

The Unveiling Campaign in Uzbekistan and Its Local Support

Özbekistan’da Kadınların Çarşaflarını Çıkarma Politikası ve Bu Politikaya Yerel Desteğin İncelenmesi

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ABSTRACT

In the early Soviet Union, Tajik and Uzbek women in Central Asia traditionally wore garments called Paranji and Chachvon, which completely covered their heads and bodies. One of the Bolsheviks' policies in the region was the liberation of women, including efforts to modernize them by removing the paranji. The Hujum campaign, aimed at removing women's paranji, was officially launched on March 8, 1927. However, many women who removed their paranji were killed or subjected to violence by locals. It is a matter of debate among scholars whether this violence was a reaction by the local population against Soviet policies or whether it reflected internal conflicts among Uzbeks. While not all locals supported the campaign, people who defended traditionalism opposed this campaign and tried to prevent women from removing their paranji. However, some locals supported efforts to modernize women's roles. This study addresses the Hujum campaign and different scholarly perspectives on it, analyzing the writings of some locals and the essays written mostly by female activists in the Yangi Yo'l journal between 1926 and 1934. By exploring these sources, the study demonstrates that, despite the opposition, there were also some female activists and locals who supported the Hujum campaign and sought reform.

Keywords: Hujum/ The Assault campaign, Yangi Yo'l Journal, Woman, Central Asia, Uzbekistan

ÖZ

Sovyetler Birliğinin kurulduğu yıllarda Orta Asya’da, genelde Tacik ve Özbek kadınları, başlarını ve vücutlarını tamamen örten, paranji ve chachvon olarak adlandırılan kıyafet giymektedirler. Sovyetler birliğinin kurulmasıyla bölgede aktif siyaset yürüten Bolşeviklerin bölge ile ilgili politikalarından birisi de kadınların paranjilerinin çıkartılması ile ilgili olan Hujum kampanyasıdır. Resmi olarak 8 Mart 1927’de başlatılan kampanya neticesinde, paranjilerini çıkartan pek çok kadın yerel halk tarafından şiddete maruz kalmış ya da öldürülmüştür. Sovyetlerin Hujum kampanyasının yanı sıra, kadınlara karşı yapılan bu şiddet akademisyenler arasında incelenmiş, özellikle bu şiddetin Sovyetlerin politikalarına karşı yerel

halkın tepkisi mi yoksa yenileşme taraftarı Özbeklerin geleneksel Özbeklerle mi çatıştığı akademisyenler arasında fikir ayrılımlarına sebep olmuştur. Özellikle eski sistemde devam etmek isteyen, gelenekselliği savunan kimseler hujum kampanyasına karşı çıkmış ve kadınların paranjilerini çıkartmaması için çabalamıştır. Ama bu durum yerel halkın tamamının kampanyaya karşı olduğu anlamına gelmez. Hujum kampanyasını destekleyen halktan kimseler de bulunmaktadır. Bu çalışma hujum kampanyasını destekleyen ve reform isteyen kadın aktivistler basta olmak üzere paranji çıkartma kampanyasına destek verenlerin yazılarını inceleyecektir. Bu amaçla bu çalışmada hujum kampanyası ve bununla ilgili akademisyenlerin farklı görüşlerine değinilecek ve yerel halktan kimselerin yazdığı kadınların özgürleştirilmesi ile ilgili yazıları ve 1926-34 yılları arasında yayınlanan, çoğunlukla kadın aktivistler tarafından yazılan Yangi Yo'l dergisinin yazıları analiz edilecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Hujum Kampanyası, Yangi Yo'l Dergisi, Kadın, Orta Asya, Özbekistan

Introduction

In the early 1900s, Tajik and Uzbek women wore burka-like garments called paranji and chachvon, which covered the entire body, head, and face, including the eyes. When the Soviet Union was founded, it developed many policies regarding Central Asia, some of which focused on women's emancipation.¹ One such policy was the unveiling campaign, aimed at removing paranji and chachvon from women. The campaign, known as the Hujum (assault), was initiated by the Communist Party leadership in Moscow with input from the Women's Division and members of the Central Asia Bureau.²³ It encompassed the Soviet Union's early period policies in Central Asia aimed at bringing gender equality to the region. The assault was not only about unveiling but also about transforming women's social and political lives, including aspects such as education and marriage.⁴ Despite its broader perspective, the symbolic focus of the campaign was on unveiling.⁵

March 8th, 1927, International Women's Day marked the beginning of a "new life" for Central Asian women, particularly Uzbek women. Tashkent, Samarqand, Kokand, and Andijan witnessed numerous public meetings where women threw off their paranji,⁶ initiating the official unveiling process for women. Gregory Massell described the day as follows: "On the morning of March 8, a massive outpouring of crowds of Moslem women was organized in major Uzbek cities. Led by Zhenotdel⁷ activist, and protected by police cordons, they marched

- 1 Policies related to women were not limited to Central Asia. Throughout the Soviet Union, various initiatives were developed to liberate women and ensure their participation in the workforce. For detailed information on this subject, see the following sources: Barbara Evans Clements, *A History of Women in Russia* (Indiana University Press, 2012)/ Wendy Z. Goldman, *Women, the State, and Revolution: Soviet Family Policy and Social Life, 1917-1936*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993)/ Lynsee Attwood, *Creating the New Soviet Woman: Women's Magazines As Engineers of Female Identity, 1922-1953* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999)/ Özge Öz, "Muslim Women in Central Asia: The Impact of Soviet Legacy" (Master Thesis, Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi, 2013)
- 2 Marianne Kamp, *The New Woman in Uzbekistan -Islam, Modernity, and Unveiling Under Communism-* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006) 150.
- 3 The Hujum campaign was launched under the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, which conducted detailed studies on the issue and implemented step by step policies. This article will not delve into the party's policies, as it focuses on local support for the unveiling campaign. For more on the party's policies and its role in this regard, see: Aminova, R. Kh., and Ė. İU İUsupov. *The October Revolution and Women's Liberation in Uzbekistan* (Moscow: Nauka Publishers, Central Dept. of Oriental Literature, 1985)112-117. / Tursunov, Kh. T., V. G Chebotareva, R. İA Radzhapova, and S. A Dmitrieva. *Khudzhum--Znachit Nastuplenie* (Tashkent: "Uzbekistan", 1987.)
- 4 Marianne Kamp, "Women- Initiated Unveiling: State-led Campaigns in Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan. *In Anti-unveiling Campaigns in the Muslim World: Gender, Modernism, and the Politics of Dress*. Ed. Stephanie Cronin. (London: Routledge Press, 2014) 215.
- 5 Kamp, *Women- Initiated Unveiling*, 223.
- 6 Adeeb Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan: Nation, Empire, and Revolution in the Early USSR* (Ithaca ; London: Cornell University Press, 2015).
- 7 For detailed information on the Zhenotdel, see: Burcu Özdemir, *Sovyetler Birliğı'nde Komünist Kadın Hareketi (1919-1930)*, (Yordam Kitap, 2021) /Anne McShane, "Bringing the Revolution to the Women of the East. The Zhenotdel Experience in Soviet Central Asia through the Lens of Kommunistka" (PhD Thesis, University of Glasgow, 2019).

in procession to especially designated city squares. ... about 10,000 women burned their veils in Uzbek city squares...”⁸

The unveiling process had a significant effect on society because of its collision with Uzbek traditions. Many people resisted the campaign, sometimes turning to violence and terror in their reactions. Keller claims that Uzbek men lost power in many areas, such as economic life, children’s education, and even their alphabet, in the late 1920s. Therefore, when the Hujum campaign interfered with the lives of women in their families, men resorted to violence, feeling that their last source of power had been taken away. This resulted in consequences such as beating, rape, and death of women.⁹ On the one hand, women were encouraged to remove their paranji as part of the Hujum campaign launched by the Soviets, but on the other hand, those who did unveil were subjected to attacks and rapes by some members of the public.¹⁰

Although the assault campaign was a Soviet initiative, viewing it solely as an act of Soviet oppression and coercion, universally met with anger by the entire population, would not be entirely accurate. Oppositions to the campaign did not represent all local perspectives; there were supporters, even though their number is limited, who wanted a new way of life different from the past. Some scholars have analyzed the campaign by focusing on the Soviet and Communist Party perspectives, relying on Russian Soviet documents and highlighting the Soviet oppression during the Hujum campaign. However, these analyses ignore the small but existing local support for the assault.

Therefore, this study will investigate whether there was any local support for the campaign. To achieve this goal, an examination of sources such as the *Yangi Yo'l* journal and written works by local people will be explored. These literary works illustrate that the assault campaign was not only a Soviet policy; it might have had some support from the local population, particularly women activists and even some Jadids.

Although the hujum campaign aimed to transform women’s social and political lives, Khalid argues that its primary purpose was to integrate women into productive labor and destroy traditions, without prioritizing the need to grant them agency.¹¹ Similarly, Keller claims that the main reason of the hujum campaign was to attack Islam, driven by the Marxist-Leninist ideologies goal of creating an atheist society.¹²

Gregory Massell defines the Soviet approach to women in Central Asia as the “*Surrogate Proletariat*” due to the absence of a real Marxist movement in the region. Massell argues that

8 Gregory J. Massell, *The Surrogate Proletariat: Moslem Women and Revolutionary Strategies in Soviet Central Asia, 1919-1929* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1974). 243, 245.

9 Shoshana Keller, “Trapped Between State and Society: Women’s Liberation and Islam in Soviet Uzbekistan, 1926-1941,” *Journal of Womens History* 10, no.1 (1998): 20-44. 36.

10 Havva Çaha, “Bolşevik Devrimi ve Orta Asyalı Müslüman Kadın: 1917-1950.” *Liberal Düşünce Dergisi* 88 (2017): 5-29.

11 Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan*, 361,362.

12 Shoshana Keller, *To Moscow, Not Mecca: The Soviet Campaign Against Islam In Central Asia, 1917-1941*. (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2001).

women could have been used as surrogates to spread socialist ideology because women in the Central Asian societies had a low level of educational and social development. The development of women would help the Soviets in the modernization of the region, which would primarily affect traditional family life and kinship structure.¹³

Douglas Northrop accepts the USSR, as the successor of the Russian empire, was a colonial empire.¹⁴ He argues that the USSR aimed to bring civilization to “backward” regions such as Central Asia, the Caucasus, and Siberia.¹⁵ This perspective portrayed Central Asia as primitive, barbaric, uneducated, highlighting some problems such as Muslim law –Shariat-, women being treated as property (bride price), forced veiling, early marriage (sometimes at ages 7-8), and polygamy.¹⁶ Consequently, in the 1920s, the Soviets introduced policies for the emancipation and modernization of women, with the hujum (assault /unveiling process) being the most important initiative. Douglas interprets this campaign as colonial power’s intervention in indigenous culture, resulting in its own reactions and resistance. The paranji was attacked and defended by both the colonizer and the colonized, and it became “an Uzbek national emblem,” so it was a symbol of national identity.¹⁷

Shirin Akiner has a similar perspective and argues that the success of the assault was an “ideological victory” for the Russians, while for Central Asians, “it was a defeat.” She also claims that for Central Asians, the veil symbolized a boundary between their public and private lives, offering protection from ‘unwanted strangers.’¹⁸

Marianne Kamp offers a different perspective on hujum than Northrop. Instead of seeing it as colonizer attack/subaltern resistance, she believes that these attacks/murders between Uzbek groups as an inner conflict, one group wanted to maintain the patriarchal system and male dominance, while the other sought reform women.¹⁹ Kamp argues that women developed a synthesis that merged Soviet objectives with the modernizing goals of Jadidism, adapting the Bolsheviks’ agenda for women’s equality to accommodate their own vision of the ‘new woman.’²⁰

Diloram Alimova stated that in the 1920s, new laws were introduced for the equality of men and women, and clubs specifically were set up for women. In these clubs, there were courses for women such as literacy, and sewing. Alimova stated that women should gradually begin to modernize. However, the Bolsheviks were not satisfied with the gradual, step-by-step

13 Massell, *The Surrogate Proletariat*, XXII, XXIII

14 Douglas Taylor Northrop, *Veiled Empire: Gender & Power in Stalinist Central Asia*, 1st ed (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004). 22,23.

15 Northrop, *Veiled Empire*.7

16 Northrop. *Veiled Empire*, 34-41.

17 Northrop. *Veiled Empire*, 20-31.

18 Shirin Akiner, “*Between Tradition and Modernity: The Dilemma Facing Contemporary Central Asian Women*,” in *Post-Soviet Women : From the Baltic to Central Asia* ed. Mary Buckley (Cambridge University Press, 1997) 270, 271.

19 Kamp, *The New Woman*, 229-233.

20 Kamp, *The New Woman*, 229.

progress, so they started the hujum campaign even though the social environment was not ready. The Bolsheviks could not understand the traditions of Uzbeks and what Islam had brought. They forced party leaders to unveil their wives, and these people took their wives to where the hujum campaign was started, and their wives also threw and burned their paranjis. But the next day, they were forced to wear paranji again.²¹ Alimova argues that the hujum campaign was necessary but the method was wrong. According to her, it is essential to transition gradually to modernization instead of forcing women to remove their paranji all at once.²²

It can be seen that scholars have different interpretations of the Hujum campaign and the policies of the Bolsheviks. To explain the assault campaign, one cannot ignore the Soviet pressure on society. For instance, in Asaka village, there was a meeting with the local union workers about the unveiling process. If they could not force their wives to unveil, they would lose their positions and jobs. Similarly, in Buzrukxonov, since some of the imams refused to sign a declaration for the women's unveiling, they were arrested. In Samarqand, women were threatened with a tax if they refused to remove their paranji.²³ These pressures are just a few examples of the government's efforts to force society to unveil.

The administration was forcing women to participate in the Hujum campaign to remove their paranji, while the public was attacking women if they did not wear the paranji. There were cases of women being injured or murdered by their spouses or relatives, especially if they joined the demonstrations related to unveiling protests or desired divorce. One source from RGASPI shows that incidents of violence almost doubled between 1926 and 1928, with 60 percent of violence cases in 1928 related to the Hujum.²⁴ During the campaign's years, the most significant violence was against unveiled women, including sexual assaults, beatings, and even assassination. Although some women re-veiled due to fear, others did not change their ideas and resisted unveiling. Killing unveiled women was accepted as a terrorist act in October 1928.²⁵

The assault was one of the most important events for Uzbek culture and identity.²⁶ It changed the social structure, dividing society into two groups: supporters and opponents. Supporters were mainly women activists, some male party members, and Komsomol.²⁷ Opponents resorted to violence and terror. During a three-year process, unveiled women were subjected to beatings, rape, and murder.²⁸ Although the exact number of deaths is uncertain, some scholars estimate

21 D. A. Alimova, *Ўzbekiston Tarikhi, 1917-1991 йиллар* (Toshkent: "Sharq" nashriyot-matbaa aksiiyadkorlik kompaniyasi Bosh tahririyati, 2001). P.179-181.

22 Alimova. P.179-181.

23 Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan*. 355.

24 "Terror in Uzbek Villages of Uzbekistan," *Seventeen Moments in Soviet History* (blog), August 30, 2015, <https://soviethistory.msu.edu/1929-2/making-central-asia-soviet/making-central-asia-soviet-texts/terror-in-uzbek-villages-of-uzbekistan/>.

25 Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan*. 356

26 Khalid. *Making Uzbekistan*. 357

27 Kamp, *Women- Initiated Unveiling*, 217.

28 Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan*. 356

that at least 2,000 women were murdered due to this terror.²⁹ Despite some women re-veiling, some persisted in the campaign, especially women activists.³⁰ There are different opinions among scholars who is responsible for the violence against women. Soviet Uzbek historians have placed this responsibility on reactionary ulema, claiming that they provoked Uzbek men. In contrast, modern Uzbek historians hold the Soviet authorities responsible for this, arguing that they acted without understanding the local socio-cultural context of society.³¹

The degree of oppression that women experience in society is evident even in the jokes of Uzbeks, some of whom say, “They no longer had need of Russian prostitutes; they had their own now.”³² Regarding the Hujum campaign, Burhan Babaev, who had been a village communist since 1918, said, “Let them kick me out of the Party, but I will not unveil my wife, and I will not take her to the demonstration...”³³ As can be understood, not all party members supported the campaign as a whole, and some were against it. There were even Soviet officials who raped women during this campaign.³⁴ One Uzbek woman describes the situation as follows: “We have women who tried out slogans, took off their paranjas and ...immediately fought with their men... Dear friend, there was no support; the woman was alone in the struggle; a month passed, another, nothing remained of the slogan, and she had to wear the paranja again, and only the many, many bruises added to her body were new...”³⁵ Despite the oppression that women are subjected to in society, it is significant that a small number of local women continued to write about the paranji issues, and some of them continued to unveil, and this shows the support that these women gave to the unveiling campaign.

While acknowledging the Bolshevik pressure on the unveiling and the oppression that women experienced from both supporters and opponents, this study aims to examine the campaign’s supporters, mainly women activists and a few Jadids, particularly through their writings in the *Yangi Yo’l* journal. It seeks to show that the Hujum was not solely forced upon Central Asian women by the Party; instead, the unveiling was desired and supported by some local people in Uzbek society.

Local Supporters of The Assault Campaign

The unveiling process was related to women’s seclusion; indigenous women activists especially highlighted the inequality between women and men. Before the assault, at the start of the 1920s, some Uzbek women activists began to remove their paranji and chachvon,

29 Kamp, *Women- Initiated Unveiling*, 217.

30 Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan*. 356

31 Grigol Ubiria, *Soviet Nation-Building in Central Asia: the Making of the Kazakh and Uzbek Nations*. (London; Routledge, 2016) 218.

32 Herbert S. Dinerstein, “The Sovietization of Uzbekistan -The First Generation-“ *Harvard Slavic Studies*, no.4 (1957) 510

33 Douglas Northrop, “Languages of Loyalty: Gender, Politics, and Party Supervision in Uzbekistan, 1927-1941” *The Russian Review* 59, no.2 (2000). 179.

34 Dinerstein, 511

35 Dinerstein, 511

although their numbers were small. Therefore, the movement of unveiling firstly started from Uzbek women activists instead of the Soviet government's oppression.³⁶ For example, on 8 March 1926, Bashorat Jalilova, one of the women activists, tried to encourage women to unveil and throw off their paranji while saying "an end to slavery."³⁷ Even though it did not reach large masses, some other demonstrations removed their paranji, and also, there were some unveiled women workers at that time.³⁸

After the Hujum officially started, some local people supported the unveiling process. One way of showing support was through written works such as poems or essays, which they published. One of the places where these written works appeared was the Yangi Yo'l journal. Yangi Yo'l, which literally means "new way," was published in Uzbekistan from 1926 to 1934. The journal was under the auspices of the Uzbek Women's Division until 1930, after which it transferred to the Division of Agitational Work and Mass Campaigns. Until this transfer, it was marketed as a women's magazine. After the transfer, also it included more women's issues. The magazine covers topics related to women's liberation such as women's education, unveiling, working outside of the home, and collective childcare. It included stories, poems, and articles. The journal was written in Uzbek, and its script was Arabic letters, then transitioned to a mix of Arabic and Latin, and finally solely to Latin after 1931. This change was influenced by the official switch of the Uzbek script to Latin.³⁹

In this study, some of the pieces written by local women and men in the Yangi Yo'l journal on the subject of the paranji in the issues published between 1927 and 1930 were examined. The aim was to show that some locals in the region, particularly women activists, also desired change. Although the magazine propagated the party and socialism, it included articles written by educated women and men from the local population, such as Uzbeks and Tatars. Therefore, the magazine can be considered a platform for women from the region to have their voices heard. It indicates that not all the masses were against the assault and that there were groups among the people who supported the unveiling campaign.

For instance, Mirtemir Tursunov, a public poet and an educated person⁴⁰, wrote a poem on March 8, 1928, which was published in Yangi Yo'l in February-March 1930. Some parts of his poem are as follows:

Qizil maydon...

Kalanalar to'lib-toshayotar, bayroqlar bahor nasimi bilan o'ynashayotar.

Yuraklar oshiqib-oshiqib uradi... Urmasin mi?

Kechagina tilsiz divorlar quchog'idagi cho'rilar- bayroqlar tomoshasidan tabassum etsa...

36 Kamp, *Women- Initiated Unveiling*, 213-214.

37 Kamp, *Women- Initiated Unveiling*, 215.

38 Kamp, *Women- Initiated Unveiling*, 215.

39 "About Yangi Yo'l," *New Ways: Everyday Life in Uzbekistan, 1926-34* (blog), March 24, 2014, <https://uzbeknewways.wordpress.com/about-yangi-yol/>.

40 Davronbek, "Mirtemir (1910-1978)," November 3, 2013, <https://www.ziyouz.com/portal-haqida/xarita/o-zbek-ziyolilari/mirtemir-1910-1978>.

Kechagina kir pardalar orasida angragan... qora ko'zlar baxt kuyini kuylab o'tsa...

(A red square... The grandstands fill and overflow; the banners play in the spring breeze. Hearts beat, faster and faster. And shouldn't they beat? When women who were slaves just yesterday, smothered in the embrace of voiceless walls- now smile at the sight of the banners... When the black eyes that, just yesterday, gawked from beneath filthy curtains- now sing the song of joy...)

'Ana-kelajak, yorug' kelajak. Barcha birday. Haqiqat hokim!... Cho'rilar da yo'q, nihoyat barcha tek-ozod...

Ana!...' Kuldi ko'zlarida- o'zlarida turgizib kuldi- botir Bolshevik... Qaynab.'

(There it is- the future, the bright future! All are as one. Truth now rules! There are no more slaves. Finally, all are free and equal. There it is!" He smiled in their eyes, smiled, and made them arise. The brave Bolshevik, overflowing...)

Birdan: burchaklarda olov.

-Olov!

Paranjilar yonayotar. Turmushning achchiq zahar kunlariga chidam berib, o'sgan onalar o'z xohishida pardani o'tga tashlab, yuz ochib kulgum bayroqlarga qarab qonayotar...

(Suddenly: Fire in the corners of the square.

"Fire!"

Veils are burning. Mothers who grew up enduring bitter, venomous ways of life now throw their veils into the fire of their own volition. They expose their faces, laugh, look at the banners and are satisfied...)

O't olsin! Chirigan qonunlarni o't olsin! Haq olsin! Quvnasin, bular-da erk olsin!

Atalsin! -yig'lagan, anglagan cho'rilar- erk qizi, ish onasi atalsin!

Yon, sen ey yillarning merosi! Yon sen ey kir parda... Gullasin... O'tmas, gul yoshlik- yosh damlar qorong'I tumanlar ichida...

(May the fire take you! May the fire take the rotten laws! Let the truth take them! May these women too rejoice and receive freedom! May they be named! The slave who once wept and now understand- may she be named the daughter of freedom and mother of work! Burn, oh you patrimony of the years! Burn, oh you filthy curtain! May it blossom... The flower of youth, it shall not pass- but in the darkness of fog, let the sighs of youth...)⁴¹

In this poem, which describes the day when the campaign was launched and women took off their paranji and threw them into the fire in the square, Tursunov depicts women as slaves who used to live behind walls and were voiceless. In the part of the poem, "Kechagina kir pardalar orasida angragan... qora ko'zlar baxt kuyini kuylab o'tsa," the women are depicted as eyes looking from behind dirty curtains because the paranji covered their entire bodies, including their eyes. It is stated that when the clothes covering women's faces and eyes were removed, those eyes began to sing a song of joy, depicting the hope and excitement they experienced that day.

Additionally, in the part of the poem that reads "mothers who grew up enduring bitter, venomous ways of life now throw their veils into the fire of their own volition," women throwing their paranji into the fire with their own will and happiness they felt from this are described.

41 Mirmemir Tursunov, "Yon," Yangi Yo'l, No: 2-3 (1930) *In Women and Social Movements, Modern Empires since 1820 database*. Translated by Claire Roosien. Accessed on April 15, 2024, https://search-alexanderstreet-com.proxyiub.uits.iu.edu/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cbibliographic_details%7C3593344. 2-4.

According to the poem, thanks to the Bolsheviks and their struggle with the system, women were finally freed. That is why their hearts were beating very fast with happiness.

The poet's verses tell us that women used to live a life of pain and sorrow and that they were freed from their prison by their own will and with the help of the Bolsheviks. This reveals the poet's support for this process. The fact that women are now equal and sing songs with happiness reflects the poet's belief that the future will be full of hope.

Especially, "There it is- the future, the bright future! All are as one. Truth now rules! There are no more slaves. Finally, all are free and equal. There it is!" represents a summary of the poem. In the poem, the biggest obstacle to women's freedom and equality is described as *paranji*. The poem shows how the poet appreciated the Hujum and the unveiling process, and his hopes that women and men are now equal. Besides the poet's happiness, the poem shows his support and announces it in the journal to display that truth to the public.

Another example can be found in Oidin's *Ochilgan Lolalar*. In her poem, Oidin, makes a wonderful metaphor. "Ochilgandir lolalarning bugun amal yuzlari. Yangi hayot qahramoni, quvnar ishchi qizlari. (The true faces of the tulips have burst into bloom today. Heroes of the new life, worker girls rejoice.)"⁴² In the poem, tulips symbolize women who unveil themselves. The metaphor of the tulip blooming can also be interpreted as signaling the onset of spring and rebirth. When women removed the *paranji*, they experienced a sense of renewal and happiness. Just as spring symbolizes rebirth and new life, taking off one's *paranji* is depicted as the beginning of a new life for women. These poems, taken from the *Yangi Yo'l* journal, depict women's excitement, hope, and desire for change, encouraging other women to remove their *paranji*.

In the *Yangi Yo'l* issue 10, 1928, the assault process was evaluated in general in an essay "Bizning Tilaklar" ("Our Wishes") written by H. Tillakhon Qizi. It was stated that the Hujum campaign worked very well in places like Bukhara and Samarkand and that people wearing *paranji* were not seen very often. However, it was written that the Hujum campaign had weakened in other regions. It was emphasized that the *paranji* issue must be completely resolved; otherwise, it would be difficult for them. It was stated that even men working in important positions in the administration had started to re-veil their wives again and that these people needed to be investigated. Especially when the author says, "No matter how it is done, work must be established to take the hujum to its conclusion, and we must roll up our sleeves to save women and girls from the misfortune of the *paranji*," she expresses support for the Bolsheviks. The essay contains a criticism against both the Bolsheviks and local men working in important positions in the state. While warnings are directed at the Soviet government for not carrying out sufficient inspections and for the campaign slowing down, the author expresses anger toward men in administrative positions who re-veiled their wives, calling these men "two-faced."⁴³

42 Oidin, "Ochilgan Lolalar", *Yangi Yo'l*, No:2-3 (1930). In *Women and Social Movements, Modern Empires since 1820 database*. Translated by Claire Roosien. Accessed March 22, 2024. https://search-alexanderstreet-com.proxyiub.uits.iu.edu/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cbibliographic_details%7C3593347

43 H. Tillakhon Qizi, "Bizning Tilaklar", "Yangi Yo'l", No. 10, 1928 [Selected Pages] | Alexander Street, Part of Clarivate," Translated by Marianne Kamp. Accessed July 19, 2024, https://search-alexanderstreet-com.proxyiub.uits.iu.edu/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cbibliographic_details%7C3593341#search/yangi+yo%271.

It was previously mentioned that women who unveiled experienced pressures in society, including beatings, abuse, and even murder. This essay in the Yangi Yo'l journal may carry the sadness of women subjected to oppression by traditionalists and not receiving the help they expected from the government and local men working in the government. It is clear from the essay that the writer is uncomfortable with the current atmosphere and the fact women are being re-veiled by their husbands again. The author is concerned about the decreasing importance given to the Hujum campaign and wishes for more action to be taken to continue the assault. Although the Soviets are criticized for the laws they enacted during the Hujum process and their pressure on unveiling, the woman who wrote this essay wants more and does not find what has been done sufficiently. Therefore, this piece in the magazine is another indication that some local women wanted change.

Locals reflected their feelings and thoughts in this journal not only through poems and articles but also sometimes through short stories. One such example is:

"Hujumchilar Jallodlari [Murderers of the Hujum Activists]" written by A. Qobili. According to the story, Omon Bibi's husband died, and she married again with her husband's nephew, whose name is Mulla Halmuhammad domla. Her new husband had already had one wife, and also, he was against the freedom of women. Therefore, she left him and went back to her hometown. She attended the Qoshchi Union in 1923 and fought with the old tradition. She got the leadership in 1926, so opponents decided to murder her. Meanwhile, after the assault started, she immediately removed her paranji and encouraged the others. Also, she was a Soviet executive committee member. Her husband came together with the group of people. And, "with the Imam's approval," one of them in the group, Mahmad Rahim, killed her. In the story, her last words are very significant. She said:" I was killed not by Mahmad Rahim alone, but by all the enemies of liberation. I believe that from every drop of my blood, a thousand Omon Bibis will mature and they will fulfill the tasks of liberation..."⁴⁴

It is clear that this story was written to encourage society to change, but it may also reflect the realities of the era. During the assault process, many innocent women were killed simply because they chose to unveil. This story may serve as an illustrative example of such sacrifices. Omon Bibi's story is not only a tragic narrative but also an inspiration for people to resist the campaign's opponents, support the Hujum, and encourage the removal of the paranji due to Omon Bibi's character. She was a brave woman who left her new husband's home because he opposed women's freedom. Additionally, the fact that her husband was already married serves as a criticism of the polygamy that existed at that time. Leaving her husband and joining the Union brought her a leadership position. Here, a woman is depicted fighting the old system and gaining a leadership role in society. However, she was killed by defenders of

44 A. Qobili, "Hujumchilar Jallodlari," Yangi Yo'l, No. 4, 1929 (Selected Pages) | Alexander Street, Part of Clarivate, Translated by Marianne Kamp. Accessed April 15, 2024, https://search-alexanderstreet-com.proxyiu.uits.iu.edu/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cbibliographic_details%7C3734770#page/24/mode/1/chapter/bibliographic_entity%7Cdocument%7C3734772.

the old system due to her beliefs and aspirations. This story may have been written with the influence of women like Tursunoy Saidazimova, who will be mentioned later in the chapter. It may be a story that reflects reality, or it may be just imagination. Regardless of whether it reflects reality or not, the author's support for the Hujum campaign and desire to get rid of the old system are evident in the story. Therefore, this author, like other writers of the journal, desires change and supports the unveiling campaign.

In Yangi Yo'l, there is also information about the demands of women activists during the Uzbekistan Fourth Party Congress (1929). These activists demanded that the party deploy a militia to arrest those who attacked unveiled women. They said: "Enough! We have been choked for so long; we too want to see the bright world; we will live like millions of other women in our country and work like them. Open the way to us! The Uzbekistan government must very soon put forth a law for all women to go about unveiled. We ourselves want this; this demands of ours must be brought to life."⁴⁵

This is quite an interesting demand. As in the previous essay "Bizning Tilaklar" ("Our Wishes"), here also, women activists are demanding more help from the party in the paranji issue and even asking for a law for unveiling. This idea contradicts the notion that the Bolsheviks came and forcibly unveiled women, because here, women activists are demanding more action from the state.

In the Yangi Yol no 2, 1929, one year after the Hujum campaign was officially launched, Dilavar Ho'jayeveva evaluated the process in her writing 'Sekkizinchil Mart Kuniga Qiz Leninchilar Qanday Sovg'a Bilan Keladi/What Kind of Gifts Do Leninist Girls Bring for March 8,' and gave advice to the unveiling girls on how to encourage those who had not unveiled yet, and advised these girls "unveiled girls take veiled girls under their influence". She also advised unveiled girls to invite these veiled girls to schools, clubs, theaters, and various events.⁴⁶ As can be seen here some women not only supported this campaign and took off their paranji, but also, wanted to influence and encourage other women to take actions. They wrote articles to encourage other women and advised their readers on how to influence others in terms of paranji issues.

Also, Yangi Yo'l is a journal that aims to encourage women to take off their paranji. For instance, on the twenty-second page of issue 4, 1929, photos of four local women were shared. On this page, information was given about those women such as when they took off their paranji and what positions they had at that time, such as being a teacher, principal at a

45 Yangi Yo'l, No.4, 1929 (Selected Pages). (1929). In *Women and Social Movements, Modern Empires since 1820 database*. Translated by Marianne Kamp. Accessed April 4, 2024. https://search-alexanderstreet-com.proxyiu.uits.iu.edu/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cbibliographic_details%7C3734770#page/17/mode/1/chapter/bibliographic_entity%7Cdocument%7C3734772 P. 4.

46 Dilavar Ho'jayeveva, "Sekkizinchil Mart Kuniga Qiz Leninchilar Qanday Sovg'a Bilan Keladi," Yangi Yo'l, No. 2, 1928 (Selected Pages) | Alexander Street, Part of Clarivate, translated by Marianne Kamp accessed July 13, 2024, https://search-alexanderstreet-com.proxyiu.uits.iu.edu/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cbibliographic_details%7C3734755#page/17/mode/1/chapter/bibliographic_entity%7Cdocument%7C3734757.

school, or a committee women's representative or chairperson. When one looks at the photos of the four women, one can see that only one woman's hair is completely visible, while the others have covered part of their hair with scarves. While the neck and face of one of these three women are visible, the neck of one of the other two women is covered by her dress and the other covers her neck with her scarf. As can be understood from these pictures, although women took off their paranji, they did not completely uncover their hair, but mostly they covered it with a scarf.⁴⁷

In the oral history interview conducted by Marianne Kamp, it is revealed that Saodat Shamsieva, an activist born in 1908 in Horazm and editor of a women's magazine, took off her paranji before the Hujum campaign. Shamsieva noted that there were many Russians in her town and that while she attended a Tatar school, Uzbek girls wore the paranji when they turned 11 or 12 and dropped out of school, whereas Tatar girls did not wear the paranji and continued their education. At that time, Shamsieva questioned why they should be veiled, since Tatar women were also Muslim, just like Uzbeks. Later in her life, despite her family's disapproval, she eloped and married her brother's friend, who was a publishing house director, and they settled in Fargana. After coming to Fargana, she removed her paranji and started wearing a scarf in 1924. She did this of her own free will, stating that no one knew her in this new city, and therefore no one could force her to wear a paranji. Her husband was not a communist at first but later became one. She was also an active Komsomol member and worked in various positions. She encountered trouble twice with the Party because her father was wealthy, and she was accused of being a nationalist.⁴⁸ It is highly possible that this woman, who took off her paranji before the Soviets began their assault campaign, supported the unveiling.

All of these examples indicate the diversity of opinions among Uzbeks regarding the Hujum campaign, with some supporting it, while others were against it and sometimes severely, even violently, protested it. These examples highlight that while the Bolsheviks were pressuring for change, some women and men activists supported the unveiling campaign with their written works and encouraged society to unveil. These local people expressed their support through their writings, and some even called for the use of force against opponents.

In addition, issues such as women's rights, and education were on the agenda of the locals long before the assault campaign. Therefore, it might have been easier for them to support the assault campaign. It is evident that between 1905 and 1917, Russian Muslim women organized councils where discussions on the rights and positions of women in society took place. Representatives from the Turkistan region also participated in some of these councils.⁴⁹ Before the Bolsheviks developed policies on women's enlightenment under the leadership of Marxist-Leninist ideology, there was already a Turkish women's movement in the Turkistan

47 "Yangi Yo'l, No. 4, 1929 (Selected Pages) | Alexander Street, Part of Clarivate." 22.

48 Kamp, *New Women*, 123-133.

49 Ahmet Kanlıdere, "Rusya Müslümanlarının Kongrelerinde Kadın Sorunu (1905-1917)" *Türk Kültürü İncelemeleri Dergisi*, no. 2 (2000): 139-148

region, particularly among Tatar women, to which Ismail Bey Gasprinsky made significant contributions.⁵⁰ Therefore, discussions on the position and education of women in the region were already occurring before the Bolsheviks.

Sakir Muhammedof's Travel Memoirs from Bukhara no:330 (June 12, 1908), page 3, criticizes the excessive deprivation of Turkestan women from social life by writers from the Tatar region. One writer criticizes the paranji, stating: <“The poor Sart women are deprived of rights everywhere. Their situation is worse than that of our Tatar women. They are forced to walk in forty-degree heat, wrapped in fabrics and with black curtains on their faces.”>⁵¹ As previously noted, some Uzbek women had already removed their individual paranjis. Therefore, it is possible that activists seeking change participated in the unveiling campaign. As seen with Saodat, it is also possible that these individuals later took positions within the Communist Party.

Some people among Jadids supported the unveiling campaign through their writings.⁵² Some Jadids argued that women should remove their paranji, and be equal with men in society.⁵³ These people expressed their support for the campaign through their writings. One of the examples is Hamza Hakimzoda Niyoziy, who was an author, poet, and playwright.⁵⁴ Some of his poems in which he criticizes ignorance and those who defend the old system and advocates for women's liberation and removing their paranji are ‘Ozod Xotin-Qizlar Qoshig’i (The Song of Free Women),’ ‘Xotin-Qizlar Ovozi (The Voice of Women),’ and ‘Hujum Xoinlariga! (To the Traitors of Hujum!)’ These were published in newspaper called ‘Yangi Farg’ona’ in 1927 and 1928.⁵⁵ In addition to his poems, he has other works on paranji such as ‘Paranji sirlaridan bir lavha yoki yallachilar ishi (A Piece from the Secrets of the Paranji or the Work of Liars.’⁵⁶ One of the poems he write about women removing their paranji that attract the attention is “Today is March 8”:

Oh, you foreign thing called paranji, your hand is filthy; don't come near Uzbek women and girls, get yourself out of here!...
Oh Rich Man!

50 Cemile Kınacı, “Ütopyadan Gerçeğe: Kadınlar Ülkesi ve Arslan Kız’dan Âlem-i Nisvan’a Evrilen Türk Kadın Hareketi,” *Modern Türklük Araştırmaları Dergisi* 11 No.4 (2014): 224-247

51 Yasemin Işık and Kübra Koç. “19. YÜZYILIN SONLARI 20. YÜZYILIN BAŞLARINDA (1880-1930) TÜRKİSTAN SÜRELİ YAYINLARI VE KADIN KONUSUNA YAKLAŞIMLARI.” *Karadeniz Araştırmaları* 19, no. 74 (2022). 504.

52 Jadidism and the Jadid movement will not be examined, as they are not the subject of this article. For more on Turkestan Jadids, see: Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan.*/ Seyfettin Erşahin, “Buhara’da Cedidcilik-Eğitim Islahatı Tartışmaları ve Abdurrauf Fitrat (XX. Yüzyıl Başları).” *Dini Araştırmalar* 1, no. 3 (1999)/ Adeeb Khalid, *The politics of Muslim cultural reform: Jadidism in Central Asia*. (University of California Press, 1999)

53 Northrop, *Veiled Empire*. 45

54 “Ziyo Istagan Qalblar Uchun! - Hamza Hakimzoda Niyoziy (1889-1929),” accessed July 11, 2024, <https://n.ziyouz.com/portal-haqida/xarita/uzbek-nasri/hamza-hakimzoda-niyoziy-1889-1929>.

55 “Ҳамза Ҳақимзода Ниёзий. Тўла асарлар тўплами. 5 жилдлик (1988-1989),” www.ziyouz.uz (blog), November 25, 2018, <https://ziyouz.uz/durdona-toplamlar/hamza-hakimzoda-niyoziy-5-jildlik/>.

56 “Ҳамза Ҳақимзода Ниёзий. Тўла асарлар тўплами. 5 жилдлик (1988-1989).”

.....

Don't stay; go into exile, cursing.
Today it will be hard for you, bad for your condition...
Do you see there? Women announced freedom, throwing off paranjis.
Don't cast your evil eye on them...

Oh Domla!

.....

If you're upset, saying, "Why are women throwing off their paranjis?" look to yourself in tears...

Oh fanatic vermin!

.....

Bind your belt for a journey to the Day of Judgment!
But I have some advice for you:
Take the paranji and chimmat [chachvon], which you brought, away with you and go to your grave with it!
Paranji and Chimmat!
Go back quickly whence you came,
Make your Hajj to Mecca,
Find your place in Hell!"⁵⁷

In the poem, the poet's tone is sharp and filled with anger towards those who supported the paranji and chachvon. This sentiment is clearly expressed through the poet's explanation of his feelings towards paranji. He addresses the paranji, rich men, religious figures or teachers in Muslim schools called domla, and the supporter of the paranji, telling each of them to take their hands off women's freedom. The words he chooses are very harsh, reflecting the poet's anger and desire for women to be free from paranji. It is also evident that the rich men, domla-religious figures/teachers, and supporters of the paranji are seen as obstacles to the Hujum process, and there is a desire to eliminate their influence.

Apart from Hamza Hakimzoda Niyozzi, Cho'lpon and Fitrat also supported the unveiling process. Cho'lpon wrote the play *Zamona Xotini*, which centered around the unveiling campaign.⁵⁸

Hamza Hakimzoda Niyozzi also wrote mourning for Tursunoy Saidazimova, who was killed during the Hujum terror. Tursunoy Saidazimova is one of the women who fought during the unveiling process to remove her paranji. Born in 1911, the professional theater actress was killed by her husband in an honor killing in 1928 when she was only 17 years old because she had removed her paranji. After her death, Muhyiddin Qoriyakubov said: "The enemies did not allow it. Okay, instead of one martyr Tursunoy, I will train a hundred of them." Tursunoy's

57 Kamp, *New Women*, 174,175.

58 Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan*. 360

work was continued by artists such as Halima Nasirova, Sora Eshontoraeva, Gavhar Rahimova.⁵⁹ These words of Qoriyakubov are an indication of his anger and his willingness to continue the struggle, and therefore, his support for the Hujum.

It's important to note that not all Jadids supported the hujum campaign. An article in Qizil O'zbekistan shows that while some Jadids were supporters of the assault, others were not. Munavvarqori Abdurrashidxonov admitted that although Uzbeks had not solved the paranji issue in thirty years, Bolsheviks achieved it in ten years. Jadids were ready to defend the reforms.⁶⁰ However, Munavvarqori showed his anxiety about accepting all Jadids as anti-reformists when some of them had such views.

In addition to the Yangi Yo'l journal and Jadid works, there is a study conducted by Marianne Kamp that shows how women felt and responded to the Hujum campaign. For instance, one woman who experienced the assault explained her opinion and perspective on the Hujum in 1991: "It was a very difficult period for women who wanted to be free of the misfortune of the paranji and to learn. The father, husband, or older brother of every woman or girl who threw off the paranji in the mahalla [urban neighborhood] or village would, having killed her, come to us saying, 'I killed her because I did not want her to uncover and to cause me shame.'"⁶¹

Despite these challenges, in her interview, Shamsiev indicated that she made her own decision to unveil. Initially, during the unveiling process, she covered her head with a scarf. Also, while I was in Tashkent in 2022, an acquaintance of mine from an intellectual family mentioned that her mother used to wear a paranji before marriage. However, since her father was working in the party, the party members' wives were required to remove their paranji as a result of the Hujum campaign through party policy. So, her father came home and informed her parents that their daughter-in-law would no longer wear a paranji. Although this caused mourning in the household, the acquaintance mentioned that her mother was very happy after removing her paranji. As can be seen from the examples, despite the significant social pressure on women, many of them chose to unveil and support the campaign.

Conclusions

The unveiling campaign, known as the Hujum or the Assault, is recognized as a significant historical event. The campaign, which officially began on March 8, 1927, under the Communist Party leadership aimed at the liberation and modernization of women and covered many issues, from women's education to marriage. However, the symbol of this campaign was the unveiling. While it may appear that the campaign was forced by the Soviet government, the communist party forced the local members to remove their wives' paranji and exerted much

59 "ТУРСУНОЙ САИДАЗИМОВА» ЎЗБЕК МИЛЛИЙ АКАДЕМИК ДРАМА ТЕАТРИ," August 21, 2018, <https://web.archive.org/web/20180821120436/http://www.teatr.uz/79-tursunoy-saidazimova.html>.

60 "Munavvarqori Abdurashidxonov. Qoralash yaxshi emas (1927)," October 25, 2013, <http://ziyouz.com/portal-haqida/xarita/matbuot/jadid-matbuoti/munavvarqori-abdurashidxonov-qoralash-yaxshi-emas-1927>.

61 Marianne Kamp, "Remembering the Hujum: Uzbek Women's Word," *Central Asia Monitor*, No 1 (2001): 1-12

encouragement and pressure regarding the campaign, it would not be correct to say that all the local people in society were against the unveiling campaign, there was support from society itself, specifically from the women activists with their written pieces.

The Hujum campaign and Bolshevik policies and violence against women have been discussed among scholars, especially regarding whether the violence against women was a conflict between ‘colonizer and colonized’, and whether women were ‘surrogate proletariat’ or not.

The purpose of this study is to show that there were local people who supported this campaign and desired change. Although there were some opponents of the campaign who sometimes used violence and terror against unveiled women, there were also followers of the campaign in society who wanted change and desired a new life. Although it is possible that most supporters of the unveiling campaign were Komsomol members or had party affiliations, there were also party members who did not support the campaign. It is understood from the examples above that some removed their paranji and supported the unveiling long before the assault campaign. Therefore, generalizing by saying that only party members supported it would overlook the agency of these individuals. Among Russian Muslims, issues such as women’s rights and education began to be discussed long before the assault campaign. Thus, it is possible that these local people, especially the women activists, supported the unveiling campaign.

Therefore, it is wrong to accept the unveiling process solely as Soviet oppression. Some local people supported the assault with their writings. For this purpose, the publications of the *Yangi Yo'l* journal, which was published between 1926 and 1934, were examined, especially focusing on the years between 1927 and 1930 when the campaign was most intense. Some pieces from the journal about the Hujum campaign were used in this study, showing the support given by the writers to the campaign. Additionally, some of Jadids’ works were also analyzed.

It might be seen that there are many stories, essays, and poems written by the followers of the assault to support the campaign, both by men and women. These studies show that not everyone from the local population was against change; not everyone defended traditionalism and the old system. Women, in particular, who continued their struggle by both removing their paranji and writing essays, poems, and stories on the issue, put up a great fight for change, and some were killed as a result of these struggles.

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