

Folk Belief and Media Group
of the Estonian Literary Museum
Estonian Institute of Folklore

Folklore

Electronic Journal of Folklore
Vol. 63

Edited by Mare Kõiva & Andres Kuperjanov
Guest editor: Aimar Ventsel

Tartu 2016

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The journal is supported by the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research (IUT 22-5), the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund (Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies), the state programme project EKKM14-344, and the Estonian Literary Museum.



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EKM Teaduskirjastus / ELM Scholarly Press

Estonian Institute of Folklore

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Design Andres Kuperjanov

ISSN 1406-0957

doi:10.7592/FEJF2016.63

www.folklore.ee/folklore

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RESISTANCE TO IDEOLOGY, SUBJUGATION TO LANGUAGE: A WORKSHOP BY WRITER GABIT MUSREPOV UNDER SOVIET TOTALITARIAN CENSORSHIP IN 1928–1964

Zhanat Kundakbayeva, Kamshat Rustem

Abstract: This paper examines how, under the control of strong censorship, some of Gabit Musrepov's literary works were published despite their seditious nature. The authors argue that although G. Musrepov was a reputable Soviet writer, the materials presented in the article prove that he worked at the meeting point of resistance and subjugation: resistance to ideology, subjugation to language. The literary analysis of Musrepov's three short stories shows that under the strictest control and actively expressed interest of the authorities in the writer's creative activities, the latter's mastery and the incompetence of censors allowed him to avoid the prohibition of his works.

Keywords: Aesopian language, allegory and grotesque description, censorship, hidden intonation of disappointment in the narration, mastery, national contextuality

INTRODUCTION

In the 1920s, Soviet political censorship was set up as a means of controlling people and society in general. As part of this Glavlit, a centralised censorship body, was set up. The structure of local censorship bodies copied Glavlit at the republican, oblast, and krai levels. Soviet political censorship increased in scale and refinement and operated in a secretive and conspiratorial way. Arlen Blum has noted: "No printed matter having any verbal meaning could appear without the permit of the Glavlit bodies – up to postcards, visiting cards, matchbox stickers, and invitation cards".¹ The censorship system, which aimed to establish control over all forms of intellectual self-expression (including public speeches), proved to be so effective that it existed without cardinal changes until the collapse of the USSR. However, close reading of some works of the founder of the Kazakh national literature, Gabit Makhmudovich Musrepov (1902–1985), reveals that, although they were written during the Stalinist period and during the Khrushchev thaw, they overstepped the limits of the socialist system.

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