

## UZBEK THEATER - IN THE ERA OF JADID ENLIGHTENMENTS

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**Annotation:** *This article highlights the contribution of Jadid enlighteners to the history of theater, the formation of the first theater troupe "Turon," and the first stage of the "Turon" troupe. The treatise also mentions the specific features of Jadid theater.*

**Keywords:** *"Turon," troupe, theater, imitator, performance, jadid.*

The emergence of 20th-century Uzbek theater is one of the unique events in the history of our culture. The Uzbek theater, which opened its curtain in 1914 with Mahmudkhoja Behbudi's play "Padarkush," emerged within two to three decades as a theater worthy of every nation.

In the press of Turkestan at the beginning of the 20th century, there is evidence that attempts to create a national foundation of European theatrical art began somewhat earlier than the official formation of this art form in our country in 1913. B.O. Pestovsky, who specifically studied the history of the new Uzbek theater, noted in a large article published in several issues of the "Inqilob" journal that "a report arrived in a village near the city of Qorako'l in 1909 stating that an 'Uzbek theater was performed.' In one of the January 1910 issues of the newspaper "Turkestan Viloyatining Gazeti," it was reported that "in the near future, a theater, that is, a Muslim society (truppa) playing the game of "muqallid," will be opened in Tashkent... That society plays'muqallid' in the Muslim language."<sup>1</sup> Five or six days after this news, the same newspaper also published a small report about the formation of a permanent theatrical troupe by local Tatar amateurs. Based on this, in the previous report, the term "Muslim society" may have referred to these Tatar amateurs. However, despite this, the performances of that society took place with the direct participation of local intellectuals. As a result, we can see that local theater actors have matured.

For the Jadids, the theater was, first of all, a "school of the great," a "house of learning," and, like schools and the press, it was intended to promote the idea of enlightenment and the pursuit of knowledge. Secondly, it was intended to earn money through educational and entertainment shows and spend it on the needs of education and the press. The arrival of Tatar, Azerbaijani, and Russian traveling theater groups in Turkestan gave impetus to the birth of European-style Uzbek national theatrical art.

The first professional theater in the territory of Uzbekistan was formed in mid-1913 in the city of Tashkent, and at the beginning of 1914 the first national play-performance was staged, and thus it officially began its activity and was initially called a "troupe." "Truppa" originally meant a creative collective of theatrical and circus directions, and in Russia theater groups were called "theatrical troupes." Since Turkestan was a colony of Tsarist Russia at the beginning of the 20th century, it was necessary to obey the imperial dogmas in the field of theater, especially when obtaining permission for the official registration of such a large cultural institution as the theater.<sup>2</sup>

Abdulla Avloniy, a renowned pedagogue, writer, and playwright who was a direct participant and organizer of these historical events, writes in his "Biography": "Starting in 1913, to open the eyes of the people and bring them closer to culture, I entered the theater, became the leader of those who established theater work, and traveled to several cities in Turkestan, paving the way for theater among Uzbeks.... I created a theatrical charitable society called "Turon." Miyon Buzruk Solihov also noted Avloniy's words: "This gang, which had been gathering as an amateur since 1913, officially became known as the 'Turon gang' at the end of 1914 and gradually became more organized."

In June-July 1913, the "Turon" troupe performed its unofficial performance. Along with other Jadids, Munavvarqori Abdurashidxonov also participated in the troupe's organizational and promotional work. On February 27, 1914, the first opening ceremony of the Uzbek national theater took place in the building of the "Coliseum" theater in Tashkent. Munavvarqori Abdurashidxonov was entrusted with opening the first act of the play. At this celebration, he said: "As you all know, no theater has been staged in the Turkestan language yet. Therefore, some of our people look at the theater, perhaps, with the eyes of a dancer or a clown. However, the true meaning of theater is the word "Lesson Room" or "School of the Great." The theater stage is like a house with mirrors on all sides, where everyone enters and learns from their own beauty and ugliness, flaws and shortcomings."<sup>3</sup>

The theatrical evening consisted of three sections, as evidenced by the "Maramnama" (poster) kept in the Abdulla Avloni Memorial Museum. The first is a performance based on Mahmudkhoja Behbudi's play "Padarkush." The second is a one-act Azerbaijani comedy "Khur-khur" performed by Azerbaijani actors Aliaskar Askarov, Gulzorkhonim, and M.Shakhbalov. The third section is "National Reading and Accompanies," where an eight-part concert will be presented. Mulla Tuychi Hafiz, the famous dancer Qurbonxon, and Mulla Ahmadjon To'ra will participate in the concert, and then Abdulla Avloniy's poems "Turkiston Faryodi" and "To'y" will be performed together. At the end of the narrative, it is noted that Abdulla Khoja's son, director Aliaskar Askarov, is responsible for the entire evening. Thus, the first concert of the Uzbek theater and the "Turon" troupe was successful. Especially the staging of "Padarkush" by the Tashkent troupe yielded

better results than expected. This event was covered in all the press publications that existed in Turkestan at that time.<sup>4</sup>

In particular, the report of the "Newspaper of the Turkestan Region" is very characteristic: "It has been half a century since the Turkestan Region came under the control of the progressive Russian government, and in the Sarts, this game has been so well compared that, seeing any theater, people familiar with theatrical work do not believe in their new knowledge, but imagine that these are people who trained in Europe for several years... It would not be an exaggeration to say by how many degrees they are superior to the Tatars who have been under Russian rule for 300 years. In this imitation game, the Sarts and Tatars were so numerous that there weren't enough tickets for those who came later, and people were bustling like chimneys inside and on top of the theater. There were also Russians. Such a large number of performances was a sign of their love for the theater and their progress, and the money received from the theater was given to the benefit of the Tashkent society."<sup>5</sup> From this it is clear that the performance was organized at a high level in all respects. We would not be mistaken to say that this was the first success achieved in the field of Uzbek theater.

The "Turon" troupe regularly staged new examples of Uzbek dramaturgy, which began to take shape together with the theater in 1915. For example, in 1915-1916, the plays "The Unfortunate Groom" by Abdulla Qodiriy and "The Oppressed Woman" by Hoji Mu'in were included in the troupe's repertoire, and from its very first steps, the troupe strived for innovation and collaboration, striving to develop as a professional team, for creative growth, and to show bold initiatives in raising the cultural and educational level of the people in extremely difficult conditions.

In conclusion, it should be noted that Uzbek theater was born as the core of the Jadid movement - the educational theater. In the "Regulations" of the first Uzbek creative group, the "Turon" troupe, it was emphasized that the theater's main goal was "a) to develop a serious attitude towards stage work and charity among the population, b) to show a performance for the people, to give them a healthy spectacle..."<sup>6</sup> In general, an important feature of Jadid theater and dramaturgy was its penetration into the human soul through the depiction of family life, its educational upbringing, and thereby the glorification of the ideas of national revival, which were developing in the life of society. The torch lit by the Jadid enlighteners illuminated the paths of artists who entered theater and dramaturgy with new ideas and aspirations until almost the 1930s.

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