

THE FATE OF A PROSECUTOR DURING THE ERA OF REPRES SION AND REHABILITATION

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Abstract

This article examines the life path and professional activities of Mirzagul Musayevich Babayev, born in 1914 in the Aktobe region of the Kazakh SSR. Special attention is given to his work as prosecutor of the Chimbay district of the Karakalpak ASSR and his subsequent arrest in 1942 on charges of counterrevolutionary activities. In 1944, he was declared a socially dangerous element and exiled to South Kazakhstan for eight years. After his release and rehabilitation in 1957, Babayev resumed his career, working as an accountant in various collective farms.

The article also considers his life in the context of historical changes, including the dissolution of the Soviet Union and Uzbekistan's independence. Babayev continued to live in Tashkent Province until his death in 1994. His legacy endures through his descendants, who honor his memory and continue family traditions. The article emphasizes the importance of studying and preserving historical and cultural heritage, which helps us understand and appreciate the contributions of previous generations to the development of our society.

Keywords: Mirzagul Musayevich Babayev, Chimbay district prosecutor, 1942 arrest, sentencing and exile, Supreme Court of the Uzbek SSR, NKVD, Karakalpak ASSR, 1957 rehabilitation, cultural heritage.

During the Stalinist repressions, many representatives of the peoples living across the vast Eurasian expanse became victims of the regime. Some were forced to flee their native lands to escape the grasp of the Red Army, while others, known as emissaries of "brotherly nations," came with naive faith in the future of the "communist" society. These individuals cannot be condemned, as they were shaped by the views and values of their era. Despite the challenges, many managed to preserve their conscience and honor. One such individual was Myrzagul Babaev, a native of the present-day Shalkar District in the Aktobe region of Kazakhstan.

Myrzagul was born in 1914 in the village of Koshkar-Ata in the "Kyzyl Oy" area to Baba Musayev, a humble laborer who worked for wealthy farmers. His mother died shortly after his birth, and his father passed away in 1921. Orphaned, Myrzagul was raised by relatives, including his paternal uncle, Kenzhebay Musayev. In 1927, he was enrolled in a boarding school at the Karashakat station in Shalkar District, where he completed primary education. In 1930-1931, Kazakhstan experienced a famine caused by drought and the genocidal policies of the Soviet government under the leadership of I. Goloshchyokin, secretary of the Kazakh Regional Committee. Consequently, from the fall of 1931, waves of starving Kazakhs began migrating northward to Russia and southward to Karakalpakstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. These migrations were not just a means of survival but also a form of collective resistance to Soviet collectivization policies. [2, p. 288] According to modern estimates, around one million Kazakhs left the republic during these years. [2, p. 288] Many of these migrants settled across Karakalpakstan, spreading throughout the region. [3]

Due to the famine, Myrzagul Babaev migrated to Karakalpakstan in August 1931. He initially arrived in the Kara-Uzyak District, where he found permanent employment. Later that year, he moved to the Chimbay District, a longstanding center of administration, culture, and politics, where both Karakalpaks and Kazakhs had lived for centuries. Initially employed as a clerk at the State Bank in Kara-Uzyak, he was soon transferred to the Chimbay branch.

In early 1936, Babaev began working as a propagandist for the Chimbay District Komsomol Committee. From 1936 to 1938, he served as a private in artillery units of the Red Army, stationed in Samarkand. After his demobilization, he returned to Karakalpakstan, joining the Karpromsouz organization as a cultural worker. In May 1939, he was appointed prosecutor of the Kuibyshev District, and in September of the same year, he became the prosecutor of Chimbay District, a position he held until August 1942.

In August 1942, Babaev was dismissed from his position and expelled from the Communist Party for defending a prosecutor's office employee named Aytenov and allegedly shielding him from military conscription. He was also accused of "participating in group drinking during the escort of conscripts to the Red Army."

During this period, an 18-year-old named Baltabay Pirmanov was arrested in Chimbay for "counter-revolutionary propaganda and pro-fascist conversations among the population." During interrogation, Pirmanov claimed to have heard such remarks at a dinner with district officials and named several individuals, including party and judicial personnel. The NKVD launched an investigation, concluding that a "counter-revolutionary insurgent organization" operated in Chimbay District.

On October 5, 1942, Sergeant Madgazin of the NKVD issued an arrest warrant for Babaev and three others, accusing them of participating in the "Chimbay Counter-Revolutionary Organization." Despite intense interrogations, Babaev initially denied all accusations. However, on October 23, he was arrested.

By November 4, Babaev was formally charged under Articles 58 and 67 of the Criminal Code of the Uzbek SSR for alleged "counter-revolutionary and pro-fascist activities." Babaev continued to assert his innocence, declaring, "I am not guilty under the charges brought against me. I have never known or participated in any counter-revolutionary organization in Chimbay." [4, p. 322]

Following days of physical torture, Babaev was coerced into signing a false confession on November 25, 1942. He later recalled, "Investigator Astafyev tormented me to the point where I believed I would not survive, so I decided to confess just to avoid further suffering."

Despite additional pressure to implicate others, Babaev refused. On February 3, 1943, he was beaten again by NKVD officials, which led him to despair. "I lost all hope," Babaev later wrote. "The next day, when Astafyev resumed his abuse, I resolved to end my life."

The NKVD transferred Babaev and other defendants to Tashkent on April 13, 1943. The interrogation resumed there, and under threat of death, Babaev repeated his coerced confession. His case was merged with others, and on June 3, 1943, Captain Baryshev of the NKGB took over the investigation.

On June 4, 1943, Babaev retracted his confession, stating that he had been subjected to daily torture since November 11, 1942. "Astafyev forced me to confess to being a member of a counter-revolutionary organization in Chimbay," he declared.

The investigation dragged on, and in November 1943, the case was referred to the Special Council of the NKVD. In March 1944, the council ordered further

investigation. Finally, on September 30, 1944, Babaev was sentenced under Articles 7 and 35 of the RSFSR Criminal Code to eight years in prison.

On September 19, 1957, the Judicial Board of the USSR Supreme Court overturned the sentence, declaring Babaev and the other defendants innocent.

Rehabilitation not only restored justice but also marked a new beginning for Babaev. In the 1970s, he settled in the Kibrai District near Tashkent, where he worked as a senior auditor and accountant in collective farms. He retired in 1974. Myrzagul Babaev passed away in 1994 at the age of 80, leaving behind a legacy of dignity and resilience. He was remembered for his honesty, intellect, and eloquence. His grandchildren recall him as a man with a keen interest in folklore and a large personal library. [5]

Babaev's life serves as a testament to the triumph of justice over adversity and stands as a reminder of the value of preserving family and cultural traditions.

References

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