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The Life Journey and Creative Writing of the Yakut Classic Writer A. I. Sofronov: An Experience in Systemizing the History of Studying and Evaluating the Subject Matter

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Abstract

The following research paper presents an analysis of the history of studying and evaluating the creative heritage of one of the founders of the Yakut literature A.I. Sofronov. Based on the archive database search and biographical methods, we gained and are sharing an experience in systemizing the periods of life and creative journey of the writer; we also provide a description of these specific time segments without any ideological imperatives.

The given research implements and introduces into the scientific use the archive and periodical materials published at the beginning of the 20th century as well as the literary critics materials written by the social activists of the republic and forbidden for a considerable amount of time. The study presents a genuine description of the impact caused by the decrees of the political party, which reflect the political situation in the country, and the impact it had on the evaluation of the writer's works. This paper also contains an analysis of the previous researches on the interpretation and opinions on the creative method of A.I. Sofronov.

The research is theoretically and methodologically based on a cultural-historical approach, which suggests that specific cultural-historical circumstances and social life have a formative impact on literature, and a biographical method, according to which a writer's personal life experience and biography play a key role in study of his creative work. As no literary process is possible without the writers as individuals, it is important to study their creative writing through biographical method in order to develop a specific concept of the national literature history and to single out the periods of its development.

The present study justifies that the renown social and creative activist of Yakutia A.I. Sofronov is one of the key figures, whose creative writing played a significant role in forming and establishing Yakut national culture and literature; it also defined the entire trend of its development in the 20th and 21st centuries. The suggested timeline of the life and creative path of the writer is subdivided into six time-periods, which coincide with the social and political changes in the life of the society: I. 1914-1925; II. 1925-1942; III. 1942-1952; IV. 1952-1962; V. 1962-1986; VI. 1986 – present days.

As a result, the given research helped to single out the features in studying and evaluating the creative writing journey of the writer covering various periods of the literary and critical works development in Yakutia: the principles and approaches, which remained unknown to reader earlier as well as the real existing literary and social-political events.

Keywords: Experience in systemizing, A.I. Sofronov, Archive materials, Study of the life and creative works of a writer, Development of the literary and critical thought.

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Introduction

No literary process can exist without the writers. Therefore, the study of their creative writings is important in developing a specific concept of the history of national literature and singling out the time-periods of its development. None of the histories of literature today is published without a partial or complete incorporation of the biographical method. A. Sainte-Beuve, who introduced this method, the creative individuality of a writer and the creation of the writer's works is formed and directly influenced by heredity, along with the literary and political environment. In accordance with this method, in the study of a writer's creative writings, a specific emphasis is given to his life experience, his biography (Questions..., 2014, p.239). The biography of one of the founders of Yakut literature and a famous social and cultural activist Anempodist Ivanovich Sofronov (1886-1935) is largely connected with the life-changing historical events taking place in Russia at that time as well as with the social cataclysms, which took place in the first three decades of the 20th century. The writer became one of the first victims of the Soviet dictatorship regime: his creative legacy was forbidden for several decades; he himself was proclaimed the "enemy of the people" for over thirty years. Not until the 1990s, his works, connected with the times of his imprisonment and exile, were unavailable in the scientific archives for researchers.

Presently, this resource database was expanded owing to the materials stored in the closed archive funds. Given this circumstance, there occurred a necessity to hold a database search in the archive and book funds in order to retrieve objective data on the biography of A.I. Sofronov. A bibliographical index was compiled before starting work on this article; the index includes 1524 units, a scope of archive documents and critically revised data on the *Chronology of the life and creative path of A.I. Sofronov*, which gives a reference to over 1000 documents; additionally, a website was created with information about the writer. Contemporary studies show the necessity to establish a new biographical timeline, without which it will be impossible to construct a scientific description of the writer's creative journey. Thus, the aim of this work is to single out the main periods of the life and creative path of A.I. Sofronov following the principle of reflecting both – the core changes in his biography and the social changes; based on the systematic material, it is our goal to study the genesis of his personality and the development of his ideas as a writer, and lastly to define the main stages of his creative path.

In accordance with these goals, it is essential to solve the following problems: to find new archive and book fund documents and materials, which are connected to the writer and to introduce them to the scientific community; to study the local newspapers dating back to the beginning of the 20th century in order to find yet undiscovered texts and reflections on the life and creative works of the writer.

Methods

The democratic changes taking place in the Russian society at the end of the 20th century set the goal of reconsidering and reevaluating the literary and cultural heritage of A.I. Sofronov with consideration of the new aesthetic and methodological callings of time. Today, there is a deep necessity for a new form of questions which are being set in the course of studying the biography and creative evolution, and consequently, the problems of distinguishing the time-periods for these aspects.

For the first time, based on other researches devoted to the life and creative path of the writer, this article studies the archive materials and presents a new timeline representation of the writer's biography, it also incorporates new documents and provides an overview of the creative writings in correlation with the biography of the writer.

Thus, as a result of the study, new documents were extracted from the state, government, and private funds and archives of the republic and country: the manuscripts department of the Russian State Library,

national archive of the Sakha Republic (Yakutia), FSB and the Yakut Scientific Center of the Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences archives; these materials were thoroughly studied. We have also studied the periodical printed materials dating back to the beginning of the 20th century and the book funds of the republic to find texts of the writer and materials on his life and creative writing. In this article we introduce the materials of the first published national periodical materials, which were transliterated from the Beohtlingk and Latin graphics to Cyrillic and attributed by the authors of this article. The novelty of the work is the incorporation of the previously unknown creative works, translations, articles, epistolary heritage of the writer as well as singling out the discrepancies between the original text and the censored reproduction. The cultural and historical method, based on the historical approach to the study of literature and culture, formed the theoretical and methodological basis of our research. Within the scope of this method, literature is regarded as a product of social life and specific cultural and historical conditions. Our study also incorporates the biographical method, according to which, in the study of any writer's creative works, his life experience and biography play a key role. According to this method, the formation of his creative individuality and the creation of his works is directly affected by heredity as well as literary and historical circumstances. Presently, likewise in the previous century, no history of national literature (in general and one belonging to a particular time-period) without a partial or complete implementation of the biographical method. In accordance with this method, in the study of a writer's creative writings, a specific emphasis is given to his life experience, his biography; no literary process can take place without the writers themselves (Questions..., 2014, pp.239-241).

Thus, based on the cultural, historical and biographical methods, this article attempts to justify that the distinguished social and cultural activist of Yakutia A.I. Sofronov is one of the key figures, whose creative works played a major role in shaping and establishing Yakut national culture and literature, moreover it predetermined the trend of their development in the 20th and 21st centuries. In this way, the present study justifies A.I. Sofronov to be one of the key figures, whose creative writing laid the foundations of Yakut national literature and furthermore defined the way it took shape and developed until today. In order to demonstrate that, the life and creative path of the writer, as well as the posthumous influence of his creative work were subdivided into six periods, with correlation to major social and political changes in the life of society of that time: 1. 1914-1925; 2. 1925-1942; 3. 1942-1952; 4. 1952-1962; 5. 1962-1986; 6. 1986 - present days.

Discussion

The study of the life and creative works of the founder of Yakut literature A.I. Sofronov is certainly strongly connected with the social and political changes in the life of the society and represents a history of the development of Yakut literary criticism of the entire 20th century. Thus, the history of studying and evaluating the creative heritage of the writer can be described through the following time-periods:

First period (1914-1925). The 1920s were the most productive years for Sofronov; the writer created his classical works, which represented the beginning of Yakut lyrical and national prose. His dramatic works were especially popular and they were staged in all parts of Yakutia. In addition, during this period, A.I. Sofronov wrote literary critics articles, in which he expressed his theatrical and aesthetic views as a playwright and performer. During his life, 83 of his written works and articles were published in different editions, including separate book editions of dramas in the Moscow and Yakut published versions. Starting from 1923, his creative writings were included into and studied within the school literature program. The earliest reaction to the creative writing of A.I. Sofronov was the article written by V.V. Nikiforov – Kulumnur titled *The creative writing of the Yakut people*, which published in the *Life of the National Groups* journal in 1923. The author of the article notes that "A.I. Sofronov deserves to be considered as the most distinguished and productive Yakut writers... In... his works he addresses the Yakut people and calls for a unity based on

friendship aimed at creating things” (Nikiforov, 1923, pp.112-116). In his review article titled *Yakut literature and its power*, the founder of Soviet literature P.A. Oyunsky, A.I. Sofronov was mentioned as the most talented writer of his time (Oyunsky, 1926, p.4).

Second period (1925-1942). Starting from the mid-1920s, the country is put under the party and government control over literature and art. One of the first executive documents of the ruling party – the resolution of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party “*On the policy of the party in the sphere of fiction literature*” of June 18, 1925, raised the questions of ideological purity of the Soviet literature and strengthening the hegemony of the proletarian writers.

The document indicated that the battle between social classes excelled in the sphere of literature and that there are groups, which are subdivided by the social and class principle: proletarian, peasant and “passer-bys”. The resolution called upon a menacing rage against the counter-revolutionary instances in literature and to take more confident steps in rejecting the prejudice of bourgeois style in literature (The resolution..., 1925, pp.8-9). From this moment, the ideological imperatives become dominant in literature, which set the trends for long-terms historical and literary studies in such topics as social class subdivision, party regime, national unity, etc.

The basis of this resolution was formed by Lenin's thoughts on literature, expressed in his works “*The party structure and party literature*” (1905), “*Critical notes on the questions of nationality*” (1914), etc. The article “*The party structure and party literature*” develops theoretical bases for social literature and justifies the principle of its belonging to the party. V.I. Lenin pointed out the necessity for the party to take leadership in the sphere of literature and claimed that literature should not be something individual or independent from the common proletarian activities and stressed the fact that writers “should certainly enter party organizations”. In his second article, V.I. Lenin noted the existence of bourgeois culture, aside from democratic and social components in the national culture. For this reason, “national culture” is generally the culture of bourgeois, popes and landlords (Lenin, 1973, pp.113-150). Starting from the mid-1920s, due to the introduction of commanding and directive methods of control into the Soviet literary criticism initiated by the ruling part, together with the impact of the ideological and fictional platform of the Russian Association of Proletarian Writers (RAPW), a nihilistic approach to the classic literary heritage was established in the unravelling Yakut literary criticism. The initial stage of these literary disputes started with the publication of an article by a renown Yakut writer and theoretician of literature, A.A. Ivanov – Kunde titled “*Fatalism, mysticism, and symbolism in the works of Yakut writers*”.

In the article, the writer accused the classical writers in mysticism, fatalism and overreaction. In particular, the author wrote the following about A.I. Sofronov: “Religious mysticism, belief in the power of destiny and fate, fatalism – all these things serve as a leitmotif in all Sofronov’s creative works... There is nothing in Sofronov’s creative writings that would make the Yakut person lift one’s eyes higher than the household, nothing that would penetrate with something fresh and new” (Ivanov, 1926, p.2). Sofronov was more and more frequently accused in his detachment from modern topics. As a matter of fact, Sofronov was not an ordinary writer, his works did not fit into the standard framework of that particular “Soviet” literature, which was strongly promoted by the “left-wing writers”; his works did not comply with the ordinary principles of the party and class division. In his poetry, Sofronov promoted love, friendship, nature, female beauty – topics, which were “immoral and unworthy of the proletarian culture” (Iezuitov, 1931, pp.146, 148). Sofronov was accused of lacking modern for that time revolutionary reality in his creative writing; he was considered to be a writer who “detached himself from the pre-revolutionary life, and who is helplessly grasping for air and trying not to drown in the new Soviet reality” (Potapov, 1927a, p.2).

Following the revolutionary trends of the vulgar socialistic methodology of the RAPW theoreticians, literary criticism begins to subdivide writers into various groups. According to their classification, A.I. Sofronov was

recognized as a representative of the “old” literature, which had become a trace of the previously accepted culture, and a Yakut writer who expressed the trade and feudalistic as well as bourgeois-nationalistic ideology. Coming up with an object of their critics without any difficulties, young writers compared and contrasted the classic traditions with the new Soviet literature by creating an artificial “illusion of progress” for themselves. During the campaign against the founders of such literature, “the voice of the weeping in the dessert” became the articles written by V.N. Leontiev, a literary critic, who stood out among other critics with his genuine interpretation of the literary process and objective evaluation of the classic writers’ heritage.

The author pointed at the “peasant character” of the Yakut pre-revolutionary literature, at its progressive, democratic and realistic character. The critic highly acknowledged the creative art of the writers, who were the founders and laid the basis for the national creative writing. He highlighted the uniqueness and educative features of the creative writings as well as to their well-structured and accurately appropriate language use (Leontiev, 1927a, pp.32-39). V.N. Leontiev also highly acknowledged A.I. Sofronov's creative writing: “In his creative writings, he gave a real and specific image combining the class features of the image with the individual ones” (Leontiev, 1927b, p.2).

In the second half of the 1920s, there a troublesome situation occurred concerning the *Cholbon* journal, the editor of which was A.I. Sofronov. The reason for these accusations for the supposed “misunderstanding in the key goals of socialist literature and art” was the so-called “non-political character” of the journal. According to the critics, such a situation occurred due to the regulations of the editor's column, where the editorial board claimed the following: “Wishing to develop the genuine fictional Yakut language literature, we will not publish works, devoted to the social, political and economical issues. Instead of that, we will accept highly creative short stories and poems, which contain a deep-rooted and vitally important material” (Aan Tyl, 1926, p.40). The journal was also accused of publishing stories written by former anarchists, who proclaimed “the ideas of bourgeois intelligentsia, which faced its defeat in the revolution”. Shortly after, the *Communist Revolution* journal published an article by A. Arshakuni *On the battle with the nationalistic ideology*, in which the author came down with his critics of the aesthetic principles promoted by the editors of the journal (Arshakuni, 1927, pp.30-36); in this journal, he saw an attempt to organize a nationalist intelligentsia group aimed at overthrowing the proletarian ideology. He considered the authors of this journal to be ideologists of national bourgeoisie. There were also local critics speaking against him: S. Potapov noted that the journal has a great creative tendency to barricade itself from revolutionary short stories and poems (Potapov, 1927b, p.2).

Starting from 1927, a policy was introduced aimed at those national groups who were mistrusted. A.I. Sofronov was arrested on September 15, 1927 in accordance with a non-justified accusation of participating in the confederist movement in June 1928; he was sent outside of Yakutia. From this moment, the critical reviews reinforced their nihilistic attitude not only in relation to his creative writing, but also in relation to his personality, who was convicted by the Soviet court and being sentenced to exile for political reasons.

On August 9, 1928, the Central Committee of the Supreme Communist Party issued a decree “On the situation in the Yakut organization”, which served as the order for the administrative implementation of “the proletarian national policy” in the republic. The decree stated the following: “while carrying out its policy on the recruitment of national intelligentsia into the process of building a socialist regime, the regional committee made a range of serious mistakes in supporting the leading portion of the nationalist Yakut intelligentsia by systematically promoting its representatives to leading positions in the society” (Regulation ..., 1928).

Following the decree, there were repressive actions in relation to the nationalist intelligentsia: the dissolution of the cultural and educational society *Sakha Omuk* and the reappointments in the editorial

board of the *Cholbon* journal, etc. According to the regulations of this document, there was a scrupulous check-up among the employees of all the organizations in Yakutsk; in the course of this check-up, 113 employees of “non-proletarian” descent were detected and fired (National Archive of Sakha Republic, f. 1111). Naturally, A.I. Sofronov was among them; he was the chair of the *Sakha Omuk* society and the chief editor of the *Cholbon* journal.

“Now all that was said in the decree in relation to the “leading group”, which was stepping up against the nationalistic intelligentsia, was fully reflected in literature, in particular in the evaluation of the creative works of the pre-revolutionary writers” (Kanaev, 1984, p.21). The critics found chauvinistic motifs in such Sofronov's works as *Russoman*, *Poor Yakov*, *The Song of a Yakut*, *Those Who Stumbled Won't Change* and interpreted them as instances of “nationalism” and “nationalistic arrogance” of the writer.

On January 24, 1929, the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party approved and then sent to the regional committees of the party a form letter “On the measures for strengthening the anti-religious activities”, which caused a considerable harm to the development of literature. The statute presented in Article I read: “To focus attention of the state publishing houses on the fact that it is prohibited to publish mystical works and to reissue creative writings with prominent religious and mystical tendencies” (National Archive of Sakha Republic, f. 731); this statute was taken into account by the young critics. From this moment on, Sofronov's works were considered revolutionary, full of religious and mystical ideas.

At the end of the 1920s, the vulgar and socialistic approach to the classic heritage finally established itself among the Yakut critics. The organizational and theoretical statutes of the RAWP caused a great impact on the positions of the Yakut writers, and on the Young Bolshevik group, in particular, who refused to recognize the traditions of the literary heritage. The society members regarded classic creative writing from the point of view of the “party” requirements in relation to art: only from the class perspective and social aspects of their biography. This social group referred to Sofronov as a preacher of the “non-political” theory and the promoter non-class feature of art, as well as a representative of Yakut feudalistic and merchant bourgeoisie writers (Zabolotskiy..., 1930, p.4). Judging by this attitude, young critics began to demolish “the destructive ideological impact” that heritage had on the “Yakut revolutionary” literature which was still weakly developed at that point.

In 1937, the scientific research institute employee N.M. Zabolotsky issued “*The Notes on Yakut Literature*”, in which the author makes an attempt to give an objective evaluation of the creative path of the founders of Yakut literature. Despite the normative approach, the researcher's work was marked by a respective attitude towards the creative works of the writers mentioned earlier. The moderate “thawing” period which came shortly after was interrupted by the repressions of distinguished representatives of the republic. Among other accusations, he incriminated the tolerant attitude towards Sofronov's creative works.

On March 20 and September 9, 1938, a decree of the regional committee of the Central Committee of the Supreme Communist Party was issued proclaiming Kulakovsky, Sofronov, and Neustroev the enemies of the people and the withdrawal of their works from the life of the people (Kulakovskaya, 2008, p.41). At the first meeting of the writers of Yakutia (1939) there was a position of rejecting the cultural heritage created by the founders; their creative works were considered revolutionary, bourgeois-nationalistic and counter-revolutionary. These writers' books were withdrawn from libraries and school programs, and it was forbidden to stage plays based on these works.

This period resembling the attitude towards the life and creativity of A.I. Sofronov is marked by a strict compliance with the requirements of the party regulations, which reflect the political situation in the country. When it comes to the evaluation of his works, the critics based their judgment on the principles of vulgar and social criticism, which established itself in the Yakut literature for a long time-period. These negative judgments along with negative reviews laid the foundation for the subsequent evaluation of the

literary heritage created by A.I. Sofronov for many years to come and formed the social opinion about his social and creative activities.

Third period (1942-1952). In a difficult time for the country, when the political leadership of the country strived to unify the fates of the people, their culture, when political repressions took place reaching levels of deporting entire nations, there were brave people among various ethnic groups in the course of history, who had the courage to stand up for the cultural heritage of their people and their unique values.

G.P. Basharin, a historian, became such an individual for Yakutia; despite the strict imperative orders, he made a non-compromise decision to pose the question of a deep necessity of finding an objective resolution to the problem of Yakut literature history. In June 1942, at the first scientific conference of the departments of the Yakut Pedagogical Institute, the scholar presented his article on the fictional literature and literary folk art during the Great Patriotic War. In his presentation, he gave an objective evaluation and highly acknowledged the pre-revolutionary fictional literature, which served as the foundation for national creative writing. G.P. Basharin recognized the first writers as the founders of native literature as well as realists and educators. The participants of the conference positively and openly accepted the key points of the presentation.

Shortly after his presentation, G.P. Basharin presented a letter based on this presentation to the regional committee of the Russian Communist Party and to the Soviet People's Committee of the Yakut Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. The letter was titled *"Rough draft papers about Kulakovsky, Sofronov, and Neustroev"*. As a follow-up reaction to the scholar's letter, the secretary of the regional committee on ideology, S.A. Bordonsky, prepared a report "On 'the literary heritage' of Kulakovsky, Sofronov, and Neustroev", which contained critical nihilistic and revolutionary views on the creative writing of the classics. Analyzing A.I. Sofronov's creative writing, Bordonsky accuses him of bourgeois nationalism, anti-Soviet attitude and comes to the following conclusion: "Sofronov was protesting against the Soviet power not only on the ideological level (his main works contain anti-social attitudes), and the organizational level" (he was a member of the "Federalists Union" and "Sakha Tomuk", which were political counter-revolutionary organizations, working against the Soviet regime)" (Bordonsky, 1943, p.21).

On February 16-17, 1943, there was a meeting of the scientific and creative society of the republic. Renown leaders, scientists, culture and art representatives supported G.P. Basharin's speech in their own presentations and openly acknowledged him for signifying the importance and significance of literary heritage.

Despite the expectations that the intelligentsia had, on March 1, 1943, based on the report issued by S.A. Bordonsky, a decree was issued by the bureau of the Yakut regional committee of the Russian Communist Party "On the literary heritage of Kulakovsky, Sofronov, and Neustroev", which basically denied the key points presented by G.P. Basharin. The decree stated that the majority of these writers' works is filled with bourgeois-nationalistic thoughts and ideas and that it is revolutionary in its character and expresses sheer pessimism and degradation.

An explicit accuracy and a critical approach to the literary heritage was also guided by the fact that "all these people (Kulakovsky, Sofronov, and Neustroev) took an active part in the battle against the establishment of the Soviet regime in Yakutia; moreover, Sofronov was convicted and sentenced to an imprisonment in connection with his participation in the counter-revolutionary manifestation in 1927" (Regulation ..., 1943, p.40). The bureau of the regional committee of the Russian Communist Party considered it unrightfully and harmful to artificially and undeservedly praise and idealize the classics, to publish all their works without any hesitation, to study their works at schools, and to spread them among the mass readers of the society; at the same time, the committee allowed using selected works of these authors.

Wishing to justify his opinion, on March 25, 1943, G.P. Basharin addressed the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party and the Writers Union of USSR. Based on his letter, in August 1943, the Department of Outreach and Agitation of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party together with the National Committee of the Writers Union of USSR discussed his work on the creative writings of the three writers and considered it improper to reject using the works of these classics of Yakut literature. G.P. Basharin's work was readdressed to the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of USSR. After discussing the works of the Yakut scholar, the academic council of the institute awarded him with a qualification of the Candidate of Sciences.

In 1944, the Scientific Research Institute of Language, Literature and History of the Council of People's Commissars of the Yakut Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic published a book by G.P. Basharin titled "*The Yakut Realists and Educators (From the History of Social Attitude of the Pre-revolutionary Yakutia)*", in which the scholar recreated the life and creative biography of these three classics, proved that their creative writing was democratic in its nature and justified the key importance of their heritage in reviving the national self-identity of the Yakut people. The scholar also carried out an in-depth analysis of the most prominent creative works by A.I. Sofronov, these are drama plays *Poor Yakov*, the *Silt of Life*, poems *Native Land* and *Angel and Demon*. Having studied the works of these writers, G.P. Basharin came to the conclusion that the creative works of Sofronov and likewise the heritage left to us by Kulakovsky and Neustroev was extremely progressive, genuinely authentic, and a good-quality creative material. The scholar claimed that the main method that a writer uses is the critical realism with some elements of enlightenment. He especially emphasized the ideological value of the writers' works (Basharin, 1994, 140-141).

G.P. Basharin's research work resonated in heated discussions not only in the republic but outside of it as well, becoming a prominent topic in the most prestigious scientific and political spheres of life in the country.

On October 16, 1944, the bureau of the Yakut regional committee of the Russian Communist Party issued a decree "On the literary heritage of the Yakut writers –Kulakovsky, Sofronov, and Neustroev", which cancelled the decree of March 1, 1943. The document read: "It is necessary to issue and implement literature works and scientific research papers of the above mentioned writers. Prior to this, there should be a critical approach to the publishing process of these works so as not to allow for publishing works, which are ideologically insufficient and contain elements of mysticism" (Resolution ..., f.119). There was an opportunity to prepare for publishing the works of these classic writers and to set their plays in theaters, which was considered a great achievement at that time. In the middle of the 1940s, positive trends occurred in relation to the creative works of A.I. Sofronov. Thus, the *Socialist Yakutia* newspaper published his *Native Land* poem, which was translated by A. Olkhon and with the efforts of N.M. Zabolotsky several of his works included into the list of essential schoolbook readings in Yakut schools.

Owing to the courageous civil position of G.P. Basharin, this time period saw great changes, which laid the foundation for an objective study of the literary heritage of the founders of Yakut literature. I.G. Spiridonov suggests that "the courageous book" was deeply scientific in its form with a theoretical insight into the problems set before the writer and it played a major role in the birth of literary critical thinking in the republic (Spiridonov, 2012, pp.69-75).

In 1946, a decree was issued by the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party, which served as the initial impulse for an entire stage in the development of the Soviet literary and creative criticism, which involved commands and directives, as well as crude distortions in the evaluation of specific literary facts and phenomena. When this decree was seen by the publicity, there was a new wave of heated discussion surrounding the question of literary heritage. The key ideas expressed by G.P. Basharin were met with strong criticism: a non-compromising negative evaluation of the pre-revolutionary Yakut literature heritage

in attempt to prove that, being representatives of naturalism, the founders of Yakut literature distorted the pre-revolutionary reality (Syromyatnikov, 1990, p.48).

Forth period (1952-1962). In this time-period, there was an ideological conflict surrounding the literary heritage, which acquires a mass effect. On January 12-16, 1951, there was a discussion of G.P. Basharin's book at the council meeting of the Writers Union of USSR in Moscow with the participation of Yakut writers and scholars.

Meanwhile, the leaders of the ideological forces of the republic managed to get the permission to publish the article by S. Borisov, A. Surkov & L. Klimovich titled "*In the Name of Correct Representation of the History of Yakut Literature*" published in the *Pravda* newspaper. In this article, the founders of Yakut literature were presented as bourgeois-nationalist writers. The article enumerated their fatal mistakes and disadvantages (Borisov..., 1951, p.2).

A month later, on January 20, 1951, an article was published in the *Socialist Yakutia* and *Kyym* newspapers, in which the views and creative works of the "nationalist-bourgeois revolutionaries" were greatly criticized. In particular, this what the article says about A.I. Sofronov: "Starting from 1914 and until his death, Sofronov in many of his works strived to create a national feud; he was strictly against the liberal ideas of the Great October Socialistic Revolution. In the Soviet times, Sofronov is seen as the great enemy of the people" (Kanaev, Efremov & Tikhonov, 1952, p.2).

On February 6, 1952, the bureau of the Yakut Regional Committee of the Russian Communist Party issued a decree "On the bourgeois-nationalist distortions in the representation of the history of Yakut literature", which stopped the development of literature in the republic for a considerable period of time. Not only did the decree deny the value of the creative heritage created by the classics, but it also accused them of "destructive impact" on the creative process of many their other contemporaries (About ..., 1952, p.1).

G.P. Basharin's book was classified as an anti-scientific and anti-Marxist, being an initiator of "reviving the long-past nationalism" and promoting bourgeois ideology.

The decree marked the beginning of a special period in the history of criticism and literature studies in Yakutia, which lasted for an entire decade and caused a considerable damage to the literary, social and political development of the republic. On March 20, 1952, at the 5th Plenary Session of the Regional Committee of the Russian Communist Party, S.Z. Borisov presented an article "On the status ideological principles in the republic and how to enhance them". Based on the key points of the presentation, specific measures were taken regarding "the case of G.P. Basharin": G.P. Basharin was fired from his work, students who participated in the scholar's scientific club devoted to history, were arrested; later they would become renown social representatives of the republic.

In 1955, "A Brief Description of the History of Yakut Soviet Literature" was published. It was different from all the other publications with its distorted, politicized description of the history of literature, in which the creative works of the founders of literature was traditionally presented as revolutionary and bourgeois-nationalistic. However, soon the political situation in the country took a positive turn. After the death of Stalin, the 20th meeting of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was held; it played an important role in the reimbursement and return of many distinguished scholars among the names of distinguished people of the country, when the ruling party reconsidered its guidelines and principles. There were also positive changes in the literary life of Yakutia: the founder of Yakut Soviet literature, P.A. Oyunsky was reimbursed and the party stopped rallying the three pioneer writers of Yakutia with unjustified accusations.

With the coming of the thawing period, there appeared a necessity to find an objective scientific approach to the analysis of the classic works. In 1959, selected works of A. Sofronov and N. Neustroev were published for the first time.

The beginning of the 1960s was marked by a gradual return of the names of the Yakut writers into the sphere of literature. In 1961, in the 8th edition of the *Banner* journal, an article written by the vice-director for research affairs of the Gorky Institute of World Literature, A. Petrosyan titled “*Disputes over heritage*”, which played a significant and key role in the development of cultural life of the republic.

In the above mentioned article, the author criticized the long-lasting and unjustified dispute concerning the names of the prerevolutionary classical Yakut literature writers and proved that their creative writing was strictly progressive and democratic in character. The researcher’s call for an objective study of these writers’ heritage read: “Life demands to enhance the mistakes elimination process in the evaluation of heritage and to replace meaningless disputes surrounding this topic with a productive study of the subject-matter” (Petrosyan, 1961, pp.204-213); the scholar’s article caused heated discussions in the republic and laid the foundation for reconsidering the primary issues of literary heritage.

On February 16, 1962, a decree was issued by the bureau of the Yakut Regional Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union “On the elimination of mistakes in the description of certain issues connected with the history of Yakut literature”; this decree served as the starting point for the transition to a new approach in the study of creative writing.

The decree mentioned that in the course of analyzing the creative writing of these writers, both idealization and a nihilistic approach are not applicable, due to the fact that a prejudiced and subjective opinion inevitably leads to a distortion of historical facts and interfere into the process of using the literary heritage properly in the desire to further develop Yakut literature. The decree of 1962 gave rise to the process of revisiting this cultural heritage from an objective perspective; the creative works of A.E. Kulakovskiy, A.I. Sofronov, and N.D. Neustroev were recognized as the creative heritage of the people.

Thus, owing to the courageous actions taken by G.P. Basharin and with the support of the national intelligentsia, the long-term ideological struggle for the sake of preserving the cultural heritage, accompanied by fierce disputes, dramatic outrage, and complex searches, ended with a victory.

Fifth period (1962-1986). In his biography, 1962 is a borderline year. On November 15, a decree was issued by the Presidium of the Supreme Court of the Yakutian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic on the cancellation and termination of Sofronov’s case due to the insufficient evidence prior to the accusation. On May 9, 1963, the judicial board on criminal cases of the Supreme Council of the Russian SFSR confirmed the decision of the Supreme Court of the republic (Archive, f. 4372).

Due to A.I. Sofronov’s full reimbursement, new opportunities occurred for holding much more objective studies of his creative heritage. In 1964-1965, two volumes of his selected works were published. In 1976, his selected poems were published; in 1986, his collection of drama plays was published. The periodical issues now contained the writers’ memoirs. Starting from the 1960s, Sofronov’s creative writing were re-included into the school education program.

During this time-period, G.P. Basharin’s monographs were published – “*A.I. Sofronov (Live and Creative Writing)*” (1969) and “*Ostrovsky and Yakutia*” (1973); G.P. Kardashevskiy wrote “*Dostoevskian Drama in the Creative Writing of A.I. Sofronov*” (1982), devoted to the writer’s drama plays. Specific aspects of the writer’s dramas were briefly described in A.A. Bilyukina’s monographs (1982, 1988).

The poetry of Sofronov, a writer with a biographical background of “an enemy of the people”, who was sentenced to a long-term exile outside of the republic, did not meet the aesthetic requirements of social realism, in which the main concept was the appraisal of the revolution and an optimistic belief in the values of the soviet regime; for these reasons, critics and scholars were very cautious in their evaluation of the poetic works created by A.I. Sofronov.

Exceptionally dangerous scientific discussion topics were connected with creative works, which were regarded by the socialist critics as a form of “degradation” and “bourgeois-nationalistic”. Such creative works were not mentioned and were not included into the writer’s collections of selected works. In order to deaccentuate the social content and motifs of the “more suitable” works, the collection editors often had to process it for censorship: to exclude words, lines, verse from the text, and to replace words. Sofronov’s poetry met contradictory reviews in the scientific works of the given time-period. In this respect, an article by G.G. Okorokov titled *The Poet of Brave Thoughts and Spirit* is of a great interest within the scope of this paper; in this article, the researcher calls A.I. Sofronov the founder of psychological genres in Yakut literature: in poetry, it is the intimate and social-philosophical lyrics; in drama and prose, they are the social and psychological aspects correspondingly.

In the concluding part of his article, the author notes that the poet had works which did not correspond to his timeline. The author also claims that Sofronov accepted the ideas of socialism, but did not accept the principle of belonging to the communist party. A thorough analysis of Sofronov’s mistakes and misinterpretations in understanding the historical fate of Yakutia, the limitations in his ideological beliefs, as well as minor bourgeois democratism in his works was included in the republished version of *“The Chronicles of Yakut Soviet Literature”* (1970), written by G.M. Vasilyev and G.S. Syromyatnikov.

The methodological problems of this time-period include attempts to interpret and analyze the Sofronov creative method. It was difficult for scholars to decipher the poet’s worldview: from dissidence and pessimism to a prominent optimism (Vasilyev, 1965, p.2). In 1984, a collection of poems by A.I. Sofronov titled *“Polar Night”* was issued in the Russian translation by V. Soloukhin.

This period of literature and criticism development is characterized by a revival of the historical truth in relation to the personality and creative work of A.I. Sofronov. However, the well-known prejudices of the “depressive” years, the stale class-and-party approach to literary issues limited the full and objective study of the classic Yakut writer’s works. Among the scholars of that time, the most prominent are G.R. Kardashevsky, his student and ideological follower, who made a great contribution into the restoration of the writer’s reputation. At the beginning of the 1960s, he published a range of articles in the republic and compiled a collection of historically valuable memoirs and photo documents of the A.I. Sofronov’s contemporaries.

Sixth period (1986 - present). The new trend of social renewal lead to considerable systematic changes, as a result of which many ideologies and methodological doctrines of the party became irrelevant. We know that at this stage in the historical timeline the society stressed its attention to the “white spots” in history; the society began to reimburse people, who became victims of massive political repressions. At the beginning of the 1990s, a range of Yakut literature founders, renown writers and critics were reimbursed.

An important event in the life of the society was the adoption of a decree by the Yakut Regional Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union of May 10, 1989, which drew the line under the most vital topics of Yakut literature studies. The decree of the then President of the Russian Federation, B.N. Yeltsin of April 26, 1994, “On the restoration of justice in relation to the Yakut people repressed in the 1920-1930s”, thus cancelling the decree of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party passed in 1928.

From this point and onwards, the archive materials, which were restricted before, became available; it also became possible to publish documents, which depict the tragic years in the life of the writer – the years of unjustified accusation, imprisonment and exile. Many of the writer’s works, unknown to the mass reader, which were unavailable to the readers for a long time-period, became available in 1996 in the book *“Swan Song”* compiled by L.R. Kulakovskaya.

In 2005-2011, a complete collection of A.I. Sofronov's works in 4 volumes was published, which was compiled by the author of the present article; the collection contains the entire prose and poetic heritage of the writer (2005, 2008, 2011). In the same time-periods, collections of memoirs and a bibliographical index were published. As a result of research in the archives of the Russian State Cinema and photodocuments Archive (Moscow), we have found fragments of documentaries featuring A.I. Sofronov.

A new wave of interest for the writer's creative writing occurred at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries in the context of spiritual revival of the people, renewal of cultural values, and reconsideration of the national self-identity; all these aspects found its reflection in the numerous articles and Yakut writers' creative works. In 2000s, monographs were published, devoted to the life and creative path of the writer, in which researchers introduced new sources. In 2006 and 2014, collections of scientific articles were published based on the materials of scientific conferences, devoted to A.I. Sofronov; these articles cover conceptual problems of studying the creative heritage of the writer from the point of view of the creative method and style, its poetic and linguistic features.

This time-period is marked with the creation of a great number of works of different genres, devoted to the tragic fate of the writer. A prominent example among these works is the novel of the Yakut national writer E.P. Neimokhov titled "Alampa" issued in 2 parts (2006), and a drama by the national Yakut writer N.A. Luginov titled "Alampa, Alampa..." (1988), a play written by I.A. Dmitrieva – Sien Cholboduk titled "White Snow-bunting..." (1988), etc.

Conclusion

Thus, based on a long-term study of the archive materials, the chronological sequence of A.I. Sofronov's life journey was reconstructed; a systemization was defined, which consists of six stages of perceiving the writer as an individual. In the evaluation of the life journey and creative writings of the writer A.I. Sofronov and other founders of the Yakut literature, the reasons for unjustified critics and accusations were the intrusions on the part of the party leaders into the evaluation process of the writers' creative works as well as the decision of the party by which it believe necessary to subdivide the writer community into social classes along with the false research concepts, who distorted the objective evaluations of the writers' works of art. The history of perceiving the creative and life path of A.I. Sofronov in Yakut criticism literature and literary studies, a long-term struggle of the national intelligentsia to return the name of the writer among the classics – all these aspects prove the ambiguous and complex nature of the writer's creative legacy. This is a typical feature of the fate that prominent creative works of art had to face throughout history. The creative legacy of the founder of Yakut literature promoted the spiritual upraise among its representatives, had a significant impact on the consecutive development of the native literature; it represents a classic spiritual heritage of the Sakha people.

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