



1989 Technical Review Summary  
by *Romi Khosla*

0988.USS

## Hamza Theatre

Kokand, U.S.S.R.



*Architect*

Sergo Sutyagin  
Tashkent, U.S.S.R.

*Client*

Ministry of Culture of the Uzbek SSR  
Tashkent, U.S.S.R.

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## I. Introduction

The town of Kokand, in the Republic of Uzbekistan has a long history which goes back to the 10th century. One of the strands of the silk routes passed through this town. The nominated project is The Hamza Theatre, originally conceived for dance and drama but whose functions have been broadened to include a much more varied use in the future because of the new policy (*perestroika*) of economic self sufficiency. Its major facility is an auditorium with 755 seats. It is a "State Theatre" which means that there is a regular repertory company, professionally paid, that performs and works here all the year round (216 employees). The district of Ferghana has 3 such State Theatres and the Hamza Theatre is one of them. The building is modern, built with precast panels and clad and decorated by the craftsmen of the Republic. It is built to counteract the highest seismic forces (Richter 8).

## II. Context

### a. *Historical background*

Kokand, in the Ferghana valley, is one of the most important towns of the valley and the historical capital of the Khanate of Kokand. One has to be careful to remain objective in assessing the historical background of the place and that of the theatre. The Uzbek's perceptions about their background often differ from those of the Russians (see section VIII and IX for details). The theatre's inception and subsequent completion, initiated from the capital Tashkent, should be seen in the light of the following statement about Uzbekistan in Soviet publications:

- "The Uzbek land is extremely fertile. But common people who used to work on it, lived without freedom and happiness for a long time. It was the Great October Socialist Revolution that brought the Uzbek people the right to live better. Over the years of Soviet power, Uzbekistan has turned into a Republic with a highly developed economy".

The Hamza Theatre was built as part of the cultural plan to modernise Uzbekistan. This modernisation process, which is still unwinding in the Republic envisaged the theatre as a major town centre. There was already a theatre in the town. It was the theatre the poet Hamza (born 1889) started, but it was not impressive enough to serve the purposes of a State Theatre. Thus the authorities decided to build a bigger and more modern theatre including modern facilities.

The project started in 1974, underwent a lot of changes and interruptions, and was eventually opened on the 23rd of February 1987.

### b. *Local Architectural Character*

The local architecture of the cities of Uzbekistan (and other southern republics) features both traditional constructions and modern buildings. This can best be understood from a description of Tashkent which also holds true for Kokand. (ancient name Kokandi Latif)

- "The image of pre-revolutionary Tashkent was typical for the majority of Central Asian cities. Low structures with earthen roofs with no windows facing the street were the common features for Tashkent. "Gloomy quarters of Tashkent, faceless women's figures in the streets - all this makes one's heart sick" wrote one of the travellers who visited the city in the mid- 19th century.  
Over the years of Soviet power the city's image utterly changed. Tashkent's territory has grown more than ten times. Broad avenues and streets, spacious squares, metro stations and shady parks and boulevards have appeared in the Uzbek capital.

Tourists coming to Tashkent to-day admire the architectural ensembles on the Lenin Square, the Navoi Opera and Ballet Theatre, the Branch of the Central Lenin Museum, the Palace of Friendship of the USSR nations and the ancient monuments".

It is this duality of architectural concepts that forms the architectural context of the Theatre. The Theatre sits at the cross roads where the modern meets the tradition in an almost literal sense, because in front of the Theatre lies the new town square and behind it the traditional mud constructed courtyard housing earmarked in the master plan for demolition.

c. *Climatic Conditions*

Kokand has a dry climate with hot temperatures in summer going up to 40° C and cold winter temperatures of -3° C. The rainfall average is of about 150 mm. The melting snow feeds the rivers of the region.

d. *The Site and its Surroundings*

The theatre has been built to the north of an old park square with ancient *chinar* (plane) trees. The building was built on the site of some demolished mud-wall houses. The park square has been entirely re-designed and now has an open air theatre, a tea house (*chai khana*) and a social realist monument to the poet Hamza. North of the theatre, and immediately behind it are the mud walled houses of the old city. To the west of it, beyond the site edge, there is a row of double storey Russian-built housing dating back to the 1950's. To the east of the theatre and immediately adjacent to it is the Hamza museum (which focuses on the poet's life and works); it was inaugurated on May 18th, 1989. The site is bounded on the eastern side by Akbar Islam street and to the south by Hamza street. Directly opposite the theatre and across Hamza street is the Jami Mosque, the most important historical mosque of Kokand dating back to 1809. Historically, town planning is difficult to document. However, it is obvious from the configuration of the land that the parks south of the theatre formed, at one time, the gardens in front of Jami Mosque, and that Hamza street was cut into this area much later as part of a traffic plan. Very cleverly, this resulted in the fact that the parks now relate to the theatre site and not to the mosque.

### III. Description

The programme, its objectives and the brief.

It is important to understand at the outset that the Soviet system of planning and designing projects is entirely different from that which prevails in other parts of the world. The fate and success of the theatre must be seen in this context. Any project costing over Roubles 3 million has to be approved by Gosplan (State Planning Commission) in Moscow. This project was budgeted at 6.8 million roubles.

The project (like all such projects) was initiated by the Ministry of Culture of Uzbekistan in Tashkent. The Ministry decides which city is to house which project. The proposal is sent by the Ministry to Gosplan Moscow who then, if they approve the project, nominate the agency in Tashkent that will carry out the project. In the case of the theatre, Gosplan nominated the Institute of Urban Planning of Tashkent to handle the project. The Institute then nominated the architect Sergo Sutiagin (an Armenian Russian who has lived in Tashkent since his childhood) to design the project.

The design of the theatre had to follow the norms and standards for State Theatres published in the "Building Norms and Regulations" SNIP (Construction Norms and Rules); these are national norms developed and updated by research institutes in Moscow.

The functional requirements of this theatre, therefore, follow the uniform norms for the country and cannot reflect varying local needs.

a. *Building Data*

Site Area	12'000 sq m.	However this is a notional figure because the theatre sits on the northern part of a public park square.
Total Built up area	8'200 sq m.	
Ground floor	4'550 sq m.	

The prevailing height of the building is 10 m though the fly tower above the stage goes up to 26 m. It is primarily a two- floor building except in the back stage area where 3 floors have been built within the 10 m height to accommodate the artists rooms.

b. *Evolution of Design Concepts*

The elements that determined the module of design were the standardised precast panel dimensions of the Soviet construction industry. After World War II, a massive programme of reconstruction was launched in the Soviet Union and prefabrication of construction panels was resorted to for rapid building programmes. This idea was taken from the French at that time, and some rudimentary 'know how' also came from the French to initiate this process. Engineers came to dominate most aspects of design and standardised buildings began to be built from Moscow to Vladivostok. The system of precasting was such that architects had to be content with whatever panels were delivered to the sites. They therefore began to regard the surface treatment of buildings (both inside and outside) as a separate exercise. 40% of the structure was entirely precast and brought from the prefab factory near Tashkent to Kokand. Each panel weighs about 5 tons.

As Kokand is a highly seismic area, a system of movable precast panels has been devised, which also emerges on the final finish. Thus joint gaps in the travertine marble cladding go through to similar joints on the precast panels. There is a complex jointing system between the precast panels and the in-situ columns. In the Soviet precast construction system, these panels are simply flat slabs with two lifting hooks on the edges. There are no moulded sections or any profiles that are precast. Thus, it can be said that the precasting is confined to a walling and roofing system of flat panels only.

The theatre was designed in Tashkent. As far as users requirements are concerned, these are totally governed by the manual of 'Building Norms and Regulations' which lays down the standards for State Theatres. It is relevant here to point out that these standards have to be strictly followed in all aspects as far as user requirements are concerned. The architect, therefore, is not free to deviate from these norms, whatever the specific local conditions. I have explained below (see personal appraisal) that, over the years, there has been an attempt to standardise the conditions for the performance of culture all over the Soviet Union. This has meant that when a State Theatre is built, the user requirements are also standardised; cultural activities have to have a hall, a proscenium stage and all the back up facilities for such a stage, regardless of the local cultural requirements.

The architect's innovative contribution is apparent, in this theatre, when one considers the following elements:

1. Interior treatments of walls, floor and ceilings.
2. The bronze statue windows made by a sculptor in Tashkent.
3. The mural paintings in the lobby done by a local painter.
4. The decorative lights.
5. The woodwork panels and doors.
6. The external cladding of the building and the articulation of the immediate area around the building.

c. *Structure, Materials and Technology*

This building, as indicated earlier is a combination of the following processes of construction :

1. Financial allocation in Moscow by Gosplan.
2. Standard norm design for State Theatres in Tashkent.
3. Precast fabrication on-site from panels brought from Tashkent.
4. In-situ construction work on-site.
5. Finishing of building using the following crafts:
  - a. Brickwork
  - b. Plaster ceilings
  - c. Woodwork in doors and decorative murals
  - d. Painted murals
  - e. Hand-crafted brass lights
  - f. Ceramic sculptures
  - g. Bronze statue windows
  - h. Services designed in Tashkent and carried out on-site by sub-contractors from Kokand.

The master bricklayer had a team of 11 bricklayers. This is the first contemporary building he worked on. Normally, he and his team only do reconstruction work on monuments. Anybody who is familiar with the reconstruction work that has been carried out in Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva knows that there is a massive programme of reconstruction going on in this part of the world. The bricks that were used for cladding are also made for reconstruction in a ceramic factory located in a town called Rishtan. The Hamza Theatre was a challenge for the bricklayers. There was very little time and the architect had designed patterns in relief which the bricklayers were handling for the first time. The master bricklayer is a distinguished man who has learned his trade from old masters in Kokand. His particular master teacher came from Bukhara, a city renowned for its brickwork. He explained to us how the reconstruction of historical monuments had introduced the making of walls with cladding. The historical buildings, originally built with square bricks in mud mortar, were seldom clad. Thus the theatre building has adapted the current techniques of historical monument reconstruction to contemporary buildings.

The plaster ceiling work was done in panels, designed by the architect and screwed onto a timber framework. The marble slabs came on-site polished and were cut at site and attached to the precast panel walls with clamps. It is a type of travertine marble.

In their motifs the carved doors were traditionally conceived. The master craftsman prepared several motifs on paper and the architect selected the ones he liked. Altogether 8 doors have been carved and 6 craftsmen worked on them. Both *Buk* and walnut woods were used. The walnut wood was bought in Kokand from individuals. The master carver who made the doors completed the work in 4 months and comes from a long line of wood master craftsmen. The doors are heavy

and solid and special brass hinges had to be fabricated in Kokand in a brass factory as part of what the Uzbeks call *Kashaar*, the community effort to realise an ideal. This is not the first time that such doors have been used in contemporary buildings.

The 37 brass lights placed on walls and ceilings, were made by a craftsman from Vilnius in Lithuania. They do not reflect any traditional motifs - on the contrary they are entirely contemporary and were made in Vilnius and brought to Kokand. The architect wanted to combine traditional and contemporary crafts, the latter being particularly suitable for electrical lighting.

The ceramic work consists of a large blue mural in the entrance lobby and individual groups of sculptures in the various halls of the theatre. These were made by a ceramic artist of Tashkent.

The mural wall was painted by a painter who has been working on small panels in buildings in Tashkent, Samarkand and Kokand. The alabaster wall surface was treated and painted upon using tempera colours. A small version was done on paper, approved by the architect, and painted on the walls. All the faces are portraits of people constructing the building. The theme of the mural is "the link of time" and the constant is the "problems of mankind". The first panel, placed historically in the 15th century, depicts the first outdoor performances featuring puppeteers and folk dances. There is a representation of a Dervish with a plant - a symbol of mysticism. The last panel shows Hamza in traditional Uzbek dress, a performance in the open and a link to the first panel - the link of time. The middle panel represents the European influence and the performance of culture within enclosures. The other parts of the murals between these panels show folk dance themes and mythical characters in Uzbek lore. This is the first time that such a mural has been painted in a contemporary building in Uzbekistan. It belongs to the finest tradition of narrative painting.

The bronze sculptured Windows were done by students of a master sculptor who has died but had done the sketches in 1981. They represent themes of Hamza's work taken from 3 different plays which, at a symbolical level, summarise the essence of Hamza's thinking. The sculptures were done in Tashkent and transported to Kokand.

The stained glass window which is circular and located at the end of the first floor lobby, over the main entrance, is a contemporary work, done by a Lithuanian artist, in molten glass.

The services were all designed at the Institute Offices in Tashkent. The 2 transformers of 1'000 kilowatts each were transported from Chirchik near Tashkent. The electrical load is high because the building is air conditioned in the summer. Heating is by gas. Steel conduits are the normal requirement for such public buildings and were used. There were no problems on-site and the drawings were followed without alteration.

The large air-conditioning load is serviced by 4'500 tons capacity condensers made in Harkov in the Ukraine. The supply is through a duct system which passes under-floor and in the ceilings. 9 fan units supply the required volume of air (over 100,00 cubic metres) through ducts that were fabricated in Kokand.

The plumbing work was carried out by workmen from Kokand. The water supply comes under pressure from the town and the sewerage also goes into the town system. The details were designed in Tashkent.

Acoustical work was designed by an expert from the Institute in Tashkent. The fire fighting system consists of a mixture of wet risers and sprinklers. The sprinklers are confined to the stage area, property stores and equipment room.



#### IV. Construction Schedule and Costs

The Construction Schedule of the Theatre was interrupted a number of times.

1974 The Institute of Urban Planning in Tashkent gives the design work to Sergo Sutiagin, one of their senior architects and the main architect of the project.

The preliminary design is submitted to the Soviet of Ministers of Uzbekistan for approval. At this stage it was a concrete building without any special treatment.

1978 Detailed drawings made for construction. Construction starts by the Construction Trust 14 of the Ministry of Construction - the work is handled on-site by the 10th unit of the Trust of Kokand.

1979 Construction is stopped. Earthquakes and floods in the region impose an economic constraint on the government and cultural projects are frozen.

1984 The construction freeze is lifted. The Kokand party General Secretary actively gets the various agencies together and a renewed effort is made to re-commence the project. The structure gets completed by diverting panels from other buildings to the Theatre. The whole community of Kokand determines to complete this theatre despite the shortage of building materials.

1985 As the structure nears completion, the architect begins work on the interior and evolves an entirely new concept for the treatment of the theatre based on local motifs and skills. The façade is re-designed. An internal competition is held within the Institute to generate ideas for the facade.

The new drawings and budget of over 6 million roubles is submitted to the State Building organisation in Moscow for approval, the previous 1974 financial sanction having expired. This proposal is approved in Moscow and returned with a budget cut of Rbl 200'000. The Soviet of Ministers Uzbekistan finally approves a budget of Rbl 6'080'000 for the Theatre.

23.2.87 The Theatre is opened. It is the architect's birthday!

##### *Costs*

	Rbl
Site work	2'922'700
Labour	6'580'000
Materials	38'650'000
Total	48'152'700
Add:	
Professional fees	2'500'000
Other expenses	13'847'300
Total project cost	64'500'000

The cost per sq m is Rbl 841.4.



In assessing these costs, it is not advisable to make simple comparisons with costs outside the Soviet Union. This is why a dollar equivalent has not been given. The rate of exchange of the rouble is artificially pegged as are the cost of building materials. These prices form part of a much larger planning strategy that governs the allocation of Gosplan funds.

Other cost obtained from interviews :

Electricity	Rbl 120'000 Rouble - excluding the costs of the two transformers. In the Soviet Union, the norm for Electrical work is 5% of the project cost. The Theatre ratio was 7% including the costs of the transformers.
Air-Conditioning	Rbl 135'000 - excluding the cost of the equipment sent from Chirchick. The equipment cost was 7 units at Rbl 4'000 each Rbl 42'000 2 units at Rbl 9'000 each Rbl 18'000. Total Cost = Rbl 195'000.
Plumbing	Total Cost = 74'000 Roubles. In the Soviet Union, Plumbing Costs should be 2% to 3% of the project cost.
Carved Doors	Total Cost = Rbl 55'000.

The data on cost is per force patchy, as there was some reluctance to go into too much detail in a Technical Review, which the Uzbek architects and consultants were facing for the first time. We simply accepted whatever cost figures were mentioned and let the matter drop if there was any hesitancy in answering.

#### *Maintenance Costs*

The Director of the theatre informed us that he requires Rbl 600'000 per year to keep the theatre afloat. This amount would pay for the upkeep of the theatre as well as the salaries of the 216 permanent employees. 50% of this amount will be provided by the Ministry of Culture and the other half will have to be generated by the theatre under the new economic self-sufficiency policy of *perestroika*.

## **V. Technical Assessment**

There is no doubt that the theatre functions excellently. We witnessed the celebrations to the 100th anniversary of Hamza and it was indeed a delight to see such an intensive use of the theatre. Much has already been mentioned about the materials and technology of the building. It is centrally air conditioned and heated and thus the climatic constraints have not influenced the building design in anyway - rather one should say that the building design does not take the climate of the region into account because it is an enclosed hall with ancillary spaces that are artificially lit and regulated.

The choice of materials is confined to the finishing of the building. The use of brick cladding is particularly suitable in evoking the traditional skills of this region. The massing of the building simply reflects the profile of a large auditorium in the modern context. The fly tower and the raised podium as well as the entrance lobby under an over hanging mass all reflect the volumetry of a contemporary theatre in most parts of the Soviet Union.

The evaluation of this theatre is not really related to its clever volumetry or technical facilities and functions. What is more relevant is that the theatre has become a symbol for Kokand by providing it with a link to its past traditions.

## **VI. Users**

The entire town uses this theatre. The in-house troop has begun to perform regularly and a wide variety of town users come to the theatre. The adjacent tea house and museum make this whole place an important centre of the town.

## **VII. Persons Involved**

Architect	Sergo Sutiagin.
Structure	Alexander Semonovich Braslavsky.
Acoustics	Dilya Ahmedova.
Bronze Sculptures	Kisilov, Popov and Yeger.
Stained Glass Window	Elena Lipene.
Lights	A.A. Domeretska.
Mural Painter	Bahodir F. Jalalov.
Doors	Hassan J. Umarov.
Brickwork	Samijan Muidinov.

*Romi Khosla*  
New Delhi, 30 May 1989

## IX. Conclusion and Personal Appraisal

One of the most vital aspects of this theatre is that it is a re-discovery of roots for the people of Kokand. When one looks at the master plan of Kokand one realises what has been going on in this town, and for that matter in every city in the Central Asian republics of the Soviet Union. The town planning authorities have been "modernising" these cities. On the existing plans of the city that were prepared in the 1960's, every house and street of the traditional and historical town was documented. The organic quality of the historical city clearly emerges and is reminiscent of many Central Asian cities that are familiar to us. Narrow streets winding towards the mosque and market complexes, with courtyard houses and *qasbah* market-places. The town planning authorities have drawn modern grid-based town plans over these drawings and coloured them with water colour. So one has the strange experience of seeing the form of the historical town in a layer below the transparency of the modern town plan. They have not-considered trying to incorporate, or graft onto the traditional fabric. The intention is to bulldoze the historic town and build anew upon the site. Indeed this process has been going on since the 1970's. The assumption has been to level the old city to the ground and build a new city upon the rubble, in stages. So master plans have been prepared and can be seen, but no copies can be obtained because the word "secret" is conspicuously printed on them.

The result of this is that a completely alien plan and alien buildings have been built in the centre of Tashkent, Samarkand, Kokand and many other towns (of course Tashkent suffered rather badly from an earthquake in the late 1960's).

The Uzbeks see this as a Russian dominance of their culture. The current atmosphere of *glasnost* and *perestroika* has enabled them to express themselves openly after a long silence. By the early 1930's the Cyrillic Script had replaced the Roman Script which had, some years earlier replaced the Arabic Script of the Uzbeks. Before the Arabic Script, they used another alphabet. This rapid succession of different scripts has a rather disconcerting effect on any culture. Even in Turkey and Indonesia where such script changes have taken place, people lost touch with their history and only had access to the newer histories written in the newly introduced script. It is indeed part and parcel of the process of rewriting history. The Uzbeks declare that their history has been rewritten by the Russians, in the Cyrillic Script. The new set of textbooks educated a whole generation of Uzbeks who had very little contact with their own cultural history.

The influence on dance and drama was remarkable. Opera, ballet, choirs and orchestras were introduced and a singing style which was more particular to Russia than to Uzbekistan was also introduced. The Uzbek culture, like all Central Asian cultures, was based on individual singing performances and folk-dancing and singing. The Russians introduced their choreographies in Uzbek folk-dancing and in the process transformed a folk-dance into a proscenium stage performance.

The Russian intervention in Uzbek culture (and architecture) was intended to remove the "primitive elements" of Uzbek culture. Russians to this day regard the Southern Republics (and Afghanistan) as primitive areas, even though these areas had nurtured at one time some of the richest civilisations in the East (Kushan). Uzbek culture, the Arabic Script and the local dress, all were considered to be hindrances to "modernisation". The "heroes" of to-day, in the eyes of the Uzbeks, are those craftsmen and painters, who are able to show, in their contemporary work, the link with a past when Uzbek identity was clearer than it is to them now. The problem of reviving past traditions and inquiring about these traditions persists. They do not have sufficient material, their history books at present do not contain any accounts of the depth and richness of their own cultures. So a search is going on to try and identify what was their traditional culture. This gives them an excellent opportunity to try and combine the contemporary with the traditional. The techniques, technology and the training are contemporary, and yet, there is a search for identity, amongst all the creative people we met for roots.

The Hamza Theatre then is a symbol of this search. The theatre is certainly a symbol for the town. The way the town people were involved in completing the construction of the adjacent museum before its opening ceremony testifies to this symbolic role. The theatre forms a major part of Kokand's cultural life. In its urban context, the theatre is surrounded by housing which was under the anvil of demolition at one time, and contains some of the most beautiful traditional houses in this area. Their courtyards, painted woodwork and grapevines lend a grace and scale to these places which redevelopment would only destroy without replacement with anything significant.

In all our discussions with Uzbek architects in both Samarkand and Kokand it was clear that they were searching for a way to "conserve" and were willing to abandon re-development. They were not sure what to do except that the old city must be saved. They were looking for a strategy that would help them merge the contemporary and the traditional. The theatre, they felt, was a solution to their dilemma. Its modern construction and its traditional decoration were possibly a way out. In their approach of historical buildings, they do not distinguish between reconstruction, conservation and restoration. They reconstruct their historical monuments to the pristine glory of their original state. The effort has been remarkable. Again, the completion of the Hamza Theatre must be seen as an integral part of their approach to historical structures where traditional decoration on a reconstructed reinforced building forms part of their conservation strategy. A similar application of art and craft onto a precast building is therefore perfectly acceptable to them, indeed the only way for them to claim a modern building as an Uzbek cultural object.

The Hamza Theatre, although conceived in 1974, represents a symbol of the new "openness" (*glasnost*) for the Uzbeks of Kokand. This is because, at the late stages of construction, when there was a growing freedom to deviate from the iron rules of the Moscow approved building plans, craftsmen and traditional painters were brought in to transform the external surfaces of the building with regional finishes.

The only problem with the theatre is that it sits on one side of a large square and forms part of a whole complex consisting of a museum, a park, an opera air theatre, a tea-house (*chai khana*) and a public cinema. The museum has just been completed this year (by the same architect who designed the theatre) and there are other plans for additions and alterations to the square to make it the real town centre.

The square has enormous *chinar* trees (which look like Canadian maple trees) which are over a hundred years old. The new tea-house, which was constructed after the theatre had been completed, is extremely successful because it is always crowded. This tea house was moved from another location on the square which has been landscaped.

The use of bricks in the theatre interior has encouraged many new buildings to be built in brick. Buildings outside Kokand, bus stops and even industrial buildings have begun to display façades of bricks after the completion of the theatre. Brick has come back as an important element of architecture and as a symbol of Uzbek heritage. The impact of the theatre has been enormous because the architects have discovered a building material that was regarded by the Russians as being cheap and inferior. The architect of the theatre explained to us that the use of brick was considered by the Russians to be a material for the poor and that precasting is the material of the future. The theatre has given the architect an opportunity to re-discover brick, although the brick used in the interior of the theatre is a cladding, in the form of brick tile. We visited the factory where these tiles are made. It is interesting to note that this factory used to supply the same type of bricks for historical reconstruction. The theatre has encouraged a demand for similar brick tiles for contemporary buildings. (The factory is located 34 Km outside Kokand in a town called Rishtan.)

## VIII. Project Significance

The Theatre is a tribute to Hamza Hakim-Zade Niyazi (1889-1929) who was killed by religious fanatics at the age of 40. In the history of Uzbek culture, there is a special place for Hamza. (see an alternate view of Hamza in the Appendix).

He was a poet of the Revolution, a patriot and fighter. Born in Kokand, his work dealt with the life of ordinary people and their exploitation by society. He worked to educate people and he opened the first school where the poor and orphans of Kokand could study. His campaign for education had a special place for women whom he encouraged to take part in the social and cultural activities of the region. He was one of the first prominent people to welcome the Revolution and joined the Bolshevik party of Uzbekistan in 1920 while working as a teacher. Known for his poetry, he was also a playwright, composer and novelist. He had studied in a 'Russian Style' school (as opposed to a traditional *madrassa* type) and founded the first European style theatre in 1915. In 1920 the first official Theatre of Kokand opened to his play 'The Tragedy of Ferghana'.

Hamza's association with culture and theatre is extremely important and the present theatre has taken over the functions of the first Theatre of Kokand which opened in 1920. Thus its completion is of importance to the cultural life of Kokand because it symbolises the continuity of the efforts of Hamza to place music and drama in the midst of cultural life in Uzbekistan.

The original 1920 Theatre had an excellent reputation. Some of the finest artists of Uzbekistan began their career there. Kokand is a very important traditional cradle of drama for the whole Ferghana valley and the Hamza Theatre is therefore a symbol of the strengthening of this tradition.

Performance spaces are rare in the Islamic world since dance and drama do not seem to occupy a central function in Islamic Culture. Hamza's fight against religious fundamentalism had incorporated theatre performances as an important element and his murder was a result of his tremendous popularity and the secular nature of his outlook. It is therefore worth signalling this theatre as an important building because it does also symbolise one of the many cultural aspects that Islamic culture can nurture. The Revolution in the Muslim Republics of the Soviet Union has introduced many fundamental changes in that part of the Islamic world and the introduction and fostering of music, dance and drama has certainly given a much richer experience to the Muslims of Uzbekistan.

At an architectural level, there is no doubt that the construction of this theatre has influenced the use of brick in many contemporary buildings in the Ferghana Valley.

It was interesting to talk to the head of the construction company about his experience in building the theatre :

- "We have learned the meaning of quality. A lot of people have seen what quality in construction means. They are all asking us to build their buildings to these standards. Architects and engineers are coming here from many republics to see this theatre - to see what has been done. Even factory owners are asking for brick cladding in their buildings".

There is no doubt that the realisation of this theatre has had a deep effect on the architects of Uzbekistan.

b. *Proposed Apportionment of Credit and Prize Funds*

In view of the free and frank discussions that took place during the review of this project, and taking into consideration the Soviet system of table top discussions for every issue and opinion addressed this question of award credit in a meeting where all those concerned with the project were present.

There was a universal opinion that the architect should get the award and that he should be responsible for distributing it. All the craftsmen and engineers present clearly stated that it is only the architect who knows the effort that the others have put into the project.

100%      Architect Sergo Sutiagin to be distributed at his discretion.

c. *Message of the Award*

Cultural institutions contribute in a very important way to the lives of contemporary Muslims. Such a Theatre, built as a tribute to a martyr who propagated culture, heralds a major event in the lives of people in the Muslim Southern Republics of the Soviet Union.

*Romi Khosla*

New Delhi, 30 May 1989

## Appendix

### Hamza - An alternative View

by Murad Mohammad Dost

There are two opposing views about the poet Hamza. One needs to look at his contradictions.

At an official level, the post Revolutionary poet and writer of the Uzbeks was Hamza. When Socialist Realism was propagated as the mainstream of Soviet literature, the Republics also started searching, at an official level, for a Gorky amongst them and their choice fell on Hamza. But Hamza did not write prose of the right kind. His prose consists of didactic short stories that Hamza called novels. This was used to claim that Hamza was the first Uzbek novelist.

As part of this process, Hamza was likened to Mayakovsky and parallels were made, which was nonsense. His "marches" (*Sharkiya*) which were said to be similar to the "marches" of Mayakovsky, were derived from Turkish sources and had no connection with Mayakovsky. His acclamation as the first dramatist and composer were totally misplaced as there was a whole tradition of all this before Hamza in Uzbekistan.

Hamza was a person full of contradictions in his world view. At one moment he hailed the White Tzar and at another the Japanese, and yet, at another level, he called on the Sons of the Turkey to unite for a Pan Turkey. His views at various times were monarchical, Pan Turkish and Islamic and he also hailed the Revolution.

Hamza attempted to discover the truth of life on his own. He had only middle schooling but he opened a school for orphans which was shut down by the authorities within 4 months.

His work was uneven but he was able to innovate in traditional poetics. His whole life needs to be re-assessed. Much of his published work has been altered and censored so that a distorted picture of his work has emerged.

Hamza did join the Bolshevik party in 1920 but was expelled 3 years later - a fact that is glossed on.

*Source: Literaturna Gazetta*  
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