



RĀZIA ĀZĀD

RĀZIA ĀZĀD (Roziya Ozod in Tajik orthography; 1893-1957), Tajik poet and educator. Born into a family of craftsmen in [Khujand](#), Rāzia Āzād received her early education at the traditional schools in her hometown. In the early 1910s, she opened a primary school in the village of Esfesār (Isfisor; in present-day Bābājān Ġafurov district), where she regularly taught children reading and writing until the outbreak of World War II (Tošmatov and Nabieva, p. 62; see also [EDUCATION xxviii. IN TAJIKISTAN](#)). She joined the Union of Writers of Tajikistan in 1944, possibly promoted by her son Bobodzhan [Gafurov](#) (Bābājān Ġafurov), a Tajik statesman and historian. Rāzia chose for herself the penname Āzād, while her formal surname was Gafurova.

Rāzia Āzād started her poetic career in the early 1940s, when she was in her early fifties. In wartime, she concentrated on poetry with social and patriotic themes by portraying Tajik heroism in defense of the Soviet homeland; such is the case of the collections *Qahramoni odil* (Just Hero, 1943) and *Muhabbat ba vatan* (Love for the Homeland, 1944). Some of her early poems, typifying the way Soviet poetry evolved during the war, were the so-called poems “written with the bayonet,” which conformed to official expectations. Her other poems, on the other hand, took advantage of the greater creative freedom afforded by the war, when governmental control over the citizenry and literati were somewhat relaxed (see Nabieva, pp. 38-49; Nazarova, pp. 65-72; see also [CENTRAL ASIA xv. MODERN LITERATURE](#)).

Rāzia’s later poetry, simple in language and style, is a valuable record of the Tajik everyday life of her time. It won her great popularity in the 1950s,



especially in the field of children's literature. Among her collections of this decade are *Iqbol* (Fortune, 1951), and *Zinda bod sulh* (Long Live Peace, 1954).

Compared to the publication of her verses in various editions and reprints, little has been written on the life and career of Rāžia Āzād under the Soviet rule. The most comprehensive account on her life is to be found in the Russian-language booklet *Roziya* (2005), written by N. B. Gafurova, the daughter of Bobodzhan Gafurov and granddaughter of the poetess. The book narrates the family history.

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