

**Kazakh Female Writers and Their Works in the Context of Stalinist Ideology of Women's
Rights in the 1930s (based on materials from “*Zhanga Adebiet*”)**

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Notes on Transliteration and Translation

The Kazakh alphabet, before changing to Cyrillic for almost a decade, used Latin script. The primary sources this paper analyzes were published in 1938 and 1939, when the Latin alphabet was still in use. In order not to hinder the translation process, as the original materials are not in the greatest shape, and also to give the opportunity to read the Kazakh text for those who are not familiar with the Latin alphabet, I decided to transcribe the original materials. All the transcriptions to Cyrillic script are based on the principles of the ALA-LC Romanization script from 1997.¹ However, in some instances, there was a typographical error in the original or inconsistencies with the Latin script, such as using ‘x’ instead of ‘kh’ for Cyrillic ‘x’, which was sometimes typed as ‘x’. In such cases, I solely based transliteration on my knowledge of the Kazakh language as a native speaker.

In addition to the transcribed text, in the Appendix, I also presented side-to-side translations of the sources from Kazakh to English. The main function of the translation is to give a contextual idea of what was written to English language speakers. The texts were translated based solely on my knowledge of the Kazakh and English languages to a high degree, enough to present a text that captures the meaning of the original. In the translation theory presented by Dryden, my translation can be described as ‘metaphrase,’ or turning an author word by word and line by line, from one language into another.”² This method, especially in poem translation, unfortunately, cannot give an idea of the artistic quality of the originals. Thus, my translation lacks any aesthetic value, but still performs its main function.

¹ Randal Berry, ed. *ALA-LC Romanization Tables: Transliteration Schemes for Non-Roman Scripts*. Library of Congress, 1997.

² Schulte, Rainer, and Biguenet, John, eds. *Theories of translation: An anthology of essays from Dryden to Derrida*. University of Chicago Press, 1992, 145.

Introduction

For Kazakhstan, the Soviet past takes an extensive period of the 20th century's history; however, this part is mostly ignored or rethought to fit into the nationalistic agenda. Nationalism was somehow present in late Kazakh Soviet literature. Still, it was rare as literary pieces produced by Kazakh authors mostly were an extension of the political agenda of the period. In Soviet culture, ideology formation was tightly bound to literature, the instrument for creating new citizens. Due to this strong connection, Soviet literature deeply reflects on society and historical events as a part of cultural production. The history of the literature in the Soviet Union is interconnected with the country's policies, its changing leaders' ideology, and wartime. Thus, analyzing the literature of each period in Soviet history will give a comprehensive overview of the government's needs and how these were introduced to the nation.

The Stalinist era, marked between 1927 and 1953, is known for purges and terror in Soviet history. In this turbulent period, the new constitution was accepted in 1936, also known as Stalin's Constitution. One of the articles in the constitution states that women are equal to men in every sphere of life. It was not the first time for the Soviet Union to touch upon the women's question, as the theme of equality was always part of the socialist agenda, as patriarchal society hinders the revolution. However, the new constitution once more changed governmental needs, as the state started forming literary canons for the state; thus, authors started creating texts that aimed to emancipate Central Asian women oppressed by societal norms. Most authors used the same image of unveiled women in their works to demonstrate newly obtained freedom. However, the unveiling process is intrinsic only for Central Asian countries where veils are part of their religious heritage, while the same image was impossible in Kazakhstan. This uniqueness creates an interest in researching Kazakhstan's literature specifically. This paper will focus on

women authors' literary works, as history usually overlooks them. Also, I intend to increase the reserves of Kazakh authors as I analyze works of mostly unknown poetesses such as Ziyash Kalauova's "Long Live the New Law," Aimankul Tazhibayeva's "True Heart," and Maira Zhansayeva's "Live on My Sun, Stalin!" These works were written after the Constitution was released, and they praise Stalin's new Constitution for bringing immense joy to women who can now work equally to men. The materials are based on *Zhanga Adebiet*, Soviet Kazakhstan's literary journal that was an official part of the socialist agenda. The research will be based only on women's poetry as part of ideological legitimization in Kazakhstan, and even though the journals contain prose written by a woman, it will not be analyzed because of limited source materials, as they have been discontinued. Also, the research focused only on those three poems, as the other works did not bring new information to the discussion. The reason behind this is the specificity of the time and the formation of the rigid literary canons; most women authors similarly wrote poems that only praised the new constitution without any particularity about how women benefited from that. Therefore, Aimankul Tazhibayeva's and Ziyash Kalaubayeva's texts were chosen as examples of two different generations of Soviet people who demonstrated the image of women whose lives changed due to the new law enforcement. Maira Zhansayeva's poem is the perfect example of the type of literary tradition that was created under Stalinist rule, Staliniana. The research will attempt to answer the question of how Kazakh female writers' works depict gender equality and feminism during the Stalinist era and to understand what influenced the way the given authors write about the changed status of women.

“Zhanga Adebiet” as an Instrument of Cultural Production

“Zhanga Adebiet” is one of the first Soviet literary journals published in Kazakhstan from 1928 until now, later by the names *“Adebiet Zhana Iskusstvo,” “Adebiet Maidany,”* and *“Zhuldyz.”* The journal was a part of the Soviet discourse, thus, publications mostly correlated with the socio-political environment of the USSR. Accordingly, constitutional amendments made by Stalin in 1936 also influenced the journal's contents. Especially the gender equality reforms that were part of a big modernization program that the Bolshevik party presented. This political reform not only changed what authors wrote about, but it also presented one of the first Kazakh woman poets and writers.

The importance of *Zhanga Adebiet* lies in the fact that it is part of a bigger phenomenon called *“tolstye zhurnaly”* (thick journals).³ Vladimir Lakshin, a Soviet literary critic, introduced the term in the report for the UNESCO expert meeting (1993) as a phenomenon that has no direct analogs in Europe and the USA. The phenomenon of *“tolstye zhurnaly”* is a long-lasting practice in Russian culture, as most of the Russian classical works of the 19th century, before being published as a separate book, were published in bits, chapter by chapter, in those literary magazines.⁴ The magazines were not read only by the elite but were also available for the common folk, creating a unique tradition, in the author’s opinion. Official literary journals became a part of the Soviet discourse as it was the easiest way to mass politicize the society, spreading the Bolsheviks’ political agenda.⁵ Thus, the activities of the official magazines have always been closely monitored and supervised by the authorities.

³ Лакшин, Владимир. *Берега культуры*. Мирос. 1994.

⁴ Лакшин. *Берега культуры*, 105.

⁵ Лакшин. *Берега культуры*, 106.

Hence, *Zhanga Adebiet* is a part of the official body of Kazakh proletarian authors. The paper studies the journal materials as the textual output of cultural production. According to Davis, one of the ways of analyzing cultural production is textual analysis, which studies cultural production by examining various texts to understand the social conditions in which it occurs, using both quantitative and qualitative methods. It involves selecting texts and determining the appropriate analysis approach. It can be applied to a wide range of media, including historical documents, reports, and different formats like print, audio, and visual media.⁶ This paper thus analyzes poems published in *Zhanga Adebiet* after the introduction of Stalin's Constitution to examine their content using historical and political information. The integration of history into cultural studies has been recognized as important for avoiding presentism—focusing solely on contemporary concerns—and particularism, where cultural phenomena are analyzed in isolation from broader historical contexts.⁷ Therefore, the paper will integrate historical background into the analysis of literary pieces to demonstrate how literature was intertwined with the Soviet narrative of the 1930s.

⁶ Davis, Aeron. "Investigating Cultural Producers." In *Research Methods for Cultural Studies*, ed. Michael Pickering, 53-67. Edinburgh University Press, 2008.

⁷ Davis. "Investigating Cultural Producers," 2008.

Historical Background of Women's Emancipation in Central Asia

The Soviet Union started a radical campaign to improve the position of Muslim women in Central Asia, prohibiting traditions such as polygamy and child marriage while encouraging female education and involvement in public life. This was a part of a larger initiative to modernize and secularize Soviet society.⁸ According to Kindler, Communists' want to modernize the nomadic lifestyle “was not philanthropic, it was to induce a cultural revolution in the steppe.”⁹ The Soviets believed that the women's emancipation movement would create a ‘surrogate proletariat’ who would become “revolutionary agents against both exploiting class and reactionary Islam.”¹⁰ In the same way, Massel argues that the main goal of the women's emancipation movement is to create the proletariat class.¹¹ This process was done because the periphery did not understand the revolution and the Bolsheviks' ideals. After all, the nomadic culture did not have social division as European societies did. Even though Kamp and Edgar question such argumentation by saying that Muslim women were not seen as the supporters of the system, but as the new workforce, making them the ‘supplementary proletariat.’¹² Still, all authors agree on the fact that the Communist Party had ulterior motives under the auspices of women's liberation.

⁸ Edgar, Adrienne. “Bolshevism, Patriarchy, and the Nation: The Soviet ‘Emancipation’ of Muslim Women in Pan-Islamic Perspective.” In *Slavic Review*, 65, no. 2 (2006): 252–72, <https://doi.org/10.2307/4148592>.

⁹ Kindler, Robert. “Chapter 2. Soviet Rule in the Steppe.” In *Stalin's Nomads: Power and Famine in Kazakhstan*. Translated by Cynthia Klohr. University of Pittsburgh Press, 2018.

¹⁰ Ubiria, Grigol. “Chapter 10. Soviet emancipation of Kazakh and Uzbek women.” In *Soviet Nation-Building in Central Asia: The Making of the Kazakh and Uzbek Nations*. Routledge, 2016.

¹¹ Massel, Gregory. “Part 3. Moslem Women as a Surrogate Proletariat: Soviet Perceptions of Female Inferiority.” In *The Surrogate Proletariat*. Princeton University Press, 1974.

¹² Ubiria, “Soviet emancipation of Kazakh and Uzbek women,” 189

To eradicate nomadic backwardness, “Communists tried to disseminate their agenda for progress, particularly among women.”¹³ During this emancipation movement, unveiling became a symbol of freedom in Central Asian countries such as Uzbekistan. For example, in Soviet films of the 1930s, transformation is usually shown in a scene of happy women without the hijab, working or studying.¹⁴ However, Kazakh women's head scarves were worn not for religious purposes but as a part of a nomadic lifestyle, to cover their faces and heads from harsh weather conditions. Thus, the Bolsheviks “could not exploit the traditional veil as a symbol of female suppression.”¹⁵ Political activists had to address additional concerns, including bride pricing (*kalym*) and polygamy. However, this initiative was not well received by the common folk. According to Northrop, women who were unveiled were refused burial in rural Zarafshon province. Uzbek traditionalists correlated unveiling with “prostitution, dishonor, corruption, even loss of nationality.”¹⁶ Also, the emancipation movement seemed to be unsuccessful, as even party members in Central Asian regions did not adhere to the laws. “Comrade Mukshchev from Akmolinsk, for example, paid *kalym* for a fifteen-year-old girl who became his second wife,”¹⁷ and even the regional party secretary, who knew about it, did not intervene. Thus, demonstrating that the women's emancipation was not going as planned, but the topic is still part of Soviet art, perhaps to promote the idea for the common folk.

¹³ Kindler, “Soviet Rule in the Steppe,” 36

¹⁴ Gradskova, Yulia. “Opening the (Muslim) Woman’s Space—The Soviet Politics of Emancipation in the 1920s–1930s.” In *Ethnicities*, 20, no. 4 (2020): 667–84, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468796820905030>.

¹⁵ Kindler, “Soviet Rule in the Steppe,” 37

¹⁶ Northrop, Douglas. “Chapter 9. Stalin’s Central Asia.” In *Veiled Empire: Gender and Power in Stalinist Central Asia*. Cornell University Press, 2016, <https://doi.org/10.7591/j.ctvrf8cpn>.

¹⁷ Kindler, “Soviet Rule in the Steppe,” 37

Image of Working Women

The unveiling of women was a common image used in the regions of Central Asia, such as Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, where the veil had religious value. The transformation is usually shown in a scene of happy women without the hijab, working or studying. Such images are prevalent in Soviet films of the 1930s; to demonstrate it, Gradskova uses the example of the film “The Other Life,” produced in 1930 in Azerbaijan. The film “shows women as totally invisible under their clothes at the beginning of the film, but shows the open smiling faces of Azeri female students of a technical school (*rabfak*) in the second part of the film.”¹⁸

However, in the regions where the veil was not a prevalent image, equality was demonstrated through the image of working women. It was one of the ways to approach women's emancipation in Russian culture, and, respectively, in Kazakhstan too, as the veil in Kazakh culture was not necessarily a religious headwear but a cultural one. In Soviet society, the image of working women was an answer to the growing demand. According to Fitzpatrick, the beginning of the socialistic rule became the reason for the new social trend of the absent father, as “in the 1920s, Communist attitudes toward the family were often hostile. ‘Bourgeois’ and ‘patriarchal’ were two words often coupled with ‘family.’ ”¹⁹ As a response to the changing social norms, the male population was no longer bound to their responsibilities of providing for their families, which was forced by patriarchal society. Therefore, women were forced to work to provide for their families instead of the absent male provider. To accommodate the new changes, the government rethought women’s role, creating a new image. “Women were consistently represented...as the nobler, suffering sex, capable of greater endurance and self-sacrifice, pillars

¹⁸ Gradskova, Yulia. “Opening the (Muslim) Woman’s Space—The Soviet Politics of Emancipation in the 1920s–1930s.” In *Ethnicities*, 20, no. 4 (2020): 667–84, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468796820905030>.

¹⁹ Fitzpatrick, Sheila. “*Everyday Stalinism*.” Oxford University Press, 2000, 142.

of the family,”²⁰ and as the ‘pillars of the family,’ most Soviet women became the sole breadwinner for families, and in the course of the 1930s, “almost ten million women entered the labor market for the first time,”²¹ creating the demand for representation by the image of working women.

It was not the sole reason for the emergence of the new image. Certainly, not all families were left without a male breadwinner, but even married women were seeking an occupation as “a way of connecting with the new Soviet society,”²² and the emergence of the wives’ volunteer movement accommodated those needs. However, by the late 1930s, the wives’ movement began to focus on women learning traditionally male skills, such as driving, flying, and operating machinery. This was partly in response to the imminence of war and the need to prepare women to take over men's roles.²³ Therefore, the working woman's image was promoted as a way to demonstrate that women were happy with new social changes that allowed them to be equal to men. Even though in reality, the image was created because of the negative social trend of absent fathers, and as a response to the imminence of war.

For example, Plungyan describes the art pieces drawn at the time of the introduction of the idea of emancipating Soviet women.²⁴ Most of the images showcase working women, such as factory workers, bus conductors, or party members. The poses of women in art pieces demonstrate heroism; they are ready to take action, and their stances create an image of confidence. When it comes to facial expression, some of them are happy even if their faces are smeared with soot, or their faces have serious and determined expressions. These visual

²⁰ Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, 143.

²¹ Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, 139.

²² Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, 141.

²³ Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, 141.

²⁴ Плунгян, Надежда. *Рождение советской женщины: Работница, крестьянка, летчица, «бывшая» и другие в искусстве 1917 – 1939 годов*. Гараж. 2022.

illustrations serve the same purpose as the literary pieces analyzed in this paper, promoting a new governmental vision where women are equal to men.

One of the authors who was published at the time was Aimankul Tazhibayeva, the mother of popular Kazakh writer Abdilda Tazhibayev. In Tazhibayeva's poem "True Heart," published in 1938, she narrates the socio-political changes in the lives of Kazakh women after the introduction of a new constitution by writing, "Let me be the first, / Let me say that I began the song."²⁵ Her narration from the beginning introduces readers to the strong female leader who is ready to shout about modernization from the top of her lungs, which highly corresponds to the description of artworks Plungyan provided in her book. Tazhibayeva creates an imagery of strong and confident women; however, this raises a question of whether it is a true feminist revolution or the poem bears only a propagandistic nature. In the second part of the poem, Tazhibayeva focuses on the image of working women.

If she becomes a seeder,
There will be a million bags of grain,
If she becomes a milkmaid,
There will be a spring of milk.
The steel tractor,
It's just a draught horse for them.
And they will be faster than the wind.

While writing about the working woman, the author clearly intends to focus more on the image of the woman who does hard labor. It is as if she is inviting women to seek the path of the working class because it is possible for Kazakh women to outstand others in their field. Thus, it created an image of a new working class that would support the Bolsheviks' ideology, that is designed as a "relief" for the pain of the proletariat that struggled from imperial injustice and class division. Tazhibayeva mentions occupations such as engineer, doctor, and teacher,

²⁵ See Appendix

demonstrating that now everything is possible for Kazakh women and they can benefit society. However, those lines are closely correlated with the image of the elderly and mothers. For example, in the poem, women engineers will build castles for mothers, while teachers will teach elderly people. It is interesting, as in modernity, the image of the teachers is usually correlated with teaching youth. Thus, the author meant that the new generation of educated Soviet youth would teach the older generation about the justness of communism. The author wrote about her dreamlike state to demonstrate how this transformation of women into the working class affected her.

Even in my dreams
I've never ever
Would've thought
To see all of that

These lines also add to the propagandistic character of the poem, implying that without the Soviet Union and Stalin, women could have never been free from traditional societal norms, but now they can work and benefit the country on a par with men. To accentuate this idea, the author seems to use real cases of women who were awarded in their field. For instance, she mentions Salikha, a woman who became a leader of her local collective farm, and Kulash, who got an *orden* for her power. At first, it can be seen as important information, as perhaps those women were real-life people whose stories were used as an image of gender equality. However, these women could also be just imaginary examples to showcase the greatness of the New Law. Interestingly enough, Ziyash Kalauova, born in 1921, also uses the same method in her work.

Maria is enjoying
Her 5000 som
How will she not enjoy it?
This income, this number,
It was only possible
Because of the sunrise in October

Maria can now bask in its light
The Stalinist New Law

Kalauova uses the name Maria as if it is the story of “real” women who flourished because of the new constitution. Maria, the character, was able to make money and was even gifted medals for her hard work. Even though these names could be fake, they give a sense of reality to the examples, making readers believe that if they work, too, they will earn money based on merit.

In the last part of her poem, Tazhibayeva mentions the possibility of war by saying “- If your enemy pursues your prize / ' What will you do?' - asks me.” The image of war is highly related to the Soviet discourse, as the rapid industrialization process in the USSR was important for future war preparations. This discourse was introduced with Stalin’s leadership. In one of his first speeches in the early 1930s, he emphasized the significance of heavy industrialization as a means of catching up with global leaders' production volumes and fighting back during warfare. Thus, mentioning warfare in the late 30s does not seem out of place as Stalin was preparing for it after the end of World War I .

Thus, the author invites women to be part of the future war the state is preparing for.

When the war day comes,
Women like Kulash will not sit at home
And look up to the men.
Thousands, and even millions
Of women will make an army.

Thus, Tazhibayeva uses women's emancipation reform as a way to invite women to participate in war, noting that women no longer seek a man for protection. They are self-sufficient enough to even go to war and fight on par with men. Taking into account the lyrics and their correlation with the Soviet identity, I can conclude that the gender equality reform seems to be not only a way of modernizing society but also a way to increase the workforce by including women in the

equation. Thus, Aimankul Tazhibayeva's poem is propaganda that women wrote to enhance the idea that women are happy to work for the benefit of society and even die at war for those ideals.

The next poem was written by Maira Zhansayeva, who was born in 1909, and was published in the same issue as Aimankul Tazhibayeva, with her poem "Live on My Sun, Stalin!" All of these literary pieces demonstrate the same image of working women who, if needed, will go to war, which makes these poems comparable. As a consequence of the implementation of the new law, Zhansayeva, in her poem, describes how women's lives changed. The author begins with the preface, "By making women equal to men, // Everyone became happier."²⁶ Kalauova also demonstrates the happiness of the women through her poem.

Today's woman
Grew up in happiness
Kulyan smiles like the Sun
Zlikha is shining
Kulan's hair is blooming

This image of happiness is linked to the ability of women to work and decide for themselves. Like both Tazhibayeva's and Kalauova's poems, Zhansayeva's poem has the same image of working women.

I can also find oil
By mastering the machines.
I can also mine the coal
With my sharp pickaxe.

In these lines, the author not only wrote about new working opportunities for women, who could now work in previously male-dominated spheres, but also demonstrated the technology-centered ideology of the Soviet Union. Under Stalin's leadership, the nation was highly industrialized to prepare for future war. The theme of mobilization was also introduced in the poem through the lines "Hand in hand with men, // I can also go to the front," which was the case both with

²⁶ See Appendix

Aimankul Tazibayeva's poem "True Heart" and Ziyash Kalayova's poem, which is too, touches on the war theme, as she wrote, "I will protect my homeland /Till I'll be left with a spoonful of blood." These similarities in using the same images to build a narrative of the happy state demonstrate the importance of working women in promoting equality in the state.

Mother's Archetype

However, after the years of building the image of the “courageous daughter” in 1929-1935, after 1936, it was forcibly adjusted in accordance with the new norm-image of the mother.²⁷ The mother archetype is one of the common images applied to women characters in literature worldwide. There are a lot of reasons behind it; however, in Soviet literary practice, the occurrence of the image reverts to pre-Soviet history. According to Gunther, the mother's archetype was already in use before the Soviet canons, and the image took its roots in Russian religious cultures: first in paganism and later in Orthodox Christianity. In paganistic culture, the image of the mother was bound to the fertility of the land, developing established expressions in the Russian language such as *Rodina-mat'* (motherland) and *Zemlya-mat'* (Mother Earth); and in Christianity, the image of Mary as the mother of Jesus, only reinforced the existence of the mother's image in literature. Both of these images were heavily transformed in the context of Soviet culture as part of the canon-creation process. Gorky's “Mother,” according to Gunther, was declared an exemplary literary piece of a socialist realistic novel; and built a canon of future literary texts in the genre of social realism. Gorky's novel, as the name suggests, revolved around the mother's image as the main character was educating his mother on the rightful way of communism. Sinyavsky, the literary critic of the 20th century, described the mother in the novel as a character who follows her heart; she is driven primarily by her love for her son, and the very ideas of social democracy are not ideas, but the faith of the heart.²⁸ Probably, this idea of being a “true believer” of the socialism from bottom of the heart made Gorky's novel the first in the genre as the author depicts ideologically driven character, which probably cemented the image of mother into Soviet literature. The image of communist youth educating the elderly population

²⁷ Plungyan, Рождение совесткой женщины, 139.

²⁸ Синявский, Андрей. “Роман Горького Мать - как ранний образец социалистического реализма.” In *Cahiers du Monde russe et soviétique*, XX (1988): 33-40.

created a canon in Soviet literature. This image was used both in Tazhibayeva's and Kalayova's poems, but from opposite perspectives: while Tazhibayeva was giving her blessing to communist youth, Kalayova was writing that she would educate the elderly to be communists. Gorky created an image of a mother that will follow her child into the new socialistic world. Thus, the mother's archetype was established in Soviet literature.

Literary canon was important in totalitarian governments like the Soviet Union, as texts were a way of controlling the mindset of the nation. For example, in 1935/36, the literary pieces were influenced by the extreme narrowing of the canon, which restricted the authors and dictated what they must write. The poems analyzed in the paper were written in 1938, thus, they lie in that category, explaining why these pieces had recurring themes and images.

However, the employment of the mother's image was not only because of the creation of the literary canon. It is also bound to socio-political changes in the 1930s happening in the Soviet Union. As the working woman's image, the mother's image was a response to the new law enforcement, which created the biggest contradiction in the women's emancipation movement. Even though the New Constitution stated that women and men are equal in their rights. The Bolshevik Party denied women in right to choose whether to be a mother or not. "In May 1936, the government put out a draft law to strengthen the family, whose most notorious aspect was the prohibition of abortion."²⁹ Initially, traditional family structures were challenged, but the state later implemented pro-family measures like outlawing abortion and increasing child support, aiming to boost birth rates. "In the mid-1930s, the Soviet state moved to a positive pro-family and pro-natalist stance, outlawing abortion in 1936, making divorce harder to obtain and more costly..."³⁰ (p.142) So, the role of the mother was "superior" because of renewed patriarchal

²⁹ Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, 152.

³⁰ Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, 142.

tendencies in the Soviet Union but still parallel to it some emphasized women's role in the workforce. This contradiction is reflected in the mixed messages conveyed through state policies and propaganda.

One of the main similarities between Aimankul Tazhibayeva's poem and Maira Zhansayeva's work is the usage of the mother's image. In Zhansayeva's poem, this image is showcased through the description of happy mothers watching over their pioneer children.

Happy children,
Wearing their necktie,
And their mothers, too
Rejoice with them.

Her poem begins with those lines as if suggesting two groups of people who benefited from the New Law. The younger generation will now study in schools, and the mothers can be proud of their children.

In Tazhibayeva's poem, the image of a mother is woven into the narration, meaning that she is telling a story from her own perspective, where she is a mother who is happy with the opportunities given to young girls.

One of them is an engineer.
About to build a golden palace.
For mothers

Thus, "emulating" the mother could be one of the ways women wrote in the Soviet Union. Thus, the mother's image became one of the prevalent archetypes for Soviet literature.

Stalin's Image in Poems

Soviet literature is mostly criticized because social realism does not depict the individualism of the author; however, according to Dobrenko, social realism is always about mass wishes. Dobrenko characterizes social realism as a contract between authorities and native speakers, which adapts new native speakers to the context of social realism and includes them in it. Thus, the authority is the one who “writes” and dictates what social realism is. The main function of the literature is to bond the masses into one discourse. So, the nature of social realism implies its tight connection to the authorities, which is probably the main reason for the implementation of the image of the *vozhd'* (chief) into the literature. According to Dobrenko, the syndrome of the cult of personality is part of the mass consciousness that is also seen in Soviet literature. Therefore, the 30s in the Soviet Union were not only about the women's emancipation movement but also introduced a new type of poetry, Staliniana, the poetry that emerged as part of Stalin's cult of personality. However, the image of Stalin as the leader did not emerge from poetry but from the party elites themselves as in their speeches the praise of the leader was a common practice that derived from the hierarchical structure of the society where the peak is the leader that has “the pathological desire to flaunt oneself, to turn oneself into a permanent spectacle.”³¹ Thus, the image of Stalin in the literature was a part of the discourse that tried to create a “portrait of the chief,” which they were not able to achieve in seventy years because of its unattainability. However, its existence is important in the context of the “permanent representation of the authority” that social realism ensured.

Staliniana contributed significantly to the “ideological arsenal” of Soviet art and the development of the imperial imaginary. The “thematic unity of fraternal literatures” (literatures

³¹ Добренко, Евгений. *Метафора Власти. Литература Сталинской эпохи в историческом освещении*. Verlag Otto Sagner. 1993

of Soviet nationalities), which from the start were fixated on the glorification of the leader, fully met the tasks of forming a new identity of the Soviet peoples, to whom, instead of sovereignty, it was offered literature. Staliniana becomes the foundation of the “large family” culture, which includes an older brother, the Russian people, a mother, the country, and a father, Stalin.³²

This representation guarantees the recurrence of the themes and methods in creating the literary pieces, and according to Lekmanov, this type of poetry has recurring themes, symbolism, and descriptions. For example, when mentioning Stalin’s biography Soviet pre-war poets, judging by their poems, added episodes such as Stalin’s childhood in the Caucasus, the image of Stalin oath-taking over Lenin's body, and the creation of the Constitution of the USSR, adopted by the VIII Extraordinary Congress of Soviets on December 5, 1936;³³ and Stalin's various “resemblances” to natural phenomena are common in the poems of the 1930s. There are many examples from the poems of the 1930s in which Stalin is compared with the Sun.³⁴ In addition to Lekmanov’s description of Staliniana, Plamper identifies some components that were important in creating the cult of personality. Firstly, Stalin’s modesty, which was an important factor at the beginning of the cult's creation, as modesty, even fake in nature, gives people a sense of the rightfulness of praising Stalin.³⁵ Also, the curation of the cult was one of the important components in producing a successful cult. When mentioning the curation, Kozitskaya’s article helps to understand some of the methods used by the center to demonstrate the loyalty of the

³² Добренко, Евгений. “Найдено в переводе: рождение советской многонациональной литературы из смерти автора.” Новое литературное обозрение. 2011, 78 (4)

³³ Лекманов, Олег. “Сталинская «ода.» Стихотворение Мандельштама «Когда б я уголь взял для высшей похвалы...» на фоне поэтической сталинианы 1937 года.” *Новый Мир* 1, no.3 (March 2015): https://magazines.gorky.media/novyi_mi/2015/3/stalinskaya-oda.html

³⁴ Лекманов, “Сталинская ода,” 1

³⁵ Plamper, Jan. “The Political Is Personal, Art Is Political Stalin, the Cult, and Patronage.” In *The Stalin Cult: A Study in the Alchemy of Power*. Yale University and the Board of Trustees of the Leland Stanford Jr. University, 2012.

periphery. Kozitskaya differentiates national and soviet characteristics of texts. For example, in fake translations from Kazakh to Russian, most Kazakh words such as *sorpa* (broth), *kyzyl asker* (red army), and *batyr* (hero) were left as it is, even though they have Russian analogs.³⁶

According to Kozitskaya, it was made to give texts national characteristics and demonstrate the exotic nature of the nation. Through these, the text will preserve its national characteristics to demonstrate the nation's support for the center.

Zhansayeva's poem "Live on My Sun, Stalin!" perfectly exemplifies Staliniana. The author's poem revolves around Stalin's image, praising his leadership or comparing him to inanimate objects such as the Sun. Before Stalin became the leader of the nation, the same type of poetry was written to praise Lenin and was called, accordingly, Leniniana poetry. This type of poetry revolved around the cult of personality and was popular among poets of the 20s and 30s. There are other properties inherent to this type of poetry, which will be discussed through the example of Zhansayeva's poem.

One of the properties of Staliniana is comparing Stalin to outstanding inanimate objects. The usual comparison is to the Sun, which is already present in the title of the poem "Live on My Sun, Stalin!" However, Zhansayeva only intensified that comparison by making Stalin's image outshine these objects.

He is better than the Moon,
Floating in the sky.
He is better than the Sun,
The kindest man alive.

Zhansayeva does not compare him to the Sun or the Moon but writes that he is even better than that. However, before that, she also mentions that Stalin is "A great man taller than mountains."

³⁶ Козицкая, Юлия. "«Песня моя, ты лети по аулам...»: комментарий к переводным сборникам казахской поэзии 1930-х годов." In *Текстология и историко - литературный процесс. Выпуск VI*, edited by Ульяна Башко et. al, 157-165. Буки Веди, 2018.

This mentioning of mountains can be described as a national tendency for the Kazakh authors, or this comparison is perhaps derived because Stalin originally was from the Caucasus region, which is known for its mountains. This comparison perhaps meant that Stalin was special to his fellow countrymen, making him the perfect leader of the nation.

Zhansayeva's poem is full of "comparisons." Several lines of her poem are written through syntactic repetition of the sentence structure "is/are better than ...". In the poem, Stalin's words are better than brilliant; they are better than honey, and his presence is better than stars and better than the nightingale's singing. Some of these comparisons have a national essence, as usually, Kazakhs utilize the term sweeter than honey (*bal dai tattı*) only in accordance with mother's milk, and the nightingale is an important image in Kazakh literature; thus, its singing is described as the most captivating one. These types of national comparisons are important to note. They prove that national symbolism in Soviet literary texts was an important component of writing under Soviet propaganda. The idea behind the usage of national symbols is that it should demonstrate that the center supports the national identity of each state, and they, in turn, support the Bolsheviks' ideology through the employment of their national identity in literary works.

The recognition of a new constitution positively changing the life of the Soviet people is one of the features inherent to Staliana poetry. In the poem, Zhansayeva has lines such as "Happy Homeland, New Law" or "After one year of law, // It gave happiness to all." Through such lines, the author seems to legitimize the new constitution in the eyes of common folk. Also, Zhansayeva wrote that Stalin "Gave law and one heart, // To all nations of the Soviet." These lines correspond to the Soviet ideology that all nations under the USSR are one family that does not allow nationalism and racial discrimination. Thus, through the Constitution, and thanks to the author of these laws, Stalin, nations were united.

Kalauova's text also recognizes the Constitution as something that changed life for the better and even as the reason for joy.

The joy got over my mind,
I'm a renewed New Man,
The Stalinist New Law
Rejuvenated my vast country

As Zhansayeva, Ziyash Kalauova uses the same phrase, "New Law," which is one of the key events in Stalin's biography, thus, the mentioning of it already presents the poem as Staliniana. However, Kalauova also praises Stalin directly by writing: "Live on my sun and teacher /My light, Stalin!" It is a typical nature-like characteristic of Stalin, but Kalauova also calls him a teacher, which was not present in the two other poems. Though this can be related to the fact that Ziyash is from the younger generation of Soviet people, compared to other poetesses. This also explains the fact that her poem has the most "Sovietized" images. For example, she often mentioned the "October sunrise," implying the October Revolution that changed her life for the better. Also, in her poem, she is happy that "The city around Kolkhoz raised /And now children of the country /Study in the school, not the mosques." In this part, she mentions the collectivization process that created collective farms as something positive, as children will now get secular education instead of a religious one, which is a very Sovietized outlook to reality.

In Tazhibayeva's text, images that fit into the Soviet discourse are also present. For example, the author wrote "Taking up the Red Flag," meaning a flag of the Soviet Union, also uses words such as *orden* (award), which is the usual reward for the Soviet people who made something extraordinary as exceeding a plan for crop collection. However, one of the prominent features of the text is using Stalin's image and praising his abilities as a leader, which is a common element in the literature of the Stalinist era.

Let Stalin hear the song,

Let Stalin hear the kui,
Let Stalin see the country,
And I will shake the leader's hand.
And say "You're the one,
Who made it for us?"

In the excerpt, the author gives Stalin an extraordinary ability to hear and see something happening in the periphery when Stalin was in the center, in Moscow. Also, the author calls Stalin *uly kosem* (the great leader) in several instances throughout the poem, showcasing the prime example of the cult of personality that revolved around Stalin during the Stalinist period. However, Tazhibayeva not only praised Stalin as a leader but also wrote about the happy life she was living as a Soviet Union citizen.

My clothes are made from expensive fabrics,
I have an endless, tasty meal on a plate.
I have my country in the light of the sun,
There is endless gold in mines.

The notion of having an endless amount of food is ridiculous in terms of the history of the Soviet Union, as in the early 1930s, there was a huge famine in the peripheries caused by the collectivization process. However, this notion is still part of the Soviet discourse, especially of the magic tablecloth concept. According to Fitzpatrick, the concept started to occur after Stalin's phrase in his speech in 1935, "Life has become better, comrades; life has become more cheerful"(p.90) This phrase was part of Soviet propaganda and the favorite slogan of the 1930s that was everywhere "run as a banner headline in newspapers to mark the New Year, displayed in parks and labor camps, quoted in speeches, ... and sometimes angrily mimicked by those whose lives had not become better." (p.90) Thus, Tazhibayeva is demonstrating that everything is good in the Soviet Union, even though it was not the case in reality. This is a clear example of the Sovietized text that also refers to Stalin and his speech. One more Soviet feature in this excerpt is

mentioning the gold mine industry, which is important in the Soviet discourse because the Bolshevik party's political agenda was heavily focused on rapid industrialization. There was a clear idea of wanting to conquer nature and take everything it offers. Except for the Soviet symbols, the poem also introduces readers to national features such as *kui*, the music that's played on *dombra*, the national string instrument, and in comparison to kneaded *jusan*, the mugwort, an aromatic plant that in Kazakh literature is usually associated with the smell of *aul* (village). Even though, all of those national images are present in the poem it is still correlate with the Soviet literary discourse, as the national *akyns* (poets) using national symbols were in demand by the center as it showcases the multinationality of the Soviet Union and gives the impression that the periphery supports Stalin and his ideas.

Discussion

The figure that is present in all the poems written by women in *Zhanga Adebiet* is Stalin. Stalin's image is so ingrained into the narration that it makes readers question what the main focus of those poetical pieces is: women's question, or is it just about praising Stalin? However, Stalin's figure is connected both with working women and the mother's image. Stalin's Constitution was not the first official document to propose women equal to men, as the women's question had long been discussed in the Soviet Union. However, these particular texts were published only after the Constitution was created, and before that, no Kazakh women's writings were published in the journal. After 1936, the literary pieces of women were published, and in all the texts, the phrase New Law was used several times, indicating Stalin's Constitution. Thus, the poetess seems to link their "newfound" equality with the Constitution and its creator, Stalin, even though in reality, the women's equality movement began long before Stalin came to rule over the state. This makes us assume that publishing poems written by women about women was an order from the state that the editorial board of *Zhanga Adebiet* should fulfill.

Nevertheless, the way the authors write about women's equality seemed curated. Three of them use similar images of Stalin as a great leader, the working woman image, or a mother's image, and the poems mention war and women being soldiers in the future. All of these are part of the official propaganda of the period thus, the authors seem to be trying to write works corresponding to the established literary canon, and they are probably adding the themes that are characteristic of Soviet literature. This shows that although women respond to the political agenda of gender issues, in their works, they replaced the topic of equality with the image of Stalin. So, the main focus of these literary pieces is indeed about praising Stalin, and the women's issue is only a part of Soviet propaganda and does not serve as true modernization of

the patriarchal state, as even in the images that are created to “support” women are paradoxical. Officially, a Soviet woman has equal rights to a man, and she can do whatever work she wants to do, but the party still translates the message that “a Soviet woman is not exempt from the great and honorable duty that nature has given her,” motherhood. This narrative that brought back the Soviet state from ‘modernization’ to the traditional patriarchal state that, according to Fitzpatrick, was called “bourgeois,” supports the fact that there was no feminist narrative in the Soviet Union, only its shell that was created to praise Stalin.

The relevance of the research lies in the fact that in the paper, I analyze the works of mostly unknown poetesses such as Ziyash Kalauova, Aimankul Tazhibayeva, and Maira Zhansayeva, which suggests their works haven't been widely studied before, at least in this specific context. Also, the study highlights that Kazakhstan had a unique situation regarding the veil compared to other Central Asian countries, as it was traditionally worn for cultural reasons rather than religious ones. This meant that the symbol of emancipation could not be the unveiling process, as it was elsewhere, which creates particular interest in how emancipation was depicted in Kazakh literature.

Conclusion

This academic paper analyzes the works of Kazakh female writers published in the literary journal *Zhanga Adebiet* during the 1930s, specifically examining how their poetry reflects the Stalinist ideology of women's rights written by Aimankul Tahibayeva, Maira Zhansayeva, and Ziyash Kalauova. The paper concludes that these works were less about genuine female empowerment and more about adhering to the rigid literary canons and propaganda of the time, particularly highlighting the pervasive theme of Stalin's cult of personality.

The results are limited by the fact that there is no possibility of understanding what the authors are driven by in writing those texts, as there is limited information about their biographies. It is also challenging to assess the readership and impact of these poems definitively. These limitations constrained my analysis to rely on informed assumptions, as definitive answers to many questions remain unattainable.

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Appendix

Айманкүл Тәжібаева - Шын жүрек

<p>Топ алдына шығайын, - Жыр бастаған, - мен! Дейін, Қызыл туды қолға алып,</p>	<p>Let me be the first, Let me say that I began the song. Taking up the Red Flag</p>
<p>Өнді естісін Сталин, Күйді естісін Сталин, Елді көрсін Сталин, Қолын қысып көсемінің - Осының бәрін біз үшін, Жасап берген Сен - дейін.</p>	<p>Let Stalin hear the song, Let Stalin hear the kui, Let Stalin see the country, And I will shake the leader's hand. And say "You're the one, Who made it for us."</p>
<p>Үлде мен бүлде киімім, Таусылмас тәтті асым бар. Бөленген нұрға елім бар, Таусылмас алтын кенім бар,</p>	<p>My clothes are made from expensive fabrics, I have an endless, tasty meal on a plate. I have my country in the light of the sun, There is endless gold in mines.</p>
<p>Егін ексе, еңсеріп Алады астық мың-мың қап. Сауыншы болса, өндіріп Ағызғаны - сүт бұлақ. Асыл темір трактор, Олар үшін жегін ат. Жеткізбей желге зулайды</p>	<p>If she becomes a seeder, There will be a million bags of grain, If she becomes a milkmaid, There will be a spring of milk. The steel tractor, It's just a draught horse for them. And they will be faster than the wind.</p>
<p>Біреуі жүр инженер Алтын сарай салғалы. Аналарға арналған Нақыштайды орданы. Енді бірі дәрігер Саулығымның сардары, Ажал менен алысып Артылтады олжаны, Енді бірі оқытад Кемпір менен шалдарды, Танытады күнде айтып</p>	<p>One of them is an engineer About to build a golden palace. For mothers The hordes of engravers. Now, one of them is a doctor The soldier of my health, Fights death Increases the benefit, Now, one of them is a teacher Teaches all day long All the elderly people</p>

Республикам ішінде. Жарап шықты Салиқам Думанға ұлы түсуге. Орден тақты Күләшім От болған соң күшінде.	In our Republic Saliha showed the best performance. ... Kulash got awarded For her fiery power
Осыншалық қызықты - Көремін деп ойлап па ем, Өңім түгіл түсімде.	Even in my dreams I've never ever Would've thought To see all of that
- Олжаңа жау ұмтылса Қайтесін? - дейді сұраулар,	- If your enemy pursues your prize What will you do? - asks me.
Кезекті күні келгенде, Еркекке ғана иек артып Отырмас үйде Күләштар. Мың-мың емес, миллиондап Әйелден отряд құрылар	When the war day comes, Women like Kulash will not sit at home And look up to the men. Thousands, and even millions Of women will make an army.

Майра Жансаева - Көп жаса күнім Сталин!

Галстугі мойнында Қуанышты балалар, Шаттыққа тегіс бөленіп, Қуанған жарқын аналар.	Happy children, Wearing their necktie, And their mothers, too Rejoice with them.
Жамбылдай қартты сайратқан, Бақытты Отан, Жаңа заң, Гүл бақшаны жайнатқан, Асқардан биік Ұлы адам.	Zhambyl is singing about Happy Homeland, New Law, A great man taller than mountains, Flowered the garden.
Асыл сөзін көсемнің Гауһардан артық көремін, Оқып дәмін татқанда Балдан да артық көремін.	The noble words of a leader They are greater than brilliants. When you learn them by heart. They are greater than honey.
Көк әлемін көркейткен, Жұлдыздан артық көремін, Таң алдында сайраған Бұлбұлдан артық көремін.	He is greater than a star, That makes words beautiful. He is greater than a nightingale, That is singing before the dawn

Аспанда жүзген жарқырап, Айдан да артық көремін. Ол адамды мейірімді Күннен де артық көремін.	He is better than the Moon, Floating in the sky. He is better than the Sun, The kindest man alive.
Адамның бақыт шырағы, Сол көсемді жырлауға Асылын төгіп ойымның Алтын сөзін теремін.	The candle of human happiness, To sing the same leader To learn his noble words As if it were the word of gold.
Жырым төгіл меруерттей, Әнім оттай жалқы да. Заңым жылға толғанда Бақыт берген қалқыма.	My song is shining pearls, My song is as avid as fire. After one year of law, It gave happiness to all.
Барлық ұлттың қалқына Бердің заң мен бір жүрек, Әнге қосып атыңды Сайрайтын көпте бір тілек.	Gave law and one heart, To all nations of the Soviet. I will sing about you With the voice of many.
Бақытын талдап адамның Ұсындың сүйген қалқыңа, Әйелді ермен теңгеріп, Шаттық бердің жалпыға.	You offered happiness To your beloved nation By making women equal to men, Everyone became happier
Қол ұстасып ерлер мен, Майданға да бара алам. Құрыш құсқа мініп ап, Айдан да асып қарақам.	Hand in hand with men, I can also go to the front. Riding on an armored bird, I will fly over the Moon.
Техникені меңгеріп, Мұнайды да таба алам. Қылыштан өткір қайла мен, Көмірді де шаба алам.	I can also find oil By mastering the machines. I can also mine the coal. With my sharp pickaxe.

Зияш Қалаубаева - Жасасың біздің Жаңа Заң!

Балқытып тұла бойымды, Қуаныш билеп ойымды, Мен жанарған жаңа адам, Жасартқан байтақ елімді Өршіткен өткір өмірді Көтерген көкке көңілді	It melted through my body, The joy got over my mind, I'm a renewed New Man, The Stalinist New Law Rejuvenated my vast country Progressed the sharp life
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Сталиндік жаңа заң.	Raised to the sky, the mood
Су ағып сырғып арықта Өлшеу мен ізбен қалыпта Көгере түсті сол далам. Жерден жинап жемісті Мыңдаған көп егісті, Калхозда енген барлық жан;	Water slides and flows in a ditch ... The fields started to blossom. We collect fruits from the ground Thousands more sowed, Everyone is in Kalhoz.
Мәрийә отыр жиында, Табысы көп мұнында, Көрсеткен өзін күшімен, Өнімді беріп ісімен, Озып шықты биылда.	Maria sits at the meeting, Here, her wages are high, She earned it all with her hard work, She collected the most products And became the first this time
Масайрайды Мәрийә 5000 сом боп табысы, Масайратпай қайтеді, Мына табыс мына сан, Бұл табысқа ие еткен. Октябрьда атқан таң, Мәрийәні нұрға бөлеген Сталиндік жаңа заң.	Maria is enjoying Her 5000 som How will she not enjoy it? This income, this number, It was only possible Because of the sunrise in October Maria can now bask in its light The Stalinist New Law
Іздеген еңбек табылып, Төсіне орден тағынып Күлімдеп көзі жайнаған Әйелдің бірі Зыбайра.	She found a job when she wanted She now has an orden on her chest She is the one smiling And she is one of the women - Zybaira
Пәтима, Жамал басқарма Өседі өршіп қайнайды;	Fatima and Zhamal are in governance Rampantly grows and boils
Бүгінгі таңда әйелдер Бақытта өскен жаңа жан, Күндей күледі Күләнда Нұрдай жайнап Зылыяқа Құлаң шашы құлпырып,	Today's woman Grew up in happiness Kulyan smiles like the Sun Zlikha is shining Kulan's hair is blooming

<p>Калхоздың өсті қаласы, Мешітке емес мектепте, Оқиды елдің баласы.</p>	<p>The city around Kolkhoz raised And now children of the country Study in the school, not the mosques</p>
<p>Отанымды қорғаймын, Қалғанынша қасық қан.</p>	<p>I will protect my homeland Till I'll be left with a spoonful of blood</p>
<p>Жасасын күнім, ұстазым, Көңілдің нұры Сталин!</p>	<p>Live on my sun and teacher My light, Stalin!</p>