

# THE ACTIVITIES OF THE KASHKADARYA WRITERS' UNION: PROMOTING LITERATURE AND CULTURE

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## Abstract

The Qashqadaryo Writers' Union plays a significant role in the literary and cultural life of the Qashqadaryo region in southern Uzbekistan. This article discusses the activities of the union during the Soviet period and in the post-independence era, focusing on its contributions to the development of literature, the promotion of regional writers, and the nurturing of new literary talent. The article explores the impact of Soviet ideological control on literature, the shift towards national and regional literature after Uzbekistan's independence in 1991, and the union's efforts to support young writers through competitions and workshops. Additionally, the article examines the role of the union in organizing literary events, advocating for writers' rights, and fostering international literary collaborations.

**Keywords:** Qashqadaryo Writers' Union, Soviet period, post-independence era, Literature, Writer support, Literary festivals, Young writers, National literature, Regional literature, Literary research, Literary competitions, Literary rights, Uzbek literature.

## Introduction

The Kashkadarya Writers' Union has played a crucial role in shaping the literary and cultural landscape of the Kashkadarya region in Uzbekistan, both during the Soviet period and in the post-independence era. This article explores the activities, milestones, and evolution of the union, highlighting its contributions to the promotion of literature and the development of literary talent in the region.

The Kashkadarya Writers' Union was founded during the Soviet period as part of the broader Soviet cultural and literary framework. In the 1950s and 1960s, the Soviet Union sought to strengthen its influence over literature by creating a structured network of regional writers' unions. These unions were designed to organize writers, encourage socialist realism, and ensure that literature aligned with state ideologies.

During this period, the Kashkadarya Writers' Union played an important role in supporting the development of regional writers, particularly those who focused on themes that reflected the values of socialism, the struggle for peace, and the construction of the Soviet state. Writers from the region contributed to various literary genres, including poetry, prose, and essays. The



works produced during this time were often influenced by Soviet ideals, while still maintaining elements of local cultural identity.

One of the notable figures from the Soviet era in Kashkadarya was Tursunali Rakhmonov, a writer and poet who became an influential member of the union in the 1960s. His works, deeply rooted in the traditions of Kashkadarya, were appreciated not only locally but also in wider Soviet literary circles. Rakhmonov's contributions helped establish the reputation of the Kashkadarya Writers' Union as an important cultural institution.

The Kashkadarya Writers' Union, in line with other regional branches, provided support for writers and poets by organizing events, workshops, and literary gatherings. These gatherings were often supervised by state-appointed officials and served as platforms to discuss literature that adhered to Soviet ideals. The union helped writers publish their works, albeit within the constraints of the government's censorship system.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the union organized regional literary festivals where writers from Kashkadarya showcased their works, often focusing on socialist values, national pride, and the progress of the Soviet Union. These events helped strengthen the bond between the writers and the state while simultaneously fostering a sense of camaraderie among local authors.

During this period, the Kashkadarya Literary Journal was established, providing a platform for writers to publish short stories, poems, and essays. The journal served as a tool for promoting regional literature and supported the creative output of local writers.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, Uzbekistan gained independence, and the Kashkadarya Writers' Union faced new challenges and opportunities. The collapse of Soviet ideological control led to a more open and diverse literary scene. The union's focus shifted toward promoting Uzbek national literature, celebrating regional cultures, and encouraging writers to explore a wider range of themes, including identity, freedom, and social change.

The 1990s marked a period of transition for the union, as writers began to explore new themes that were previously restricted under Soviet censorship. While the influence of the state was still present in some areas, there was a noticeable increase in the diversity of literary voices and styles.

For example, in 1993, the union organized a major literary conference to discuss the future of Uzbek literature in an independent country. Writers from various regions, including Kashkadarya, participated, discussing the importance of preserving national identity while adapting to new social and political realities. The event also focused on encouraging young writers to express their unique perspectives, breaking away from the constraints of Soviet-era literature.

In the post-Soviet era, the Kashkadarya Writers' Union placed a strong emphasis on the promotion of regional literature. The union sought to celebrate the rich cultural heritage of Kashkadarya, a region known for its diverse history, language, and traditions. The works produced by writers from Kashkadarya began to reflect the region's complex social dynamics, historical experiences, and evolving identity.

In 2000, the union launched the “Kashkadarya Literary Days,” an annual festival that became one of the most significant cultural events in the region. The festival attracts writers, poets, and literary critics from across Uzbekistan, as well as international participants. It serves as a



platform for promoting Kashkadarya's literary works and provides an opportunity for young and emerging writers to present their first publications.

Additionally, the “Young Pen” competition, launched in December 2020, has become a key initiative for identifying and nurturing new literary talent. The competition encourages young writers to submit their works, which are then reviewed by experienced writers and critics. Several participants from the competition have gone on to publish successful books, establishing themselves as prominent literary figures in Uzbekistan.

In recent years, the Kashkadarya Writers' Union has strengthened its collaboration with national and international literary communities. The union has organized workshops and conferences in partnership with the national Writers' Union of Uzbekistan, facilitating dialogue between writers from various regions and promoting cross-cultural exchange.

The union has also participated in international literary festivals, such as the Tashkent International Literature Festival in August 2021, where writers from Kashkadarya presented their works to a global audience. These events have played a crucial role in introducing the works of local writers to the international literary scene, helping to build connections with foreign literary communities.

Throughout its history, the Kashkadarya Writers' Union has been a strong advocate for the rights of writers, including the freedom to express ideas without fear of censorship or persecution. While this was a challenge during the Soviet period due to state-imposed restrictions, the union has worked to ensure that writers can explore diverse themes and challenge societal norms in the post-independence era.

In January 2024, the union organized a roundtable discussion on intellectual property rights for writers, which addressed the importance of protecting the creative works of authors in the modern era.

### Conclusion

The Kashkadarya Writers' Union has been an integral part of the cultural and literary landscape of the Kashkadarya region throughout both the Soviet and post-Soviet periods. From its early days under Soviet control to its current focus on regional literature and young talent, the union has adapted to the changing political and cultural environment while remaining committed to promoting literature, preserving cultural heritage, and supporting the creative growth of local writers.

Today, the Kashkadarya Writers' Union continues to play a vital role in shaping the literary future of Uzbekistan, ensuring that the literary traditions of Kashkadarya and the wider region continue to thrive in an ever-evolving global landscape.

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