



RAḤIMZĀDA, BĀQI

RAḤIMZĀDA, BĀQI (Boqī Rahimzoda in Tajik orthography; b. Sorboḡi, 15 May 1910; d. Dushanbe, 30 January 1980), Tajik poet who adapted classical Persian-Tajik forms to the social and cultural goals of the Soviet era.

Bāqi Raḥimzāda was born into a rural, mountain family of slender material means, but one in which learning was prized, as his father taught at a *madrasa* and was an amateur poet. By the time Bāqi was nine both of his parents had died, and he had to fend for himself, first as an agricultural helper for his uncle and then as a shepherd. He came to Dushanbe in 1928, where he worked for a time in a cotton mill. Then, in 1930-31 he attended the teachers college in Samarqand, and upon completing his studies he became a teacher in several village schools, serving at the same time as the director of one and as the head of the district teachers union (1933-36). He continued his education at the Tajik teachers college in Tashkent (1936-38) and, while still a teacher, he studied Tajik language and literature at the state pedagogical institute in Dushanbe (1939-41; see [EDUCATION xxviii. IN TAJIKISTAN](#)). For some time he had been writing poems and in 1940 he joined the Union of Writers of the Soviet Union. His academic career was interrupted by military service in World War II. After being severely wounded in 1943 he was sent home to Dushanbe, where he taught in the pedagogical institute until 1947. From 1948 until his death he served as a counselor at the Union of Writers of Tajikistan and devoted himself to poetry. In recognition of his contributions to literature and to the building of the new socialist order the Supreme Soviet of Tajikistan accorded him the title of People's Poet of Tajikistan in 1974.



Raḥimzāda's poetry up to 1940 explored themes that would form the core of his mature work after World War II. He was drawn especially to social and political themes that were intended, in the first instance, to arouse patriotic support for the new society being constructed by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and Tajikistan ("Ba qahramoni Vatan"; 1934). He was enchanted by the beauties of the native landscapes, and he praised the nobility of labor in the fields and in the factories and urged his fellow citizens to spare no sacrifice to build a better world ("Bahoriya"; 1936). His poems of these years were closely tied to models taken from classical Persian-Tajik poetry, but he made certain that his language was clear and his meaning unambiguous. During World War II particularly he used his poetry to mobilize support for the war effort at the battlefield and in the factories and fields at home. He also praised the valor of individual Tajik soldiers in such poems as "Intiqom" (1942) and "Ba qahramon" (1943), in which he drew on his own experiences of war.

In the prime of his career Raḥimzāda was, above all, a social poet who was persuaded that the primary function of art was to promote the well-being and progress of the peoples of the Soviet Union, including the Tajiks. For him, the Russian Revolution of 1917, Lenin, and the Communist Party were the initiators and the guarantors of the new age. He composed many poems in memory of Lenin such as "Naḡustin šinosī bo Lenin," in which he traces the awakening of class consciousness among young peasants of the mountains, much like himself, who were prepared for momentous social change by Lenin's thoughts (Nurov, pp. 44-45). He gives free rein to the hyperbole of the Tajik oral tradition, which was to inspire so much of his own work (Kudoydodov, 1986). The theme of social transformation is also paramount in "Čašmai Lenin," where the power of Lenin's ideas brings hope to the inhabitants of a remote village "forgotten by God and people." Raḥimzāda treated the Communist Party as the preserver of Lenin's ideas and the executor of his will. In "Ba Partiyai kīradmand," one of many on the same theme, he emphasizes the contrast between the old ways of thinking and the new. At the center of things is an argument between a father and son about the true meaning of life. The older man views life on earth from a religious perspective as merely transitory, while his son embraces the Revolution and his new "spiritual father," the Party, as the creators of a vibrant, self-fulfilling life in this world.

In Raḥimzāda's many-sided depiction of the new order in the Soviet Union and



Tajikistan he reserved a special place for work, the theme of many of his *matnawis*. He perceived an intimate relationship between work and socialism and characterized the whole socialist era as one of bold strivings by the laboring masses to transform society: in “Mubohisa” the peasants who are engaged in the cotton industry talk about how hard their work is, but express their satisfaction at the end of the day with the contribution they have made to socialist construction. The poet’s objective is to praise what has already been achieved and to urge on the working class to still greater efforts (Nurov, pp. 96-97). In “Dar kolkozi ba nomi Lenin” he writes about work as the son of the village who knows from experience the nature of the land and the readiness of those who tilled it to fulfill the tasks it laid upon them. In “Gilembof” he sees work as no less than the mold of character of an entire people.

Many of Raḥimzāda’s poems extol the eternal friendship of peoples of the Soviet Union as a crucial source of their strength and well-being. He gives particular attention to the historical relations between the Tajik and Uzbek peoples, as in “Ba dūstoni ūzbek.” But he reserved a special place for Russia and Russians in his ethnic hierarchy of comradeship and respect, as in “Russiyai man,” where he praises the beauties of the Russian land and the inborn generosity of the Russian people. He portrays Moscow as the symbol of the aspirations of Soviet peoples to create a union of true brothers and places it at the center of the international movement to liberate the peoples of the world from political and economic oppression at the hands of the West (Ḳudoydodov, 1976, pp. 77-104). An early poem, “Moskva” (1949), which presents the Soviet capital as the hope of mankind, sets the tone for similar works later on.

Raḥimzāda was versatile in his means, as he drew on the Persian-Tajik tradition, folklore, and contemporary modes of expression. But whatever their form his poems were always linked to the social and spiritual life and labor of ordinary people. One of his favorite forms, the *matnawī*, amply reveals his intentions, as in “Čaroği adlu kirad,” where he compares the countryside before and after the Revolution and shows the superiority of the new social and economic order forged by working people themselves. He was a master of the *gazel* as the vehicle for his love poetry, which he endowed with new content appropriate to the time. He was often inventive; he created a distinctive form of the *mostazād*, the *mostazād-e mokarrar*, as in “Nigohe,” where three stanzas of four lines each (aaaa, bbba, ccca) are followed by the same refrain of two lines (Nurov, pp. 92-93; see also [STANZAIC POETRY](#)). His



appreciation of the rhythms and diction of folklore was deep and abiding and owed much to his own early life in the village and his pride in the creativity of rural people, as in “Qissai kūhsor.”

Perhaps Raḥimzāda’s chief contribution to the development of Tajik poetry was his promotion of a conception of literature in keeping with the material and moral aspirations of his time. He put his art fully at the service of the builders of socialism. Thus, in his own works he insisted that the message was paramount and must not be blurred by “word games.” In a sense, he stands as a link between the poetry of two literary eras—the classical Persian-Tajik and the socialist contemporary.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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