



## SOLAYMĀNI, ĀTAJĀN PEYROW

**SOLAYMĀNI, Ātajān Peyrow** (Tajik Otajon Payrav Sulaymoni; b. Bukhara, 15 April 1899; d. Samarqand, 9 June 1933), Tajik poet who blended the classical traditions of Tajik-Persian verse with the social themes of the new Soviet Central Asia of the 1920s and early 1930s.

Solaymāni was born into a prominent Bukharan merchant family. His father, who was engaged in the long-distance trade of animal hides, belonged to the educated elite, and his mother was a reader of classical literature. Young Solaymāni thus grew up in a household where literature was enjoyed and learning was encouraged. He began his formal education at a *maktab* in Bukhara and was enrolled in the Persian *madrassa* at Marv between 1911 and 1914. His father, whose commercial fortunes depended in great measure on the Russian market, saw to it that his son learned Russian and became acquainted with Russian culture. He hired private tutors to teach him Russian, and in 1916 enrolled him in the Russian school in Kāgān, the mainly Russian suburb of Bukhara (Solaymāni, “Maktubi kušoda,” pp. 23-24). Solaymāni had already begun to write poetry—the first of his poems that have come down to us date from 1916—and he had already chosen the pseudonym “Peyrow” to indicate his status as an apprentice and a follower of the Tajik-Persian masters.

Solaymāni lived in Bukhara during the revolutionary turmoil between 1917 and 1920, which resulted in the overthrow of the Emir and the establishment of the Bukharan People’s Soviet Republic (see [CENTRAL ASIA ix](#)). He welcomed the change of regime, expressing his thoughts in “Ba monāsebat-e enqelāb-e



Boḳārā” (1920), one of the few poems he wrote on revolution. He was appointed second secretary at the Republic’s embassy in Kabul in 1921, and, then, after a year in Afghanistan he returned home to work in his father’s business. In 1925 he embarked upon a career in journalism, which took him to Tashkent, Samarqand, and Dushanbe, and from 1930 until his death he served as an editor at the State Publishing House of Tajikistan, mainly at its branch in Samarqand. All this time he was pursuing what had become for him his true vocation—poetry.

Throughout his relatively brief career as a poet he drew amply on the traditions of classical Persian poetry, a debt he forever acknowledged. In a poem written on the millennium of Rudaki’s birth, “Tažmin-e ḡazal-e Rudaki” (1925), he revealed the master’s influence in the directness and simplicity of his language and in the clarity of his ideas. His chosen form was the *ḡazal*, and his favorite theme was love, at least until the later 1920s. His verses were often filled with sadness, as in “Če šod ke?” (1924), composed on a visit to Mašhad, and expressing sorrow at being parted from his beloved. A few such poems he sent to [Šadr-al-Din ‘Ayni](#), one of the creators of Soviet Tajik literature, who praised his talent and predicted a bright future for him. But unlike ‘Ayni and the poet Abu’l-Qāsem Lāhuti, who were fully engaged in creating a new cultural life in Tajikistan, Solaymāni stood apart from the critical political and social issues of the day. Rather, he persisted in writing poetry that was intimate and detached, a preoccupation that drew severe rebukes from proletarian critics.

Sometime after 1925, subtle changes of mood and content could be detected in his poetry. Sensitively attuned to human emotions and a keen observer of his surroundings, he could not but be affected by the drastic changes of atmosphere and structures going on about him. He turned increasingly to social and political themes, and by 1930 he was writing in praise of the productive labor of peasants and workers, the liberation of women, and revolutionary movements in the East. In two longer poems—“Taḳt-e *ku*nin” (Bloody throne; 1931) and the unfinished “Manāra-ye marg” (Death minaret)—he condemned the inhumanity of the old regime in Bukhara. The influence of contemporary Russian writers, especially Vladimir Mayakovsky, whose work he much admired, may be detected here (*Očerĳ istorii*, pp. 89-90), but his sources of inspiration remained overwhelmingly Tajik-Persian. Although he experimented with new verse forms, perhaps following Russian models, traditional Persian prosody remained predominant.



Now, even his love poetry exhibited a new spirit, as an evident joy of life replaced the pervasive melancholy of the earlier poems. His “spring poems” (Tabarov, pp. 215-24) represent a remarkable harmonizing of the closed inner world of his love poems, on the one hand, and, on the other, the dynamic landscape of the new Tajik countryside and the labor of those who were transforming it. In “Bahār-e Tājikestān o nāla-ye čupān-i” (Tajikistan’s spring and a shepherd’s lament; 1928) he skillfully merges form and substance and reveals his mastery of the comparison, and in “Bahāriya” (1931) he describes the aromas of the fields stirred by the rhythmic work of peasants and carried by spring breezes.

Solaymāni’s contributions to the emergence of a modern Tajik poetry were considerable. To its language he added the words and phrases of the new journalism and of everyday conversation, and he was one of the few poets of the time who could combine literary and spoken forms in a charming synthesis of sound and meaning. Of crucial importance, too, was his striving to ensure continuity between the old and the new. As a devoted student of classical literature he sought, on the one hand, to preserve its idealism and romanticism and, on the other hand, as a convert to the new civic poetry he undertook to merge traditional forms and values with a sense of social mission. It is as the reflection of a world caught moving between two eras that his poetry endures.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Works.

There are several editions of his poems; those published during his lifetime or shortly afterwards contain primarily poems with social and political themes: *Šukūfai adabiyot*, Stalinabad-Samarqand, 1931; *Majmūai še’rho*, Samarqand, 1932; and *Qadam ba panjsolai duvvum*, Tashkent, 1934. Other editions are: *Majmūai osor*, Dushanbe, 1959; *Devon*, Dushanbe, 1971; *Qalamam umri jovidoni man ast*, Dushanbe, 1989; and *Kulliyot*, Dushanbe, 2006, the most complete and scholarly edition. Enlightening is Solaymāni’s defense of his poetry against attacks by proletarian critics in 1931, “Maktubi kušoda ba idorai rūznomai ‘Tojikistoni surk’ (Open letter to the office of the



newspaper...),” in *Majmūai osor*, pp. 22-26.

Studies of his life and work.

The most extensive treatment to date is Sohib Tabarov, *Pairav Sulaimonī. Očerki hayot va ejodiyot*, Dushanbe, 1962. One may also consult Rahim Hošim (Raḥim Ḥāšem), “Payrav Sulaymonī,” in *Majmūai osor*, Dushanbe, 1959, pp. 3-21, a sympathetic portrait; and *Ocherk istorii tadzhikskoi sovetskoi literatury*, Moscow, 1961, useful for an interpretation in keeping with the ideology of the time.