



SOCIO-POLITICAL MOVEMENTS IN EARLY 20th-CENTURY KARAKALPAKSTAN: BASED ON INDEPENDENT OPINIONS AND PRINTED SOURCES

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Abstract: This article explores the socio-political movements in Karakalpakstan during the early 20th century, analyzing the region's historical dynamics through independent voices and printed sources of the period. Drawing upon local newspapers, memoirs, and political documents, the study highlights how Karakalpak intellectuals responded to colonial rule, social inequality, and national awakening. The article demonstrates that early Karakalpak activism was closely linked to broader regional reformist currents, particularly Jadidism, and played a significant role in shaping the region's identity and resistance narratives.

Keywords: Karakalpakstan, socio-political movements, early 20th century, Jadidism, colonialism, national awakening, printed press

At the turn of the 20th century, Central Asia witnessed significant socio-political transformation, fueled by the collapse of traditional structures, growing colonial control, and the rise of reformist ideologies. Karakalpakstan, situated on the periphery of major political centers, was nonetheless actively involved in these processes.

Although often underrepresented in Central Asian historiography, the Karakalpak people engaged in intellectual, cultural, and political reform efforts, many of which were inspired by the broader Jadid movement and regional anti-colonial sentiments. The emergence of independent thinkers and writers, as well as



the development of a native print culture, signaled the formation of a distinct socio-political consciousness.

This study aims to examine early 20th-century socio-political movements in Karakalpakstan by analyzing both printed sources (newspapers, pamphlets, and public letters) and the independent viewpoints of Karakalpak intellectuals. Through these sources, we uncover the complexities of national identity formation, resistance to imperial domination, and the pursuit of social reform in the region.

The research is based on qualitative historiographical analysis and content review of primary sources. The main materials include:

• **Printed sources:**

- Local and regional newspapers such as *"Turkiston"*, *"Haqiqiy So'z"*, and Jadid press with Karakalpak contributions
- Political pamphlets and leaflets distributed in Khorezm and Karakalpak regions in the 1910s–1920s

• **Memoirs and personal writings** of Karakalpak intellectuals and activists

• **Secondary sources:**

- Scholarly works on Central Asian political history, with a focus on marginalized voices
- Archival materials from Khiva Khanate and Russian Turkestan administration

Methods used include discourse analysis, comparative source analysis, and historical contextualization to trace the ideological and organizational development of socio-political activism.



The study reveals several key aspects of socio-political activism in early 20th-century Karakalpakstan:

- **Rise of Reformist Thought:** Influenced by Jadidism, Karakalpak intellectuals began advocating for secular education, women's rights, and cultural renewal. Reformers such as Allayar Dosnazarov and Tazabek Seytmuratov promoted modern schooling and political awareness.

- **Printed Media as a Tool of Mobilization:** Local contributions to regional press created platforms for discussing land reform, identity, language preservation, and anti-colonial resistance. Some newspapers called for national autonomy within a broader Turkic unity.

- **Colonial Repression and Political Response:** The Russian Empire and later the early Soviet regime suppressed nationalist tendencies. Nevertheless, secret societies, underground schools, and poetic resistance persisted.

- **Integration with Regional Movements:** Karakalpak activists were part of larger Turkestan political currents, including the Basmachi resistance, Khorezm People's Soviet Republic, and Muslim Congresses.

The socio-political activity in Karakalpakstan during this period reflects the interplay of local grievances and global ideological currents. While the region faced economic underdevelopment and political marginalization, it was not passive. Rather, Karakalpak intellectuals engaged in complex negotiations with both colonial powers and fellow reformers across Central Asia.

The adoption of print culture marked a crucial shift in political engagement. Articles, poems, and editorials served as vehicles for spreading new ideas and fostering collective identity. These publications often expressed concern about cultural assimilation, language erosion, and land dispossession.



Despite limited resources and harsh repression, the Karakalpak socio-political awakening contributed to the region's eventual recognition within the Soviet administrative structure. However, much of this early activity remains understudied, and the legacy of these movements is often overshadowed in mainstream Uzbek or Soviet historiography.

Moreover, the analysis of independent voices—outside the state-sponsored narratives—sheds light on how local actors perceived modernity, reform, and resistance. These sources challenge homogenized depictions and emphasize the diversity of political thought in early 20th-century Central Asia.

The early 20th century was a formative period for socio-political consciousness in Karakalpakstan. Through the efforts of local reformers, educators, and writers, the region saw a modest but meaningful awakening that intersected with broader reformist and anti-colonial movements.

By examining independent opinions and printed sources, this study reveals the depth and complexity of Karakalpak political life during a crucial historical juncture. These movements not only laid the groundwork for regional identity but also contributed to the broader fabric of Central Asian modernization.

Further research is needed to compile, digitize, and analyze Karakalpak-language sources and oral histories, ensuring that the voices of this region are fully represented in post-colonial scholarship.

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