



# GAFUROV, BOBODZHAN GAFUROVICH

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**GAFUROV, BOBODZHAN GAFUROVICH** (b. 1908; d. 1977; [Figure 1](#)), Tajik statesman, academician, and historian. Gafurov was born in the Ispisar township near Kojand, Tajikistan, and studied law in Samarkand. From 1930 on, Gafurov worked as a government official in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, at the same time pursuing his interest in journalism. In 1931, he entered the Institute of Journalism in Moscow, graduating in 1935. In 1940-41, having completed postgraduate studies at the Institute of History, Soviet Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Gafurov defended his thesis “Istoriya sekty ismai’litov s nachala XIX v. do mirovoï voïny 1914-1918 gg” (History of the Isma’ili sect from the beginning of the 19th century to the First World War”). He returned to Dushanbe and served in a number of high administrative positions, becoming eventually Second and then First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Tajikistan. His energy and administrative skills were instrumental in establishing Tajikistan’s first State University in 1948, and in inaugurating its national Academy of Sciences in 1951. During this period he published several historical works, and initiated the series “Materialy po istorii tadjhikov i Tadjhikistana” (Materials on the history of the Tajiks and Tajikistan).

Gafurov’s book, *Ta’rikhi muḳtasari ḳalqi tojik* (A concise history of the Tajik people), for which he was awarded a doctorate, came out in 1947. An expanded version of it was translated into Russian (*Istoriya tadjhikskogo*



*naroda v kratkom izlozhenii*, Moscow, 1949; 2nd. ed. 1952; 3rd. ed. 1955).

From 1956 to 1977 he was the director of the Institute of Oriental Studies at the Soviet Academy of Sciences, Moscow, and during his tenure the Institute expanded in new directions. He was elected a corresponding member of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, and later became an academician. He was a founder of the Publishing House for Eastern Literatures, which printed scholarly works on the history, economics, philology, linguistics, religion, and the culture of the countries in Asia and the Middle East. It also published critical texts and translations into Russian.

In spite of his many administrative duties, Gafurov published more than 500 works in Russian, Tajik, and other languages. His monumental study, *Tadzhiki: Drevneishaya, drevnyaya, i srednevekovaya istoriya* (The Tajiks: Prehistory, Ancient, and Medieval History), was edited by Boris A. Litvinskiĭ (Moscow, 1972, 2nd ed., Dushanbe, 1989). It was also translated into Tajik. It treats the history of the Tajiks in the wider context of Central Asian history, and highlights the achievements of the Central Asian civilizations without succumbing to the sociological clichés which dominated the scholarly discourse at the time. His other major historical works include *Aleksandr Makedonskiĭ i Vostok* (Alexander the Great and the East, Moscow, 1980, with D. I. Tsibukidis). His selected works have also been published (*Izbrannye trudy*, Moscow, 1985).

Bobodzhan Gafurov died in 1977 and was buried in Dushanbe.

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