

LANGUAGE AND CULTURE IN TAJIKISTAN

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MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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CERTIFICATE

Certified that the dissertation entitled “**LANGUAGE AND CULTURE IN TAJIKISTAN**” submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY** has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this or any other university and is my own work.

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Dedicated
to
My Parents

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Needless to say, errors, if any are solely my own.

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PREFACE

The Republic of Tajikistan is culturally rich and traditionally vibrant, with several languages and people coexisting harmoniously for ages giving it the texture which makes it stand out. Since art, language, culture and tradition heed no boundaries and transcend the man made barriers of geography and religion and the eternity of time, the rich cultural fabric of Tajikistan has influenced and in turn has been influenced by the cultures and traditions of other places, near and far. This work deals with the language and culture of the people of Tajikistan, which has been a great centre of culture since ancient times. Though it is devoted to Tajikistan, one can not study the same in isolation vis-a-vis Central Asia, as since ancient and medieval times the region has been culturally one and homogeneous. The literal meaning of the term “Tajikistan” is “the province of Tajiks”, (*istan* in Persian is for province).

This study is a modest attempt to elucidate the rich, effervescent, evolving yet much neglected and forgotten cultural and linguistic history of Tajikistan, its origin and development over time, its influence on the economy and its people and its significance in the global canvas. In modern dynamic times as of now we can seldom afford to overlook the rich cultural heritage that binds us with time and ties us with our roots, which essentially are the same, though regions and people might vary.

Chapter I, gives a brief introduction about the geographical, economic and social aspects of Tajikistan. Tajikistan is home primarily to three groups, the Tajiks, Uzbeks and Russians. Being located centrally to the west of China and to the north of Amu Darya it is landlocked, hence called “the heart of Central Asia”. The terrain is rugged and hilly making cultivation of crops difficult. Cotton is the primary crop besides almonds and hazel that is cultivated on the semi-arid mountain terrain. The picturesque Pamir and Altai Mountains, collectively called as the Roof of the World dominate the landscape. The longest glacier of the world, the 60-km long Fedchenko glacier is the chief source of water for irrigation and also for many hydro electric projects in the region. With only 8% to 10% of the total land area being arable, more than 60% of the population being rural, high level of unemployment and even higher rates of poverty and due to civil war, the growth rate of the economy of Tajikistan has been the lowest in Central Asia.

This province was used by the Arabs as a base for the invasions of the Transoxiana. Turkish resistance was overcome, but the proud national spirit and culture of the Tajiks eventually overshadowed the Arabs, and gave birth to the first Persian/Tajik dynasty in Islam. The end of the Umayyid Caliphate in 750 A.D marked the beginning of the direct Arab rule in Khwarezm and Transoxiana. During the 5th and 7th centuries the Tajik language evolved due to a heightened sense of cultural and linguistic identity. This period also saw the rise of numerous poets, writers, thinkers and intellectuals who have lent their distinguishable mark to the time. Abu Abdullah Rudaki, the founder of the Tajik Persian literature is

regarded as the first poet of the Islamic period. The Tajiks are the largest Persian and the oldest ethnic element in Central Asia. The Uzbeks are the largest Turkic group in Central Asia and the largest in the world after the Turks of Turkey. This Chapter gives an overview of the cultural basis, origin and development in Tajikistan

Subsequent Chapter II, seeks to trace the development of Tajik language through various phases of history in a transcendental journey covering Old Persian, Middle Persian, Classical Persian and Modern Persian times. The people of Tajikistan and Afghanistan have maintained a somewhat purer form of the Farsi language and call it Farsi-e Tajik in Tajikistan and Farsi-e Dari in Afghanistan. Since the Central Asian culture was based on the teachings of Zarathushtra, who preached the use of wisdom, they had no need for a script. The scribes of Elam and Babylon were recruited and for the first time the language of the Persian was written in the Cuneiform script. A few records in the Armanic script have been found to prove its use. During the Sassanian era, a very advanced form of alphabet was used, what is today known as the *Din Dabereh* having 48 alphabets consisting of 14 vowels and 34 consonants and capable of recording all types of sound and therefore every language.

Language underwent change after the Arab conquest who forced their script and grammar upon the Iranian language. The Tajik/ Persian language and culture also provided the best means for the promotion of an anti-Arab, pro Central Asian

ethnic identity. Cultural and linguistic map of Tajikistan was shaped by the events that overtook its territory through history. The division of the Tajik/Persian community into two separate zones and the placement of each zone in a different country, Imperial Russia and Afghanistan respectively made both groups vulnerable to cultural degeneration. The adverse impact of the division on the Tajiks to the north of the Panj river was felt even more during the Soviet period. The Tajik language belongs to the Eastern branch of the Indo-European family of languages, which also includes Farsi, Pashtu, Dari, Kurdish, and Baluchi. Tajik language includes, Yaghnobi and the languages of the Pamir and Badakhshan highlands. Some other Dialects of Tajik are Yaghnobi, Wakhi, Ishkashemi, Shighnani, Rushani Bajuvi etc. The extensive propagation of the Tajik language in the Pamirs is mainly a phenomenon linked to the Soviet era. This chapter throws light on the course of development of Tajik language and social, economic and political factors that have influenced and shaped it over time

In Chapter III, the development of Tajik literature is traced through its glorious past, wavering present and uncertain future. Continuous war disrupted the flow of culture and evolution of literature. Since Mahmud of Ghazni was a sincere patron of literature *Qasida*, the famous form of poetry developed during his reign. The most famous *Qasida* writer of his time was Abul Qasim Hassan bin Ahmad Unsuri Balkhi known as Malakus-shoara. Unsuri wrote beautiful *Qasidas* in Tajik/Persian. Abu Rehan Mohammad bin Ahmad Beruni (973-1051) famous as Al Beruni, came to India with Mahmud of Ghazni and learnt Sanskrit language, habits

and rituals of the people of India. He wrote a book on his observations *Tehquiq Malal Hind Man Maqula Maqbula Fil Aql Au Mazdaula Athri*, famous as *Kitabul Hind*. Fazal Baihaqi (995-1075) wrote a voluminous description, in 30 volumes, about the Ghaznavids. His most famous work is *Tarikh-i-Masudi* also known as *Tarikh-i-Baihaqi*. The most famous poet of the middle ages (14th century) of Tajikistan was Kamaluddin Mas'ud, known in poetry as Kamol Khujandi. . In the 16th century some great poets like Jalaluddin Rumi, Saadi Shirazi, and Amir Khusrau Dehlavi lived who enriched the Tajik / Persian literature. One famous poet and philosopher in this period was Mirza Abdul Qadir Bedil (1644-1721). He was born in India and has written on Sufism. Bedil is more famous in Central Asia and especially in Tajikistan. This Chapter gives a vivid account of the literary endeavors accomplished during the 15th-17th centuries, which gave direction and moulded the edifice of the future developments.

Chapter IV analyses the development of Tajik language and culture under the Soviets. The Russian take over of Central Asia greatly helped in the development of the Russian language, culture, literature etc. Progressive Russian intellectuals were of tremendous help to the Central Asians in the fields of economy, natural resources exploitation, literature, language, theatre etc. Ahmad Makhdoom Danish, a famous philosopher of that period was greatly influenced by the progressive Russian culture. He was so liberal in his ideas and thoughts that he came to be known as 'infidel'. The most famous work of Ahmad Danish is *Navaderul Waqae*, which is the collection of science, philosophy and political

ideas. Abdulhuseynov's , a science fiction writer, works include *Nihonkhonai Qamar* (The Hiding Place of the Moon, 1982) and *Boshishgoh dar Qamar*. Abdulhuseynov joined the Union of Writers of the Soviet Union in 1985. Other prominent writers of this era are Ghani Abdullo(*Mo az Bomi Jahon, Satrhoi Sokhtmon etc*), Rashid Abdullo(*Qodir*), Ziyodello Abdulloev, Abdurahman Abdumannonov, Abdurazzoqov Habibullo, Kamol Aini, Sadriddin Aini, Jonibek Akobirov, Abbas Aliev, Salimsho Alimshoev, Ozod Aminova, Roziya Ghafurova, Jalol Ikromi, Gulnazar Keldiev, Abulqosim Lahuti etc Soviet rule institutionalized western art forms, publishing and mass media, subject to political constraints. The Firdausi State Library, houses significant collection of oriental manuscripts. The Soviet era saw the introduction of opera and ballet in Tajikistan as well as the organization of Tajik-style song and dance troupes. In the beginning of 20th century the efforts of many progressive writers of Central Asia who were influenced by the Russian literature and were experimenting it in Tajik literature, helped the development of Tajik language and culture around this time. During the 1920s and 1930s, the role of Tajik as the language of official communication declined with the introduction of Russian. In 1930s, the Arabic script of Tajik language was changed into the Latin script. In the 1940s, this script was changed once again to the Cyrillic script.

In the mid-1970s, the Tajik intellectuals and religious leaders formed an underground group in Qurqanteppe, their most sacred goal being the revival of Tajik language. Tajikistan's Language Law of 1989, spearheaded by the reformists

declared Tajik as the official language of the republic and relegated Russian as the language of international transactions.

In Chapter V discusses the changes began in the post-Soviet period. The disintegration of the Soviet Union, independence of Tajikistan and the subsequent economic crisis are leading Tajikistan to the crossroads of socio-cultural transformation. Ethno-cultural consolidation of the people of Tajikistan was never fully realized, as the Tajik centres in Bukhara, Samarkand, Ferghana and northern Afghanistan are still outside Tajikistan. However, the departments of departments of the Ministry of Culture, various cultural establishments, and the mass media have served as important sources for the education and enlightenment. There were many creative unions of writers, painters, journalists and others that were financed by their own funds and were part of union organisations. Currently the state budget for education, science and culture cannot cover expenditure due to cash shortages and inflation and are often supplemented by private financing, which are uncertain and insufficient. After independence, school curricula included more Tajik language and literature study, including classical Persian/Tajik literature.

Maps

Tajikistan



Tajikistan: Administrative Divisions



- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1 Region under the direct jurisdiction of the central government in Dushanbe</p> <p>2 Kulyab Region</p> <p>3 Kurgan-Tyube Region</p> | <p>4 Leninabad Region</p> <p>5 Gorno-Badkhashan Autonomous Region</p> <p>Note: Kulyab and Kurgan-Tyube Regions were unified in 1993 after the civil war as Khatlon Region.</p> |
|---|--|



Regional Groups or Clans



Chapter-I

INTRODUCTION

The official name of the Republic of Tajikistan is **Jumhurii Tojikiston**, which gained independence from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic on 9th September 1991. The capital of the Republic of Tajikistan is **Dushanbe**; the other major cities are Khojand, Kulyab, Kurgan-Tyube. The official language of the Republic is **Tajik** but Russian is widely used in government and in business transactions.

Despite substantial migration, Tajikistan was the fastest growing republic during the 1980s. At present the total population of this country is 68, 63, 752 (July 2003). This is because Tajiks have the highest birth rate (32.78 births/1,000 population as per 2003 estimates) of all the Central Asian republics. The Tajik proportion of the republics' population grew by more than 3 percentage points between 1979 and 1989. It is one of the poorest countries of the region where according to an estimate 60% population lives below poverty line¹.

There are three major population groups in Tajikistan, the Tajiks being the largest with 65%. The next large group is of Uzbeks with 25%

¹ See also, David Twaing, *The New Eurasia: A Guide to the Former Soviet Union*, Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1993, pp. 163-169

population and the Russians 3.5%, which is declining because of their continuous emigration. According to the religious beliefs there are: 85% Sunni Muslims and the population of Shi'ah Muslims is about 5%.

The Republic of Tajikistan is situated west of China between 36.40⁰ to 39.40⁰ north latitudes and 67.20⁰ to 75⁰ east longitudes. It is 350 km north to south and 700 km west to east, with the total area of 1,43,100 sq. kms. Tajikistan is in the north of Amu Darya. It is a landlocked country and is called '*Hirat* of Central Asia' sharing its borders with Uzbekistan (1,161 km) and Kyrgyzstan (870 km) lie to north and west, China (414 km) and Afghanistan (1,206 km) to the east and south. Tajikistan is the country of mountains with Pamir and Alay mountains dominating the landscape. Geographically Pamir Mountains are situated in Central Asia, in the Republic of Tajikistan occupying 93% of its territory.

The capital of the Republic of Tajikistan is Dushanbe, which is situated on the confluence of the two rivers Varzob and Kafernihon. It was once famous for its boisterous Monday market, hence it got the name "Dushanbe" that means "Monday" in Tajik².

In the deep valley there is much semi desert steppe landscape, which is being reclaimed. Cotton plantation is done on a large scale in this area. Some

² Svat Soucek, *A History of Inner Asia*, Cambridge, 2000, p. 12

of the mountainsides are bare but others in the lower zones are covered with almond, hazel, and pistachio. In the middle zones deciduous trees and extensive pasturelands are found. The climate of Tajikistan is mid-latitude continental, hot summers, mild winters; semi-arid to polar in Pamir Mountains.

Tajikistan has the lowest per-Capita GDP among the 15 former Soviet Republics. Only 8% to 10% of the land area is arable. Cotton is the most important crop. Mineral resources, varied but limited in amount, include silver, gold, uranium, and tungsten. Industry consists only of a large aluminum plant, hydropower facilities, and small obsolete factories mostly in light industry and food processing. Tajikistan has one of the highest rate of literacy in Asia (99.4%). The civil war (1992-97) severely damaged the already weak economic infrastructure and caused a sharp decline in industrial and agricultural production. Even though 60% of its people continue to live in abject poverty, Tajikistan has experienced steady economic growth since 1997. Continued privatization of medium and large state-owned enterprises will further increase productivity. Tajikistan's economic situation, however, remains fragile due to uneven implementation of structural reforms, weak governance, widespread unemployment (40%), and the external debt burden.

A debt restructuring agreement was reached with Russia in December 2002, including an interest rate of 4%, a 3-year grace period, and a US \$49.8 million credit to the Central Bank of Tajikistan.

▪ **HISTORY:**

i. PRE-ISLAMIC PERIOD

The records related to the history of this period are scanty. The most civilised part of the whole region about which there is any coherent information was Soghd or Soghdiana roughly corresponding to what is Transoxiana³. This was the area lying between the Amu Darya and Syr Darya. The people of Soghd were of Iranian origin but the nomad empire of the Turks held sway over the whole of Central Asia during the sixth century. This empire was divided into two parts: the eastern Turks and the western Turks. Turkistan at this time was politically divided into a number of small states, the most powerful ruler being the Prince of Samarkand, who bore the title of *Ikshid*⁴. The prevailing religions were Zoroastrianism, Buddhism having died out before the coming of Islam, except in Tokharistan, the country round present day Termez.

³ Svat Soucek, *A History of Inner Asia*, Cambridge, 2000, p.5

ii. THE ISLAMIC CONQUEST

Whereas earlier records are exclusively Chinese, from the later part of the seventh century onwards, there is an abundance of Arabic materials. The importance of Arab conquest and of the subsequent establishment of Islam can hardly be overestimated. It checked what might have been the gradual assimilation of Transoxiana by the Chinese; it outlasted the invasions of the Mongols, who were eventually assimilated by the civilisation, which they had come to destroy.

The Umayyid rulers of Damascus had achieved the Arab conquest of the Persian Sasanid empire during the seventh century. The northern most province of this empire was Khorasan, with its capital at Merv. The Arabs used this province as a base for the invasions of the Transoxiana. Qutaiyba ibn Muslim's conquests, which lasted until his death in 715 A.D., resulted in Transoxiana, Tokharistan and Khwarezm coming under Arab control⁵. Turkish resistance was overcome, but the proud national spirits of the Iranians/Central Asians was eventually to breakdown the supremacy of the Arabs. And give birth to the first Persian dynasty in Islam.

The end of the Umayyid Caliphate in 750 A.D. really marked the beginning of the direct Arab rule in Khwarezm and Transoxiana. Although

⁴ Geoffrey Wheeler, *A Modern History of Soviet Central Asia*, London, p.20

the conquests and the direct Arab rule may be said to have come to an end in the middle of the eighth century, the advance of Islam and Islamic culture was proceeding with the same pace. It is much more likely that the Islamic culture and civilisation were spread by the Muslim traders who, during the eighth century, penetrated as far as Khwarezm and thence to the banks of Volga. These traders propagated Islam more as a way of life than as a creed and, unlike Buddhism and Christianity, Islam was at that time un-supported by the missionaries. At the end of the tenth century the Samanid dynasty of Persia was regarded as the northeastern limit of the land of Islam, beyond which there were Turks who still had not accepted Islam.

The period between 5th to 7th centuries witnessed the tendency towards ethnic self-consciousness, a sense of common identity, which gave rise to the formation of the Tajik language⁶. The biggest Samanid State with its capital city in Bukhara, appeared in the 9th century. By tradition, the Samanid State is known in history as the first Tajik State founded after the close of the Arab conquest. The outstanding politician of the time and the most prominent ruler of the Samanid dynasty was Ismoil Samony. This was a glorious period in Tajik history, which saw the rise of galaxy of scholars, thinkers, writers and architects who made considerable contribution to the cultural heritage of

⁵ Geoffrey Wheeler, *A Modern History of Soviet Central Asia*, London, p.21

human kind. A testimony to the cultural level of those times is provided by such masterpieces as the lyrics by Abu Abdullah Rudaki, the founder of the Tajik/Persian literature who is generally regarded as the first poet of the Islamic period, the *Shahname* by Abul Qasim Firdowsi, an epic poem which mirrored the legendary early history of the Persians and Tajiks, and the canon of medicine by Abu Ali Sina, a fundamental treatise on medicine which for centuries served as a foundation for medical knowledge in all European universities.

Recently the Government of Tajikistan has introduced a new currency, *Somoni* to replace the Tajik rouble (TR). One somoni being equivalent to 1000 roubles. They have named their currency after the first native dynasty of Samanids who ruled the region in the 10th century A.D.

The overthrow of the Samanid dynasty by the Karakhanids ushered in what is sometimes called the Turkish period. The culture of the Turkic people as the Karakhanids, Karluks and Tokuzoguz was largely derived from their contact with the Chinese. The Mongolian period contributed little other than Mongolian to the culture of the peoples of the region. But the Pax Mongolica, which came to an end with the Timurid dynasty, gave fillip to urban culture and the flourishing of the arts. After the overthrow of the

⁶ Rezazadeh Shafaq, *Tarikh-e-Adabyat-e-Iran (Persian)*, Armaan, 1991, p.43

Turkicised Mongol Timurid dynasty by the Uzbek, the peoples of Tajikistan were not subjected to any further foreign cultural influences until the coming of the Russians. Islamic and Iranian culture retained an important hold over the minds of the people.

During the 11th century A.D. the Turks, who displaced the Arab hegemony in the region, continued to promote Iranian culture, which had begun under the Samanids of Bukhara. At the same time, they distinguished the nomadic Turks from the rustic Iranian by labeling them as Tajiks, or non-Turkish. This politically motivated strategy created a discriminatory process that helped the incoming Turkish tribe that arrived in the region from northeast. The more Turkish tribe migrated westwards, the more Tajiks were forced out of their fields that were turned into pastureland for nomadic herders. The defenseless Tajiks finally found themselves in the Waksh and Karategin valleys of present day Tajikistan and in the inhospitable slopes of the Pamir and Hindukush mountains.

- **People:**

The original population of ancient Turkestan and of Steppe Region was of the Iranian stock. In the fifth century White Huns or Ephthalite conquered Turkestan. White Huns were probably also having Iranian descent. During

the sixth century the Turks overran the whole region. By the time of the Arab conquest in the eighth century the nomad Iranians had been removed from Central Asia but the Soghdians, who were sedentary Central Asian Iranians remained there. From then onwards the Turkicization process began, particularly regarding the language, but the effect of Persian culture on Transoxiana, the country lying between Amu Darya and Syr Darya remained and is still visible. The Arab conquests eventually resulted in the most populous part of the region coming under Persian domain. The Karakhanid and Seljuk invasions of the eleventh century carried Turkicization still further but do not appear to have resulted in the large-scale colonization. Such Mongols as did settle in the region were quickly assimilated with the local population and adopted Turkic languages, Islam and the local culture.

After the establishment of the empire of the nomad Turks in the sixth century, the main influences, which affected the population of Central Asia, were those of Islam and Russian conquest. The effect of the first was deep and lasting. It was almost entirely cultural, although in the fourteenth century the urban population was to some extent affected by the emergence of architects, artisans, artists and captured slaves as a result of Timur's conquests in Mesopotamia, Syria, India and Persia. Very little is known of the way in which Islam was spread, but it was probably more the result of

penetration of Muslim merchants than of forcible conversion at the point of the sword. Be that as it may, there can be no question but that Islam is the most prevalent, penetrating and lasting influence, which has so far reached Central Asia.

At the beginning of the Russian impact, and indeed upto the beginning of the Soviet regime, the distinction of the peoples of Central Asia was not as between nationalities, or even as between Turkic and Iranian groups, but as between nomad and sedentary peoples. At the time of Russian conquest the nomads were exclusively Turkic, but the sedentary peoples included both Iranian (Tajiks) and Turkic (Uzbeks, Karakalpaks, etc.) elements.

Anthropologically the peoples of Central Asia can be classified as follows. The Uzbeks and Tajiks belong to the Caucasoid race of the type known as Central Asian riverain; who are brachycephalic, of medium height and have dark hair and dark eyes. Mongoloid features can be observed among the Tajiks of the plains, and to a lesser extent among the mountaineers of Karategin, and Darvaz and also among the Uzbeks of northern Khwarezm and the Kypzhak Uzbeks of Ferghana⁷. Among the Tajiks of the western Pamir and the Uzbeks of southern Khwarezm no Mongoloid features are present. The Kazakhs and Kyrgyzs belong to the

⁷ Geoffry Wheeler, *The Modern History of Soviet Central Asia*, London, p.9

South Siberian type formed as a result of the mingling of the Central Asian Mongoloids with the ancient population of Kazakhstan. The Turkmen are in some respects in a different ethnic class. They have predominantly Caucasoid physical features, but unlike the Caucasoid Uzbeks and Tajiks, they are dolichocephalic and considerably taller. Their type, which is sometimes called the Khorasan type, is related to the Mediterranean group and includes a small but clearly distinguishable Mongoloid element.

The Tajiks: The Tajiks are the largest Iranian people in Central Asia. They are also the oldest ethnic group in Central Asia, but apart from their language and the fact that they have always been sedentary, there now seems to be no real distinction between them and the Uzbeks other than that of language. A large number of Tajiks are bilingual. According to Barthold the word Tajik is derived from Tay, the name of an Arab tribe. In the tenth century, Tazi, a corruption of Tay, was used locally as a generic term for all Muslims.

The Tajiks/Persians gave this name to Arabs in general, and the Soghdians followed their example. After the conquest of Central Asia by Muslims, not only Arabs but also growing numbers of Persians and Tajiks professed the new religion, and all of them came under the term 'Tajik'. At last the Tajik/Persian speaking converts outnumbered the Arabs, and the ethnonym, which had once been the name of an Arab tribe, ended up being

revived for Tajik/Persian speaking Muslims of Central Asia and their language.⁸ In the eleventh century the nomad Turkic invaders called the settled population Tajik. Although there is no doubt that the Tajiks can fairly be called the descendants of the ancient Soghdian and Bactrian population of Central Asia, traces of ancient Iranian civilisation do not seem to be any more marked among them than among the Uzbeks, except possibly among the so-called mountain Tajik of the Gorno-Badakhshan region.

Similarly, it is now accepted that no generally accepted definition is available of the people who are now called the 'Tajiks'. Historians have noted that the term Tajik is derived from the ancient Persian name for the Arab. The term Taz or Tajik thus applied only to the Arab in Persia. In the later times due to Arab inter-marriage with the people of the region meant that in the succeeding generations Persians called them Tajiks. It has also been suggested that since the word was a Persian one it was restricted to the territories which were formally under Persian suzerainty. Barthold traces the appearance of the term to the middle ages. The entire settled Muslim population of the Central Asia thus came to be known as Tajiks, as well as all Irani speaking aboriginal population in the region.

⁸ Svat Soucek, *A History of Inner Asia*, Cambridge, 2000, p. 32

However, some historians are of the opinion that the Tajiks were not the original inhabitants of the region. They were transplanted Iranians who, in the course of the trade mission along the Silk Route, found the region to be attractive. Nineteenth century Persian sources, however point out that the Tajiks were the original inhabitants of Central Asia who had been ejected from the hinterland to the mountains by the Turks. The controversy about the origin of the Tajiks continues. What is being summarized below is this controversy particularly in terms of the continuing debate on the nature of the indigenous population in the region.

Most scholars point out that Turan was inhabited by the Tajiks who were descendants of the Aryans and that the Turks were later immigrants in the region who dispossessed them of their lands thus confining them to the cities and the mountains. The records of the American consul Schuyler who records that Scythians inhabited Central Asia repeat this. Turks were late immigrants and drove out the Scythians/Persians or Irani tribes. Each successive wave of Turkish invaders forced the Tajiks into the innermost recesses of the region. The urban population of Bukhara, Smarkand and Khiva had a larger number of Tajiks in their midst whereas Turkish element forms the mainstay of the population on the right banks of the Syr Darya.

Similarly, the author of *Waqai Tassalut i Russiya bar Asiya* categorically points out that the Tajiks are of Irani origin while the Turks and Tatars are of Turani stock. He then goes on to elaborate the differences between the two, based on the fact that the Tajiks are peace loving and devoted to agriculture whereas the nomads spent their lives in warfare. The Tajiks are scattered all over Central Asia. More than 8 million Tajiks live in neighbouring Afghanistan. According to some estimates between 1.6 millions Tajiks reside in Uzbekistan while 50,000 live in China and tens of thousands are in Iran⁹. Some Tajiks live in Uzbekistan, whereas some live in the upperlands of Surkhan Darya, in the valley of the Shirabad Darya, in the mountain valleys of the river Katta Ura Darya, in the high lands of Kashka Darya and the Karshi oases. In the valley of Zerafshan, the Tajiks lived in an isolated manner in the northwestern part from Jizzak to Nur Ata. In the Ferghana valley also the Tajiks are found scattered everywhere in the region surrounded by Turkish speaking population. In the valley of Soz in the south of Kokand, and in the southwest and north of Namangan. A large number of Tajiks inhabited the Khante of Kokand. A small ethnic group of Yagnovtsev speaking a variant of the eastern Iranian language group were said to be

⁹ A.I.Kuzmin, 'The Causes and Lessons of the Civil War', in Alexie Vassilies, ed., *Central Asia: Political and Economic Challenge in the Post Soviet Era*, London: Saqi Books, 2001, p.175

descendants of the Soghdians. In the Surkhan region and in the place between Baisunam and Guzar live a group called the Tajiks who are known by the name of Karburi. Abdul Ghazi had used the word Sart which stemmed from the word Syr. In Bukhara, however, he applied the term Tajik to the settled dwellers. Shergul, however, asserts that Tajiks were infact inhabitants of the region and real natives of the place¹⁰.

Veki Velidi Togan has examined the ethnic origins of the Central Asian peoples in detail. This examination of the ethnic origins of the Uzbeks and the Tajiks is being represented in detail not only because it reflects the complexity of determining the true origins of the two groups but also because it shows how ethnographic studies themselves reflect the personal positions of the ethnographer in the course of the study. For instance, Togan's pan Turkic sentiment is evident from the fact that he points out that the Tajiks of the region are a mixture of the Turks with the Iranian elements and that their *Kavims* (may be translated as clan or tribe) had since very early times spoken in Turkish and Farsi/Tajik. Similarly, he notes that Faizullah Khodjaev and Abdulrauf Fitrat, are city Tajiks, who 'do not for an instant consider themselves to be Iranian, but count themselves as the *kavim* of Kent Turks. This is extremely interesting as these two men who are projected as leaders

¹⁰ Mansura Haider, 'Tajiks Antecedents', in Shamsuddin (ed) *Geopolitics and Energy*

of the reconstituted Uzbek nation are claimed by the Tajiks as being of Iranian origin. On the one hand, Togan's statement substantiates the Tajik claim, on the other it is a reflection of the complexities of the ethnographic situation in the region as also to the problems of determining clear ethnographic boundaries between various groups. Time and again Togan writes of ethnic groups who merged with larger groups and were henceforth known by the name of the peoples he was writing about which makes this an interesting study.

According to Togan, from the historical and ethnological point of view the Turks of the Turkestan can be said to constitute three groups:

- (1) The Kypchak group consisting of the Kazakhs, Uruglu Uzbeks, (the word *urug* may be translated as clan) Mangit- Nogay, and the Kazan Turks or Tatars;
- (2) Turk-Cigil group, this includes those who live in towns and small townships, Kent Turks Tarachi, Kashgars and Kyrgys. These first two groups as well as the Onasya or near Asian Turks are grouped together under the name of 'Orta Turks' or middle Turks;
- (3) The third group is that of the Turkmen Oguz group. They are part of the southwestern Turks and the Yakuts, Sayan and the Altay Turks who

Resources in Central Asia and the Caspian Sea Region, New Delhi, 2000.

constitute the North eastern Turk group. The Turk-cigil group, has been identified by Togan as the most important. Apart from the Kyrgys, they are settled. The Kypchak group still follows a partially nomadic life and has not yet forgotten its clan and tribe oriented lifestyle.

Tajiks are also living in Uzbekistan. The Uzbek census puts this figure around five per cent of the total population. But it is disputed by many writers and staticians¹¹. The population of Tajiks in Uzbekistan is estimated to be around 25 to 30 per cent of the total population of Uzbekistan. Scholars at Samarkand State University estimate the total Tajik population of Uzbekistan at six to seven million about two times the Tajik population of the Republic of Tajikistan.

The Tajiks in Uzbekistan are facing some problem regarding their language and culture. The pedagogical institute was closed in 1992 and there have been lesser number of publications even in predoiminant Tajik areas. Tajiks constitute about 70% of the population in Samarkand and 90% in Bukhara.

¹¹ Richard Foltz, *The Tajiks of Uzbekistan*, Central Asian Survey, 1996, 15(2), pp.213-216

The Uzbeks: Uzbeks are the largest Turkic group in Central Asia, and the largest in the world after the Turks of Turkey. Their name was probably derived from the Uzbek, one of the Khans of the Golden Horde. Since Uzbek himself became a Muslim, his name came to be applied to the Muslim element of the Golden Horde, which constituted its ruling class¹². During the fifteenth century the Uzbeks occupied the country between the lower Volga and Aral Sea. They first came into historical prominence when Shaibani Khan at the beginning of the fifteenth century conquered and settled in the regions of Bukhara and Samarkand, and later of Urgench and Tashkent, thus supplanting the Timurid Empire. By this time the Uzbeks were no longer in any sense homogeneous: they had become mixed with the many nomadic groups. After the disappearance of the Shaibanid Empire, from sixteenth to nineteenth centuries, the term Uzbek related primarily to the predominating elements in the populations of the Bukhara, Khiva and Khokand Khanates. In 1914, the Uzbeks were officially described as constituting the preponderant element in the Samarkand *oblast*.

¹² Geoffry Wheeler, *The Modern History of Soviet Central Asia*, London, p.10

- **Society:**

Tajik society never has been organised by tribal affiliation. The core of the traditional social structure of Tajiks and other sedentary peoples of Central Asia is usually the extended family, which is composed of an adult couple, their unmarried daughters, and their married sons and their wives and children. Such a group normally has joined ownership of the family homestead, land, crops and livestock. The more prosperous a family, the more members it is likely to have. In the 1930s, some particularly wealthy Tajik family had 50 members or more. The strength of the family is sometimes misinterpreted as simply a consequence of Islam's influence on Tajik society. However, rural societies in general often emphasize the family as a social unit and Islam does not forbid divorce. Grounds for divorce in Tajikistan include childlessness, emotional estrangements and shortage of housing, drunkenness and economic dissatisfaction. The highest rate of divorce is in Dushanbe, which has not only an acute shortage of houses but a large number of inhabitants belonging to non-Central Asian nationalities. Marriage across nationality is uncommon. Ethnically mixed marriages are almost twice as likely to occur in urban as in rural areas. Although Islam permits polygamy, the practice has been illegal in Tajikistan. Monogamy is

the more typical form of spousal relationship because of high bride price traditionally required of suitors.

▪ **Religion:**

Following the Arab conquests of the 7th and 8th centuries, indigenous people of Tajikistan converted to Muslims. Up to the establishment of Soviet regime Islam was the strongest and most durable cultural influence in Tajikistan. Before the coming of Russians, Islamic culture had not only survived but was actually embraced by all non-Muslim invaders such as the Karakhanids and Mongols.

From a theological point of view, Islam probably had its apogee in Tajikistan during the Samanid dynasty, which was overthrown by the Karakhanids at the end of the 10th century. Under the Samanid dynasty, Bukhara became an important center of Islamic learning and it was here that the *madrassa*, or Muslim higher educational establishment, had its origin. The heyday of Islamic culture in Tajikistan was during the 14th and 15th centuries, when Samarkand might have been its center. The state of learning and even of popular education was probably on par with other advanced regions.

After the end of the Timurid dynasty at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the creative power of the Islamic culture declined; but the influence of Islam and particularly of the clergy, on the lives of the people increased. This process continued even during the Tsarist Russian regime. The Tsarist policy towards Islam was inconsistent. During the early stages of the Russian advance into Central Asia in the second half of the 18th century, the Russian government regarded Islam as a stabilizing and pacifying influence, and actually ordered the building of mosques in the region¹³. Later, however, when the authorities realized to what extent justice and agrarian system were tied up with Islamic laws they began to regard the clergy, and particularly the *Qazis* with strong disfavour.

Events quickly showed that Islam with its distinctive social, educational and judicial systems was much less likely to reach a workable compromise with the new regime than the Orthodox Church of Russia. The fact that Islam has never experienced a reformation or renaissance, which could loosen the bonds of medievalism and allow it to come to terms with modern life, the chances of a new, vigorous, ruthless and atheistic force such as Bolshevism being able to gain the co-operation of the Muslim clergy were in any event

¹³ Geoffrey Wheeler, *The Modern History of Soviet Central Asia*, London, p.186

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remote. During the Soviet period, Islam was deprived of the patronage and support it used to receive earlier.

In 1941 the Soviet Union installed an “official clergy” to control the religious activities of its Muslim population and to formally their spiritual needs¹⁴. However, only the Sunni and the *Twelver* Shiite communities received official recognition as ecclesiastical establishments. A Muslim Religious Directorate (*Muftiyya*) was setup in Central Asia, with its headquarter at Tashkent. Tajikistan came under this directorate. The head of Tajikistan’s official clergy, *Qazi Kalan*¹⁵ operated under the tight control of Soviet KGB. Beginning in 1978, a new rapprochement between the Soviet government and Islam resulted in new mosques being built and a certain revival of Islam permitted in Central Asia. Mikhael Gorbachev’s accession meant the onset of *glasnost*, and religious revival as a form of reassertion of cultural identity received a new boost.¹⁶ The disintegration of the Soviet Union led to the end of official religious hierarchy and institutions, but throughout the Soviet period, Islam and Islamic identity remained vivid in Tajikistan, especially in the countryside.

¹⁴ Benningson and Wimbush, *Muslims of Soviet Empire: A Guide*, Bloomington, 1986, pp. 21-23

¹⁵ Grand Qazi

¹⁶ Mehrdad Haghayeghi, *Islam in Central Asia*, New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1995, pp. 41-70

Chapter-II

TAJIK LANGUAGE

Language is a medium through which human beings convey their thoughts among themselves. Linguists have divided major languages of the world into different groups. And the Tajik/Persian language is of Indo-European family of languages. Tajik or Persian or Farsi was the language of the Parsa people who ruled Central Asia between 550-330 B.C. It belongs to what scholars call the Indo-Iranian group of languages. It became the language of the Persian Empire and was widely spoken in the ancient days ranging from the borders of India in the east, Russia in the north, the southern shores of the Persian Gulf to Egypt and the Mediterranean in the west.

Over the centuries Parsi has changed to its modern form and today Persian is spoken primarily in Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan and parts of Uzbekistan. As far as origin and development of Tajik/Persian language is concerned, it can be divided into three phases.

1. Old Tajik/Persian
2. Middle Tajik/Persian
3. Modern Tajik/Persian

Old Tajik/Persian: In the ancient times, two languages were important namely- Avestan and Old Persian. Linguists who are working on the languages of the Central Asian region call Old Persian as the language of Achaemenians and attribute Avestan language to the followers of Zoroastrian faith.

The language in which the religious books of the Zoroastrians, Avesta is written, came to be known as Avestan. It was the language of the priestly class.¹⁷ Avestan language bears much similarity with the ancient Indian language, Sanskrit. *Gatha*¹⁸ has much similarity with the *Rig Veda*¹⁹ in style and structure²⁰. It is believed that the script of the Avestan language evolved during the Sasanid period. Till then the contents of Avesta were transferred from one generation to another through memorization and word of mouth²¹. The earliest Avestan alphabets, which were written in 1325 A.D, are still preserved in a museum in Copenhagen. There are 44 letters in Avestan alphabets.

Old Persian was spoken in the province of Pars and has similarity with Avestan and Sanskrit languages and all these are believed to have originated from same roots. It is the same language which is written on the *Takht-e-*

¹⁷ Rezazadeh Shafaq, *Tarikh-e-adabiyat-e-Iran*, Armaan, 1991, p.25

¹⁸ Most ancient literature of the Zoroastrian faith, considered to be written by Zarthrust himself.

¹⁹ Earliest literary scripture in India.

²⁰ Babajan Ghafurov, *Tajikan*, Dushambe, 1997, p.65

Jamshe in Persipolis. Most detailed remnants of this language are found in the inscription of Darius the Great²².

Middle Tajik/Persian: The period from the last Achmenian ruler and up to the advent of Islam in Central Asia was dominated by middle Persian/Tajik language. This is also known as Pahalavi language and is attributed to “Parthians”, who after the death of Alexander of Macedonia drove away Greeks from Central Asia and established a big empire. This language had two dilects Eastern Pahalavi and Southern Pahalavi. The Eastern Pahalavi is also called Saka Pahalavi or Pahalavani. The southern dilect is also known as Sasani Pahalavi or Parsik.

During the Sasani period there was much progress in the Pahalavi or middle Persian/Tajik language.²³

There are important inscriptions in this language. The most important being the inscription of *Ardeshir on Naqsh-e-Rustam*. Some important books were translated, but unfortunately they have been lost in the course of time. Near about hundred books could be saved and continue to enrich our knowledge till date. These books are related to various topics like history, literature, governance, war etc. Most important among these books are

²¹ Rezazade Shafaq, *Tarikh-e-adabiyat-e-Iran*, p.23

²² Ibid., p.23

²³ Rezazade Shafaq, *Tarikh-e-adabiyat-e-Iran*, p.29

*Karnamak-e-Ardshir Papkan, Zend, Pazend, Matigan-e-Chaturang, Khutai Namak, Ardwiraf Nameh, Wendidad, Kirtak-wa-Damnak*²⁴.

Modern Persian/Tajik: The coming of Arabs with a new religion of Islam in Central Asia, a new language evolved in the region called Parsi or Farsi²⁵. The people of Central Asia accepted the new religion and its language; gradually they started using Arabic alphabets and sounds²⁶. The problems with the Pahalavi script also paved the way for the development of Arabic script with the Central Asian people. It soon gained popularity and the script started being used widely. Arabic words also infiltrated in the Tajik/Persian literature. Persian words have their roots in different languages spoken in various parts of the country but the majority of the words have their roots in Old Persian, Pahlavi and Avesta. They are represented in classical writings and poems. The corruption by Arabic words has done damage to the Tajik/Persian language because it has not only replaced original Tajik/Persian words but also driven them out of the language, to the extent that reintroduction of these original Tajik/Persian words sound alien to many readers. The damage has been so extensive that Arabic words have

²⁴ It is the translation of Indian ancient book Pancha-Tantra.

²⁵ Since the Arabs could not pronounce the sound of "P" so they called it Farsi.

²⁶ Razazadeh Shafaq, *Tarikh-e-Adabiyat-e-Iran*, Armaan, 1991, p.37

even found their way into the latter editions of *Khordeh Avesta* the prayer book of the Zarathushties, which one expects to be in Avesta language.

It is noteworthy that every country that the Arabs conquered lost its civilization, culture and language and adopted the Arabic language and way of life. For example Egypt whose people could build Pyramids, were good astronomers and possessed the art of mummification lost their culture and language to the Arabs and started living like them. It was only Central Asia that broke the trend and stood against the Arabs and preserved its culture and language and even adopted their own version of Islam. Later when the Mongols/Moguls invaded Central Asia the people of the region turned them into ambassadors of their language, culture and art. The Moguls made Parsi their court language in India.

Some modern technical terms, understandably, have been incorporated from English, French and German and are recognizable, but Arabic has corrupted a major part of the language by replacing original Parsi words. What Firdowsi worked so hard to preserve is finally being lost. The European words have usually come into use because there was no existing Persian word to describe the situation or product. Instead of coining a word the foreign word was imported with the product. For example with the imported car came the French form of its name 'Automobile'. It took some

time and effort to coin a Tajik/Parsian word *Khodrow* and replace the foreign word. Another example is the word 'Television', which has a less successful replacement *Sadah va Seema*, so also is the word 'Radio'. There are some non-technical words like *Merci* 'Thanks' that has settled into the Tajik/Persian language and many people do not consider it as foreign, and the Tajik/Parsi word *Tashakor* is alternatively used in speaking but in writing it more often replaces *Merci*. Another example is the word *Salaam* which has been borrowed from the Arabs and is used by Iranians as a salute when two friends meet each other, instead of the Parsi salute *Rouz-e-gar Neek* and *Dorood*.

The people of Tajikistan and Afghanistan have maintained a somewhat purer form of the Parsian language and call it Farsi-e-Tajik in Tajikistan and Parsi-e-Dari in Afghanistan. In the ninth century A.D, after a long period of Arabic occupations and adoption of Islam, Soghdian and Bactrian languages were replaced by Farsi/Dari/Tajik language. The Tajik nation became part of the Samanid state that had its capital in Bukhara (ninth and tenth Century A.D). The Turks overthrew the Samanids, the Tajiks found themselves under the reign of Ghazni, the Seljuk dynasty, the Khwarism Shahs of Urgench, Chingiz Khan and Tamerlane. Starting with the 16th Century A.D, when Shaibanids captured territories populated by Tajiks, a cultural divergence

began. This divergence eventually resulted in modern day Tajik or Persian and the different conceptions of Islam (Persian- Shiite Muslims, Tajik Sunni Muslims). Until the 20th Century, Tajiks were scattered across areas ruled by different Turkish dynasties, with a Persian based language functioning as common tongue.

SCRIPT AND DIALECTS

The Central Asian culture was based on the teachings of Zarathushtra, who preached the use of wisdom. For that very reason they had no need for a script. They made good use of their mind *-Vohumana-* and memorized information acquired through the ear and this was a handy method. They only had to refer to their memory and not to the voluminous scrolls. **'We revere the wisdom acquired through the ear'**. (Even to this day the Zoroastrian Mobeds in India memorize the whole Avesta, which runs into volumes as part of their training to become *Mobeds*²⁷ and as for a living example of a language without script, the Zarathushties of Central Asia have been speaking the Dari language for centuries without writing it.)

After the Sassanid rose to power and with the expansion of the Empire and the inclusion within their realm of various cultures that used writing to communicate, the need for communication by writing arose. The scribes of

²⁷ Zoroastrian priests

Elam and Babylon were recruited and for the first time the language of the Persians as written in the Cuneiform script. So when the Central Asians entered the business of writing they used their wisdom and started improving on existing methods and forms of writing. Initially they used the clay tablets, as was the practice among the scribes, like the ones found at Sush (Susa), which contains the Old Persian/Tajik text of the foundation charter of the palace of Dariush (Darius). Although the scribes were using Cuneiform script for centuries, it never occurred to them before, and it was under the Central Asians that it was developed into an alphabet denoting sound. Thus the second generation of Old Persian was written in forty-three signs or alphabet and writing became easy and less tedious.

The Aramaic script written with ink on papyrus and skin was, gradually adopted by the Iranians. A few records in the Armanic script have been found to prove its use from Egypt to India. One of the versions, on the tomb of Dariush is drawn up in the Old Persian and written in the Armanic script.

The use of papyrus, skin and ink made writing, storing and transportation of written material more practical, as compared to the wet clay on which the cuneiform script was to be written and then dried. The extent of the Empire, the need for messages and records of trade and commerce to be taken from one place to another, all this weighed in favour of the Armanic script on

papyrus or skin. At the same time this itself was the very cause of the loss of information. Today the lack of information on the great Empire was caused by the destructibility of papyrus and skin.

We know from the Bible that records were well maintained by the Iranians in those days. It says (Ezra 6: 1-3)

1. Then Darius the king made a decree, and search was made in the house of the rolls, where the treasure were laid up in Babylon.
2. And there was found in Achmetha (Hamadan) in the palace that is in the province of the Medes, a roll, and therein was a record thus written.

All this information and all the knowledge and science *Asha Vahista* of the Zarathushties, which was recorded, was destroyed by Alexander in his barbaric ways, but that which was saved found its way into Greece where some of it was misused, personified and attributed to the pagan gods. But most of it was translated and called Greek Medicine, Greek science, Greek philosophy, Greek mathematics, and overall it caused a growth of knowledge and progress among the Greeks.

During the Sassanian era, a very advanced form of alphabet was used, what is today known as the *Din Dabereh*. It has 48 alphabets consisting of 14 vowels and 34 consonants. This alphabet is capable of recording all types of sound and therefore every language. After the Arab conquest, they forced

their inferior script on the people of Iran, in fact it were the Iranians who for the first time organized and wrote the grammar for the Arabic language and made it useable. Although the Arabic script was not capable of recording the sounds of Parsi language even after addition of additional alphabets not found in Arabic such as PH - CHA - JAH - GH; it became the official script for writing Persian/Tajik.

The Tajik language belongs to the Eastern branch of the Indo-European family of languages, which also includes Farsi, Pashtu, Dari, Kurdish, and Baluchi. Tajik language includes, Yaghnobi and the languages of the Pamir and Badakhshan highlands. Tajik proper, spoken by over 10 million people, serves as the lingua franca of the peoples of the lowland, the mountain Tajiks and the Tajiks of the Badakhshan highlands and is mutually intelligible with Dari of Afghanistan and Farsi of Iran. Languages that have influenced Tajik include Arabic, Russian and Uzbeki. Pashtu and languages of India influence Tajik of Afghanistan. Tajik is usually divided into Northern Tajik and Southern Tajik, which are not very different except that the former has borrowed generously from Turkic languages, especially Uzbeki, whereas Iranian languages and specially Dari have influenced the latter.

Tajik proper can be divided into four distinct linguistic groups; socially the speakers of Tajik can be divided into three groups. This grouping,

encompasses all the speakers of the language irrespective of whether they speak Tajik as a first, second or third language. Although these languages belong to the eastern branch of the Iranian languages of Indo-European family of languages, certain distinctive features set them apart from each other. It should be mentioned that in most cases these distinctions are not well defined or deep set. There are, however, distinctions that the inhabitants of the region insist upon as ethnic and linguistic markers distinguishing their respective communities such as;

Lowland Tajiks use an extensive number of Arabic, Turko, Mongol and Russian words, where as mountain Tajiks have relatively smaller numbers of borrowings and also its literary form is relatively free from the spoken form. Farther east in the Badakhshan region, Tajik is spoken as second language, often as third language also, hence is saturated with local forms of Badakhshani sometimes to the point of incomprehensibility.

- a) Owing to enhanced communication Tajik is gradually assimilating its neighbouring languages to the point of extinction. Vangi and Gorani are cases in point, which have been totally replaced by Tajik; hence they are not included in the chart of living languages of the Pamir.
- b) None of the Pamiri languages is written; hence Tajik and Sughnani serve as the literary lingua franca for all of them.

c) The ethnic groups that speak the languages of Gorno-Badakhshan straddle the Panj River, the border separating Tajikistan from Afghanistan, thus occupying both sides.

d) All the inhabitants of the region are Muslim. Only the speakers of Yazgulemi and those who previously spoke Vangi are Sunni, the rest being Ismaili Shiites.

e) The Tajik speakers on the north of the Panj river were Sovietised to some extent under the Soviets. After the breakup of the Soviet Union most of the speakers returned to their original homes, reestablishing the ancient ties.

Tajik and Russian are the languages used by local newspapers and media, and are medium of discussions in public meetings.

OTHER DIALECTS

a) Yaghnobi: It was spoken by some 6000 speakers in the high valley of Yaghnov river in the upper ridges of the Zarafshan. It is a remnant of Soghdian, the language of the ancient kingdom of the Samarkand. Even though absolutely annihilated by the Muslim invaders, Yaghnobi survived and indeed flourished in the middle ages. The Yaghnobis are Sunni Muslims and bilingual in Tajik and Yaghnobi, which is not a written language and are only used for daily communication.

- b) Wakhi** is spoken in the highest valleys in the south central region of Badakhshan, valleys of the Pamir and the Wakhan corridor along the Wakh river, notable for two major events; first it served as a major link in the Great Silk Road system connecting China to Europe, and secondly it was the point where, at the end of the Great game the Russian and British influences met and forced to make a compromise regarding the fate of Central Asia and Afghanistan. The estimated 29,000 Wakhi speakers are distributed in Afghanistan, Pakistan and China also. Wakhi is not a written language.
- c) Ishkashemi:** To the west of the Wakhan is a small community of Ishkashems, barely 2,500, living on both banks of Panj. The speakers are bilingual in Tajik and Ishkashemi, which is again not a written language.
- d) Shughnani** is spoken by about 20,000 of Ismaili Shiaism living in the middle valleys of the Panj and its tributaries the Gunth and Shab Darya. It is the largest linguistic group among the six groups that constitute the Gorno-Badakhshan peoples. They failed in their attempt to establish Shughnani as the lingua franca and as a literary language for the region in 1920s.

e) **Rushani** is spoken in the valley of the Bartang river in the north of Badakhshan range. The Shughnans and Tajiks influence the 20,000 Rushani speakers.

Linguistically 'the Pamir languages' is a tentative term for it is not clear whether they are a genetically separate group descended from the hypothetical Proto-Pamir language, or if they have independently developed from the ancient Common Iranian. The genetic coherence of the Shughni sub-group, however, is beyond doubt:

- the Shughni language
- the Bajuvi dialect
- the Khufi dialect
- the Roshani dialect
- the Bartangi language
- the Oroshori language
- the Sarikoli language

In comparison with the other Iranian languages the Pamir Group has retained a lot of ancient characteristics of Old and Middle Iranian, brought about by territorial seclusion. The relative homogeneity of the Pamir languages is evident in contrast to other current Iranian languages.

As mentioned earlier, none of the Pamir languages, including Shughni, has a written form and education has been received in Tajik. The gradual perishing of these peoples and their assimilation with the Tajiks has, for example, been glorified by S. Tokarev (1958) as a natural and healthy consolidation and a positive outcome of the national policy of the Communist Party. On the other hand it has been suggested that the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region ought to switch over to Russian at schools since the children do not initially know Tajik -- Tajik would then be taught to the same degree as all other disciplines.

The extensive propagation of the Tajik language in the Pamirs is mainly a phenomenon linked to the Soviet era. In the past Tajik was spoken by the men who had seasonal jobs in eastern Bukhara, Afghanistan and Chitral in Pakistan. Women, in general, were monolingual. Before the establishment of Soviet power there was practically no school system in the Pamir and most of the people were illiterate.

Of the Pamir languages, the Vanji language has become completely extinct. The Vanji lived in the valley of the River Vandzh (Vanch) belonging to the Emirate of Bukhara. Forced imposition of the Islamic faith (Sunnite) served to assimilate them with the Tajik quicker than any other of the Pamir

peoples. Records of the Vanji language are very few. In the 1920s I. Zarubin was able to make a list of 50 words in the Vanji language.

The Tajiks use the Russian script and by adding a couple of additional alphabets they are able to create Parsian sounds much better than what is done with the Arabic script.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Under the Umayyids, Arabs did not like to engage in discussion of the sciences. Indeed, they had neither the tools nor the know-how to undertake such tasks. Poetry continued to be their most cherished subject of interest. This, however, did not mean that Arabs like ‘Abd-al-Malik ibn Marwan’ (646-705) for whom the language and culture of the non-Arabs were a source of hatred and detestation, remained passive. Upon coming to power, in an attempt to consolidate the empire internally, Abd-al-Malik replaced the Greek and Pahalavi writings on coins with Arabic. In the case of Iran, following his dictat, all tax ledgers were translated from Pahalavi into Arabic (685-705), displacing hosts of Central Asian workers in the many administrative bureaus of occupied Iran. Unfortunately for the Umayyids, those possessions were given to Arabs who were not adequately trained for

the jobs. As a result of the Caliphs increasingly lost contact with the Central Asians, specially those in the eastern provinces.

Although sympathetic to the Caliph, the Tahirids were resolved to overthrow the oppressive rule of the Arabs. As an indication of their devotion to gaining independence, the Tahirids reintroduced the Tajik/Persian language into Transoxiana and Khurasan and promoted Tajik/Persian literature and culture. Adopting an expanded version of the Arabic script, scholars, students and officials alike were encouraged to use the Tajik/Persian language in their translations, discussions, transactions and in the administration of the realm. Advocating public access to knowledge, the Tahirids promoted the lower classes, especially the peasantry. This was the first time, since the Arab invasion and the destruction that had accompanied it, that a native dynasty was openly promoting the language, literature and culture of Central Asia. In this effort, the Tahirids benefited greatly from the support of another ancient Iranian House, that of Saman. Installed as the governor of the village of Saman in the Balkh province by the Caliph Al Ma'mun, Saman Khudat²⁸, a former Zoroastrian, was an increasingly growing force in the Balkh region. His great grandson, Ismai'l, established the mighty Samanid dynasty.

²⁸ Rezazadeh Shafaq, *Tarikh-e-Adabiyat-e-Iran*, Armaan, 1991, p. 43

Building on the accomplishments of their predecessors, the Samanids (875-999) unified the nation by undermining the power of the local rulers. The centralisation was not complete, of course, as Khwarezm, Chaqanian, Khutalan and Isfijab did not fall in line as expected. Nevertheless, a major step in this direction was taken when such ancient urban centres as Bukhara, Samarkand, Merv, Nishapur, Hirat, Balkh, Khujand, Panjekent and Holbuq were revived. Revival of these centres, even within a limited centralized government, elevated the socio-political, economic and cultural dynamics of the new and progressive state. Additionally, in order to boost revenues and further the reach of the State across the feudal boundaries, a major programme of urbanization was launched. New mints were installed to produce Samanid dinars and dirhams and new civic administrations were empowered to revitalize traditional local customs.

In this respect, the Samanids were well versed. They were fully familiar with the region, its ethnic composition, the people's zeal for rejuvenation of ancient values, as well as with the economic and administrative disarray that Arab rule had introduced and maintained as a measure of control over the various levels of society. Like the religion, the Samanids allowed the continuation of the coinage of Sassanids. Infact, they minted coins with ancient Central Asian (Zoroastrian features). Additionally, they reintroduced

such ancient works as the Khudainama and reformed their society on the model of their Sassanian predecessors. Subsequent dynasties, like the Seljuqs, followed their example in creating their centralized rule, institution of rule of justice, promotion of the arts and sciences, and facilitating commercial transactions.

While the administration was in charge of the well being of the infrastructure, language, literature and the sciences served as moving force in the state. Central Asia's most outstanding contribution in the post-Arab invasion era was the establishment of their linguistic heritage, Tajik/ Persian language. Much has been said about the subject and many names are associated with the revival. Among these, the names of Tahirids, Saffarids, Ghaznavid and Samanid rulers, as well as of Abu Hafs Soghdi, Rudaki and Firdowsi are regularly and repeatedly cited. To this we should add the contributions of the ordinary people of Transoxiana and Khurasan who actually retain the language rather than specific poets or rulers. It was the ordinary individual who took delight in his language and who continued its use even after others, including many major scholars, had abandoned it.

What then was the contribution of the state? The state Tahirids and Saffarids in the early stages and Samanids thereafter repaired the damage that Arab invaders had inflicted on the finer aspects of language i.e.,

language as a means of promotion of literature, art and the sciences. It funded revitalization projects so that generations to come may know their past in a better way. It funded poetry contests whereby talented youth could refine their language and express their feelings towards life, love and nature. It funded collaborative projects whereby literature could be enhanced by music.

The process, however, did not stop here. The kings being mortal, passed away. Their legacy, including their assumed contribution, reverted to the state and from there, back to the people. In this way, a generation later, the people found themselves in possession of a civilization. Major contributor to the early development of the state was the ruler's recognition of the role of Tajik language, its use as a unique means for compilation of record of historical events, and for facilitating communication across governmental, religious, military lines. The Tajik/ Persian language and culture also provided the best means for the promotion of an anti-Arab, pro Central Asian ethnic identity. By underscoring the mistakes of the Arabs, by embarrassing them in public the Samanids gained the upper hand. The indigenous people were thus being empowered to become acquainted with their true identity, as seen and described by their own people rather than by Arab or Arabicised scholars. The Samanids recognized the role of the sciences and arts in their

quest for unity and advancement. Samanid rulers not only respected scholars and poets, but invited them to their courts, held group discussions and participated in the session as major. Similarly, Prime Ministers like Abu Ali Bal'ami, a well known historian, Abu Abdullah Jaihani, a competent geographer were patrons of the arts and sciences. In fact, the encounter between the young poet, Farrukhi and Amir As'ad, the vassal of the Samanids at Chaghanian, forms one of the memorable chapters of the history of Tajik/ Persian literature.

During the first century of Islamic rule in Transoxiana and Khurasan, in the Umayyid period, there was very little activity in the promotion of the sciences. There was, however, considerable activity in preparing translations from Syriac, Greek, Pahlavi into Arabic and adopting ideas from India. Nevertheless, even though there was no real advancement in the sciences as such, the road was paved for future generations to involve themselves in the higher levels of learning. Thus the early Abbasids, building on the knowledge gained from the study of Indian and Sassanian scientific books, especially in astronomy, contributed greatly to the creation of a sound foundation for scientific enquiry. Samanid scholars like Al Razi, Ibn Sina and Alberuni following the Ptolemaic model, as opposed to the Indian and

Persian models, enhanced this knowledge and passed it on to subsequent generations to which figures like Hakim Umar Khayyam Nishapuri belong.

In the oases of Transoxiana and what is now Tajikistan, Iranian languages predominated and today a form of Persian perfectly intelligible to Iranians and Afghans is spoken in Tajikistan and to a considerable extent in the cities of Bukhara and Samarkand. After the Muslim conquest, classical Arabic became the religious and literary language, which was taught in all the schools and was universally used by men of letters. Persian was also taught in the religious schools and was written and spoken by the urban intelligentsia. A third language of cultural intercourse was Chaghtai. This was literary language, named after one of Chengiz Khans' sons, which came into vogue at the beginning of the 14th century and had its apogee in the 15th century. It was a Turkic language but was written in Arabic character making use of a considerable amount of Arabic and Tajik/Persian vocabulary. Upto the middle of the 19th century, when the cultural impact of the Russians first began to be seriously felt, three traditional languages symbolized a kind of common Arabo-Irano-Turkic culture. As the more advanced material civilization of the Russians made itself felt, the old Muslim *Ummah*²⁹ began to disappear and languages based on popular dialects began to appear. On the

²⁹ Muslim brotherhood

eve of the Bolshevik Revolution, however only a few languages had achieved any kind of literary form in Central Asia and Tajik was one among them.

The more recent history of the Tajiks is hardly different. The division of the Tajik community into two separate zones and the placement of each zone in a different country, Imperial Russia and Afghanistan, respectively made both groups vulnerable to cultural degeneration. The adverse impact of the division of the Tajiks to the north of the Panj River was felt even more during the Soviet period. In the process of Sovietisation, which saw the emergence of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan; the Tajiks lost two of their major cultural centers, Samarkand and Bukhara to Uzbekistan and thus losing control over their social, political and ideological centres. The situation of the Tajiks to the south of Panj was even worse. They have been in constant conflict with the Pashtun tribes of Afghanistan. Their political uncertainty prompted them to ally with their fellow Tajiks. They look to the Islamic bonds between the two groups to eventually reunite them.

TAJIK LITERATURE

The period of the Tajik literature begins with the establishment of the Samanid rule in Central Asia. They contributed greatly to the development of Tajik language and culture. Rudaki who is considered the father of the Tajik poetry in this period rose to significant prominence and the *Shahname*, the greatest epic poem of the world has its origin in this period. The writer of *Tazkeratul Albab* has mentioned 27 Tajik poets belonging to this phase of history. During the Samanid era, there was development in Tajik language and culture as well as in the field of science. The Samanids had great interest in these areas and their court had become a shelter for poets, intellectuals and writers.

Poetry during Samanids: The greatest accomplishment of the Samanids was the development of Tajik poetry and literature and encouraging the fiery nationalist spirit in Tajiks. The epic poetry began in this period and was a special feature of this time. Among the famous poets of this period Abu Shakur Balkhi was very prominent. He has written a *Mathnavi*³⁰, *Afreen Nameh*. One of his famous couplets which has even been quoted by Greek writers is very famous;

Ta bedanja raseed Danish-e-man ke bedanam hamin ke nadanam

³⁰ A style of Tajik/Persian poetry

(What I perceive to the fullest of my knowledge I only know that I know nothing, being an ignorant)

Another famous poet was Abu Muyad Balkhi who had started writing *Shahname* in prose and wrote the story of *Yusuf and Zulekha* in verse.

Abul Hasan Shaheed Balkhi was a great poet and scholar of his time. He was very good in philosophy, and argued with Zakariya Razi. He has written on almost every topic and was an accomplished poet of Tajik as well as Arabic language.

Abu Abdullah Jafar Bin Mohammad Rudaki Samarkandi was another prominent Tajik poet of the Samanid period. Rudaki can be called one of the founders of the Tajik literature³¹. He was from the region of Penj-rood which is not far from modern Panjkent in Tajikistan³². Rudaki was the first poet who wrote a *Diwan*³³. He has said couplets on every subject and is also credited to have written *Kelila-wa-Dimna*³⁴ in verse form. Apart from these, he has also authored lexicography *Tajul Masadir*.

Abu Mansur Muhammad Bin Ahmad Daqiqi was the last great poet of the Samanid period and was second only to Rudaki. It is he who before

³¹ Kabir Ahamad Jaisi, *Tarikh-e-Adabyat-e-Tajikistan*, p.11

³² Ibid., p. 11

³³ complete collection of poems

³⁴ translation of Indian story Pancha Tantra

Firdowsi started writing *Shahname* and wrote about 1000 verses but unfortunately met an untimely death and could not complete it.

Prose Literature: Prose literature rose to the same prominent position as did the poetry of the Samanid period. Among the significant books of this period are *Muqadama-e-Shahname* (Preface of *Shahname*), which is attributed to Abu Mansur Muhammad Bin Abdur Razzaq who was the governor of Tus province. This book deals with the Zarthrust period. Other important book is the translation of *Tarikh-e-Tibri* by Abu Ali Muhammad Bal Ami who was a famous *Wazir* (Prime Minister) of the Samanids. This work is lucid and captivating.

The Samanid period was indeed the golden period of the revival of Persian literature, which gave new dimension to the Tajik culture and literature.

Since the fall of Samanids in 999 A.D. and coming of Karakhanids, continuous wars disturbed the flow of culture and development of language in Tajikistan. When Mahmud of Ghazni established an empire in Central Asia, language and culture benefitted from it. Mahmud was a great patron of poets and learned people. He was very anxious to be praised, that is why a special form of poetry *Qasida*³⁵ developed during his reign. The most famous

³⁵ A form of poetry in Tajik/Persian in which the patron is highly eulogised

Qasida writer of his time was Abul Qasim Hassan bin Ahmad Unsuri Balkhi known as Malakus-shoara ³⁶. Unsuri wrote beautiful *Qasidas* in Tajik and Persian.

The other great personality of this time was Abu Rehan Mohammad bin Ahmad Beruni (973-1051) famous as Al Beruni. Beruni was fond of travelling and he often travelled far and wide to acquire the knowledge of the region ³⁷. He came to India with Mahmud of Ghazni and learnt Sanskrit language, habits and rituals of the people of this land. He wrote a book on his observations *Tehqiq Malal Hind Man Maqula Maqbula Fil Aql Au Mazdaula Athri*³⁸, which is also a very important source of the ancient Indian society and culture. Al Beruni had great respect for Indian culture. An important writer in the Ghaznavi period was Abul Fazal Baihaqi (995-1075). He wrote a voluminous description, in 30 volumes, about the Ghaznavids. His most famous work is *Tarikh-e-Masudi* also known as *Tarikh-e-Baihaqi*.

The most famous Tajik/Persian poet is Abul Qasim Firdowsi Tusi who was born in a village near Tus in 935 A.D. The *Shahname* (epic of kings) to which he devoted most of his adult life³⁹, was originally composed for the Samanid princes of Khurasan, who were responsible for the revival of

³⁶ Babajan Ghafoorov, *Tajikan*, p. 671

³⁷ Babajan Ghafoorov, *Tajikan*, p. 672

³⁸ Popularly known as *Kitabul Hind*

³⁹ It took thirty years of his life.

Tajik/Persian cultural traditions after the Arab conquest of the 7th century. During Firdowsi's lifetime the Ghaznavid Turks conquered this dynasty, and there are various stories in medieval texts describing the lack of interest shown by the new ruler of Khorasan, Mahmud of Ghazni, in Firdowsi and his work.

Shahname of Firdowsi contains nearly 60,000 couplets and is based on a prose work of same name compiled in the poets' early manhood in his native Tus. This prose *Shahname* was in turn and for the most part the translation of a Pahalavi work, *Khutai Namak*, a history of the kings of Persia from mythical times down to the reign of Khusrow II (590-628), but it also contained additional material continuing the story upto the overthrow of the Sasanians by the Arabs in the middle of the 7th century A.D. Firdowsi was a great exponent of Tajik language and culture.

The language and culture in Central Asia during 13th and 14th centuries was severely affected by the Mongol attacks⁴⁰. The literature developed in those areas, which were free of Mongol attacks. The most famous poet of the middle ages (14th century) of Tajikistan was Kamaluddin Mas'ud, known in poetry as Kamol Khujandi. He writes about the city of Khojand. His great heritage is the *Diwan* of his Ghazals. The verses of Kamol Khojandi are

⁴⁰ Babajan Ghafoorov, *Tajikan*, p. 734

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laced with the sadness and yearning for his city of Khojand, the streets, the gardens, the landscapes.

Sixteenth century was very important for the development of Tajik/Persian literature. In this period some great poets like Jalaluddin Rumi, Saadi Shirazi, and Amir Khusrau Dehlavi lived who enriched the Tajik/Persian literature⁴¹. Jalaluddin Rumi was from Balkh, which was the ancient centre of Tajik civilization. He is one of the most important Sufi poets of Tajik Persian language. In the 16th century history writing also progressed. In the later period particularly during the reign of Amir Shah Murad, literary activities were limited to writing religious texts only.

In the beginning of 16th century the city of *Hirat* lost its importance due to the rise of Safavid power. Many famous poets, writers, researchers, painters (including Mir Ali⁴², Wasafi), and calligraphists left *Hirat* and settled in Central Asia. They were welcomed by the Shaibanid rulers into their courts, which had become a centre of poetry and sciences. The successor of Shaibani Khan himself was a poet who used to write in both languages, i.e. Tajik and Uzbek⁴³. The period of 16th century was tumultuous. In Central Asia three powers Timurids, Safavids and Shaibanids were

⁴¹ Ibid.,

⁴² Calligraphist and poet Mir Ali who died at Bukhara was originally from *Hirat*

⁴³ Kabir Ahmad Jaisi, *Tarikh-e-Adabyat-e-Tajikistan*, p. 27

struggling to capture the city of *Hirat*. Banai and Wasafi were forced to leave Khorasan and take shelter in the north. Peace prevailed in the region when Abdullah Khan came to the power. During his tenure there was development in the field of Tajik literature.

Another feature of this period was that many writers and poets of Central Asia came to the court of Mughals in India, and some poets from India went to Central Asia, which show great cultural interaction at that time⁴⁴. In this phase most of the writers and poets lived in the courts. Some poets and writers were also attached with the Khans and small *Jagirads*⁴⁵. These poets used to eulogise their masters using the old structure of Tajik poetry. Spirituality or mysticism was gaining strength gradually with the religion, which paved the way for the development of a new kind of poetry consisting religious and mystic ideas, stories regarding good human conduct and biographies of famous persons. The literature of this period was artificial⁴⁶, which was indicative of decline of the Khans and Jagirdars.

There were only a few writers who were in touch with the common man's issues. These poets were searching for a new structure to express their views as they did not find the old structure proper to express new ideas of the time,

⁴⁴ Kabir Ahmad Jaisi, *Tarikh-e-Adabyat-e-Tajikistan*, p. 28

⁴⁵ Land holders

⁴⁶ Kabir Ahmad Jaisi, *Tarikh-e-Adabyat-e-Tajikistan*, p. 29

and the issues before the society. It is their poetry which is still in the minds of the people and not of those who were writing for their masters in the courts.

Banai was an important poet of this period. Babajan Ghafoorov considers him a great poet of the 16th century⁴⁷. Banai has written a *mathnavi*, 'Behruz Bahmani' which deals with humanity and good conduct. He condemns social evils and injustice. According to him the root of injustice lies in Amirs and his bad characters. The poet did not want to become a *Qazi* or *Mufti*, because he thinks that instead serving to the people they were busy in accumulating wealth for themselves. Banai was killed in 1512 by the Shiite forces in Qarshi⁴⁸.

Halali was another important poet of this period. He is not known in Iran but is very famous in Central Asia. His birth place is Astarabad near Khorasan. For the rest of his life he lived in *Hirat*. He was killed on the pretext of being Shiite, but the real cause for his murder was his couplets which he had composed against Obaidullah Khan⁴⁹. By going through the history of that period it becomes clear that Halali was a revolutionary poet⁵⁰. He was not like a poet composing *Qasidas* at court, in his book *Laila*

⁴⁷ Babajan Ghafoorov, *Tajikan*, p. 871

⁴⁸ Kabir Ahmad Jaisi, *Tarikh-e-Adabyat-e-Tajikistan*, p. 35

⁴⁹ Touji Uthman, *Halali Chera Kushte Shud*, p.25

Majnoon he has clearly expressed his dislike about it. He has criticized those poets who “praise like fools and consider them intelligent”. This book also contains many of his ideas about religions and their followers. He even says that a good infidel is better than a bad Muslim⁵¹.

Other famous poets of this century were Wasafi and Mushfaqi who enriched the Tajik literature of their time.

During the 17th century there was a mixture of two trends emerging in literature of Central Asia. One was the poets from small places *qasbai shoara* were scaling new heights and another feature was the overall prevalence of *Sabk-i-Hindi*⁵². Another feature of the Tajik literature of this time is that it is divided in two streams one was group of progressive writers and other which was attached to the court.

This period also saw some famous poets like Saidov. Mir Abid Saidov Nasfi was the greatest poet of his time⁵³. He was rediscovered by Sadruddin Aini⁵⁴. He was the first poet who stood for the betterment of the common people against the rulers. His writings are in very simple language and deal with the social issues.

⁵⁰ Kabir Ahmad Jaisi, *Tarikh-e-Adabyat-e-Tajikistan*, p. 38

⁵¹ Ibid., p.40

⁵² A distinct style of Tajik/Persian poetry developed in India (Hind)

⁵³ *Obaidullah Nama*, p. 303

⁵⁴ Kabir Ahmad Jaisi, *Tarikh-e-Adabyat-e-Tajikistan*, p. 56

Tajik literature of the period from 18th century till the advent of Russians in Central Asia has not been studied extensively⁵⁵. Due to bad economic condition, religious intolerance and continuous wars there was a decline in the literature of this period. Mystic poetry had lost its theme of religious confluence and instead became a medium through which hatred against each other was expressed. But despite this there were some great poets and writers who were enriching the Tajik literature, and most of them were active in India. Among these poetess Zaibun Nisa⁵⁶ and Mirza Abdul Qadir Bedil are worth mentioning here. The poetry by the latter particularly influenced the literature of Central Asia in 18th and 19th centuries.

Zaibun Nisa was the daughter of Moghal ruler Aurangzeb of India. She devoted her life to the study of Arabic and Tajik poetry, and also composed poetry with pen name of *Makhfi*. She also has a *Diwan* to her credit. There are many progressive ideas found in her poetry, she condemns the suppression of common populace⁵⁷.

Another great poet of the time was Mirza Bedil who was born during the reign of Shah Jahan at Azimabad⁵⁸ in 1644. Apart from learning Persian and Urdu languages he also learnt Sanskrit, the ancient language of India. He was

⁵⁵ Views expressed by Mirzaev in the ivth conference of Tajik writers, Sharq Surkh, 4,1959

⁵⁶ Daughter of the Mughal ruler Aurangzaeb of India

⁵⁷ Kabir Ahmad Jaisi, *Tarikh-e-Adabyat-e-Tajikistan*, p. 64

⁵⁸ Near Patna

well versed with the Brahminical philosophy of India. Bedil several times declined the offer to become a court poet, as he was bitterly against it. He was critical the poets who for the sake of money wasted their talent. The works and style of Bedil have greatly influenced the Tajik and Uzbek literatures of Central Asia till as late as 1920s.

Till recent times the Tajik literature of the period from 16th to 19th centuries was unknown to outside world and was confined in Central Asia. Edward Brown and other linguists have concluded the Tajik literature with Jami, and considered the onward period as of decline⁵⁹. Due to the efforts of Soviet writers and particularly the works done by Tajik researchers it came to light that this period had some great poets like Banai, Wasafi, Mushafaqi, Saidov, Danish etc. who were writing independent of the old style using new ideas.

⁵⁹ Kabir Ahmad Jaisi, *Tarikh-e-Adabyat-e-Tajikistan*, p. 27

Chapter-IV

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE AND CULTURE UNDER THE SOVIETS

TAJIK LITERATURE TILL OCTOBER REVOLUTON:

The period from the advent of Russians in Central Asia and upto the October Revolution was unstable and it cast its distinct shadow over the literature of the time. Most of the Tajik poets of that time did not leave any *Diwan*. Though all efforts were made to protect the court poetry but due to the decline of Amirs and Khans, and there being no relation between the subjects chosen by the poets with the ground situation, it went into oblivion⁶⁰. The litereture which was associated with the common man developed further and several new themes were added to it⁶¹.

An important feature of the poetry of this period was the simplicity of the language used⁶². The language used by poets was near to the colloquial language, sometimes even the colloquial idioms and phrases were mentioned. Another interesting feature of this period is the effect of Bedil on the contemporary literature. It equally affected both the poets who followed his style and even those who did not. A new trend also emerged in this period

⁶⁰ H. Mirza zadeh, *Shaheen*, p. 206

⁶¹ Though the court poetry declined in the end of 19th century, still poets were dependent on it for their subsistence

⁶² Kabir Ahmad Jaisi, *Tarikh-e-Adabyat-e-Tajikistan*, p. 91

in which poets tried to do away with the complicated style of *Sabk-i-Hindi* and in its place they used the simplicity of the classic Tajik literature.

PROGRESSIVE WRITERS OF 19th CENTURY IN TAJIKISTAN:

- **Ahmad Donish** was one of the main Tajik writer, poet, painter, and judge Ahmad Donish⁶³ was born in April, 1826, in Bukhara into a poor family headed by Mullah Nasir. Also referred to as Ahmad Makhdum Kallah, his early education was undertaken by his mother, a teacher. Later, he joined the *mektabs* and *madrassas* for religious education. He devoted himself to the study of the works of the great Tajik-Persian and Arab authors. Thus, while still at school, he studied the natural sciences, mathematics, astronomy, history, philosophy, and literature on his own. He completed his formal studies, which he paid for with money he received by selling his paintings, in 1850. After that, upon the recommendation of his teacher, he found employment as a court architect and painter. In reality, however, according to Donish himself, he merely copied manuscripts and attended to court correspondence. In the latter responsibility, Amir Nasrullah (ruled 1826-1860 A.D.) personally nominated Donish as secretary for a delegation leaving for St. Petersburg.

⁶³ Iraj Bashiri, *Prominent Tajik Figures of the Twentieth Century*, Dushanbe, 2002, p. 70

The first phase of Donish's career included three trips to Russia. These trips acquainted him with life in St. Petersburg and expanded his knowledge and world view. During the first trip, he not only participated in official negotiations, but also visited the literary and industrial centers of St. Petersburg. Upon his return to Bukhara in 1850, however, his high hopes that the Amir would implement some of his suggested reforms were shattered. The Amir accepted only what was of military and economic interest, and summarily rejected all advice regarding social, educational, and cultural reforms.

Donish fared even worse when the selfish Amir Muzaffar (ruled 1860-1885) systematically alienated all the worthy and experienced officials who had assisted his father. As for Donish, he was isolated. In fact, Donish's role in the government at this time would be totally obscure were it not for his work *Manozir al-Kavokib* (The Placement of the Planets, 1865). He could have been Amir Muzaffar's court astronomer. In 1868, against all advice, Amir Muzaffar challenged Russia's might for second time and he was defeated. Following the signing of a forced Treaty of Friendship, the Amir sent a delegation to Russia. Donish was appointed as the delegation's consultant. He spent the period between June 1869 and March 1870 in St. Petersburg reestablishing ties that had been severed by war. As a result of his

involvement in the negotiations, Donish's influence and prestige as Bukhara's most experienced and informed politician increased dramatically. As for Donish, he not only acquainted himself with the economic, political, and governmental situation of Russia, but also with Russia's history, especially its ties with Europe.

Upon his return, in recognition of his contributions to the success of the delegation, the Amir conferred upon Donish the title of *Uroq* and offered him a lucrative position in government. Donish refused the offer. Instead, he devoted his time entirely to write *Risola dar Nazmi Tamaddun va Ta'avun* (Essay on the Organization of Civilization and Cooperation), 1870-1873, in which he examined the governmental structure of the Emirate. The essay, which included a complete program for the overhaul of the Bukhara bureaucracy, placed primary emphasis for government on the pillars of justice and education.

In considering a role for government, Donish looked to both the traditional Islamic and the new European models. For instance, he advocated a European-style *Majlis* (Parliament) that would meet in the presence of the Amir. The parliament, consisting of people from all walks of life, would debate issues and vote on matters pertaining to public welfare. The Amir would approve all governmental concerns, after having been debated and

voted on. To curtail the Amir's authority even more, Donish included the office of the *Wazir* (Prime minister). This two-prong assault on the Amir's powers, Donish thought, would not only introduce order into the government but would allow for a system of checks and balances. The Amir rejected Donish's suggestions. He did not allow even for a reform of the traditional educational system or the institution of European style courses. In addition, upon Donish's return from his third trip to St. Petersburg (1883-84), he was assigned the *Qaziship* (office of the judge) of Bukhara's remote districts, Ghuzor and Nahrpai.

Undaunted, Donish worked on his *Navodir al-Vaqoye'* (Singular Events, 1885) until the new Amir, Abdulahad (ruled 1885-1910), appointed him director of one of Bukhara's *madrassas*. When *Navodir* was completed, Donish copied and distributed it among his friends and supporters. Highly influential in awakening the people, Donish's work rallied the Amir, the court, and the *Ulema* against him. The book was singled out as anti-Islamic, and its author as irreligious and unprincipled. It was even rumored that Donish lacked the knowledge of Islam and the *Shari'a* (law). In response to these allegations, Donish published *Mi'yor al-Tadayun* (The Touchstone of Religion), in 1894 in which he analyzed the Islamic *fiqh* (jurisprudence) as it

pertained to his contemporaries. In fact, in matters of religion, Donish easily outshone his dogmatic accusers.

Convinced that mere improvements in the government would not be sufficient to place Bukhara on a solid path to progress, during his last years, Donish devoted his time to writing *Risolai Ta'rikhi* (Historical Essay, 1897). In it, he severely criticized the hundred years rule of the *Manghit Amirs*, especially Muzaffar. Furthermore, he prophesied that either internal strife or the will of the people would put an end to the rule of the Manghits.

A unique individual, Donish taught himself the works of the masters and made three arduous trips to Russia to perfect his understanding of the world. When he became convinced of the inability of Bukharan authorities to effect change, he severely criticized the traditional methods used in the Bukharan *madrassas*, promoted the learning of foreign languages and the exact sciences, and more poignantly, documented the root causes of the malaise that permeated every aspect of Bukharan life. In the field of literature, Donish influenced the literary developments of his time by introducing realism into Tajik literature, and by broadening the scope of the vernacular to encompass the expression of contemporary concerns. Ahmad Donish died in 1897 in Bukhara.

Shaheen is considered as a leader of progressive writers of the 19th century. Despite his untimely death⁶⁴ he succeeded in compiling twelve thousand verses. *Badius Sanai*, is his important prose work. He also compiled a Mathnavi, *Laiala Majnoon*, in which the character of *Laila* is different from the position of women in Central Asia. He also complains about the pathetic situation and blames it on the insensitive rule. Mirza Zadeh considers him a great writer after Ahmad Danish during this period⁶⁵.

THE POST-REVOLUTION CHANGES

The goal of the Soviet nationalities policy in Central Asia in the 1920's was to create separate national republics by means of *natsionalnoe razhmyezhivaniye* or national territorial delimitation. A region, that had been variously defined and demarcated through the centuries, was thus delimited and defined into the five Soviet Central Asian socialist Republics. The rationale behind this was projected to be a need to move away from a situation, where, the colonial character of the previous regime had done nothing to remedy the demographic tangle in the region, to a situation where each of the nations would be able to develop themselves within their

⁶⁴ He died at the age of 35 years due to t.b.

‘national’ territory. Based on the principle that nationalities have a territorial distribution, it was projected as having ‘solved’ the complex ethnic question of the region.

However, it is being increasingly pointed out today, that, the ethno-demographic structure of the region has been such as to preclude the possibility of a permanent solution. It is now being argued that delimitation may have impeded the natural course of development of the existing state systems. These recent events, and particularly a number of cases of ethnic conflicts, are a pointer to some unanswered questions of the period of delimitation, which assume importance in the course of the transition, of these constituent states of the erstwhile Soviet Union, to independent existence in the post-Soviet times. The period witnessed a number of policy changes and regulatory distortions, which over time gave new shape to the emerging society.

The Soviet era saw the implementation of policies designed to transform the status of women. During the 1930s, the Soviet authorities launched a campaign for women’s equality in Tajikistan, as they did elsewhere in Central Asia. Eventually major changes resulted from such programmes, but initially they provoked intense public opposition. For example, women who

⁶⁵ Mirza Zadeh, *Shaheen*, p.275

appeared in public without the traditional all-enveloping veil were ostracized by society or even killed by relatives for supposedly shaming their families by what was considered unchaste behaviour.

World war-II brought an upsurge in women's employment outside home. With the majority of men removed from their civilian jobs by the demands of war, women compensated for the labour shortage, although the employment of indigenous women in industries continued to grow even after the war, they remained a small fraction of the industrial labour force. In the early 1980s, women made up 51% of Tajikistan's population and 52% of the work force on collective farms. In some rural parts of the Republic about half of the women were not employed at all outside the home in mid 1980s. In the late Soviet era, female under employment was an important political issue in Tajikistan because it was linked to the Soviet propaganda campaign portraying Islam as a regressive influence in society.

The issue of female employment was more complicated than was indicated by Soviet propaganda, however, many women remained in the homes not only because of traditional attitudes about women's roles but also many lacked vocational training and few child care facilities were available. By the end of 1980s, Tajikistan's pre schools could accommodate only 16.5% of the children of appropriate age and only 2.4% of the rural children.

Despite all these, women provided the core of the work force in certain areas of agriculture, especially the production of cotton, fruits and vegetables.

In the last decades of the 20th centuries, Tajik social norms and even *de facto* government policy still often favoured a traditionalist, restrictive attitudes towards women that tolerated wife beating and the arbitrary dismissal of women from responsible positions. In the late Soviet period, Tajik girls still commonly married while under age despite official condemnation of this practice as a remnant of the “feudal” Central Asian mentality.

The Soviet take over of Central Asia greatly helped in the development of its culture, literature etc. Progressive Russian intellectuals were of tremendous help to the Central Asians in the fields of economy, natural resources exploitation, literature, language, theatre etc. A large number of philosophers and poets of Central Asia learnt new ideas from the progressive Russians. Ahmad Makhdoom Danish, a famous philosopher of that period was greatly influenced by the progressive Russian culture. He was considered as the most learned man of Bukhara. He had rightly said about himself that he was a doctor, poet, philosopher, musician, painter, scientist, and calligrapher. He was so liberal in his ideas and thoughts that he came to

be known as 'infidel'. The most famous work of Ahmad Danish is *Navaderul Waqae*, which is the collection of science, philosophy and political ideas.

During the Soviet era, educated Tajiks defined their cultural heritage broadly, laying claim to the rich legacy of the supra-ethnic culture of Central Asia and other parts of the Islamic world from the eastern Mediterranean to India. Soviet rule institutionalized western art forms, publishing and mass media, some elements of which subsequently attracted spontaneous support in the Republic. However, the media and the arts always has been subject to political constrains under the Soviet.

By the mid 1980s, more than 1600 libraries were operating in Tajikistan. Of particular importance is the Firdausi State Library, which houses a significant collection of oriental manuscripts. In 1990 Tajikistan had 27 museums, the fewest of any Soviet republic. Among the most notable are the Behzad Museum of History, Regional Studies, Art and Ethnographic Museum of the Academy of Sciences, both in Dushanbe. The Republic had 14 theatres in 1990. The Republic's film studio called *Tadzhikfil'm*, opened in Dushanbe in 1930. By mid-1980s, it was producing 7 or 8 feature films and 30 documentaries per year for cinemas and television.

The Soviet era saw the introduction of opera and ballet in Tajikistan as well as the organization of Tajik-style song and dance troupes. Dushanbe's

Opera and Ballet Theatre was the first large public building in the city; its construction having begun in 1939. Dushanbe also had theatres devoted to Tajik and Russian drama, as well as a Drama School. There are theatres for music, musical comedy and drama in several other Tajik cities as well.

POST-OCTOBER REVOLUTION LITERATURE:

The Soviet Tajik literature came into existence due to the efforts of the Soviet and the Tajik writers, and it was a part of the collective literature of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic⁶⁶. Like other literature of the Soviet Union Tajik literature also had the theme of common problems of human beings. However, one can not infer that the whole of Tajik literature was influenced by Soviet literature. The topics of the writings of this time were socialism, liberation of women and eradication of illiteracy. One important feature of this period is that the classical Tajik was extensively used and many things were taken from it⁶⁷.

From the literary point of view the period from the October Revolution till the independence of Tajikistan can be divided in four phases.

- From Revolution till the establishment of Tajik Soviet Socialist Republic (1917-1929)

⁶⁶ Kabir Ahmad Jaisi, *Tarikh-e-Adabyat-e-Tajikistan*, p. 150

- Period till the beginning of the Second World War (1929-1941)
- Soviet Tajik literature during the World War II (1941-1945)
- After the Second World War until the independence (1945-1991)

During the first phase a new realistic literature came to the forefront. Aini and Lahoti greatly influenced the literature of this period. The stormy situation of this time was helpful in the development of poetry rather than prose literature. Poetry used to be shorter in length and had new structure. Magazines and journals started being published in this period⁶⁸. First Tajik journal *Shoala-i-Inqalab*⁶⁹ was published in Samarkand from 1919 to 1921 and *Awaz-i-Tajik* from Samarkand, 1924 to 1930. Aini wrote his first novel *Adina* which also was the first novel of Tajik language.

During the second phase too Tajik literature grew. Two new streams Drama and child literature came into prominence. Social unity, liberation of women, praise of Soviet nationalism, and degrading of the medieval system were the themes. Important writings in Russian language was translated into Tajik, which worked as examples for Tajik writers. The decade of the 1930s saw the spurt in the readers of the Tajik literature; which helped in further development of Tajik literature, particularly after Latin script was used in

⁶⁷ Kabir Ahmad Jaisi, *Tarikh-e-Adabyat-e-Tajikistan*, p. 151

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 159

⁶⁹ Fire of revolution

1928 for Tajik language. In 1940 this script was discarded and Cyrillic was adopted, which removed the deficiency of the earlier script and helped Tajik language and literature in its development.

The Soviet Tajik literature during the Second World War was influenced by fast changing scenario. Poetry was used more than prose as the medium of expression⁷⁰. During this period not a single novel was published but theatre developed with pace, in which nationalistic feelings were aroused. *Rustam* and *Kaveh* of *Shahname*, were held in high esteem. *Zahak* was a symbol of evil forces.

The post-World War II Tajik literature not only continued the development of pre-war literature and included the experiences gained during the war. Once again prose overtook poetry and the most important prose stream was the writing of novels. Due to contact with other nationals Tajik literature developed with a faster pace. Important literary works were translated in 20 languages spoken in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic⁷¹. Apart from it translations were also done in Czech, Chinese, Hindi, Bangla, Polish, English, French, German, Spanish and Portuguese languages. The contents of literary works also had to adopt to this desire for a socialist renewal of language. Writers and poets had to seek their

⁷⁰ Kabir Ahmad Jaisi, *Tarikh-e-Adabyat-e-Tajikistan*, p. 163

inspiration, as much for content as for form, not from the bays and clergy, as before but from the common masses 'khalaq'. Two areas were thus opened up; reference to an ancient culture, and Socialist Realism.⁷²

The first was represented by Aini in his work *'Namunaye Adabiyat-e-Tajik*. This was the first re-evaluation who is considered as the father of Tajik culture. The tenth century poet Rudaki who is considered as the father of Tajik poetry was held in high esteem.

Socialist realism also made its appearance. Tajik writers new abandoned romanticism in favour of this new literary trend. Aini's story *Tajike-kambaght* is an example of it.

In the beginning of 20th century the efforts of many progressive writers of Central Asia who were influenced by the Russian literature and were experimenting it in Tajik literature, helped the development of Tajik language and culture around this time. During the 1920s and 1930s, the role of Tajik as the language of official communication declined with the introduction of Russian. Due to an influx of the Russians and Europeans to the Tajik Republic, most schools switched from Tajik to Russian as medium of instruction. Tajik children learnt Tajik language at their homes under the directions of their parents. Similarly, mosques and *madrassas* were closed

⁷¹ Kabir Ahmad Jaisi, *Tarikh-e-Adabiyat-e-Tajikistan*, p. 167

and the clergy was marginalized. Conferences seminars and classes were organised in the urban and rural centres for teaching the Russian language and the principles of scientific atheism. Many Tajiks participated in these efforts and accepted the change. In 1930s, the Arabic alphabet of Tajik was changed into the Latin script. The Tajiks were told that this change would bring them into the sphere of the technologically oriented West. In reality, however, the change was meant to distance the Tajiks from the source of their ideology, that is Islam. It was also a means of preparing the way for the next stage in their development as Soviets.

A decree on the introduction of Roman script of the Tajik language was published in 1928 and was enforced in 1930s⁷³. It was supposed to facilitate the process of teaching illiterate adults and children to read and write. The review *Rahbar-e-Danesh*, played the central role in the Romanisation project. Experiences were exchanged and published in the new alphabets⁷⁴.

⁷² Raza Jalili

⁷³ It was this time between 1920 and 1930 that the Roman alphabet was introduced in Turkey. The rapid development of publications there reinforced the nationalistic feeling, which was distinct from the Islamic religious tradition. In Iran the move to Romanise the language never saw the day, even though Reza Shah tried for it.

⁷⁴ Guissan Jahangiri, "The Premises for the Construction of a Tajik National Identity 1920-30" in M.R. Djalili, et al., (ed.), *Tajikistan: The Trials of Independence*, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1998, p. 27

In the 1940s, the Tajik script was changed once again, this time to the Cyrillic script⁷⁵. The change was stated to be necessary because the Tajiks in their ascent to the heights of communism would need the help of the Soviets, who could only communicate with them in Russian. Since Turkey had adopted Roman script for Turkish language, it caused fears in Soviet leaders, that the new Pan-Turkic literature could develop in the Latin alphabet and this new script could attract the people of Central Asia towards Turkey and away from Soviet Union⁷⁶. The change over to Cyrillic, therefore, would simply be the final step, before the Tajik language would get into disuse.

In the mid-1970s, Tajik intellectuals and religious leaders formed a clandestine group in Qurgan-teppe, a hundred miles south of the capital of Dushanbe. The Tajiks on both sides of the Soviet/Afghan border contributed to the effort and a stiff resistance against the Soviet communists started. The revival of the Tajik language was one of their most sacred goals.

Tajikistan's Language Law of 1989, spearheaded by the reformists declared Tajik as the official language of the republic and relegated Russian as the language of international transactions. The government undertook measures to safeguard the languages of the Gorno-Badakshan region and

⁷⁵ Aini said the new alphabets should be simple that every Tajik child could be able to master it in one month. "Donya ye nau wa alifba ye nau" (A New World and a New Alphabet) in *Avaz-e-Tajik-e-Kambakht*, Dushanbe, p. 7

⁷⁶ Elizabeth Bacon, *Central Asia Under Russian Rule*

allowed the Uzbeks and the Kyrgyzs of Tajikistan to develop their own cultural institutions. It was decided that after 1995 all official business would be conducted in Tajik.

FOUNDERS OF SOVIET TAJIK LITERATURE:

- **Sadriddin Aini**

Tajik historian and author Sadriddin Saidmurodovich Aini⁷⁷ was born on April 15, 1878, in the village of Saktara. He grew up in the Ghizhduvon region of Bukhara in a traditional Islamic setting. His grandfather and father were both learned figures of the time and followers of the strict *Kubravi* school of thought. Orphaned at the age of 12, Aini left Saktara for Bukhara, where his older brother studied and where he hoped to pursue his own studies. With him he carried a vast number of popular stories and proverbs, which he had learned by mingling with the shopkeepers and laborers of Ghizhduvon.

In Bukhara, Aini became familiar with the world of his time through the works of Ahmad Donish. Donish had made three trips to Russia and had documented his observations in *Navodir al-Vaqaye'* (Singular Events). Aini also drew on the knowledge and teachings of Domulla Ikromcha, a cleric

⁷⁷ Iraj Bashiri, *Prominent Tajik Figures of the Twentieth Century*, Dushanbe, 2002, p. 20

with a refreshing and different view of life than his own contemporary colleagues. Aini's awakening, happening at the time of the October Revolution in Russia, impacted Aini's world view immensely, so that his lyric poetry, centered on the themes of love and nature, gave way to anthems in praise of the dawn of a new age for the working people of Bukhara. Additionally, the more he learned about the new society in the making, the more he detested the regime that had fallen. In fictional works such as *Ghulomon* (The Slaves) and *Jallodoni Bukhoro* (The Bukhara Executioners), he exposed the inhumanity of the Amirs as they clung to power using repression and terror as a means to sustain them. He also gathered materials and wrote extensively on the transition that was taking place in Bukhara and the Kuhistan as new trends replaced the old.

Aini's knowledge of the atrocities of the Amirs was first hand. Indeed, he was arrested as a revolutionary by Alimkhan's henchmen and was imprisoned in the Arg. Unlike those whose hands were tied in the front, a sign to the watching crowd of the forthcoming execution, his hands were tied in the back. He was administered seventy five lashes of the whip. Aini would certainly have died had not Bukhara fallen to the Red Army that very day, so that he was taken to Kagan immediately to receive medical attention.

Aini's contributions are manifold. As the father of Tajik and literature, he has written extensively in Tajik language. He is recognized as one of the main figures of the *Jadid* movement. In this regard he spearheaded the *Maktabi Nov* (the new method schools). He went personally to the homes of potential students and persuaded their parents to allow their children to attend the new schools. At school, he provided both the textbooks and the instruction himself. He even found locations where the schools could meet either openly or (later on) clandestinely.

As a revolutionary, Aini started his literary career with such fiery poems as *Marshi Hurriet* (Song of Freedom) and *Inqilob* (Revolution) but, soon after, he chose prose as the medium that could best serve his purpose: depiction of the centrality of daily events in the life of the common man as material for literature. Some of the major works of early Soviet Tajik literature are graced with his name. They include *Odina* (Odina), *Dokhunda* (Dokhunda), and *Ghulomon* (Slaves), just to name a few. Towards the end of his life Aini contributed to the growth of such Soviet journals as *Ovozi Tojik* and *Tojikistoni Surkh*. His most remarkable work is an account of his life, especially the formative period. Written in the 1940s, it is called the *Yoddoshtho* (Reminiscences); it details life in Bukhara of the turn of the century in a most vivid and informative way.

Some of Aini's contributions, like *Odina* (Odina) and *Margi Sudkhur* (Death of the Money Lender), have been the subject of exciting motion pictures. His *Margi Sudkhur* is, indeed, a classic of the Soviet screen, and is shown repeatedly to Tajik audiences.

▪ **Jalol Ikromi**

Tajik author Jalol Ikromi⁷⁸ was born in Bukhara in 1909. His father was an educated man interested in the Russian language and culture. From childhood Ikromi, too, was interested in literature and science. He joined the CPSU in 1945.

Between 1928 and 1930, Ikromi's *Shirin* (Sweet), *Rahmatullo Ishon* (Rahmatullah Ishan), *Chi Boyad Kard?* (What Needs To Be Done?), *Yak Havzi Purkhun* (A Pond Filled with Blood), *Ghalaba* (Victory), and *Dor ur-Rohati Musulmonon*" (The Place of Rest for the Muslims) were published in Rahbari Donish.

Ikromi's enthusiasm for language took him to the Dorul-Mu'allimin of Tashkent. In 1930, he participated in the First Congress of Tajik Language Specialists. Recognizing the need for talented writers and poets in the young republic, in the same year, Ikromi took his family to Stalinabad. There he

⁷⁸ Iraj Bashiri, *Prominent Tajik Figures of the Twentieth Century*, Dushanbe, 2002, p. 113

worked on the Committee for Scientific Research, and later on served as the editor of *Rahbari Donish*.

In 1934, Ikromi's novellas entitled *Du Hafta* (Two Weeks), *Tirmor* (Arrow Snake), as well as a collection of his stories which included *Hayot* (Life) and *Ghalaba*, were published in separate volumes on the occasion of the First Congress of Tajik Intellectuals. In 1937, he published *Tokhm-i Mahabbat* (The Seed of Love).

Ikromi's *Shirin*, which he revised seven times under Sadriddin Aini's supervision, deals, on the one hand, with village life and, on the other, with the public's hatred for the Basmachis. The heroes of the story, Shirin and Shodmon, love each other and pursue their dream. Shirin's parents also support the new way. Ikromi's *Tirmor*, which was published in installments in *Rahbari Donish* (1931-34), deals with life in a Bukhara publishing company during the time when Ikromi was a typesetter. The novella played a decisive role in determining Ikromi's position in Soviet Tajik literature.

In 1936, Ikromi wrote *Az Maskav Chi Ovardi?* (What Did You Bring from Moscow?). The novella deals with the influence of revolutionary changes and of sovietization on the young generation, emphasizing the latter's love for Moscow. This novella is a first in children's literature to deal with sovietization.

Ikromi's first novel, *Shodi* (Merry Making, 1949), played a major role in the life of the republic. For the first time in Soviet Tajik literature, a literary work thoroughly examined collectivization and the role of the Communist Party in the creation of the kolkhoz system. In the imaginary setting of the Gulistan village, the author portrays the events of 1930-31, when small collectives were directed to form large units. Dealing with the spirit and the conflicts among the poor peasants, Ikromi investigates the inherent difficulties with which the founders of the system had to cope. Ikromi's *Shodi* is a landmark in Tajik literature of the 1930s and 1940s.

During WWII, Ikromi placed his pen at the service of the socialist regime, extolled the victories of his people and denounced Fascism. His output at this time includes a number of stories, including, *Javonho ba Jang Miravand* (The Youth Go to War), *Baroi Vatan Joni Khudro Dariq Nomedorim* (We Will Not Hesitate to Give Our Lives for the Nation), and others, all extolling the system and highlighting the role of the Tajik people in the war.

During 1942-43, Ikromi published two novellas *Dili Modar* (A Mother's *Hirat*) and *Khonai Nodir* (Nodir's House). In *Dili Modar*, he portrays the efforts of Khovar Khola, a progressive factory worker who works in harmony with other workers in resolving problems. In contrast to this,

Ikromi wrote *Dushman* (Enemy), which was brought to the stage in 1937. It portrays the struggle of the newly organized workers against masked bandits. After the World War II, Ikromi wrote a number of stories all of which were published between 1945 and 1964.

In 1958, Ikromi published his novel entitled *Man Gunohkoram* (I Am Guilty). This novel is a major achievement for him both in the choice of subject and in the psychological analyses pertaining to various characters. In 1960, he wrote his first historical novel, dealing with the Revolution. Called *Tori 'Ankabut* (The Spider's Web), it examines the role of the *Ulamo* (clergy) and the youth in the Revolution. His *Dukhtari Otash* (Daughter of Fire) deals with the same time period (i.e., end of 19th, beginning of 20th centuries). In this novel, Ikromi examines a number of issues including the status of women and girls, family, ethics, the life of the *bais* and the poor, the introduction of Russian capitalism into Bukhara, the progression of capitalism in the region, the effects of the Russian democratic-bourgeois revolution, the rise of *jadidism*, the creation of the socialist party, the gradual awakening of the lower classes, and activities of the Peoples Revolution of Bukhara, all of which led to the flight of the Amir and his entourage.

In 1969, a complementary volume to *Dukhtari Otash*, entitled *Davozdah Darvozai Bukhoro* (The Twelve Gates of Bukhara) was published.

It deals with the important social, political, and historical events during the first days of the Revolution, until Soviet rule is established.

A number of Ikromi's works have been produced as motion pictures or have appeared on the Tajik stage. Some of his major works have been translated into various Soviet-block languages.

Ikromi was the recipient of the Red Banner of Labor and the Badge of Honor awards. He also garnered the Friendship Among Peoples and the Medal for Distinguished Service. Ikromi died in 1993.

▪ **Abulqosim Lahuti**

Iranian-born Tajik poet Abulqosim Lahuti⁷⁹ was born on December 4, 1887, into a family of shoemakers in Kirmanshah, Iran. Influenced by the contemporary social consciousness stemming from the demands of the workers for a better life, he published his first work at the age of 16. It was entitled *Masnaviye Ranjbar* (An Ode to the Worker). Soon after that, he joined the revolutionary groups.

After the establishment of the constitution, he found employment in the gendarmerie. In 1914, on charges of the execution of a major local figure without acquiring permission from higher authorities, he was sentenced to

⁷⁹ Iraj Bashiri, *Prominent Tajik Figures of the Twentieth Century*, Dushanbe, 2002, p. 158

death by hanging. He fled to Turkey. Soon after, he clandestinely returned to Kermanshah and established the worker's party. In 1918, he accompanied the deposed governmental figures to Turkey, where he established the Pars journal. In 1920, he returned to Iran via the Azerbaijan border and was pardoned by the governor of Azerbaijan. After participating in an uprising against the governor who had pardoned him, he fled Iran for the last time and went to the Soviet Union. He lived in a number of places in the Soviet Union, including Tajikistan. In 1925, he came to Dushanbe and joined the friends of Sadriddin Aini. His poetry, which appeared first in *Baroye Adabiyoti Sotsialisti*, was welcomed by audiences and gained him the position of the founder of Soviet Tajik poetry.

Lahuti's works include on the one hand, a series of love sonnets and lyrical pieces about love and patriotism and, on the other hand, a number of ethical and social pieces centered on the theme of revolution. Their combined impact on Tajik Soviet society of his time elevated him to the level of the first Tajik-speaking Communist poet.

Tajiks, however, know Lahuti mostly for the composition of their national anthem. Lahuti's other works include *Kovai Ohingar* (Kaveh the Blacksmith), 1947, *Qasidai Kremel* (Ode to the Kremlin), 1923, and *Toj va Bairaqa* (The Crown and the Banner), 1935. His collection of poetry, in six

volumes, was published between 1960 and 1963. Lahuti died on March 16, 1957, in Moscow.

SOME OTHER TAJIK WRITERS AND THEIR WORKS DURING THE SOVIET PERIOD:

- **Abdulguseynov Qulmuhammad**

Tajik author Qulmuhammad Abdulguseynov⁸⁰ was born into a farming family in the village of Rumid, in the Rushon district of Badakhshan, on October 29, 1929. Abdulguseynov graduated from the Stalinabad Library Institute in 1947 and from the Central Komsomol School in 1963. In 1960, he became the Assistant Editor of Komsomoli Tojikiston.

Abdulguseynov's first creative work was published in the early 1980s. He is mainly a science fiction writer. Many of his stories have appeared in *Pioniri Tojikiston*, *Javononi Tojikiston*, *Badakhshoni Shavravi*, *Mash'al*, and *Sadoi Sharq*. His major works include *Nihonkhonai Qamar* (The Hiding Place of the Moon, 1982) and *Boshishgoh dar Qamar* (A Pavilion on the Moon, 1984).

Abdulguseynov's characters continue to explore new and exciting dimensions of the solar system. Reading his works, the younger Tajik

⁸⁰ Iraj Bashiri, *Prominent Tajik Figures of the Twentieth Century*, Dushanbe, p. 1

generation, too, is becoming increasingly curious about the subject.

Abdulguseynov joined the Union of Writers of the Soviet Union in 1985.

▪ **Ghani Abdullo**

Tajik poet and playwright Ghani Abdullo⁸¹, Rashid Abdullo's brother, was born on March 11, 1912, to a family of laborers in Samarkand. Abdullo received his early education in the traditional schools of Samarkand. Abdullo graduated from the Samarkand Pedagogical Institute in 1932. Soon after graduation, Abdullo joined the Education Commissariat of the Republic of Tajikistan, working in the public education sector in Dushanbe. Still later, he became the Secretary of the Union of Writers of Tajikistan, then the leader of the Literature Division of the Lahuti Theater. Like his brother, Rashid, he was imprisoned by Stalin's regime, but unlike his brother, he survived the torture.

Ghani Abdullo's literary career began in the early 1930s as a lyrical poet. His early works, in Uzbeki, include *Satrhoi Sokhtmon* (The Levels of the Building, 1932) and *Bo Nomi Vedding* (Vedding by Name, 1933); both works were published in Tashkent. Abdullo's Tajik poetry appears under the title of *Sado* (Sound, 1935); he also published a story entitled *Du Sohil* (Two

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 3

Shores, 1935), as well as several works on literary criticism, including one dealing with the works of Jalol Ikromi (1933). Ghani Abdullo's later career is that of a playwright who wrote about contemporary issues and the history of the Tajiks, especially the struggles of the Soviets in World War II. His contributions include *Vodii Bakht* (The Realm of Luck) in 1934, *Rustam va Suhrob* (Rustam and Suhrab), 1935, and *Shurishi Vose'* (The Vose' Uprising), 1936. It is not, however, until 1956 and 1957 that his *Sharafi Inson* (Man's Honor) and *Surudi Kuhsor* (The Song of the Mountains) appeared on the Tajik stage. Then, a year later, his *Tufon* (Storm) brought the life of V. I. Lenin to the Tajik theater for the first time. His other plays, including *Hurriyat* (Freedom) and *Mo az Bomi Jahon* (We, From the Roof of the World), 1965 were staged shortly thereafter. He was awarded the Rudaki State Prize for literature in 1972.

- **Inoyat Khojaeva**

Tajik poet Inoyat Khojaeva⁸², also referred to as Farzona, was born on November 3, 1964, in Khujand. She received her early education in the public schools of Khujand. Khojaeva graduated from the Khujand Pedagogical Institute in 1985. Thereafter, she worked for Haqiqati

⁸² Ibid., p. 146

Leninobod. For a while, she was a poetry consultant for the Union of Writers of Tajikistan's Khujand Division.

Khojaeva's early poetry was published in 1982. A wide international audience in Europe, Japan, and the republics of the former Soviet Union reads her poetry. The themes of Kkojaeva's poetry include the philosophy of life and death, love and society.

Khojaeva's contributions include *Soyai Ghazal* (Shadow of a Sonnet), *Rishta boron* (Downpour), *Oyati 'Ishq* (The Love Verse), *Paiyomi Niokon* (The Message of the Ancestor), *Bargi Sabz* (Green Leaf), and others.

▪ **Qutbi Kiromov**

Tajik poet Qutbi Kiromov⁸³ was born on December 18, 1932, into a worker's family in Zahmatobod. Kiromov graduated from the Dushanbe Pedagogical Institute in 1953 and from the Gorkii Faculty of Literature in Moscow, in 1967. For a while, he was an instructor, then he joined Irfon Publishers, and later, Sido va Simoi Tojikiston.

Kiromov's first collection of poetry was published in 1962. It was entitled *Parvozi Mihr* (The Flight of Love). His other works include *Surudi Qullaho* (The Anthem of the Mountain Peaks), 1976, *Ziri Kuhsor* (Under the

⁸³ Ibid., p. 154

Mountains), 1970, *Ostini Baland* (The Long Sleeve), 1972, *Khoki Paivandi* (The Terrestrial Attraction), 1974, *Dili Barodar* (The Brother's *Hirat*), 1986, *Rishtai Kuh* (The Mountain Chain), 1979, *Puli Miyoni Zamonho* (The Bridge Gapping the Times), 1983, *Chishmai Nur* (The Source of Light), 1983, *Dostonho va Ash'or* (Stories and Poems), 1986, *Dostoni Ontuan* (Anthony's Story), 1974, and *Qatli Tughrul* (The Murder of Tughrul), 1993.

▪ **Rashid Abdullo**

Tajik poet, journalist, and translator, Rashid Abdullo⁸⁴ was born into a family of laborers in Samarkand in 1910. He was Ghani Abdullo's brother. Rashid received his early education in traditional Samarkand schools.

Abdullo graduated from the Faculty of Literature of the Uzbekistan Academy of Education in 1932. Thereafter, he became the Secretary of Baroi Adabiyoti Sotsialisti and Tojikistoni Surkh in Dushanbe. He also served as the Director of the Literary Division of the Republic, and the Director of the Censors of Dushanbe Film Studio. Later on, the Tajikistan Central Komsomol Committee recommended that Abdullo be assigned to the education centre of the Vakhsh Rural District as an instructor. His tasks included the elimination of illiteracy in the region.

⁸⁴ Iraj Bashiri, *Prominent Tajik Figures of the Twentieth Century*, Dushanbe, p. 4

Rashid Abdullo's poetry appears in the literary journals of the 1930s. His story entitled *Qodir* (Qodir), depicts the feelings of a youth upon taking control of a tractor for the first time; it was published in 1933 by the Tajikistan government press. His collection of poetry appeared in 1935, followed in 1936 by *Vakhsh* (Vakhsh) in which he depicts the Soviets' recovery of the Vakhsh marshes for cultivation.

As a translator, Abdullo brought some of the works of Lermontov and Nazim Hikmat into Tajiki. Rashid Abdullo joined the Union of Writers of Tajikistan in 1934.

In 1937, he was accused of slander, a charge that placed him in Stalin's prisons. He died in prison shortly after that.

▪ **Ziyodello Abdulloev**

Tajik poet Ziyodullo Abdulloev⁸⁵, also referred to as Ziyu Abdullo, was born into a farming family in the village of Khishtkupruk of Qabodion on December 10, 1948. Abdulloev graduated from the Dushanbe Pedagogical Institute in 1971. He worked for a number of years thereafter as a teacher, reporter for Komsomoli Tojikiston, and a copy editor for Sadoi Sharq. Abdulloev's first poems appeared early in the 1970s. His early contributions

⁸⁵ Iraj Bashiri, *Prominent Tajik Figures of the Twentieth Century*, Dushanbe, p. 7

are published in two volumes: *Iftikhori Zamon* (The Pride of Ages), 1982 and *Daryo* (The River), 1985. His other works include *Kafi Khok* (The Foam of the Earth), 1982, *Forugh* (Light), 1990, as well as an interpretation of Abdurahmon Mushfiqi's *Zeri Tegh* (Under the Sword), 1991, *Majmuai Dastajam'i* (Group Collection, Moscow, 1998), and *Tajovuze Nur* (Encroachment of Light).

The themes of Abdulloev's poetry include patriotism, the labor of the farmers, and the praises of the beautiful scenery of Tajikistan. Abdulloev joined the Union of Writers of the Soviet Union in 1984.

▪ **Abdurahman Abdumannonov**

Tajik literary critic Abdurahmon Abdumannonov⁸⁶ was born into a family of farmers in the village of Boghiston of Tashkent on April 6, 1947. Abdumannonov graduated from Tajikistan State University in 1968.

Abdumannonov's research deals with the works of the Iranian poet Malak al-Shu'ara Bahar and the question of "new Persian poetry." Abdumannonov has written several essays about this subject. He is also one of the authors of the six-volume *Ta'rikhi Adabiyoti Sovetii Tojik: Inkishofi Zhonrho* (The History of Soviet-Tajik Literature: Development of the

⁸⁶ Iraj Bashiri, *Prominent Tajik Figures of the Twentieth Century*, Dushanbe, p. 9

Genres). He is also interested in the realist elements in the poetry of the Tajik people, especially the inception and development of socialist realism in contemporary Tajik literature.

Abdumannonov has written extensively on the works of such Tajik greats as Aini, Lahuti, Payrav, Tursunzoda, Ikromi, Shukuhi, Ansori, Sherali, Gulrukhsor, Gulnazar, and others.

▪ **Abdurazzoqov Habibullo**

Tajik actor and director Habibullo Abdurazzoqov⁸⁷ was born in Kulab on November 7, 1937. Abdurazzoqov graduated from the Lunacharskiii State Institute for Dramatic Arts in 1960 and became an actor at the Pushkin Comedy-Music Theater in Leninabad. Abdurazzoqov was one of the best actors for the creation of national and classical figures of Tajik culture. The roles he created include the following: Lubim Tortsov in *Kambaghali Aib Nist* (Poverty Is Not a Shame), by A. Ostrovskii, 1960; Yodgor in *Dokhunda* (Dokhunda), by J. Ikromi, 1961; Faizullojon in *Irodai Zan* (A Woman's Resolve), by A. Sidqi, 1962; Merkutsio in *Romeo va Julietta* (Romeo and Juliet) and Otello in *Othello*, both by W. Shakespeare, 1963; Afrosiyob in *Rustam va Suhrob* (Rustam and Suhrab), by Ghani Abdullo, 1966;

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 11

Nizomiddin in *Dilhoi Suzon* (Burning *Hirats*), by J. Ikromi, 1967; and many others.

The productions created by Abdurazzoqov are national to the core. They include *Khudorahmati* (May God Bless!), by B. Nushij, 1966; *Rustam va Suhrob* (Rustam and Suhrab), by Ghani Abdullo, 1967; *Kupruk* (Bridge), by F. Niyoz, 1969; *Karim-Divona* (Crazy Karim), by T. Ahmadkhonov, 1969; *Sado va Tobut* (Sound and Coffin), by A. Qahhor, 1975; *Vaqti ki Shahr Khufta Bud* (When the Town Was Asleep), by A. Chkheidze, 1980; and *Vopasin Arusi Amir al-Mu'minin* (The Last Bride of the Commander of the Faithful), by F. Muhammadiev, 1983. Abdurazzoqov was instrumental in the development of the Tajik theater, especially with regard to training young actors, forming ensembles and traveling abroad on promotional tours.

▪ **Kamol Aini**

Tajik textual and literary critic Kamol Sadriddinovich Aini⁸⁸ was born into a family of workers in Samarkand on May 15, 1928. Son of the famed Tajik author, Sadriddin Aini, Kamol Aini received his early education at home, as well as in the Tajik and Russian schools of the region. He is the permanent President of the International Aini foundation. He is also one of the founders

⁸⁸ Iraj Bashiri, *Prominent Tajik Figures of the Twentieth Century*, Dushanbe, 2002, p. 19

of "Paivand," and has served as its president. He is an Academician of the Academy of Advanced Schools of Sociology of Moscow and a recipient of the Afshar Foundation Prize (Iran).

Aini's contributions, which date to 1948, fall into three main categories: administrative, collaborative, and litterateur. As an administrator and scholar, Aini has been tireless in organizing original textual materials dealing with the study of the orient, as well as in persuading colleagues to contribute to the enhancement of the treasury of Oriental manuscripts. As a collaborator, he has delivered lectures, chaired conferences, and worked on such major projects as the preparation and presentation of the entire text of Firdowsi's *Shahname* (Book of Kings), a project containing nine volumes of poetic materials. He also undertook the editorial responsibility for the five-volume text of Jami's Collected Works.

As a litterateur, Aini has centered his work on the 15th and 16th centuries. His main concentration is on the works of Badriddin Hiloli and the contemporaries of Hiloli. However, he also has contributed to the publication of several other works including *Humo va Humoi* (Humo and Humoi), 1969, *Gul va Navruz* (Flowers and Nowruz), 1972, *Vis va Romin* (Vis and Ramin), 1970, and *Badoyi' al-Vaqoye'* (Novel Events), 1970. At the present, he is one of the collaborators on a five-volume monumental work entitled *Research on*

Ancient Culture and Understanding of the Avesta, as well as the founder of the Varorud Intercultural Organization.

▪ **Jonibek Akobirov**

Tajik author Jonibek Akobirov⁸⁹ was born into a family of workers in the village of Ravshan in the Komsomolabad province in 1952.

The themes of Akobirov's stories are centered on rural life and life in the highlands. He is particularly interested in the impact of urban life on the young Tajiks who leave their villages for the tranquility of the city only to be faced with urban perplexities.

Akobirov's first collection of stories, *Farzand* (Offspring), was published in 1976. His other works include *Dunyo ba Umid* (The World [Rests on] Hope, 1978), *Khirmani Sitora* (The Harvest of Stars), 1985, *Kuhistoni* (From the Highlands), 1987, and *Dostonhoi Pazmoni* (Stories of Down Times), 1992. Akobirov joined the Union of Writers of Tajikistan in 1982 and the Union of Writers of the Soviet Union in 1984.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 24

- **Abbos Aliev**

Tajik statesman and scholar Abbas Aliev⁹⁰ was born in Bukhara in 1899. He received his early education in both the traditional Islamic madrassas and in the new method schools of Bukhara. He received his doctorate degree in history and became a professor in 1940. He then became involved in revolutionary activities primarily in Bukhara, Kagan, and Charju. Between 1918 and 1920, he was the head of the clandestine Party Committee of Charju. Thereafter, he became a Party functionary and served as the Chief Editor of the Turkish monthly, Bukhara, and other Bukhara-related publications. Between 1924 and 1927, he became the first Minister of Education of the Autonomous Republic of Tajikistan. In this capacity, he endeavored to eliminate all vestiges of illiteracy from Tajikistan.

Aliev's career in science and pedagogy began in 1933, when he taught at the State University of Central Asia. Then, between 1940 and 1945, he was the Head of the Department of History of the Ancient Orient and the Peoples of the Soviet Union at the Dushanbe State Pedagogical Institute. He was also one of the first translators of classical Marxist-Leninist literature.

⁹⁰ Iraj Bashiri, *Prominent Tajik Figures of the Twentieth Century*, Dushanbe, p. 26

His major work, *Velikii Oktiabr' i revoliutsionizirovanie narodov Bukhari* (The Great October and the Revolutionary Path Chosen by the Peoples of Bukhara) was published in Tashkent in 1958.

Aliev died in Alma-Ata (now Almaty) on January 16, 1958.

▪ **Salimsho Alimshoev**

Tajik poet Salimsho Alimshoev⁹¹, also referred to as Halimsho Salimsho and Salimsho Halimsho, was born into a family of farmers in the village of Rivak of Shughnan on February 16, 1936. Alimshoev graduated from Tajikistan State University in 1960. Between 1960 and 1980, he was on the literary staff and Head of the Literature Division of Tojikistoni Soveti.

His poetry appeared first in the mid 1950s. His first collection of poetry, entitled *Rohi Qullaho* (Path to the Peaks), was published in 1964. His other contributions include *Kishtii Inqilob* (Ship of Revolution), 1971, *Imzoi Lenin* (Lenin's Signature), 1977, *Oinai Vijdon* (The Mirror of Conscience), 1983, and *Haft Khoni Badakhshon* (The Seven Khans of Badakhshan, 1989. From 1981 to 1991, he was an editor, and later, Acting Director of Adabiyot va San'at. In 2000, he became the Editor of Farhang.

⁹¹ Iraj Bashiri, *Prominent Tajik Figures of the Twentieth Century*, Dushanbe, p. 28

Alimshoev's poetry and stories deal with the October Revolution, V. I. Lenin, and implementation of Lenin's wishes, as well as the transformation of the rural culture in Tajikistan. His play, entitled *Kabutaroni Safid* (White Doves), was staged in Mahmud Vohidov Theatre.

▪ **Ozod Aminova**

Tajik poet Ozod Muhiddinovna Aminova⁹², also referred to as Ozod, was born in Khujand to the family of Muhiddin Aminzoda in 1933. She joined the CPSU in 1970.

Aminova graduated from the Leninabad Pedagogical Institute in 1958. From then until 1970, she taught at the regional schools of Khujand. In 1971, she became the Director of Haqiqati Leninabad.

Her early works were published in the mid 1950s. Her contributions include *Satrhoi Nakhustin* (The First Lines), 1965, *Ba Yodi Tu* (Thinking of You), 1971, *Chashm-e-Bidor* (Wakeful Eye), 1975, and *Didori Sahro* (A Visit to the Fields), 1975. This latter was written in honor of the distinguished engineer of the Republic, Dilbarniso Nurmatova. Her other contributions include *Modarnoma* (In Praise of Mother), 1981, *Piroyai Sabz*

⁹² Iraj Bashiri, *Prominent Tajik Figures of the Twentieth Century*, Dushanbe, p. 29

(Green Ornament), 1983, *Man Ham Maktabkhon Shudam* (I, Too, Became Learned), 1981, and *Guldasta* (Bouquet, 1984).

In her poetry, Aminova discusses patriotism, love, loyalty, and the good life of free Soviet women. Many of her poems have been translated into Russian and into the languages of the other republics of the former Soviet Union.

Aminova joined the Union of Writers of Tajikistan in 1965 and won the Komsomoli Tojikiston Prize in 1982. She received the Honorary Order of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviets of Tajikistan and Azerbaijan.

▪ **Muhiuddin Aminzoda**

Tajik poet and tambourine player Muhiddin Aminzoda⁹³ was born in 1904, in the city of Khujand to a traditional family. His literary career, however, began in 1924 when his poems appeared in *Ovozi Tajik* and in the satirical journal *Mullo Mushfiqi*.

The themes of his poetry include emancipation of women, opposition to religious zealotry, and traditionalism. His poems include *Bisavodi Baloi Jon Boshad* (Illiteracy Is the Bane of Life), *Ta'limi Umumii Majburi* (Compulsory Public Education), and *Hasrati Yak Domullo* (A Religious

⁹³ Ibid., p. 29

Figure's Regret). Aminzoda's first collection of poetry was published in 1937.

Satire is another genre to which Aminzoda contributed and, of which, he is, indeed, a founder in Tajik literature. *Hasrati Yak Domullo* (1928) is an example of his contribution to this genre. His satirical pieces were published in Khorpushtak and Mullo Mushfeqi.

Lyrical poetry is Aminzoda's forte. His first volume *Chaman* (Meadow) was published in 1937. Other volumes of his poetry include *Bahori Vatan* (Spring of the Fatherland), 1939, *Bahori Dil* (Spring of the Heart), 1964, and *Sadoi Zafar* (Sound of Victory), 1944. He also drew on his poetic talent for translating the works of Pushkin, Gorkii, Lermontov, and others.

Aminzoda died in Khujand on September 1, 1966.

▪ **Zebo Aminzoda**

Tajik dancer and ballerina Zebo Muhiddinovna Aminzoda⁹⁴ was born into a family of professional artists in Stalinabad on October 3, 1948. She learned the intricacies of the profession from her grandmother, Zakirova Karomatkhon and her mother, Usmonova Oidinoi. From 1965 to 1978, she

⁹⁴ Iraj Bashiri, *Prominent Tajik Figures of the Twentieth Century*, Dushanbe, p. 30

performed at the Pushkin Music and Comedy Theater of Leninabad. From 1978 to 1993, she was the Head of the Zebo Ensemble at the Committee for Tajik Radio and Television. In 1993 and 1994, she was the Vice Chairperson of the Cabinet of Ministers of Tajikistan. In 1994, she became the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Tajikistan at the Mir International Radio and Television Company in Moscow.

Aminzoda is delicate in nature and noble in character. Her unique abilities in dance and music enable her to create unforgettable characters in such dances as, *Jonon* (Jonan), *Tuyona* (Party), *Zang* (Bell), *Sanam* (Sanam), *Dar Chaman* (On the Meadow), *Munojot* (Midnight Prayer), *Vokhuri* (Meeting), and others.

Over the years, she has blended Tajik folk dances with classical Western ballet and come up with forms that are at once new and refreshing. More importantly, she has created her dances around such major themes as life, labor, love, and the good fortune of her people. Neither is her talent restricted to the performance of Tajik dances. She is also accomplished in the performance of the dances of the peoples of the other republics of the former Soviet Union, and to a degree, of the world. In addition, she was the main player in a number of spectacles, including *Ashroffparast* (The Sycophant) of

Zh. Moliere, *Ramayana* (Ramayana) of N. Guseva, Lulion (The Gypsies) of A. S. Pushkin, and others.

▪ **Mukaddima Ashrafi**

Tajik art historian Mukaddima Mukhtorovna Ashrafi⁹⁵ was born on July 5, 1936, in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Her father, Mukhtor Ashrafi, was a well-known composer and conductor in Uzbekistan and she is the wife of Tajik intellectual Kamol Aini.

Ashrafi's publications include *Miniatures of the 16th Century in MSS of Works by Jami*, 1966, *The Bukhara Miniatures School of the 40s-70s of the 16th Century*, 1974, *Persian-Tajik Poetry in Miniatures of the 14th to 17th Century*, 1974, *The Development of Iranian Miniatures in the 16th Century*, 1978, *Bihzod and the Development of the Bukhara Miniature School of the 16th Century*, 1987, and "The Art of the Book," *History of central Asian Civilization* (UNESCO), Paris, 2000.

Ashrafi has traveled extensively in Iran, France, Ireland, India, Germany, Pakistan, Hong Kong, Jordan, and the United States.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 35

▪ **Gulchehra Baqoeva**

Tajik actor Gulchehra Baqoeva⁹⁶ was born in Khujand on December 15, 1908. Baqoeva's career began in 1927 when she joined the traveling theater of Bukhara; it continued in the Lahuti State Academy of Dramatic Arts.

During her career she portrayed the lives of many bold and courageous, as well as kind and considerate women. These roles include *Marina Menishchek* in *Boris Godunov* (Boris Gudenov), by A. Pushkin, 1937; *Ledi Milford*, in *Makr va Mahabbat* (Cunning and Love), by F. Schiller, 1937; *Jannatkhon* in *Tuhmat* (Slander), by S. Saidmurodov and Ismoilov, 1938; *Qumri* in *Kaltakdoron* Surkh (The Red Club Wielders), by S. Ulughzoda, 1941; *Tahmina* in *Rustam va Suhrob* (Rustam and Suhrab), by Pirmuhammadzoda and V. Volkenshtin, 1941; *Emiliya* and *Doya* in *Otello* (Othello); *Romeo va Julietta* (Romeo and Juliet), by W. Shakespeare, 1941, 1947); *Ogudolova* in *Dukhtari Bibisot* (Girl Without a Dowry), by A. Ostrovskii, 1948; *Belina* in *Bimori Qalbaki* (Fake Patient), by Zh. Moller, 1944; *Khovakhola* and *Muhtola* in *Dili Modar* (Mother's *Hirat*) and *Shabi Bistu Hashtum* (The Eve of the 28th), by J. Ikromi, 1943, 1946; *Ganna Likhta* in *Suiqasdi Mahkumon* (The Prisoners Plot), by N. Virta, 1949; *Kampiri Mutu'assin Iqlim Banu* in *Sa'odat* (Happiness), by S. Saidmurodov

⁹⁶ Iraj Bashiri, *Prominent Tajik Figures of the Twentieth Century*, Dushanbe, p. 46

and M. Rabiev, 1948; *Jahonkhola* in Orshin-mololon (Arshin Malalan), by U. Hojibekov, 1948; *Modari Jamila* in Boi va Khizmatgor (The Rich Man and the Servant), by H. Hamza, 1957; *Modar* in Tyi (Celebration), by S. Ghani, 1958; and others. In addition, she also participated in dubbing many films and played women's roles for both radio and television.

Baqoeva died in Dushanbe on March 17, 1975.

▪ **Turdikhon Berdieva**

Tajik Orientalist and linguist Turdikhon Ishonovna Berdieva⁹⁷ was born into a family of workers in Konibodom on June 7, 1942. She joined the CPSU in 1971. Berdieva graduated from the Tajikistan State University in 1963. In 1967, she began teaching at the Department of Arabic of the Faculty of Oriental Languages of Tajikistan State University.

Berdieva's research deals with Arabic vocabulary and structural elements that have found their way into the Tajik language. She is also interested in socio-linguistics and issues of preventing foreign words from entering the Tajik language. Berdieva's contributions include *Leksika I grammaticheskie elementi arabskogo iazika v tadzhikskom* (Arabic Words

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 50

and Grammatical Compositions in Tajiki), Dushanbe, 1968. Berdieva was recognized as a Distinguished Contributor to Tajik education in 1984.

▪ **Yuri Boboev**

Tajik scholar and literary critic Yuri Boboev⁹⁸ was born in Samarkand in 1917. Boboev graduated from the University of Samarkand with a degree in Tajikand Persian languages and literatures in 1945.

He has written a considerable number of articles on literary criticism, especially dealing with the works of Sadriiddin Aini, Tursunzoda, Lahuti, and Ikromi. His contributions include *Aini: Ustodi Barrasi dar Tafakkur* (Aini: A Master Investigator of Thought), 1956, *Mirzo Tursunzoda* (Mirzo Tursunzoda), 1961, *Sipahsolori Nazm* (The Commander of Verse), 1971, *Adabiyoti Shavravii Tojik* (Soviet Tajik Literature), with Nosirjon Ma'sumi, 1985-1987, *Hizb, Zamon va Adabiyot* (Party, Time, and Literature), 1964, *Hayot, Qahramon va Adabiyot* (Life, the Hero, and Literature), 1978, *Simo va Mahorat* (Appearance and Skill, 1979), and *Muqaddamai Shinokhti Adabiyot* (Introduction to Literary Criticism), 1974.

⁹⁸ Iraj Bashiri, *Prominent Tajik Figures of the Twentieth Century*, Dushanbe, p. 51

- **Ahamad Boboqulov**

Tajik artist Ahmad Boboqulov⁹⁹, the son of the famed master of Shashmaqom, Boboqul Faizulloev, was born in Dushanbe on January 17, 1931.

Boboqulov graduated from the Moscow Conservatory for Voice in 1954 and completed postgraduate work in 1962. His voice was that of a dramatic tenor. Between 1954 and 1966, Boboqulov was the soloist for the Aini Theater for Opera and Ballet. Between 1955 and 1966, he was the soloist for the State Philharmonic Society of Tajikistan. Beginning in 1967, he served as an Assistant Professor of Voice at the Dushanbe Pedagogical Institute, and became a professor in 1977. He is a master in the performance of Arias, romances, and songs in general; he imbues his performances with feelings of warmth, genuineness, and sincerity. Boboqulov mastered operas in Russian, European languages, and Tajiki.

Boboqulov's major roles include *Kararodosi* in *Toska* (Toska), by G. Puccini, 1970; *Kanio* in *Maskharabozho* (Clowns), by R. Leoncavallo, 1967; *Zamon* in *Dukhtari az Dushanbe* (A Girl from Dushanbe), 1968, and *Komdi va Madan* (Komdi and Madan), by Z. Shahidi, 1966; *Rudaki* in *Rudaki*

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 57

(Rudaki), by Sh. Saifiddinov, 1976; *Vodimon* in *Iolonta* (Iolanta), by P. Tchaikovsky, 1976; and others.

Boboqulov's voice is rich and clear. He teaches the tradition of *Shashmaqom* as he has received it from his father. His main written contribution is *Asarhoi Vokolii Zhonrhoi Gunogun Baroi Ovozi Tenor* (Voice Contributions for Various Genres of Tenor), 1976.

Ahmad Boboqulov passed away in 1990.

▪ **Asliddin Burhonov**

Tajik actor and movie director Asliddin Badriddinovich Burhonov¹⁰⁰ was born on January 8, 1915, in Bukhara. From his early childhood, Burhonov performed as a part of the *havaskoron* amateur group of Bukhara and Ghizhduvon.

In 1933, he joined the Lahuti State Academy of Dramatic Arts, playing in roles of resolute men who fought for freedom, as well as loyal and thoughtful men of foresight. A versatile and talented actor, he played both dramatic and comic roles skillfully and naturally. The roles he has performed include *Rizo* in *Muboriza* (Struggle), by A. Usmonov, 1933; *Ferdinand* in *Makr va Muhabbat* (Cunning and Love), by Schiller, 1937; *Khushvaqt* in

¹⁰⁰ Iraj Bashiri, *Prominent Tajik Figures of the Twentieth Century*, Dushanbe, p. 62

Tuhmat (Slander), by S. Saidmurodov and I. Isma'ilov, 1938; *Salim* and *Safar* in Kaltadoroni Surkh (The Red Club Wielders), 1941, and in Dar Otash (In the Fire, 1944), both by S. Ulughzoda; *Hajir* and *Suhrob* in Rustam va Suhrob (Rustam and Suhrab), by Pirmuhammadzoda and V. Volkenstein, 1941-1945; *Hoji Vaqqos* in Aruse Panj 'Suma' (The Five-Sum Bride), by M. Urduvodi, 1943; *Koba* in Khonlar (The Khans), by S. Burqun, 1951; *Qori Ishkamba* in Margi Sudkhur (The Death of the Money Lender), by S. Aini, 1953; and *Rudaki* in Rudaki (Rudaki), by S. Ulughzoda, 1958.

Burhonov was the first actor to play V. I. Lenin on the Tajik stage. The play entitled *Odami Miltiqdor* (Man with a Rifle, 1948), was written by N. Pogodin. Later on, he again played that role in N. Pogodin's *Soli 1919 - Faromushnashavanda* (The Unforgettable Year of 1919), 1960.

Burhonov also had expertise in classical Western dramatic arts. Among his contributions in this regard are *Muallimi 'Ishq* (Teacher of Love), by M. Mirshakar; *Arusi Panj 'Suma'* (The Five-'Sum' Bride), by M. Urduvodi; and *Gavhari Shabcharogh* (The Brilliant Jewel) and *Rudaki* (Rudaki), by S. Ulughzoda. In the 1970's, Burhonov played the main roles in *Antigona* (Antigona), by Sofokl, 1971; *Dast i Dusti* (Hand of Friendship), by M. Nazarov, 1974; and *Faryodi 'Ishq* (The Cry of Love), by Ghani Abdullo, 1975.

In 1941, Burhanov began contributing to the Tajik Cinema. Among his contributions is: *Az Gang to Kreml* (From the Ganges to the Kremlin, 1975).

He also dubbed Lenin's speeches into Tajikin *Odami Miltighdor* (Man with a Rifle), *Lenin dar Soli 1918* (Lenin in 1918), and a number of other films. Beginning in 1972, Burhonov began teaching his art at the State Institute for Dramatic Arts.

Tajikistan. Burhonov died in Dushanbe in December 1997.

- **Lutfullo Buzurgzoda**

Tajik linguist and literary critic Lutfullo Buzurgzoda¹⁰¹ was born in Isfara in 1909. He received his early education in Isfara and Kazan, and his higher education in Samarkand and Leninabad.

Buzurgzoda was accomplished in linguistics, stylistics, and folklore; in each field, he has left contributions. These include *Shivai Tojikoni Chilgazi* (The Speech of the Tajiks of Chilgaz), 1936, *Zada dar Zaboni Adabii Tojik* (Stress in the Tajik Language), 1937, *Shivai Leninobodi* (The Speech of the People of Leninabad), 1937, *Shivai Vorukh* (The Speech of the People of Vorukh), *Dar Borai Shivai Tojikoni Sukh* (Concerning the Speech

¹⁰¹ Iraj Bashiri, *Prominent Tajik Figures of the Twentieth Century*, Dushanbe, p. 64

of the Tajiks of Sukh), *Ba'zi Khususiyathoi Zaboni Aholii Samarkand* (Some Peculiarities of the Speech of Samarkandis), 1939, *Ocherki Mukhtasari Dialektologiai Shivahoi Tojikii Vodii Zarafshon* (A Brief Study of the Dialects of the Speech of the People of the Zaravshan Region), 1939, *Fonetikai Zaboni Adabii Tojik* (The Phonetics of Literary Tajiki), 1940, *In'ikosi Shurishi Vose' dar Folklor* (The Reflection of the Vose' Uprising in Folklore), 1941, *Morfologiyai Zaboni Tojiki* (Tajik Morphology), 1942, *Sintaksisi Zaboni Tojiki* (Tajik Syntax), 1942, and others.

Buzurgzoda died on 12 November, 1943.

▪ **Bobojan Ghafurov**

Tajik politician and Orientalist Bobojon Ghafurovich Ghafurov¹⁰² was born in the village of Isfisar in Khujand on December 31, 1909. He joined the CPSU in 1932.

Ghafurov graduated from the High Juridical School in Samarkand in 1930 and following that he worked at both the People's Commissariat of Justice and the Qizil Tajikistan journal. In 1935 he graduated from the All Soviet Communist Institute of Journalism and thereafter became the Deputy Editor and Editor of the Uzbek Language journal Qizil Tajikistan. From 1938

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 86

to 1941 he was a postgraduate student at the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the Soviet Union in Moscow. In 1941, he was appointed Propaganda and Agitation Secretary for the Communist Party. From 1944 to 1946, he was the Second Secretary and, from 1946 to 1956, he was the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Tajikistan. From 1956 to the end of his life, Ghafurov served as the Director of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the Soviet Union, and the Editor of the Asia and Africa journal. He completed his doctoral dissertation, *entitled Istoria Sekti ismailitov* (History of the Isma'ili Sect) in 1941. Ghafurov's research deals with an understanding of the history of the freedom movements of the Eastern Peoples, the political aims of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and the ancient and medieval history of the Peoples of the East. Recognizing the importance of *Shashmaqom* classical music in Tajik culture, Ghafurov supported the transcription of the *maqoms* for posterity. He also supervised the publication of the five-volume History of the Tajiks in Russian, which was published between 1963 and 1965.

Ghafurov's contributions include *Istoria Sekti ismailitov* (History of the Isma'ili Sect, Moscow), 1941, *Ta'rikhi Mukhtasari Khalqi Tojik* (A Brief History of the Tajiks, Stalinabad), 1947. This work was translated into

Russian and went through three reprints. An expanded version appeared in 3 volumes between 1963 and 1965 under the title *Tojikon: Ta'rikhi Qadimtarin Qadim va Sadahoi Miona* (The Tajiks: Their Ancient and Medieval History, Moscow), 1972.

Ghafurov, like Sadriddin Aini, is recognized as a Tajik hero. His list of accomplishments, awards, and accolades includes six Orders of Lenin, medals of the October Revolution, Red Banner of Labor of Mongolia, Jawaharlal Nehru Prize. Honorary Member of Oriental Studies in Poland, and the Head of the International Firdowsi Prize Committee. The city of Sovetobod in the Lenin District and one of the streets of Dushanbe are named after him. Also, a scholarship was created in his name, and a library was dedicated to him in the Academy of Sciences of the USSR.

Ghafurov died in Dushanbe on August 12, 1977.

- **Roziya Ghafurova**

Tajik poetess Roziya Ghafurova¹⁰³, also referred to as Ozod, was born on January 18, 1893, to a merchant family in Khujand. She is the mother of the famed Tajik scholar Bobojon Ghafurov. Ghafurova received her early education in the traditional schools and became a teacher.

¹⁰³ Iraj Bashiri, *Prominent Tajik Figures of the Twentieth Century*, Dushanbe, p. 87

Her poetic career began during World War II, when she composed patriotic verses urging the warriors of the motherland on. Among her works, mention can be made of *Qahramoni Odil* (Just Champion, 1943), *Mahabbat ba Vatan* (Love for the Country), 1944, *Gulistoni 'Ishq* (The Rose Garden of Love), 1946, *Az Vodihoi Taloi* (From the Golden Valleys), 1948, *Iqbol* (Fortune), 1951, and *Zindabod Sulh* (Long Live Peace), 1954. Ghafurova joined the Union of Writers of Tajikistan in 1944. She died in Khujand in 1957.

▪ **Obloqul Hamroev**

Tajik novelist Obloqul Hamroev¹⁰⁴, also known by the penname of Sorbon, was born into the family of a collective farmer in the village of Amondara in Panjakent province of Zarafshan in January 27, 1940.

Hamroev's first collection of stories was published in 1969. It was titled *Gap dar Dil* (Not Everything Is Said). His other stories are centered on events of the October Revolution and of the Second World War. Hamroev's other works include *Zangi Avval* (The First Session), 1970, *Sangi Sipar* (The Shield Rock), 1973, *Kowli* (The Gypsy), 1975, *Shinil* (Overcoat), 1980, *Sabo*

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 98

(Saba), 1980, *Hunarpisha* (Actor), 1984, *Zarafshon* (The Zarafshan Region), two volumes, 1988, and *Dashti Moron* (The Desert of the Snakes, 1991).

Hamroev's stories deal with the lives of women; the delight of rural life; establishment of Soviet power, especially in the Zarafshan Valley; and the difficulties that the Tajiks experienced in World War II. His stories made Hamroev extremely popular in the 1970s.

▪ **Gulnazar Keldiev**

Tajik poet Gulnazar Keldiev¹⁰⁵, also referred to as Gulnazar, was born into a farming family in the village of Dardar in the district of Falghar in Zarafshan province on September 20, 1945. He received his early education in the New-Method schools of the region.

Kaliev's first poem appeared in 1963. His poetry spans both traditional and new poetic genres. His contributions include *Rasmi Sarbozi* (Military Custom), 1969), *Dastarkhon* (Display, 1972), *Nar-dabon* (Ladder), 1975, *Aghba* (The Aghba Pass), 1979, *Pahno* (Width, 1981), *Sitorai Ulughbeg* (The Star of Ulughbeg), 1981, *Langar* (Anchor, 1984), *Soyai Tut* (The Shadow of the Mulberry Tree), 1985, *Pai Daryo* (At the Sea), 1986, *Chashmi*

¹⁰⁵ Iraj Bashiri, *Prominent Tajik Figures of the Twentieth Century*, Dushanbe, p. 141

Nigin (Nigin's Eye), 1988, *Takhti Rustam* (The Throne of Rustam), 1990, and *Tabkhola* (Fever Blister, 1992).

Kaldiev's language is simple and he composes in *du-baitis* (couplets). His poetry has contributed a great deal to the enhancement of the works of the poets before him. His inclusion of a philosophic aspect to his couplets sets them apart from others.

Kaldiev deals with the themes of patriotism, especially the goals of Lenin, as well as with the praise of mother, love, and nature. His *Askari Nobina* (Blind Soldier) and *Takhti Rustam* (The Throne of Rustam) exemplify these aspects of his poetry. In *Savdoi Zindagi* (Zest for Life, 1972), for instance, he depicts Soviet life during World War II in a most realistic form. *Pai Daryo* ("At the Sea," 1986), similarly deals with the simple life of the Soviets during the war.

▪ **Ghaffor Mirzoev**

Tajik poet Ghaffor Mirzoev¹⁰⁶ was born on January 5, 1929, to a family of farmers in Khavaling in the Kulab province. Orphaned very early in life, he grew up in an orphanage.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 178

Mirzoev's forte, is poetry. He started writing poetry as early as his high school days; he made a considerable impact not only on Tajik audiences but on many other Soviet lovers of poetry as well. In addition, Mirzoev wrote a number of noteworthy articles, two of which are *Yak Chand Fikr va Mulohi'za Raji' ba Tanqidi Adabii Nazm* (Some Thought and Considerations Regarding Literary Criticism of Poetry), 1954 and *Vazifai Asosii Mo Omukhtan va Mahorati Khudro Baland Bardoshtan Ast* (Our Duty Lies in Learning and in Keeping Our Skills Sharp), 1975.

Finally, in addition to a number of works that Mirzoev contributed to children's literature, he wrote *Az Samimi Qalb* (From the Bottom of the Heart), 1952, *Hazor Rahmat* (Thanks a Million), 1956, *Dil Bar Kafi Dast* (*Heart in the Palm of the Hand*), 1962, *Rui Surkh* (Red Face), 1971, *Az Gahvora be Maidon* (From the Cradle to the Field), 1981, *366 Pahlu* (366-sided), Vols. I-IV, 1963-72 and *Farzandi Hukumat* (Offspring of the Government), 1983.

▪ **Fazluddin Muhammadiev**

Tajik short-story writer and novelist Fazluddin Aminovich Muhammadiev¹⁰⁷ was born into the family of a bookbinder on June 15, 1928, in Samarkand.

¹⁰⁷ Iraj Bashiri, *Prominent Tajik Figures of the Twentieth Century*, Dushanbe, p. 183

Muhammadiev began his career as a simple reporter in the 1950s, but quickly rose to the level of a credible author. His *Porchai Ostin* (The Sleeve Material), 1955, as well as other works dealing with the social and civilizational issues, were received enthusiastically. Two of his works, *Raisi Nav* (The New Boss), 1955 and *Muhojiron* (The Immigrants), 1956, dealing with the needs of the rank and file of the collectives, clearly place him in the forefront of social reformers of the decade.

In the 1970s, Muhammadiev traveled extensively to the isolated hamlets of the republic talking to industrial workers in Norak, Roghun, and Berghozi. *Shirai Zamin* (The Essence of the Earth), 1981, *Oini Muqaddas* (The Sacred Custom), 1982, and *Savolu Javobhoi Enajon Boimatova* (The Questions and Answers of Ainajan Baimatova), 1986 reflects his assessment of the industrialization process in the former republics of the Soviet Union.

The clash between tradition and modernization also occupied some of his time. Investigation of the complex inner aspects of life was Muhammadiev's goal from the beginning. *Maktubi Dust* (The Friend's Letter), 1958, *Savdoi Umr* (The Zest for Life), 1958, and *Roh* (The Road), 1962 are indicative of that, as is *Odamoni Kuhna* (Traditional Folks), 1963, which deals with the generation gap, bribery, and sponging on society. The

translation of Traditional Folks into Russian included Muhammadiev among the best Soviet writers of the time.

Muhammadiev considered religion to be a historical stage in man's development. He believes that religion can dull a person's creative intellect and limit his worldview. Was it not Islam, he argued, at the base of the *bai*-feudal system that treated women like chattel? Neither are his characters ignorant of the tenets of the Islamic faith. In fact, it is after a thorough examination of the said tenets that they become more devoted to their socialist homeland and the Communist ideology.

Muhammadiev's last two novellas, *Shohi Yopon* (King of Japan), 1982 and *Varta* (Precipice), 1983, examine the Tajik worker's status in the community, as well as the ways he has to cope with difficult living conditions. The major characters in both works recognize the significance of being responsible individuals.

Muhammadiev influenced Tajik prose between 1960 and 1980 by establishing a new and fresh direction. He openly criticized aspects of socialism that were not true to the legacy of the early leaders. In the same breath, he also denounced Islamic dicta that were not congruent with a well-balanced life.

Muhammadiev died on June 10, 1986, in Samarkand.

▪ **Bobojon Niyozmuhammadov**

Tajik linguist Bobojon Niyozovich Niyozmuhammadov¹⁰⁸ was born into a family of shoemakers in the village of Firuzabad in Konibodom on May 5, 1906. Niyozmuhammadov's contributions include *Shivai Tojikoni Shahrtuz* (The Dialect of the Tajiks of Shahrtuz), 1960, *Shivai Tojikoni Konibodom* (The Dialect of the Tajiks of Konibodom), 1961, and *Sintaksisi Jumlahoi Soda dar Zaboni Adabii Tojik* (The Syntax of the Simple Sentence in Tajiki), 1960. In addition, Niyozmuhammadov has studied the syntactic variations in the works of major Tajik authors like Nosiri Khosrow, Ahmad Donish, Sadriddin Aini, A. Dehoti, M. Tursunzoda, and others.

Niyozmuhammadov joined the Union of Writers of the Soviet Union in 1980 and became a People's Distinguished Scientist of Tajikistan in 1964. He received three Badges of Honor. Niyozmuhammadov died in Dushanbe on October 25, 1979.

▪ **Sotim Ulughzoda**

Tajik novelist, playwright, and literary historian Sotim Ulughzoda¹⁰⁹ was born on September 1, 1911, into the family of a poor collective farmer in the

¹⁰⁸ Iraj Bashiri, *Prominent Tajik Figures of the Twentieth Century*, Dushanbe, p. 215

¹⁰⁹ Iraj Bashiri, *Prominent Tajik Figures of the Twentieth Century*, Dushanbe, p. 332

village of Varzik in Namangan (present-day Uzbekistan). His rural background afforded him a traditional education.

Beginning in 1930, Ulughzoda wrote brief pieces for *Tojikistoni Surkh* and *Baroi Adabiyoti Soveti*. In these articles he examined the lives of Rudaki (d. 940), Firdowsi (935-1020 or 26), Ibn Sina (980-1037), Donish (1827-1897), Aini (1878-1954), and Dihoti (1911-1962). By the end of the decade, he became increasingly involved in the theater and preparation of pieces for the stage. His *Shodi* (Exhaltation), 1939, which depicts the conflict between the new order and the old, and *Kaltadoroni Surkh* (Red Club Wielders), 1940, about the Red Army and the Basmachis, were enthusiastically received. His third play, *Dar Otash* (In the Fire), 1944, inaugurated a new phase in Tajik dramatic presentation. His career as a playwright, however, like his career as a correspondent, came to an end with *Juyandagon* (The Searchers), 1951. The play dealt with the activities of a group of geologists commissioned to look for precious stones. The play was not received well due to Ulughzoda's depiction of Soviet girls in the media.

Life on the kolkhoz, described in *Navobod* (The New Settlement), 1948-53 and *Subhi Javonii Mo* (The Prime of Our Youth), 1954, reminiscent of Sadriddin Aini's *Reminiscences*, established Ulughzoda in his third career, that of a novelist. Here he contributed immensely to an understanding of the

growth of Communism in Tajikistan, including an analytical view of the workings of the kolkhoz system.

In a way, Ulughzoda's novels, concentrating on Tashkent and the Ferghana valley, complement the contributions of Aini, who dwells on Bukhara, Samarkand, and the Hissar region. Examining the old and new method schools, Ulughzoda illustrates how the Muslim child, fleeing the stark and difficult surroundings dictated by his exploitative family and the dogmatic *ishans* (religious guides), is attracted, and gradually absorbed by the Soviet system.

Although, Ulughzoda was praised for his earlier portrayal of Rudaki, Ibni Sina, and Donish, his later contributions, like *Vose'* (Vose'), were not published until the 1980s. In fact, during the latter part of his life, he was blacklisted for having sent his son to England to be educated.

Completed in 1967, *Vose'* portrays the life of a revolutionary peasant who is forced by circumstances to rise against Amir Abdul Ahad (ruled 1885-1910). To gather materials for the novel, Ulughzoda visited Khavaling, studied the family relations of Vose', and interviewed some of the older people who still remembered the event. The novel makes its nonconformist author the third most prominent writer of twentieth century Tajikistan, the

other two being Sadriddin Aini and Jalol Ikromi. Ulughzoda died in Moscow in 1997.

Chapter-V

Development of language and culture in post-Soviet Tajikistan

The demise of the Soviet Union, unexpected independence of Tajikistan, and subsequent economic crisis have put Tajikistan at the crossroads of socio-cultural transformation. The old structures have been changing and the outlines of the new structures are not yet obvious. The society faces the problems common to many post-Soviet areas. The socialist experience of the Soviet Union was of an unprecedented scale. It was an attempt to modernize a society quickly without concern for price. In the realization of this policy, Tajikistan, a remote region of feudal states, turned into a country of near complete literacy with efficient systems of health, industry, and mechanised agriculture. However, in the basic principles of this system were the elements, which despite the success of this system, led to its failure. These included the gap between the structure of the production and the needs of the population, the deformation of the self-image of the nation and the lack of justice and security for the people. As a result, the society became isolated from its development. In Tajikistan this situation was intensified by its isolation from its history and culture.

By the end of the Soviet era, many educated Tajiks were criticizing what they perceived as the continued privileged positions of Russians in Tajik society. Even after decades of improved education and indoctrination

of younger generations of Tajiks, Russians and other non-indigenous peoples still occupied a disproportionate number of top positions in the Republic's Communist Party. There were fewer Tajiks working in the republics main industrial enterprises.

The languages of instruction in the state system were Tajik, Kyrgyz and Russian. The demand to make Tajik as state language started, and in an article Mukhammadzhan Shukurov of Tajik Socialist Republic Academy of Sciences emphasized the need for it¹¹⁰. The language Law made Farsi a compulsory language for administrative works¹¹¹. The law envisages that the employees of the state institutions must have a "good command of the state language" and the skill of office workers rendering services to the population "should be on the level necessary for carrying out their official duties"¹¹².

When Tajik became the State Language in 1989, schools using Russian as the primary language of instruction began teaching Tajik as a second language from the first through the eleventh grades. After independence, school curricula included more Tajik language and literature study, including classical Persian literature. The spellings of Tajik names and words were also changed in December 1992 by the Government of Tajikistan. Tajik system

¹¹⁰ Mukhammadzhan Shukurov, "The National Language Needs Special Attention", *Tajikistan-e-Soviet*, 25 November 1988, (SWB, SU/0349,B/5, 4 January 1989)

¹¹¹ ITAR-TASS, 22 July 1992, (SWB, SU/1441,B/7, 24 July 1992)

¹¹² See appendix

rather than Russian system of transliteration was adopted, for example the Russian *dzh* was replaced by Tajik sound *j*, *kh* by *h* and *a* in some contexts with *o*¹¹³.

After gaining independence from the Soviets, Tajiks have been trying to change alphabet of Tajik language once again to Persian script with the help of Iran. Iran has donated 400,000 Persian language text books to Tajikistan with a view to revive the Farsi language and writing in Central Asia¹¹⁴. Iran has also established six libraries in Tajikistan¹¹⁵. In September 1992

World Tajik Forum held a conference in Dushanbe to discuss the contributions of Iranian nations to the development of world civilisations. In addition to Tajik scholars the conference was attended by specialists from Iran, India, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and other countries. The forum also laid down a solid foundation for cultural co-operation and for the spiritual reunification of the Tajiks¹¹⁶.

¹¹³ Summary of WorldBroadcasts, SU/1555,B/2, 4 December 1992

¹¹⁴ 'Adabyat va Sanat', Dushanbe July 1996, IRNA, Tehran, 18 July 1996, (SWB, SU/2672,G/2, 24 July 1996)

¹¹⁵ Voice of Islamic Republic of Iran, Teheran, 26 August 1996, (SWB, SU/2702, G/2, 28 August 1996)

¹¹⁶ ITAR-TASS, 17 September 1992, (SWB, SU/1490, B/6, 19 September 1992)

SOME FAMOUS POETS AND WRITERS IN POST-SOVIET
TAJIKISTAN:

▪ **Safarmuhammad Aiyubov**

Tajik poet Safarmuhammad Aiyubov¹¹⁷, also referred to as Aiyoubi, was born in Kulab on December 20, 1945. Aiyubov graduated from the Kulab Pedagogical Institute in 1976, the same year he joined the staff of Kulab's Rohi Lenini as a reporter.

Aiyubov's early poems were published in local newspapers in the 1970s. His contributions include the collection *Guli Gandum* (Wheat Flower), 1981, *Rohi Safar* (The Path for the Journey), 1983 and *Shokhai Barq* (The Flash of Lightening), 1986. A volume of his selected poems appeared in Dushanbe in 2000. In 2002, he published a series of plays entitled *Javlongohi Oftob* (The Arena of the Sun). Aiyubov's poetry deals with such lighter aspects of life as patriotism and love. Desire for a better society for workers permeates his compositions. Poems like *Shi'ri Safidi Danghara* (The Blank Verse of Danghara), *Dehqon* (Farmer), and *Farzandi Korgar* (Worker's Child) are examples of his thematic approach to the composition of his verses. V. I. Lenin plays a major role in the verses of Aiyubov. *Lenin* (Lenin), *Ziorati Dohi* (Visiting the Sage), *Mujassamai Dohi* (The Statue of

¹¹⁷ Iraj Bashiri, *Prominent Tajik Figures of the Twentieth Century*, Dushanbe, p. 22

the Sage), and *Tabibi Lenin* (Lenin's Physician) are examples of the leader's impact on Aiyubov's creations. In his collections entitled *Gandumi Siroji* (Light Wheat), 1983 and *Khoki Tashna* (Thirsty Earth), 1986 Aiyubov depicts the workers who participated in the Revolution. Aiyubi has traveled to Iran and Germany.

▪ **Alamkhon Kucharov**

Tajik linguist and literary critic Alamkhon Kucharov¹¹⁸ was born in the village of Sarichashma in Shurabad, Khatlan, on February 4, 1946. He received his early education in the schools of Khatlan.

He taught courses on literary criticism, emphasizing new approaches to the study of the modern contributions of Tajik-Perso authors. Kucharov's contributions include *Tadqiqi Tekstologii 'Odina'-i S. Aini* (Textual Study of Sadriddin Aini's 'Odina', Dushanbe), 1982; *Matni Ilmii 'Odina'-i S. Aini* (The Scholarly Texts of Sadriddin Aini's 'Odina', Dushanbe), 1992; *Mas'alahoi Matnshinosii Adabiyoti Tojik* (Problems Related to the Study of Tajik Literary Texts, Dushanbe), 1994; and *Naqdi Matn va Mas'alahoi Matnshinosii Nasri S. Aini* (Textual Criticism and its Problems when Applied to the Prose of Sadriddin Aini, Dushanbe), 2001.

¹¹⁸ Iraj Bashiri, *Prominent Tajik Figures of the Twentieth Century*, Dushanbe, p. 155

▪ **Mirzo Mulloahmadov**

Tajik literary scholar Mirzo Mulloahmadov¹¹⁹ was born in the village of Darbar in the Aini district in 1948. He graduated from Tajikistan State University with distinction in 1969. From the same year until the present, he contributes as part of the staff of the Academy of Sciences of Tajikistan.

From 1978 to 1980, Mulloahmadov worked in Iran as a translator. In 1983, he joined the staff of Tajikistan State University as a teacher of language and literature, as well as history and oriental studies. In 1994, he worked in Iran at the University of Isfahan. In the same year, he became a member of the Union of Tajik Writers. He is currently the Head of the Iran-Tajikistan Friendship Association.

Mulloahmadov's work is dedicated to research in the history of Tajikistan and Iran from ancient times to the present. He has prepared and published many of the major works from Tajik/Persian literature including the Quatrains of Omar Khayyam, the Qabusnoma of Kaikavus, and the Diary of Iskandarbek. Mulloahmadov is one of the editors of "Anis." In 2000, he became a member of the prestigious Iranian Encyclopedia of Anthropology. He was also one of the editors of the Literary Persian Encyclopedia published in Tehran in 2001.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 188

▪ **Askarali Rajabov**

Tajik art and culture specialist Askarali Rajabov¹²⁰, also referred to as Rajabzoda, was born in the village of Khufar in Sariosia (in present-day Uzbekistan) on June 16, 1944. He received his early education at Khufar schools. Rajabov graduated from the Samarkand State University with a degree in Oriental Languages in 1969.

Rajabov's career began in 1975. He has served as Junior, then Senior Scientific Worker, then Chief Scientific Worker of the Institute of History and Archaeology and Ethnography. In 1998, he became the Director of the History of Art and Civilization Division of the Institute of History, Archaeology and Ethnography of the Academy of Sciences of Tajikistan. Since 1990, he also has been the Head of the International Borbad Foundation. Rajabov's contributions include *Tamadduni Musiqii Tojikon dar Asrroi 13-14* (The Civilizational Background of Tajik Music of the 13th and 14th Centuries, Dushanbe), 1987; *Kavkabi Bukhori va Risolai Musiqii U* (Kavkabi Bukhori and His Musical Essay, Dushanbe), 1988; *Zainulobiddin Mahmudi Hussayni va Risolai U* (Zainulobiddin Mahmudi Hussaini and His Essay, Dushanbe), 1988; *Afkori Musiqii Tojik dar Asrroi 12-15* (Thought about Tajik Music from the 12th to the 15th Centuries, Dushanbe), 1989;

¹²⁰ Iraj Bashiri, *Prominent Tajik Figures of the Twentieth Century*, p. 268

Borbad: Zamon va Sunnathoi Tamaddun (Borbad: His Time and Civilizational Traditions, Dushanbe), 1989; *Somonion va Ihyoi Tamadduni Forsi-Tojiki* (The Samanids and the Revival of the Civilization of the Fars Tajik Peoples, Dushanbe), 1989; *Naqmai Niokon* (The Music of the Ancients, Dushanbe), 1989; *Az Sur to Sitoi Sharif Jura* (From 'sur' to 'sitoi' of Sharif Jura, Dushanbe), 2000; and *Az Borbad to Sabo* (From Borbad to Saba, Dushanbe), 2001.

▪ **Gulrukhsor Safieva**

Tajik poet and author Gulrukhsor Safieva¹²¹, also referred to as Gulrukhsor Safi, was born in the village of Yakhch in Komsomolabad on December 17, 1947. She joined the CPSU in 1968. Safieva graduated from the Tajikistan State University with a degree in Persian language and literature in 1968, and was employed by Komsomoli Tojikiston. In 1972, she became the Chief Editor of Pioniri Tojikiston. In 1981, Safieva was appointed the Director of the Union of Writers of Tajikistan, and in 1987, the Chief of the Cultural Foundation of Tajikistan.

Safieva's first poem was published locally in Qarotegini Shavravi in 1962. *'Az Shabi Dirav* (From the Harvest Night), 1975; *Motami Safid* (The

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 280

White Wake), 1983; and *Takhti Sangin* (Stone Throne), 1989, are among her early works. Her poetry collection, *Marzi Nomus* (The Limit of Honor), originally published in 1987, was republished in 1990 under the title of *Zanoni Sabz Bahor* (The Women of Sabz Bahar). This collection depicts the plight of the women of the Kuhistan region during the Second World War.

In 1991, protesting the Tajik Parliament's lack of respect for the law, Safieva participated in a hunger strike. Her major works include *Bunafsha* (Violet), 1970; *Khonai Pidar* (Father's House), 1973; *Afsonai Kuhi* (Mountain Legend), 1975; *Dunyoii Dil* (The Universe of the *Hirat*), 1977, *Ikhlos* (Sincerity), 1980; *Otashi Soghd* (The Soghd Fire), 1981; *Oinai Ruz* (The Mirror of the Day), 1984; *Ruhi Uryon* (Naked Soul), 1983; *Kabkho* (The Partridges), 1983; *Ruhi Bokhtar* (The Spirit of the West), 1987; *Zilzila* (Earthquake), 1995; and many others.

Safieva joined the Union of Writers of the Soviet Union in 1971, and garnered the Komsomoli Lenin Prize in 1978. She also received the Red Banner of Courage and the 100th Anniversary of the Birth of Lenin Prize.

▪ **Loiq Sheraliev**

Tajikistan's People's Poet, Loiq Sheraliev¹²², popularly known as Loiq Sherali, was born on May 20, 1941, to a family of farmers in Panjakent. His first poem is entitled *Nom* (Name); it was published in *Sadoi Sharq* in 1959.

Sheraliev was dedicated to the concept of preserving the cultural heritage of the Iranian peoples. In this regard, he glorified the poetry of the major poets of the past in his own poetry. *Jomi Khayyam* (Khayyam's Cup), *Man Zindagii Khudro bo Tu Shinokhtam* (I Know My Life Because of You), *Ilhom as Shohnoma* (Inspired by the *Shahname*), *Taqlidi Mavlavi* (Mavlavi Imitation), *Az Bomi Jahon* (From the Roof of the World), and *Az Nomi Jahon* (In the Name of the World) are examples of his verses in this regard.

Sheraliev's contributions include *Sari Sabz* (Green Head), 1966; *Ilhom* (Inspiration), 1968; *Nushbod* (Cheers), 1971; *Sohilho* (The Shores), 1972; *Khoki Vatan* (The Soil of the Fatherland), 1975; *Rizei Boron* (The Falling Rain), 1978; *Mardi Roh* (Man for the Road), 1979; *Varaqi Sang* (The Rock Piece), 1980; *Khonai Chashm* (The Eye Socket), 1982; *Ruzi Sa'id* (Auspicious Day), 1984; *Khonai Dil* (The Abode of the *Hirat*), 1986; and *Jomi Sarshor* (Brimful Cup), 1991.

Sheraliev passed away of a stroke in Dushanbe on June 30, 2000.

¹²² Iraj Bashiri, *Prominent Tajik Figures of the Twentieth Century*, Dushanbe, 2002, p. 297

▪ **Bozor Sobirov**

Tajik poet and social critic Bozor Sobirov¹²³, generally referred to as Bozor Sobir, was born into a rural family in Faizabad province on October 20, 1938. The loss of his parents at an early age made his life extremely difficult.

Although Sobirov began publishing his poetry as early as 1960, his collections do not appear until the early 1970s. They include such poems as *Paivand* (Connection), 1972; *Otashbarg* (Fire leaf), 1974; *Guli Khor* (The Thorn Flower), 1978; *Mizhgoni Shab* (The Eyelids of the Night), 1981; *Oftobnihol* (Sun Plant), 1982; and *Bo Chashidan, bo Chamidan* (In Taste and Act), 1987. His poetry is generally sentimental and his social themes are developed with extreme care.

Tajikistan's rustic scene forms the backdrop to Sobirov's early works, which include *Mo Kudakon Budim* (We Were Children), 1984; *Kudakiam Hanuz Girion Ast* (My Childhood Still Weeps), 1984; *Kudaki Ku?* (Where is Childhood?), 1984; and *Farzandi Dihqon* (The Farmer's Child), 1984. All these works hark to the poet's formative years, while contributions like

¹²³ Ibid., p. 305

Tojikzan va Pakhta (Tajik Woman and Cotton), 1989 describe the sentiments of a more mature and sophisticated poet.

Sobirov did not praise the Soviet system. In fact, he rose against Communist aggression during the heyday of the Party and survived. He confronted social issues frankly and pursued his goal of reforming society with an unrelenting zeal. For instance, in *Sahna* (The Stage), 1984, he criticized all levels of Soviet society except the working classes. With *Pas az Mo* (After Us), however, he crossed the line and was subjected to vociferous criticism. He refused to conform. Conversely, in 1978, in an assembly at the Union of Writers of Tajikistan, he criticized Soviet activities in Afghanistan. Since this behavior was against the clear Soviet dicta that poets should praise the achievements of the Soviet military, Sobirov's name was entered into the list of subversives.

Sobirov's contributions in the 1980s concentrate on Soviet activities in the republics of the former Soviet Union, especially Georgia, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. Why shouldn't the Tajiks walk daily by the statue of Ahmad Donish rather than the statue of Lenin? Or more poignantly, why should the Tajik youth be exposed constantly to the thoughts of Lenin and Marx rather than to the guidance of their own learned men? But perhaps the most telling pieces among his later contributions are *Zaboni Modari* (Mother Tongue),

1984 and *Hoji Komunist* (The Communist Pilgrim). In these pieces, he exposes the duplicity of those who bear ill will against the Tajiks, as well as the apparatchiki who, after the establishment of the Coalition Government in Dushanbe, made the pilgrimage to Mecca to show their attachment to Islam.

In his verses, Sobirov allows the content to take precedence over the form. His fame, however, is more due to his patriotism and stance against Communist aggression than for either his poetic style or his introduction of innovative methods into Tajik literature.

Sobirov's rustic background and youthful difficulties, as well as his love for his mother and for his homeland, form the major foci of his poetry. His lyrics deal with romantic themes in the tradition of the Tajiks, while his critical pieces carry patriotism and nationalism to an extreme.

- **Nur Tabarov**

Tajik intellectual and journalist Nur Muhammad Tabarov¹²⁴ (with the occasional penname of Afsar) was born in Kofarnihon on July 15, 1941. He received his elementary education at the Middle School #1 Named after Krupskaya, in the Kofarnihon region. He is considered to be one of the best, if not the best journalists in present-day Tajikistan. Tabarov has authored a

¹²⁴ Iraj Bashiri, *Prominent Tajik Figures of the Twentieth Century*, Dushanbe, 2002, p. 317

number of works dealing with Tajik culture, which include, *Rohhoi Dur va Nazdik* (Far and Near Roads), 1977 and *In Bahor Chi Miovarad* (What Will This Spring Bring?) 1983.

As a playwright, Tabarov has made several contributions including *Shikori Divon* (Hunting Demons), *Parvozi Vopasin* (The Last Flight), *Kafshhoi Abulqosim* (Abulqosim's Shoes), and *Dar Chorsu* (At the Crossroads). This latter play, which created a commotion in Tajikistan when it appeared in 1986, was staged at the Lahuti Academy of Dramatic Arts, as well as at the Ashkabad, Bukhara, Khujand, and Kulab Theaters. Additional contributions include *Qismat* (Lot), 1997, *Tars* (Fear), 1998, and *Payomi Zardusht* (The Message of Zoroaster), 2001; all were staged at the Lahuti Academy of Dramatic Arts. *Okharin Vagon* (The Last Wagon), 2001 was staged at the Russian Theater Named After Mayakovskii.

EFFORTS TO IMPROVE TAJIK LITERARY ACTIVITIES

Regional departments of the Ministry of Culture, various cultural establishments, and the mass media served as important sources for the education and enlightenment. There were many creative unions of writer, painters, journalists and others that were financed by their own funds and were part of union organisations. A new official newspaper *Posukh* (Answer) was launched in Tajikistan by the Information Ministry and the

Journalists Union. The newspaper carries articles on the developments in Tajikistan and in foreign lands¹²⁵. A new weekly magazine *Bunyad-i-Adab* (Foundation of culture) was started to foster cultural links among the country's Persian speaking population. It is published in Arabic, Persian and Cyrillic scripts making it accessible also to readers in Iran, India, Pakistan and China.

DIFFICULTIES IN THE FIELD OF LITERATURE AND CULTURE:

Since the civil war financing of cultural phenomena has been significantly reduced. There was a 20% decline in the number of people employed in culture and art between 1990-93. Wages for those employed in art and culture are of the lowest degree and are lower than the average wage in business or industry. The loss of financial and technical support has resulted in the decline of the quality broadcasts, television programs, magazines and newspapers, upon which the Tajik President Mr. Rahmanov, expressed his concern in a conference of teachers in Dushanbe and ordered the local administration to pay special attention to it¹²⁶. However, recently culture and art have started to become commercially oriented, and many performances are now generating income.

¹²⁵ Tajik Radio, Dushanbe, 20 November 1994, (SWB, SU/2162, G/4, 25 November 1994)

¹²⁶ Interfax, Moscow, 28 August 1995, (SWB, SU/2395, G/3, 30 August 1995)

The decline in the number of registered members of libraries can be attributed to a number of things, most important being the lack of free time as people take on additional work to generate extra income to live. Of similar importance is the reduction in the number of existing book stock, fewer new books, publications and newspapers and the decline in the perception of the value of education. Between 1990-93 the volume of library holdings declined by 8% due to theft of books and inability to purchase new volumes. For cultural establishments, the decline in attendance was provoked by high prices of tickets and expensive services.

In the post-Soviet era, education in Tajikistan has also suffered from infrastructure problems. School buildings are in dilapidated condition. The construction industry, an area of particular weakness in the Republic's economy, has built only a few new schools.

Conclusion

Conclusion

Tajikistan has been the centre of great religions and civilisations of the world. Zoroastrianism, Buddhism flourished in same region, which even today are influencing the lives of the people.

The culture of Tajikistan has undergone significant changes in the long course of its history. It has been enchanting and mesmerising at all times and has been a great source of inspiration and challenge for scholars and researchers. The wide canvas of Tajikistan, ranging from science to literature and from economy to society, has shades of its ever-evolving cultural stature. The Tajik which once upon a time had touched great heights, is on the brink of a cultural collapse today.

Historically after the breakup of the Indo-European family the Aryan branch subdivided so that the Medas and the Pars migrated to the Iranian Plateau where they created the Median and Persian Empires respectively; the Soghd and the Hind migrated to the Aral Sea region. Subsequently, the Hind migrated southeast and occupied the northwestern regions of the Indian subcontinent. Soghdiana, settled between 1000 to 500 B.C. by Aryan tribes, passed into the hands of Achaemenians who lost it to Alexander of Macedonia in the 4th century B.C. The Arabs conquered Soghdiana in early 7th century A.D. which grew into an important centre of culture and trade in

Central Asia. The Tajiks came into prominence as a people under the rule of the Samanids, who revived the ancient urban centres as Bukhara, Samarkand, Merv, Nishapur, Hirat, Balkh, Khojand, Penjikent. Additionally the Samanids, introduced a major programme of urbanisation, revival of local customs etc. The Samanids allocated resources for public education and encouraged innovation and enterprise. The promotion of arts and science led to the institution of new centres of learning, it also led to the creation of centres for storing and retrieving informations such as *Sivan al Hikmat* in Bukhara. There were libraries full of manuscripts consisting translations from Greek and Syriac languages. The rise of Turk power, who were slaves and later on became commanders in the Samanid army, and the rise of Mongols, who overran the region in the first quarter of the 13th century, put a check to the development of Tajik language and culture. Due to continued violence and coming in contact with other civilisations, Tajik language and literature got influenced by these developments. The poetry and prose of this period focusses on mysticism and common brotherhood, and important works were compiled during this time like *Diwan-i-Hafiz*, *Gulistan-i-Sadi* etc.

Later on with the emergence of Central Asian Khanates, Tajik literature continued to develop as the Khans patronised poets and writers in their

courts. They even invited famous poets and writers from other places. But gradually the Khans lost their importance because they were negligent with the affairs of the state. The decline in Tajik language and literature is also due to the court writers and poets of this period as they would keep their masters in their own imaginary world, by falsely praising them without any contact with the ground situation. revolution were adopted. The Russians changed the economic social and literary situation in Tajikistan. Tajik people became literate, which led to increase in the literature. Russians, to assimilate with the centre tried to change the script of Tajikistan. First it was changed to Latin, it was thought that it would bring them closer to the world literature and important works would be made available to the Tajiks. But some discrepancies arose which led to the adoption of Cyrillic script. Now the Tajiks had access to the vast Russian literature. Russian writers and scholars did research work in Tajikistan, its history, culture and literature were studied and many monumental works were produced.

The situation changed after the disintegration of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic. The independence of Tajikistan brought a new opportunity for Tajiks to reassert themselves. For this Tajiks are trying to revive their old language and literature, because due to the change of their script which was done, cut them off from their rich and vibrant past.

The choice of an official language, and by extension a writing system, for Tajikistan is a serious question. National sentiment favours using Tajik as the official language of the nation. Political speeches by both the government and opposition are given in Tajik. However, Russian continues to be the medium of communication. In post-Soviet Tajikistan the government would like all school instruction to take place in Tajik. However, there are several obstacles before it can be implemented fully. One simple obstacle is that there are still a large number of people in the country who do not know Tajik well enough to be educated in that medium, whereas Russian is the *lingua franca* that nearly all adults understand. A second obstacle is that there are simply not enough instructional materials in Tajik language to carry student through high school curriculum, much less a college curriculum.

The use of Russian as an instructional medium also has its difficulties. Since independence during the years of civil war students in rural areas have stopped learning Russian. Thus, a whole generation of young Tajiks is growing up without knowing Russian. Most of these students have not yet reached high school or college. At this time the public media is fully bilingual. Newspapers appear in both Tajik and Russian, and the television programmes are also aired in both languages.

Language connects races and culture bonds of the mankind. No nation,

however advanced and forward looking can afford to march into a culturally stable future without giving adequate importance to its cultural and linguistic roots. In modern times and a globalized environment these may seem obsolete but are in fact the real strength behind a nation's success. An enriched and preserved culture and a treasured linguistic history are both an end as well as means of economic and social advancement, though the interdependence may not be too apparent and explicit.

Ethnic consolidation of the people of Tajikistan was never fully realized and now constrains the transition to statehood. Tajik language and culture are the effective means to reinforce the distinct national identity of Tajikistan, after its independence.

Appendix

DRAFT LAW OF TAJIK LANGUAGE

The Tajik language shall be the state language of the Tajik Soviet Socialist Republic. The present status of the Tajik language and the curtailment of its social functions and the sphere of its use and application in oral and written communications have made it necessary to give it state protection.

Legislative recognition of the Tajik language's status as state language will lay a durable foundation for its broad use in all spheres of socio-political, economic and cultural life and for the further development of the Tajik people's language and culture.

The Tajik language's proclamation as state language shall not in any way diminish or infringe the rights of persons whose native language is any other language. The Tajik SSR recognizes and protects the inalienable right of citizens of any nationality to develop their native language and culture and all citizens' equality before the law, regardless of their native language. The Russian language, voluntarily accepted as the language of communication between nationalities in the USSR, shall operate freely in the territory of the Tajik SSR.

Chapter I

General Provisions

Article 1. The Tajik language shall be the state language of the Tajik SSR.

Article 2. The Tajik language's status as state language shall not infringe the rights of citizens of other nationalities living in the Tajik SSR to use their native language. The Tajik SSR shall ensure legal guarantees and a respectful attitude towards all languages used in the republic and shall create conditions for their development.

Article 3. The Russian language, as the language of communication between the nationalities of the USSR, shall operate freely in the republic's territory. The Tajik SSR shall guarantee the principle of Tajik-Russian and Russian-Tajik bilingualism.

Article 4. The Tajik SSR shall guarantee the preservation and free use of the Pamir and Yagnob languages.

Article 5. This law on language defines the spheres of the use of the Tajik, Russian, Uzbek, Kyrgyz and other languages in state and social life

and the rights and guarantees of citizens in their choice of language and in the protection of languages.

The law does not regulate the use of languages in daily life, in communication between work collective members, in armed forces institutions and organizations, or in the exercise of religious activity or the performance of religious rituals.

Chapter II.

Citizen's Rights and Guarantees in Choice of Language

Article 6. The Tajik SSR guarantees that every citizen shall have the right indecently to choose the language of communication with state power and institutions and with enterprises, institutions and organizations and to receive from them information and documents in the state language, the Russian language or other acceptable language.

Article 7. Officials of bodies of state power and management and of enterprises and organizations whose duties include systematic communication with citizens of different nationalities (officials in law enforcement bodies, health care, trade, consumer services, communications, transport, municipal services and others) shall be

required to have knowledge of the state language and the Russian language to the extent necessary of the performance of their official duties.

Article 8. The language of communication or information between leaders and subordinates in official relations shall be chosen by mutual agreement.

Article 9. Congresses, conferences, plenums, meetings, sessions, gathering and rallies shall be conducted in the state language or a language chosen by the participants, with no restrictions on the choice of language by speakers and with provision of translation facilities by the organizers.

The working language of international, all-union and inter-republican events held in the Tajik SSR and the question of translation facilities shall be determined by the organizing committee.

Chapter III.

Use of Languages

Section 1. Language in the bodies of state power and state management.

Article 10. Official business in the bodies of state power and state management in the Tajik SSR shall be transacted in the state language.

Sessions of soviets of people's deputies and other sittings and conferences shall also be conducted in the state language. People who do not speak this language shall have the right to use Russian or any other language at sessions and conference and translation facilities shall be provided.

Official business in local bodies of state power and state management shall be transacted in the language of the majority of the population in the relevant territory.

Acts of bodies of state power in the Tajik SSR shall be adopted in the Tajik language and shall be published in the Tajik Russian and Uzbek languages.

Acts of bodies of state management in the Tajik SSR shall be adopted in the Tajik language and shall be published in the Tajik and Russian languages.

Article 11. The language of communication between nationalities shall be used in communications between bodies of state power and state management in the USSR and other union republics.

A language acceptable to both sides shall be used in communications with foreign states.

Article 12. Officials of bodies of state power and state management in the Tajik SSR shall use the state language or the Russian language when addressing citizens and translation facilities shall be provided.

Officials of bodies of state power and state management in the Tajik SSR reply to citizen's appreciations and complaint in the state language, Russian, Uzbek or other acceptable language.

Section 2. Language at enterprise and in institutions and organizations

Article 13. Internal official business at enterprises and in institutions and organizations located on the territory of the Tajik SSR shall be transacted in the state language.

Official business at enterprises or in institutions and organizations where the majority of workers are non-Tajik speakers shall be transacted in Russian or other acceptable language.

Enterprises, institutions and organizations must create conditions for the study of the state language.

Article 14. Correspondence between enterprises, institutions and organizations located on the territory of the Tajik SSR and the bodies of the state power and the state management of the Tajik SSR, and also between themselves, shall be conducted in the state language.

Enterprises, institutions and organizations which continue to use the Russian, Uzbek, Kirghiz, or other language in their official business shall be allowed to use these languages in communications between themselves and bodies of state power and state management.

Correspondence between enterprises, institutions and organizations located on the territory of the Tajik SSR and enterprises, institutions and organizations situated outside the Tajik SSR shall be conducted in the Russian language or in a language acceptable to both sides.

Article 15. Technical and planning documents prepared by Tajik SSR enterprises, institutions and organizations for use in the territory of the SSR shall be written in the state language. Should the client so wish, they may be written in the Russian language.

Article 16. Officials of Tajik SSR enterprises, institutions and organizations shall reply to citizens' applications and complaints in the state language, Russian, Uzbek or other acceptable language.

Article 17. Documents issued to citizens by enterprises, institutions and organizations must be composed in accordance with citizens' wishes either in the state language, or in Russian, or in the two languages – Tajik and Russian.

Documents issued to citizens in either the Tajik or the Russian language shall be recognized and accepted by all enterprises and institutions in the territory of the Tajik SSR.

**Section 3. Language in judicial proceedings and the hearing of cases
of administrative offences**

Article 18. In accordance with Article 160 of the Tajik SSR Constitution, judicial proceedings in the Tajik SSR shall be conducted in the Tajik language or in the language of the majority of the population in the relevant locality. Persons involved in the case who do not speak the language in which the judicial proceedings are conducted shall have the guaranteed right to be briefed fully on the case material and to participate in the judicial proceedings through an interpreter, as well as the right to address the court in their native language.

Article 19. The hearing of cases of administrative offences shall be conducted in the state language or in the language of the majority of the population in the relevant locality.

Persons against whom administrative proceedings have been instituted and other persons involved in the case shall have the right to

use their native language at the case hearings and interpreters must be made available if they do not speak the language in which the proceedings are conducted.

Protocols on administrative crimes shall be formulated in the state language. If the person against whom administrative proceedings have been instituted does not speak the state language, the protocol shall be composed in Russian or a translation in another acceptable language shall be provided.

Section 4. Language in education, science and cultural life

Article 20. The Tajik SSR shall guarantee the right to every citizen to be educated – within the limits of the republic's potential – in the Tajik, Russian, Uzbek, Kirghiz or other language.

Article 21. The Tajik SSR shall guarantee teaching of the Tajik language to the Russian-speaking population and of the Russian language to the Tajik-speaking population in pre-school institutions, general educational schools, secondary specialized and higher education establishments, and in other forms of instruction.

The study of the Tajik and Russian languages shall be guaranteed in pre-school institutions and education establishments using different language of instruction.

Leaders of children's pre-school and extramural institution and education establishments, pedagogues and educators must be effluent in the language of instruction and education adopted in the relevant institution.

Article 22. Secondary specialized, vocational and technical, and higher education establishments in the Tajik SSR shall guarantee instruction of the Tajik-speaking population in the Tajik language in all specialized fields for which training is available in the Tajik SSR regardless of the education establishment's departmental subordination.

Instruction of the Russian-speaking and Uzbek-speaking population in the relevant specialized fields shall be provided in the Russian and Uzbek languages in line with the requirements of the state plan for the Tajik SSR's socio-economic development.

Article 23. The Tajik SSR shall guarantee instruction in the Tajik language in all non-Tajik speaking education establishments and study

groups regardless of their departmental subordinates. Graduates of secondary specialized, vocational and technical and higher education establishments in the Tajik SSR shall be required to have knowledge of the state language to the extent necessary for the performance of their professional duties, and they shall be examined accordingly.

Article 24. Further training in the Tajik SSR shall be available in the state language but groups using the Russian, Uzbek or other language of instruction shall also be organized.

Article 25. The Tajik SSR shall guarantee the equal use of the state language and of the Russian Uzbek languages in the sphere of science.

Article 26. The Tajik SSR shall promote the study of Tajik writings using the Arabic script and the publication of literature using the script.

Article 27. The Tajik SSR shall guarantee the production of cinema, television and video films and other works in the state language with subsequent translation into other languages, and shall also implement the translation of such works from other languages into the state language.

Chapter IV

Protection of Language

Article 28. Questions concerning the orthography and terminology of the Tajik literary language shall be codified by an orthography commission and a terminology commission to be constituted according to established procedures.

Article 29. The names of Tajik SSR ministries, state committees, departments, enterprises, institutions shall be in the Tajik language with translation into Russian and other languages.

Article 30. The texts on letterheads, seals, stamps, imprints and forms used by enterprises, institutions and organizations shall be in the Tajik and Russian languages.

The texts of signs, notices, announcements and advertisements on public display shall be in the state language with translation into the Russian language and, whenever necessary, into another language.

Article 31. The Tajik SSR shall guarantee the preservation of Tajik names, designations and historical place names in the territory of the Tajik SSR and they shall be in the Tajik language.

Tajik SSR citizens shall have the right to take names in conformity with their national traditions. They may preserve the spelling of their name, patronymic and surname in accordance with the orthography of their native language.

Article 32. Output produced by republic enterprises shall be provided with labels, instructions and tags in the state language with translation into Russian or other languages.

Output arriving in the republic from other regions in the country or from abroad shall be provided with labels, instructions and tags in the state language by the trading or marketing organization.

Article 33. Tajik SSR local soviets of people's deputies and leaders of Tajik SSR ministries, state committees and departments shall ensure the fulfillment of this law's demands.

Article 34. The granting of the status of state language to the Tajik language may not be used for any discrimination against citizens who do not speak the state language anywhere, and primarily in cases of transactions with state bodies, health care, education and culture institutions, public transport, trade and the services sphere.

Persons guilty of such discrimination shall be liable under the law.

Article 35. The procedure and schedule for the entry into force of this law shall be elaborated by the Tajik SSR Council of Ministers and shall be ratified by a decree of the Presidium of the Tajik SSR Supreme Soviet.

Article 36. Progress in the fulfillment of this law shall be monitored by the Presidium of the Tajik SSR Supreme Soviet.

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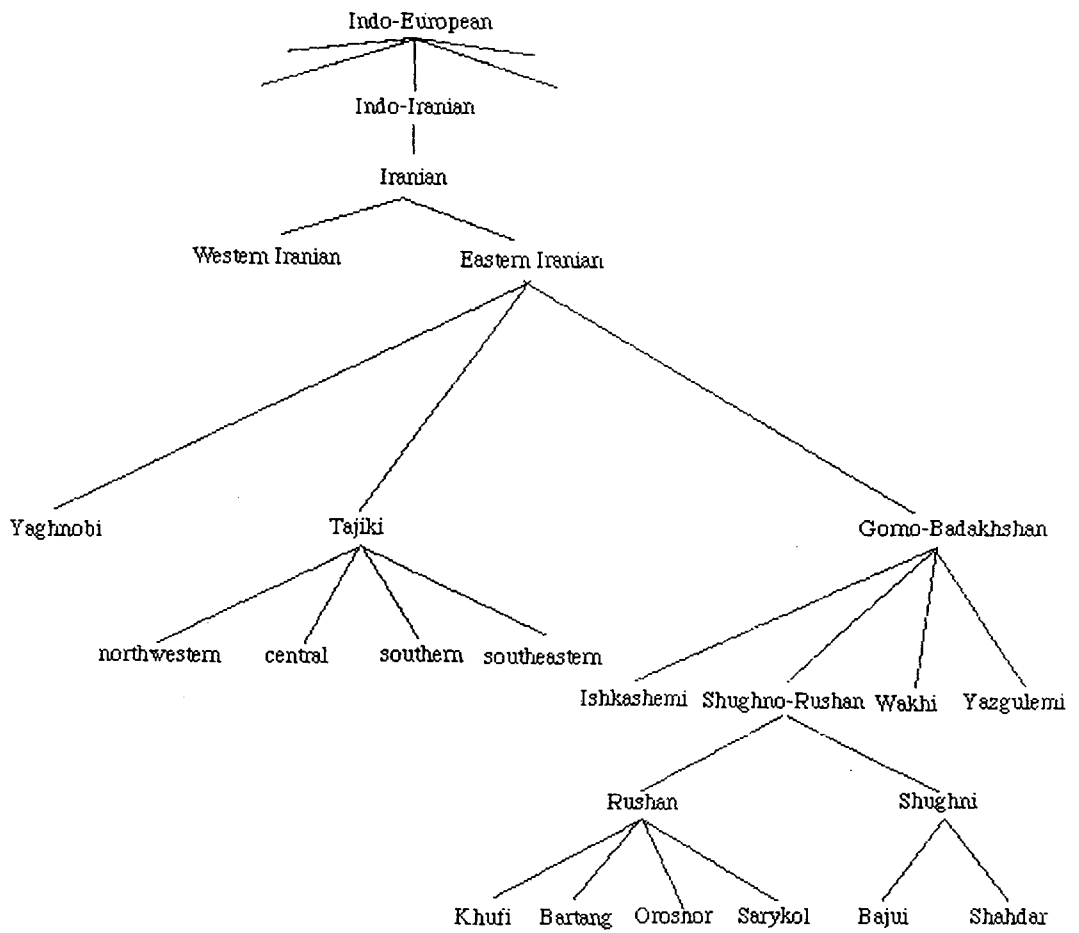
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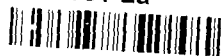
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