

## THE HISTORY OF ASHURALI ZOHIRIY'S PUBLISHING AND JOURNALISTIC ACTIVITY

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### **Annotation:**

Ashurali Zahiri, one of the representatives of the literary milieu of the 20th century Kakand, joined the Jadidist movement in 1910. He began to participate in the cultural reforms of the Jadids. He took part in the creation of the society "Taraqqiparvarlar" of Jadids, which arose in the Fergana Valley. This society focused on thinking about and supporting the education of young people for the future of Turkestan. Together with Ferghana Jadid intellectuals, he opened and taught new schools of method. He carried out his activities in the direction of one goal, in connection with the Turkestan moderns, around the important issues of the reformist movements.

**Keywords:** Turkistan, jadidizm, autonomy, culture and enlightenment, press, jurnalistika, publisher, political ideology.

Ashurali Zohiriy was one of the leading intellectuals in Turkestan, particularly in the city of Qo'qon, during the early 20th century. He studied at the Muhammad Alixon Madrasa in Qo'qon from 1894 to 1914, and from 1907 onwards, he taught Uzbek language and literature at a Russian-native school in the city. His passion for language learning led him to master Turkish, Azerbaijani, Tatar, and Russian.

During the early years of the 20th century, Zohiriy actively participated in the educational and political processes occurring in Turkestan, particularly in Qo'qon. From 1910, he began contributing to the Turkestan press. Initially, he wrote small articles for the "Turkiston viloyatining gazetisi" (The Newspaper of Turkestan Province). Later, in 1914, he became one of the main authors of the "Sadoyi Farg'ona" newspaper, which was established under the editorial direction of Obidjon Mahmudov. According to T. Pidayev, Zohiriy's contribution to the newspaper was significant. At the time, Zohiriy was not only a well-known educator in Qo'qon but also a recognized scholar in classical literature and linguistics. He was responsible for editing all the material that came into the "Sadoyi Farg'ona" newspaper<sup>1</sup>.

Additionally, T. Pidayev noted that Zohiriy played a key role in revitalizing "Sadoyi Farg'ona" by recruiting leading intellectuals of the time, such as Hamza Hakimzoda Niyoziy,

<sup>1</sup> Pidayev T. Matbuot – millat chirog'i. – T.: "O'zbekiston milliy ensiklpediyasi" davlat ilmiy nashriyoti. 1999. – B. 58.

Abdulhamid Sulaymonov (Cho'lpon), To'lagan Xo'jamiyrov (Tavallo), Ibrohim Davron, Saidahmad Vasliy Samarqandiy, Shokir Muxtoriy, and Kholid Said, to contribute to the newspaper<sup>2</sup>.

Furthermore, in 1918-1919, Zohiriy served as the head of a section in the "Xalq gazetasi" (The People's Newspaper), which was published under the editorial leadership of the national affairs commissioner of Qo'qon, Ahmad Devishev. In this newspaper, Zohiriy promoted the issue of new spelling reforms and expressed his critical views on the matter.

On June 1, 1917, Ashurali Zohiriy founded the "Yurt" magazine in the city of Qo'qon and was its direct editor. The magazine's slogan was aligned with its goals: "Long live the independent people's republic!" The publishing activities of the magazine were led by Khoji Mavlonberdi Ashurboyev. Technically, "Yurt" was considered one of the most outstanding magazines of its time. The editorial office of the magazine was located on Xo'jand Street in the city. The second issue of the magazine was published on July 15, 1917, and the third issue on August 18, 1917. It was a political, social, historical, and literary weekly, with only three issues published before it was closed down due to pressure from the Bolsheviks.

Although only three issues of "Yurt" were published, the spirit of its articles still resonates with the profound and historical pain of Turkestan, urging the reader to feel the struggles of the region. Apart from Ashurali Zohiriy, other contributors included Abdullabek with his piece "Mashohiri Turkiston tarjimai hollari"<sup>3</sup> A. Marg'inoniy sohibi 'Hidoya, Abdulhamid Sulaymonov (Cho'lpon) with "O'zbeklar ham Turkiston," Ahmad Sardor with "Учредителный собрание va yangi saylov tartiblari," Mirmuhsin Shermuhammedov with "Istiqbolda bizning hayot," Shokir Muxtoriy with "Ho'qand majlislari munosabati bilan," as well as various letters sent to the editorial office and news about the life in Turkestan.

It is worth recalling the following statement from Ziyo Said about the journal: "The 'Yurt' magazine, started by comrade Ashurali in 1917 in the city of Qo'qon, was the most outstanding and spiritually rich magazine among those published until then"<sup>4</sup>.

Furthermore, Ashurali Zohiriy also showed his abilities as a publisher by establishing the "G'ayrat" private publishing house and library in 1917. The researcher B. Irzayev emphasizes that it was after establishing the publishing house and library that Ashurali Zohiriy became the true leader of the progressive forces in the Fergana Valley<sup>5</sup>.

In addition, a number of articles about the "G'ayrat" library were published in the "Sadoyi Farg'ona" newspaper<sup>6</sup>. Furthermore, some references to "G'ayrat" are also found in the "El bayrog'i" newspaper. For instance, on January 26, 1917, the "El bayrog'i" newspaper

<sup>2</sup> Pidayev T. Matbuot – millat chirog'i. – T.: "O'zbekiston milliy ensiklopediyasi" davlat ilmiy nashriyoti. 1999. – B. 59.

<sup>3</sup> Alijonov M. O'tgan asr jurnalistikasi – uchinchi sonidayoq taqiqlangan "Yurt" jurnali sahifalarida nimalar yoritilgan edi?. <https://oyina.uz/uz/article/1943>.

<sup>4</sup> Ziyo Said. O'zbek vaqtli matbuoti tarixiga materiallar. – T.: "O'zbekiston davlat nashriyoti". 1927. – B. 189.

<sup>5</sup> Irzayev B. Qo'qon tarixidan lavhalar. – T.: "Akademnashr" nashriyoti. 2020. – B. 5.

<sup>6</sup> Ho'qandda ochilgan "G'ayrat" kutubxonasi // "Sadoyi Farg'ona" gazetasi. 1915-yil 17 aprel; Yangi ochilgan "G'ayrat" kutubxonasidan // "Sadoyi Farg'ona" gazetasi. 1915-yil 21-aprel; Ho'qandda "G'ayrat" kutubxonasida // "Sadoyi Farg'ona" gazetasi. 1915-yil 15-may.

published an announcement titled “To the attention of the members of the 'G‘ayrat' organization”<sup>7</sup>. Later, it was with the help of the "G‘ayrat" publishing house and library that the "El bayrog‘i" newspaper, which became the official press organ of the Turkistan Autonomy, was published. Abdulvahob O‘qtoy writes: "With the material support of “G‘ayrat” in Qo‘qon, the “El bayrog‘i” newspaper was published in September and initially served as the great weapon of the Jadid movement in Qo‘qon. However, after the national congress, under the leadership of Cho‘qay’s son Mustafobek, declared Turkistan an Autonomous region in December 1917, “El bayrog‘i” started to be published as the official press of the Turkistan Autonomy government”<sup>8</sup>.

On November 27, 1917, after the establishment of the Turkistan Autonomy, Ashurali Zohiriy worked alongside Bo‘lat Soliyev as part of the editorial team of the "El bayrog‘i" newspaper, which served as the press organ of the Autonomy. Ashurali Zohiriy emphasized the importance of the Turkistan Autonomy in the newspaper, explaining the steps citizens needed to take to strengthen this independent state and calling for all Turkestanis to unite around the Autonomy. A poem by Abdulhamid Cho‘lpon titled "Ozod turk bayrog‘i" (Free Turk Flag) dedicated to the Autonomy was also published in this newspaper.

The "El bayrog‘i" newspaper was published three times a week under the slogan "Long live Turkistan Autonomy!" It featured sections such as "Official Reports," "Articles," "Various News," "Internal News," "Turkistan News," "Telegram Reports", "Local News," and "Letters to the Editorial Office." In addition, the newspaper published various announcements and information about meetings and congresses.

As a skilled publisher and journalist, Ashurali Zohiriy, together with Bo‘lat Soliyev, worked hard to ensure the quality of the newspaper. They paid particular attention to publishing articles that called for national unity. For example, the article titled “Anglaydirg‘on vaqt!” (The Time Will Reveal) published in the January 26, 1917 issue of "El bayrog‘i" is one such example.

The article, published anonymously, is stylistically attributed to Ashurali Zohiriy. In it, the author writes: “We gained independence, we declared autonomy! We rejoiced, we celebrated! But looking at the results, we are still far from the goal. We have not yet reached our purpose. Our tears, our broken hearts, our suffocating breaths have not stopped. The crushed livers, chests, trembling hands, feet, frozen heads, and the lost senses have not returned to their rightful place. Our homeland, our motherland, our city, our homes no longer seem to be a place of peace and rest. We cannot walk freely here, we cannot sleep peacefully. We do not have the strength to walk tall or the freedom to do so.”

Through this and many other articles published in the newspaper, Ashurali Zohiriy addressed the citizens of Turkistan's autonomy. Despite the declaration of national autonomy and the achievement of independence, he emphasized that it was still very fragile. Therefore, he

<sup>7</sup> Shirkat muassislari. “G‘ayrat” shirkati a‘zolari diqqatiga! // “El bayrog‘i” gazetasi. 1917-yil 26-yanvar.

<sup>8</sup> To‘qtamish o‘g‘li (Abdulahob O‘qtoy). Turk gazetachilig‘i // “Yosh Turkiston” jurnali. 1933-yil dekabr – №. 49.

insisted that every citizen had no right to “walk freely, breathe freely, or sleep peacefully” until the autonomy was fully protected. He stressed the importance of every citizen actively defending the independence of the autonomy.

Continuing his thoughts, Ashurali Zohiriy wrote: “The Russian state broke apart, it was divided. Every faction found its own way, settled its affairs. Why did Turkistan lag behind? Now the time, hours, and minutes have come to understand this. The time to reflect on our situation has arrived. If every Turk and Muslim child thinks about this, examines the reasons, it will not be harmful,” urging all the people of Turkistan to participate actively in the ongoing social and political processes of society.

Additionally, in the November 21, 1917 issue of "**El bayrog'i**" newspaper, there was an article titled “The first Darulmuallimin and educational courses were opened in Khoqand,” which called upon the people to pursue education. The article stated: “Among the cultured nations and peoples, living with true humanity, being free and equal in rights, and preserving our sacred national identity can only be achieved through education, schools, and learning. Our sacred homeland, Turkistan, has been oppressed for years due to the former regime’s disastrous policies. No organized and proper school or madrasa has been opened until now, which left our people ignorant and unaware of the changing times!”

In summary, the editorial team of "**El bayrog'i**", led by Bo‘lat Soliyev and Ashurali Zohiriy, viewed the preservation of Turkistan Autonomy and its development in social, political, economic, and military power through education and knowledge.

Unfortunately, the Turkistan Autonomy was drowned in blood on February 22, 1918. Mustafa Cho‘qay, who later worked in the Turkistan Autonomy, wrote the following about this tragic event: “When the Khoqand government was established, it had neither any officers nor soldiers, nor even a penny. At least, it didn’t have enough personnel for government administration. The postal service, telegraph, and railways were all under enemy control. In these circumstances, it is entirely natural and easily understandable that the Khoqand government, established under such dire conditions, could not accomplish any remarkable work for the national interests of the Turkistan people. Even more extraordinary is the fact that this government lasted for 74 days under these circumstances”<sup>9</sup>.

Abdulvahob O‘qtoy’s reflections on the El Bayrogi newspaper and its closure are noteworthy. He writes:

"El Bayrogi was one of the most widely circulated and beloved newspapers of Turkistan's progressives, especially during the period of the Autonomy. The pages of this newspaper featured articles by Po‘lat Soliyev, Ashurali Zohiriy, Sardor, Abdulloh Begi, No‘shirvon Yavushev, Ahlulloh Hayrulloh o‘g‘li, Ubaydullaxon, A. Bek, O‘g‘uzxon, Teshaboy, Ismoil Obid, Nosir Hoji, Hofiz Nurmuhammad, Yunusjon Og‘aliq, Rauf Yoqub, Uyg‘ur, Shokirjon

<sup>9</sup> Cho‘qay o‘g‘li Mustafo. Qo‘qon Muxtoriyati // “Yosh Turkiston” jurnali. 1937-yil dekabr. – №. 97.

Rahimiy, and many others. El Bayrogi was published twice a week and printed 20 issues as the official publication of the Turkistan Autonomy government. However, after the Turkistan Autonomy government was dispersed by the Russian Bolshevik forces, El Bayrogi was also buried under the crushing weight of the Russian proletariat, which Mag'jon Jumaboy had referred to as the 'swarm of pigs'<sup>10</sup>.

Abdulvahob O'qtoy further states that after the establishment of the Turkistan Autonomy on November 27, 1917, Ashurali Zohiriy dedicatedly worked on the newspaper, emphasizing the importance of the Autonomy and urging the citizens to work to strengthen the independent state. Zohiriy called on all people of Turkistan to defend the legitimacy of the Autonomy. However, recognizing the immense spiritual power of El Bayrogi, the Bolshevik government swiftly shut it down. Overall, El Bayrogi demonstrated Ashurali Zohiriy's true commitment to the autonomy movement.

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<sup>10</sup> To'qtamish o'g'li (Abduvahob O'qtoy). Turk gazetachilig'i // "Yosh Turkiston" jurnali. 1933-yil dekabr – №. 49.