



## ULUĠZĀDA, SĀTIM

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**ULUĠZĀDA, SĀTIM** (Sotim Uluġzoda in Tajik orthography; b. 1 September 1911 in the village of Varzik, in present-day Uzbekistan; d. 1997, Dushanbe), Tajik novelist, dramatist, and critic.

Born into a family of poor peasants and orphaned at ten, he was cared for and educated by the state. In 1929 he graduated from the Tajik Teachers Institute in Tashkent and began a career in journalism. Moving to Dushanbe in 1930, he joined the editorial staff of *Javononi Tojikiston* (later, *Komsomoli Tojikiston*) and *Tojikistoni surġ* (later, *Tojikistoni soveti*), the main Communist Party daily. He was also drawn into the literary establishment, becoming a secretary of the Union of Writers of Tajikistan (1934-37) and a deputy editor of its primary literary journal, *Baroi adabiyoti sotsialisti*. As a young man he owed these appointments, at least in part, to the Communist Party's search for "new men" as the foundation of the "progressive" intellectual elite that was to help lead the transformation of Tajik society. During World War II he served as a newspaper correspondent at the front and published sketches and short stories about Tajik heroism in defense of the Soviet homeland. After the war he devoted himself to literature.

Uluġzāda first achieved fame as a playwright. His earliest important plays dated from the late 1930s and early 1940s and dealt with contemporary social and political issues. In *Šodmon* (1939) he portrayed with a keen eye for realistic detail the struggle on a kolkhoz (communal farm; see [ECONOMY xii. IN TAJIKISTAN](#)) between the defenders of the old social order and mentality and the builders of a new world. This confrontation between the old and the



new was also the theme of *Kaltakdoronī surk* (1940), and, as in *Šodmon*, the new, that is, the disciples of the Communist Party, triumphed. *Dar otaš* (1944) explored the nature of heroism as exemplified by Tajik defenders of Leningrad in World War II and revealed Uluġzāda's talent at turning historical facts into literature.

He proved enormously versatile as a playwright, since he was constantly experimenting with form and method. His most accomplished pieces were undoubtedly those based on the lives of famous Tajik men of letters. *Rūdakī* (1958), based on his film scenario, *Qismati šoir* (1957), was one of the outstanding Tajik dramatic works of the postwar era. In it he deftly wove together facts and his own imagination to reveal the poet Rudaki as a complex individual with feelings and thoughts typical of his time, which he had constantly to reconcile with his ambitions as an artist. Philosophical in intent also was *Allomai Adham va digaron* (1971), an appreciation of the life and works of the 19th-century Tajik enlightener [Aḥmad Dāneš](#). Uluġzāda contrasts Dāneš's rationality and search for knowledge with the social and intellectual backwardness and religious obscurantism prevailing in the Emirate of Bukhara of his time. But Uluġzāda, alert to the ideological requirements of the new Tajikistan, also emphasized the spiritual unity of Tajiks and Russians. He turned frequently to history for inspiration as in the romantic epic, *Temurmalik* (1968). In describing the resistance of the medieval Tajiks to the Mongol invaders, he was intent on strengthening devotion to the Soviet Tajik homeland. He proved capable also of a lighter touch, as in *Jūyandagon* (1951), about the unlikely adventures of geologists, the first lyrical comedy in Tajik drama. Another comedy, *Gavhari šabčaroġ* (1962), written with verve and filled with humorous characters, was immensely popular.

Uluġzāda owes his fame as a writer mainly to his novels. Although he had written numerous short stories and sketches, it was his work as a playwright that allowed him to move quickly to long forms of fiction. As in his plays, he was inspired by revolution and the construction of a new social order. His first important prose work was the short novel (*povest*), *Yoroni bohimmat* (1947), about the faithfulness of wives while their husbands were at the front in the World War. He measured the nature of heroism both on the battlefield and on the home front, and he devoted much attention to the psychological motivations of his main characters and thus pointed the way to the new direction that the Tajik novel would take. His first novel, *Navobod* (1953), portrayed the creation of a new life in the countryside. As he was eager to

avoid the stereotyped plots and characters of the typical kolkhoz narrative, he revised his text a number of times, a testimony to his integrity as an artist. Built around the new man, the secretary of the Communist Party organization of the kolkhoz, the novel traces the elimination of the remnants of the old order and the laying of new foundations for human progress.

Uluğzāda drew subject matter and characters from history, while preserving his commitment to contemporary socialist construction. The povest *Subhi javonii mo* (1954) is autobiographical. Composed of a number of short stories held together by the main character, the young peasant Sobir (Şāber), through whose experiences the destruction of the old order can be observed, it develops the theme of the transformation of individuals and whole communities through revolutionary struggle. The novel *Vose'* (1967), about the leader of an uprising of Tajik peasants at the end of the 19th century (see [KULĀB](#)), allows Uluğzāda to explore the traits of the outstanding individual, the new man, and establish the link between enlighteners like [Aḥmad Dāneš](#) and peasant revolts. His povest, *Rivoyati suḡdī* (1975), set in the time of the Arab invasion of the 7th century, and his biographical novel, *Firdavsī* (1986), further reveal his attachment to the sweep of Tajik history.

Uluğzāda helped lay the foundations of Soviet Tajik prose and drama through his commitment to literature as art and as a means of recording and fostering social progress and through his searching analysis of the individual personality and collective psychologies. No less important were his language and style, particularly his insistence that speech conform to character and precision govern the use of words. His literary interests were wide-ranging, as his translations from Cervantes, Shakespeare, Goldoni, and numerous Russian authors suggest. They allowed him to judge Tajik literature from a broad perspective and measure his own creativity against native and foreign masters.

See also [FICTION ii\(h\)](#). In [Tajikistan](#); [CENTRAL ASIA xv](#). [Modern Literature](#).



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