



# ÈN̄TSIKLOPEDIYAI SOVETII TOJIK

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**ÈN̄TSIKLOPEDIYAI SOVETII TOJIK** (Tajik Soviet Encyclopedia), the first general encyclopedia of Tajikistan, published in the Tajik Persian language and Cyrillic alphabet (8 vols., Dushanbe, 1978-88). It includes more than 23,000 articles (VIII, p. 197) in a total of 4904 pages plus 242 folios (mostly in color) of additional figures and maps. Each volume measures 20 x 26 cm, printed in a triple-column format. It was published in a run of 15-23,000 copies.

In the late 1950s the Soviet government undertook publication of encyclopedias in the national languages of each of the fifteen republics of the Soviet Union (VIII, p. 196). After a joint resolution of the Tajik government and Communist party in 1968, the compilation of the *Tajik Soviet Encyclopedia* was begun by the Tajik Academy of Sciences (Akademiyai fanhoi RSS Tojikston; see VIII, p. 197). Its editorial board was led by the late Moḥammad ‘Āṣemī (q.v., Supplement) and A. Sayfullov. Like the encyclopedias of the other republics, the general articles of the *Tajik Soviet Encyclopedia* are based on the third edition of the *Bol’shaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopedia* (Great Soviet Encyclopedia, 30 vols., Moscow, 1969-78).

Originally, only one-third of the articles were scheduled to be on native issues (personal interviews with the editors including M. ‘Āṣemī and A. Sayfullov) but this limit was obviously exceeded. For scholars, the major value of the *Tajik Soviet Encyclopedia* lies in the wealth of information it provides about



Tajikistan and its people. Indeed, it is by far the most comprehensive individual compilation ever published on Tajikistan, in which every area of Tajik life is systematically presented: topography and ethnography, flora and fauna, agriculture and industry, science and technology, literature and publications, folklore and fine arts. The articles on the biography of people, including living persons, cover a wide spectrum of individuals (even including farmers); they serve as a virtual “Who’s Who” of Soviet Tajikistan. Articles on the history of the Tajik people naturally lead to the related fields of both Central Asian and Iranian studies, to which particular attention is devoted. Biographies of Western and Persian scholars of those areas are widely covered. Classical Persian literature is treated with numerous entries on poets and poetry.

The articles are generally short, yet a few (e.g., “Soviet Union”) extend to dozens of pages. They are usually cross-referenced as necessary. Some are provided with bibliographies that contain those references available to a reader in the local libraries; other references are cited in the body of the text (see I, p. 8). The bibliographies are selective. They contain historical and current sources, suggestions for further readings and, for biographical entries, works written by the subject. The references are generally to Tajik and Russian works. Many books published in modern Persia are also cited, using the original Perso-Arabic letters, particularly the primary sources on Persian literature but also secondary sources, most notable among them being Dehḡodā’s *Loḡat-nāma* and works by Sa’īd Nafīsī and Zahrā Ḳānlārī. The maps are neat and accurate; some appear to be based on the *Atlas Tadzhikskoi SSR* (Atlas of the Tajik SSR, Dushanbe and Moscow, 1968), a major reference on the geography of Tajikistan. The Islamic and European entries are followed by the Arabic and Roman orthography of the source language. The Tajik nomenclature in natural sciences (e.g., medicine, flora and fauna) is furnished with the Latin equivalent—a useful way, together with the illustrations, to identify the terms. The comprehensive system of abbreviations employed sometimes complicates the reader’s task.

The fact that this encyclopedia had originally been planned for six volumes (I, introduction) but was increased to eight may explain why the articles are much shorter and hastily prepared in the last three volumes, in contrast to the fairly well balanced body of articles in the earlier volumes. The quality of Tajik articles, chiefly written and signed by native authors, is uneven. In addition, the encyclopedia is stuffed with Marxist ideology and Soviet patriotism.

The encyclopedia is supplemented by the single volume *Tadzhikskaya SSR*, in



Russian, also edited by ‘Āšemī. The first edition was published in 1974 on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the formation of the Republic of Tajikistan and may be regarded as the preliminary edition of the multi-volume *Tajik Soviet Encyclopedia*. It focused on contemporary Tajikistan, was arranged by subject, and contained around 400 articles written by more than 350 authors (Šukurov and Muḵtorov). The second edition (Dushanbe, 1984) included revised and updated information.

While the last volumes of the *Tajik Soviet Encyclopedia* were being published during the period of *glasnost* and *perestroika* of the late Soviet era, the Tajik Academy of Sciences scheduled the *Īntsiklopediyai adabiyot va san’ati tojik* (adabiyāt wa šan’at-e Tājīk; Tajik encyclopedia of literature and art) as a specialized and revised second edition of the *Tajik Soviet Encyclopedia*. Of the three volumes planned, with more than nine thousand anticipated articles (I, p. 6), two volumes have been published (Dushanbe, 1988-89) in the same format as the *Tajik Soviet Encyclopedia*. They include those articles of the *Tajik Soviet Encyclopedia* relevant to literature and fine arts. Some articles have been updated and extended with somewhat less use of ideological jargon.

An offshoot of the *Tajik Soviet Encyclopedia* is the *Īntsiklopediyai kojagii qišloqi Tojikiston* (Encyclopedia of the agricultural economy of Tajikistan) which was edited by J. A. Azizqulov and published in two volumes with a total of 1179 pages plus forty folios (Dushanbe, 1989-91). Although it claims in the introduction (I, p. 5) to be an “original” work, its articles (approximately eight thousand in all) are essentially selections from the *Tajik Soviet Encyclopedia*. The term *kojagii qišloq*, “agricultural [or rural] economy,” does not accurately depict the actual scope of the encyclopedia, which covers economic subjects in general. Modern approaches to environmental issues are also broadly covered.

Many articles on Tajik literature and history in these encyclopedias have been incorporated into the *Dāneš-nāma-ye adab-e Fārsī. Jeld-e yekom: Asīā-ye markzī* (ed. Ḥ. Anūša, Tehran, 1375/1996), a non-methodical compilation embracing many general entries irrelevant to Central Asia and which is principally based on the Tajik encyclopedias.



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