

ENTREPRENEUR CHARACTER IN SOVIET-ERA LITERATURE (EXAMPLES FROM UZBEK AND RUSSIAN LITERATURE)

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes how entrepreneur and merchant characters were shown in Soviet-era Russian and Uzbek literature. The study explains how Marxist-Leninist ideology influenced literature and how entrepreneurs were often presented as “bourgeois exploiters” and placed in contrast with positive socialist heroes. The article also examines the characters Miryoqub and Usta Alim in the works of Abdulla Qodiriy to show the conflict between traditional economic thinking and new socialist ideas. The research is based on literary and cultural approaches and reveals how economic characters were ideologically transformed in Soviet literature.

Keywords: Soviet literature, entrepreneurship, merchant character, Russian literature, Uzbek literature, Miryoqub, Usta Alim, Marxism, class struggle, literary character, ideology, economic thinking.

INTRODUCTION

Literature of the Soviet period in the 20 th century was created under strong ideological control. Economic and social characters in literature were interpreted according to a class-based approach. In particular, entrepreneur and merchant characters were connected with the capitalist system and were often shown as negative social types. Although this process appeared in different artistic forms in Russian and Uzbek literature, the general ideological foundation remained the same.

This article analyzes attitudes toward entrepreneurship in Soviet-era Russian and Uzbek literature, its representation in literary characters, and changes in economic thinking through the examples of characters such as Miryoqub and Usta Alim. The study aims to show how society’s economic and moral views were formed through literary images. During the Soviet period, the economic and social structure of society was built on Marxist-Leninist ideology. The founders of this ideology — Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin — believed that the main cause of economic inequality was private property and the capitalist system of production. Therefore, economic policy in the Soviet state was based on the following principles:

Limiting or completely eliminating private property — the means of production were transferred to state or collective ownership. Understanding capital as a tool of exploitation — the process of making profit was seen as taking advantage of other people’s labor. A centralized planned economy — state planning became more important than market mechanisms. As a result, entrepreneurship was not viewed as an independent economic initiative but as a factor that increased social inequality. In Soviet thinking, the following ideological formula appeared: entrepreneur bourgeois exploiter According to this formula:

the entrepreneur was seen as a person who pursued personal interest;
the bourgeois was considered a class enemy as the owner of capital;
the exploiter was understood as someone who gained profit from workers' labor.
Because of this approach, entrepreneurship was presented as: a socially harmful
phenomenon, a morally condemned activity, and politically an object of struggle.

In Russian culture of the 19th and early 20th centuries, literature held a special place. At least until the October Revolution, literature was a universal cultural phenomenon that combined philosophy, humanities, and socio-political thought. Through literature, reality was not only artistically represented but also understood and interpreted. These views became firmly established not only in economic policy but also in culture, especially in fiction. In literature, the entrepreneur was often shown as a negative character, while the opposite figure — the “new person,” a hardworking individual who valued collective interests above personal gain — was idealized. During the Soviet period, Russian literature was reshaped according to Marxist-Leninist ideology. As a result, works created at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries were reinterpreted in a new way. The entrepreneur character, which had previously been complex and contradictory, was now evaluated mainly from a class perspective and turned into a social type judged ideologically. In this process, the works of Maxim Gorky played an important role. Soviet critics interpreted merchant and industrialist characters in such works as evidence of the crisis and moral decline of capitalism. Even earlier, Nikolai Gogol portrayed a similar conflict in the second part of the novel *Dead Souls*. In this work, the carrier of practical rational thinking is not a merchant but an ideal landowner — the nobleman Kostanjoglo. He strongly criticizes Khlobuyev, who lives on debt and organizes luxurious feasts. In Russian fiction, real entrepreneur characters were often portrayed as modest and even ascetic people who avoided luxury and unnecessary spending. For example, Ossetrov in the works of Pyotr Boborykin and Konstantin Bakharev in the works of Dmitry Mamin-Sibiryak represent such figures. Their simplicity is explained not by greed or high ideals but by practical thinking and a lack of interest in luxury.

In Soviet-era Russian literature, the entrepreneur character is described with the following features: Moral negativity — the entrepreneur is shown as greedy, selfish, and individualistic. Suspicious source of wealth — capital is presented as gained through crime, deception, or exploitation. Spiritual crisis — the entrepreneur is connected with inner emptiness and lack of meaning.

Opposite ideal — the positive hero is usually a worker, peasant, or revolutionary. Literary examples: In the novel *Foma Gordeyev*, moral decline within the merchant environment is portrayed. In *The Artamonov Business*, entrepreneurship is interpreted as a heavy and meaningless burden. In *The Gloomy River*, the character Prokhor Gromov is strong and active, but his activities ultimately lead to tragedy.

Thus, in Soviet Russian literature, the entrepreneur is not shown as a symbol of individual freedom but as a negative social type representing the crisis of the capitalist system. Entrepreneur Image in Uzbek Literature Attitudes toward entrepreneurship in Uzbek literature changed greatly depending on historical periods. Jadid Period (Pre-Soviet Era) During this period, entrepreneur and merchant characters were evaluated more positively or

neutrally: they were seen as factors of economic development; trade and production were understood as forces that helped society progress; personal initiative was respected. For example, in the works of Abdulla Qodiriy, characters like Miryoqub are portrayed as realistic and complex individuals with inner conflicts. Soviet Period: Soviet ideology strongly influenced Uzbek literature as well: merchants and wealthy people were criticized as representatives of the "old system"; private property owners were interpreted as class enemies; the positive hero became the worker, poor peasant, or collective farm member. As a result, the entrepreneur character was socially marginalized or turned into a negative stereotype. Analysis of Miryoqub and Usta Alim Characters These two characters represent two different models of economic thinking in Uzbek literature. Miryoqub — the Entrepreneur Type The character of Miryoqub stands out as a person close to modern economic thinking. Main characteristics: practical thinking (close to the idea of rationality described by Max Weber); focus on profit and opportunity; ability to adapt to situations; inner moral conflict.

These traits bring him closer to the images of active yet tragic entrepreneurs in Russian literature. In Soviet interpretation: he is viewed as an individualist, unreliable, and a "new bourgeois element." The character Usta Alim represents a traditional businessman or craftsman type. His main characteristics include: a life based on honest work; stability and caution; adapting to societal values; operating within a small business scope. This type is similar to what Werner Sombart described as the "petty bourgeois type." In Soviet interpretation:

Sometimes seen positively (as a hard worker), Sometimes viewed as a "remnant of the old world." **Brief Comparison Table** Character: Miryoqub Type: Entrepreneur Main Features: Active, calculating, conflictual Soviet Evaluation: Negative or questionable Character: Usta Alim

Type: Traditional Merchant Main Features: Honest, stable, cautious Soviet Evaluation: Neutral / old type In Russian and Uzbek literature during the Soviet era, the image of the entrepreneur underwent a sharp ideological reinterpretation. It was no longer a symbol of personal initiative and economic freedom but became a social type evaluated in the context of class struggle. In this process:

- Entrepreneurial activity was interpreted as bourgeois exploitation;
- Positive moral evaluations were mainly given to worker and peasant characters;
- Entrepreneurs and merchants often turned into negative or questionable types.

The characters Miryoqub and Usta Alim represent two poles of this complex process in Uzbek literature: Miryoqub symbolizes new economic thinking, initiative, and individual rationality; Usta Alim represents traditional business practices, stability, and adherence to societal values. In this sense, they hold significant importance as social-psychological models of a transitional period in Uzbek literature.

Comparative Table (Expanded) Characters: Entrepreneur Image Russian Literature: Bourgeois, exploiter Uzbek Literature: Wealthy merchant – criticized Characters: Positive Hero Russian Literature: Worker, revolutionary Uzbek Literature: Peasant, collective farmer Characters: Moral Evaluation

Russian Literature: Negative Uzbek Literature: Negative or ambiguous Characters: Realistic Complexity Russian Literature: Decreases

Uzbek Literature: Partially preserved (in Qodiriy's works) Characters: Ideal Image

Russian Literature: Almost absent Uzbek Literature: Almost absent

all in all, In Soviet-era literature, entrepreneurship was:

Interpreted as a socially harmful phenomenon; Judged negatively from a moral standpoint;

Almost entirely rejected as a positive character in artistic literature.

However, differences remained within the literary process: In Russian literature, the entrepreneur is often depicted as a tragic figure facing moral crisis;

• In Uzbek literature, the entrepreneur appears as a conflicting type between transitional periods and traditional economic models. The characters Miryoqub and Usta Alim are bright examples of this process, representing:

New economic thinking through one, Traditional social order through the other.

CONCLUSION

In Soviet-era literature, attitudes toward entrepreneurship were formed on an ideological basis and were directly connected with Marxist-Leninist class theory. As a result, entrepreneurship was not seen as independent economic initiative but as a form of capitalist exploitation. Because of this ideological approach, the formula “entrepreneur = bourgeois = exploiter” became firmly established in literary thinking as well. In Russian literature, this situation led to a reinterpretation of the complex entrepreneur characters created in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (for example, the heroes of Maxim Gorky and Dmitry Mamin-Sibiryak). Characters that were once contradictory and multi-layered were now presented in Soviet literature mainly as people experiencing spiritual crisis, alienated from society, and morally negative. In contrast, the model of the “new positive hero” — the worker, peasant, or revolutionary — was idealized. A similar process can be observed in Uzbek literature. During the Jadid period, merchant and entrepreneur characters were shown relatively positively or neutrally as symbols of economic development and social activity. However, in the Soviet period they were criticized ideologically as “remnants of the old system.” At the same time, in the works of writers such as Abdulla Qodiriy, these characters did not disappear completely but remained in complex and realistic artistic forms.

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