” (4, 393). Having great popularity among ordinary people, this political poems or “tasnifs” were the first samples of literature created as alternative to meaningless poetry of the elite class.

Jalil Mammadguluzadeh and the “Mullah Nasraddin” Magazine. “Mirza Jalil Mammadguluzadeh – the founder of the “Mullah Nasraddin” magazine (1869-1932) was born in Nehram village of Nakhchivan province” (1, 40).

After learning the Azerbaijani, Persian and Russian languages, Mirza went to Georgia for pedagogical education. In his first works of realistic style he described the bitter reality of life with high professionalism. Jalil Mammadguluzadeh is considered one of the most popular and notable intellectuals. He felt responsible to popularize culture, development and education while eastern countries were in deep ignorance and lack of culture. The most important time of Mirza Jalil’s literary activities begins, doubtlessly, with the first edition of the “Mullah Nasraddin”. “This was a very important satiric magazine in the Turkish language published in Baku in the period of the revolution in Iran, which had great importance in development of Iranian and Caucasian nations” (5).

Appreciating Mirza Jalil’s literary works, Pr. Mir Jalal writes about the brilliant satiric magazine to edition of which M.J.Guluzadeh dedicated his life: “It is impossible to show any magazine or newspaper which played greater role in comparison to the “Mullah Nasraddin” in the awakening of Azerbaijani people, salvation of masses from the darkness of feudal ages and the world of “The Dead” (6).

Sabir and satiric magazines of Azerbaijan. Being published since last years of the 19-th century, several satiric magazines were a new way Iranian and Azerbaijani intellectuals found to struggle against oppression and ignorance. Poets and writers could not openly speak or write about many social, religious and other topics, therefore, in order to make people to think, they chose the way of satire, writing on bitter and sorrowful topics using funny phrases and humoristic style.

“Most of topics in the Azerbaijani media of the 20-th century have democratic character, whereas an important part of democratic organs of public opinion are satiric magazines.” (7, 9-10) The “Mullah Nasraddin”, “Bahlu”, “Zanbur”, “Merat”, “Ari” and others were among these organs of public opinion and on the top, doubtlessly, stood the “Mullah Nasraddin”. Many writers and poets took part in the edition of the magazine and among them were A.Hagverdiev, Mammad Said Ordubadi, Ali Nazmi, A. Gamkusar, Ali Razi and others.

However, the most remarkable and popular literary man of the magazine was Mirza Alakbar Sabir who thought during all his life the ignorance, oppression, injustice and difficulties of his people, trying to solve these problems with the help of satire. After getting married, in 1890 he opens a soap store which he tells about later: “I could not clean the dirt in the people, so, I decided to open a soap store to clean their outer dirt.” (1, 47)

Mirza Alakbar’s poems were published in the “Mullah Nasraddin” magazine from the 8-th issue (26 May, 1906). His poetic style was so popular and favourite among people, that readers could recognize his poems even when he did not put his signature.

Sabir touched different topics in his poems, among them the despotism in the country, women deprived of rights, starvation and freedom – all these were material for his works. He reanimated the reality of that period in colorful and original way of his style:

Şairim, çünkü vızifim budur: şar yazım,
Gördüyüm nikibdi eyliyim izhar, yazım.
Pisi pis, yirini yiri, düzü hımar yazım,
Niy bıs böyl bırdırsın o qar gözünü,
Yoxsa bu ayındı yiri görürsün özünü?

Aziz Mirahmadov writes: “Realism and truthfulness were the main conditions of poetic activity in his opinion, because he considered literature the mirror of social existence” (8, 101)

The “Mullah Nasraddin” and the Iranian revolution literature. In the modern period two neighboring states have much influence on the literary development, as well as historical and political processes in Iran – Turkey and Azerbaijan.

Being kind of a bridge between Asia and Europe from geographic viewpoint, Turkey also was affected by political, philosophical and cultural changes in Europe and in its turn, delivered positive changes in the socio-political sphere to the Middle East. Istanbul was the source where Iranian intellectuals, writers, poets and politicians got information regarding new laws on human rights in Europe. Many literati, philosophers and others escaped from persecutions of the Gajar dynasty to the Ottoman Empire and spread their ideas to Iran from abroad.

The second country, as mentioned above, was Azerbaijan. Being the most important country of Caucasia and part of the Russian Empire – one of the magnificent states of all times from one hand, having long-term and deep religious, cultural and spiritual relations with Iran from other hand, Azerbaijan and different events in this country were observed by Iranian people, specially intellectuals.

In June 13, 1908 Liakhov fired guns for a time upon Iranian National Council. After this event Tabriz became the centre of the revolution during 13 months called “the small despotism”.

Meanwhile, “Russian revolutionists – some on their own desire and some under leadership of a Georgian revolutionist named Orjonokidze brotherly helped the Iranian revolution” (1, 8)

Thanks to relative political freedom formed after the first Russian revolution in 1905, several positive changes begun in the sphere of theater, literature and art. Besides, many organs of public opinion with new democratic ideas were established by intellectuals. The first issue of the satiric “Mullah Nasraddin” magazine was published in this kind of a socio-political situation. Though it could not touch “the Russian topic” because of “the censorship of Tsar”, all socio-political and welfare problems of the eastern peoples were well reflected on pages of the magazine. It became, thanks to its deep relations with Iranians, voice of people against the despotism of the crown. It took only some time before several magazines and newspapers were established under influence of the “Mullah Nasraddin”. Sometimes these organs of public opinion even imitated poems, topical satires and caricatures published on the magazine. Among these newspapers and magazines were the “Azerbaijan”, “Ancuman” (Tabriz, 1907), “Faryad” (Urmiye, 1907), “Voice of People” (Tabriz, 1908), “Mujahed” (Tabriz 1907) and others published in the Azerbaijani and Persian languages. There was a close ideological relation between the “Mullah Nasraddin” and these new editions. The “Mullah Nasraddin” delivered the events happened in Iran in its every issue. Many writers and poets in Iran learned the way of professional literature namely from this magazine. “Specially two political writers of the Iranian media profited by the style of this magazine – Seyyid Ashrafaddin Gilani and Alakbar Dehkhuda” (Фидан, 61)

The literature of the revolution is literature of protest. The “Areef”, “Eshgi”, “Farrukhi”, the pungent and sour “Bahar”, clever and quick-witted Ashrafaddin Gilani criticized the injustice, ignorance and distortion of the society with a satiric, ironical and funny language.

The “Naseem-e Shomal” was the magazine with the sharpest and freedom-loving style of its time. Its editor was neither a minister, nor a deputy. His outer appearance was not so much attractive, as well, but masses loved him with unbelievable love.

The name of the magazine was so popular that people called its editor Ashrafaddin Gilani “Mister Naseem-e Shomal”.

Another important organ of public opinion during the Iranian revolution was the “Sur-e Israfil”. One of the most popular names of the magazine under the editorship of Mirza Jahangir Khan Shirazi was “Mirza Alakbar Dehkhuda” (Dekhu).

Being a remarkable philologist and poet, M.J. Shirazi was considered one of “sharp tongues” of the magazine. The magazine had close relations with the “Mullah Nasraddin” and appreciated its literati, specially, M.A. Sabir. Once it was written in the “Dehkhuda”: “Sabir was a candle and others moths turning around him... He was an one night infant which covered hundred years, while his contemporaries stayed back in previous centuries” (7, 101)

Sabir had great influence on the Persian literature and organs of public opinion published in Teheran, among them “Peyman”, “Umid”, “Baba Shemel”, “Demavend” and etc.

“It is possible to compose hundreds of this kind of articles about the influence of the “Mullah Nasraddin” on the Iranian literature. In fact, looking through the contemporary Iranian literature we can still observe this great literary influence” (9)

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5. Natiq, the “Huma-Negin” magazine, Teheran 1350 solar, issue 81

6. Mir Jalal – “Literary schools in Azerbaijan” (1905-1917) – Baku, 2004

7. Akhundov, Nazim – Satiric newspapers of Azerbaijan (1906-1920), Teheran, 1358 solar, p.9-10

8. Mir Ahmadov, Aziz – Sabir – Baku, 1958, p.101

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Мақалада XX ғасыр басында Азербайжанда қалыптасқан «Насреддин Молданың» әдеби мектебі және оның иран әдебиетіне тигізген ықпалы туралы жазылған. Автор иран әдебиеті мен «Насреддин Молда» журналының әдеби байланыстарын тоқталған.

В статье исследуется литературная школа «Молла Насреддин», сформированная в начале XX века в Азербайджане, и ее влияние на иранскую литературу. На обширном материале изучаются литературные связи журнала «Молла Насреддин» и иранской революционной литературы.