

# Emancipated Woman Of Soviet East

By SARA ISHANTURAYEVA

Deputy to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, People's Artist of the Uzbek SSR

WHEN I look back at my past life, memories of a joyless, gloomy childhood loom up like a recollection of a nightmare which it is difficult to shake off even in hours of wakefulness. I lost my father when I was an infant and my mother, too poor to feed me, was forced to give me to an acquaintance to bring up. My foster-mother was a farmhand working for a rich landowner, and had there been no Revolution, I too would not have had any future. At the very best I would have been sold in marriage to the highest bidder, and as a peasant's wife I would have shared the fate of my mother. Poverty and slavery had been the lot of the vast majority of Uzbek women since time immemorial, and even the wealthy, though free of the former, spent their lives in bondage.

I was about seven when as a result of the Great October Socialist Revolution the Uzbeks, with the fraternal assistance of the great Russian people, overthrew the colonial and feudal yoke. Life in Uzbekistan took a complete turn. Schools were opened one after the other. I too was sent to study by my foster-parents who moved to Tashkent. Today it seems only natural to everybody in Uzbekistan that girls as well as boys should study—as a matter of fact, since 1930 compulsory education has been the general rule in our republic.

In school we not only received tuition free of charge, but we were fed and cloth-

ed of utmost importance to the nation. I have had the good fortune to participate in the discussion and approval of the post-war five-year plan and all the post-war budgets of the USSR, as well as the other laws adopted by the Supreme Soviet in this period with the object of raising the material and cultural standards of life. Apart from this, I conduct a great deal of activity connected with the immediate needs of my constituents. For instance, I took part in organizing the construction of several hydroelectric power stations in Namangan Region.

## TYPICAL STORY

My story is typical of all the women of present-day Uzbekistan, who take full advantage of all the political rights granted them by the Soviet system. It is indicative that, whereas 20 years ago, in 1929, only 7.8% of Uzbek women took part in the elections to the soviets, the percentage went up to 56.1 in 1931, and last year, when the Supreme Soviet of the Uzbek SSR was elected, over 99.9% of the women voters came to the polls.

Of the 400 deputies in the Supreme Soviet of Uzbekistan, 106 are women, while 14 Uzbek women are members of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. Need one look for a more tangible example illustrating the increased political activity of Uzbek women under the conditions of Soviet democracy, which guarantees women an opportunity to realize their equality in practice?

I could list the names of many Uzbek women occupying high government posts. Vasilya Sadykova is Vice-Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the Uzbek SSR. Ibodat Sharipova is member of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of Uzbekistan. Aliya Umarova, herself a physician, holds the post of Deputy Minister of Health. Jamiliya Tajieva, as head of the committee in charge of cultural and educational institutions, guides the work of over 2,000 Houses of Culture, clubs and reading rooms, 600 libraries, dozens of recreation parks and the numerous museums in our republic.

Formerly Uzbek women were completely debarred from participation in the economic life of the country. Today, however, over 400,000 women are engaged in state industry and producers' cooperatives in the republic.

Nearly half of all the students of higher schools in Uzbekistan are girls. Thousands of Uzbek women have graduated at higher schools as engineers, chemists, physicians or agronomists. Today there is hardly a field of endeavor in either industry or culture where women are not doing fruitful work. Our outstanding people include a woman professor, Dr. Zulfiya Umidova, who has done important work in the study of the effect of hot climate on the human body, the chemists Amina Abdurasuleva and Zarifa Saidnasyrova, the biologist Mukarram Arifkhanova, the writers Zulfiya and Aidyn, and the artist Khasanova. The Uzbek actresses Khalima Nasyrova, Tamara Khanum and Mukarram Turgunbayeva have been awarded Stalin Prizes. A great many women working in agriculture have been honored for their selfless labor for the good of the country. Seven of them have been given the title of Hero of Socialist Labor in recognition of their record yields of cotton and other farm crops.

## REAL EQUALITY

Uzbek women have occupied today a place worthy of them in the political, economic and cultural life of the republic because the equality of women has not only been proclaimed, but the material prerequisites making it possible in practice have been provided in Uzbekistan, as elsewhere in the Soviet Union.

In view of the feudal past of Uzbekistan, our republican Constitution contains a special provision declaring any resistance to the realization of Uzbek women of their rights an offense punishable under the law.

The women of Soviet Uzbekistan are joyously building up their life side by side with men, confident in the future. And all that we have today we owe to the Communist Party, to the great Stalin, who has shown us the way from feudal slavery to freedom and happiness.



SARA ISHANTURAYEVA

ed. It was while I was studying that I discovered my life's calling. I came to love the theater, and since there was a drama circle in the school, I became an active member of it.

When I grew up I was sent to a theatrical school in Moscow with a large group of other young Uzbeks on funds provided by the Soviet Government. After graduation I returned to Uzbekistan, where, together with the other Uzbek actors who had been trained in Moscow, I became one of the organizers of the first Uzbek drama theater, now the Uzbek State Academic Theater of Drama named after Khamsa Khakimzade.

I continue to work in the theater to the present. I have had the honor to be the first to perform most of the leading women's roles in the productions of this playhouse. I must say that I am particularly happy that most of the plays we put on now have been written by Uzbek playwrights who have come to the fore during the past Soviet years. In the first years of our theater we mainly staged translated works.

Regarding my work in the theater as service to the people, I am happy that I have been in a position to contribute to the development of Uzbek art. My modest services on the stage have been rewarded by the Soviet Government with the Order of Lenin, the Order of the Red Banner of Labor and the Badge of Honor, as well as the Distinguished Labor Medal.

I am also a servant of the people in another capacity: as a deputy to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. I was elected to the supreme body of state authority in our country by the collective farmers of Namangan Region where my birthplace, the village of Besh-Bulak, is located. Today I, the daughter of an agricultural laborer, sit in the Kremlin together with the leaders of our mighty country to decide on matters