

## STUDYING JADIDISM FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE MODERN UNIFIED HISTORY OF CENTRAL ASIA

**Abstract.** *Within the Eastern intellectual elite, who were awakening in reaction to Western conquests since the 19th century, Jadidism became a relatively mature political, ideological and religious movement. It was a political doctrine that was periodically updated in accordance with the demands of the times, in terms of both conceptual views and national strategy. In light of the substantial body of research on the Jadidist movement, which is widely regarded as a significant national awakening phenomenon, it is imperative to continue examining its political and strategic methods and philosophy, which closely align with the spirit of the nation.*

*In the current context of integration and a unified regional strategy for Central Asia within the framework of global development, there is a need for ideological teachings based on its roots and the mechanisms of national development. Being progressive at its core, Jadidism created a national strategic concept based on a synthesis of the experiences of countries that, at the time, were pursuing the most progressive paths of modernisation. This article analyses the importance of studying the political and strategic teachings of the Jadid movement and its role in the history of Central Asia.*

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**Keywords:** *Jadidism, Turkestan, political strategy, decolonisation policy, post-Jadidism, identity, ideology.*

**Introduction.** The beginning of the 20th century was a pivotal moment for the Turkic peoples of Central Asia, characterized by substantial economic and social changes linked to the region's transition to capitalism. During this period, the foundations of a national bourgeoisie began to form, contributing to increased economic activity and the emergence of new class structures. The

Jadids emerged at a time when the historical territory of Turkestan was united for all the peoples of Central Asia, and all the materials of Jadidism reflected their political and ideological struggle for the independence of Turkestan. One of the most important aspects of this time was the emergence of a new philosophy and innovative ideas that spread actively among the

Turkic peoples. These ideas, in particular, were devoted to the necessity of modernizing society, education, and culture. As a result, the formation of modern political nations began, which became an important factor in the region's subsequent history. The process of establishing strong political structures in the states of Central Asia began with uprisings against the harsh policies of Tsarist Russia. Historical records indicate that before 1905, there were about four thousand national liberation movements in Turkestan [1. 118]. If such a number of movements indicates the people's democratic aspirations, then it can be argued that uprisings against tyranny and the desire for freedom were suppressed by the invaders from those times. Here are a few examples: 1) During the Dukchi Eshon uprising, 22 Tsarist soldiers were killed and 16 wounded, after which the villages of Mingtepa, Tajik, and Kashgar were shelled for three days, and most men in the village of Okchi were shot by Tsarist soldiers. In the criminal case regarding the Dukchi Eshon uprising, more than 400 people were prosecuted, and their property confiscated [2. 136]; 2) On January 12, 1881, in Koktepe, General Skobelev's detachment brutally killed more than 22,500 innocent Turkmens, Kazakhs, Uzbeks, and Kyrgyz [2. 11]; 3) In 1864, the Dungsans of Seven Rivers rebelled against Russian oppression, but were suppressed and everywhere blood was shed [3. 65]. Even Russian authors noted: "The main revolutionary task facing the national liberation movements during the occupation was not to lose their independence." In this gradual process, the doctrine and movement of the Jadids began to take shape as an ideological inviolability [4. 65].

**Research Methods.** The period in question went down in history under the name "Jadidism." Jadidism was a movement for renewal and reform that

encompassed various aspects of the life of the Turkic peoples. The core of Jadidism was the aspiration for enlightenment and modernization, which included reforms in education, culture, and public life. liberation movements, aiming at the creation of independent states. Thus, the beginning of the 20th century for the Turkic peoples of Central Asia became a time of significant changes and reforms that had a long-term impact on the region's development. Jadidism, as one of the key movements of that time, played an important role in shaping the modern political and cultural identity of the Turkic peoples.

Traditionally, the spread of Jadid ideas is associated with the name of Ismail Gasprinsky (İsmail Gaspıralı, 1851-1914). However, it should be noted that once this link – Gasprinsky-Jadidism – entered academic circulation, it began to migrate from study to study and was endlessly repeated and copied by scholars, automatically transcribed from one work to another. In fact, even a superficial analysis makes it clear that Jadidism was a much broader process not tied to one name. This movement was diverse and multilayered, and it achieved wide distribution. Moreover, Jadidism was not limited to the time frames we traditionally use to define the stages of national culture, philosophy, and identity formation. This process covered a much longer period and included many aspects.

It should be noted that the penetration of Jadidism into Central Asia, particularly Uzbekistan, was diverse, as was its long-term influence. Moreover, research on this issue revealed a later wave of Jadids. This later wave of Jadids gave rise to the formation of a new period, which we have defined as the period of post-Jadidism (Post Jadidism)[5]. This period, to some extent, differed from the earlier,

preceding Jadid period, and encompassed all the peoples of the region, allowing it to be singled out as a distinct phenomenon with its own chronology and cultural, social, and political specificity.

According to the Western scholar of Jadidism, Adeeb Khalid, Jadidism is "an astonishingly progressive doctrine"[6]. The idea of Turkestan unity contained within it, as well as its strategic ideological concept, has not been sufficiently studied from a theoretical perspective in the social and humanitarian sciences. As a result, it has only been explored in isolation within the fields of history, literature, pedagogy, and, to some extent, philosophy. In essence, Jadidism is a national strategic doctrine of its time, which developed a comprehensive set of measures for state development by integrating geopolitical, educational, religious, and cultural aspects. By its nature, Jadidism is progressive, and in its era, it developed a national strategic concept synthesized from the experiences of the most advanced and secularly developed countries. This concept was aimed at governing Turkestan in the spheres of geopolitics, education, culture, and religion.

In particular, one of the current tasks is to draw correct conclusions from history and to reveal the regional role of Jadidism in science, culture, education, and the economy in the history of Central Asia. This is an important task, as it will strengthen the ability of Central Asian states to withstand global ideological challenges today.

**Research Methodology:** This article relies on a transdisciplinary method that highlights the political, strategic, and ideological nature of the Jadid doctrine. It also analyzes the decolonization approach, which allows for an objective re-examination of the artificial history created by the ideology

of conquest in modern social and humanitarian sciences.

**Research Results:** In studying and promoting the Jadid national strategic doctrine, it has become clear that there are still unresolved issues regarding the theoretical foundations of national statehood in relation to the social and humanitarian sciences, as well as the methodology for promoting national and religious values within the framework of national model concepts and principles.

In addition, research is being conducted on the representatives of Jadid philosophy, pedagogy, and literature, as well as their works. However, since the aforementioned studies are predominantly of a theoretical and methodological nature, a constructive, competent model of the Jadid national strategic doctrine for social institutions has not yet been developed.

In his 2025 article published on the official website of the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES), Adeeb Khalid discusses issues that remain relevant in the study of Central Asia, particularly the scholarly and methodological challenges faced by Central Asian researchers and their academic groups: "Interest in decolonization was especially high in Kazakhstan, particularly among young scholars. During the Soviet era, Kazakhstan endured the greatest traumas: the devastating famine of 1932–33, which wiped out forty percent of the Kazakh population; nuclear tests that destroyed the environment; waves of deportation and migration that changed the demographic balance and turned the titular nation into a minority. These losses led to a sharp decline in the use of the Kazakh language, so that the majority of urban Kazakhs came to speak Russian. It is not surprising, then, that Kazakh scholars have produced the most radical critiques of the Soviet past.

In Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, however, there does not seem to be as much interest in a decolonial critique of their own histories” [7].

The concept of decolonization involves revisiting the scientific and cultural norms and paradigms imposed by colonial policy on subjugated territories. Jadidism, in turn, is an issue that needs to be reassessed and rehabilitated in the context of Central Asian history. Adeeb Khalid’s article primarily focuses on the issue of decolonization, noting that the non-objective historical narratives shaped during the Soviet era by Central Asian scholars have persisted even throughout the years of independence. According to him, Jadidism, in its essence, was a political doctrine and movement: “The movement emerged out of the necessity to respond to the colonial situation in which society found itself. The empire was the problem. Its very existence raised questions, but answers were not always found. Until 1917, Muslim intellectuals in Turkestan considered different models, most of which lay outside the Russian Empire. They read newspapers from the Ottoman Empire, Iran, Afghanistan, India Later, the revolution of 1917 changed many things” [7]. Evaluating the results of the Jadid movement from a political perspective and recognizing it as a significant branch of global politics in the 19th century, there are several key documents that demonstrate the political and strategic character of this doctrine.

However, after the “Division by Hatchet” policy of 1924, Jadidism began to be regarded as a doctrine specific only to Uzbekistan on a regional level, and it was increasingly seen in a narrow sense as a movement for enlightenment and culture, deprived of its political, ideological, and strategic significance. The role of Jadidism in Turkestan’s history was deliberately denied or even

concealed. This is because acknowledging this political movement in the broader context of Central Asian history would emphasize the shared history and unity of the peoples of the region.

**Discussion of research results.** The rigid Marxist theory that “history is made by the people” was countered by the idea that history is made by the will and sacrifice of national intellectuals, who could unite the people as a nation under a common idea – a notion that posed a greater threat to Soviet policy. That is why, for the past century, all information about the Jadid leaders was systematically erased under the dogma that “history is made by the people.”

In particular, the history of the Kokand Autonomy, established in 1917 and suppressed by force, is connected to a project written by Mahmudkhoja Behbudi in 1907. The “Turkestan Cultural Autonomy Project” was drafted in Samarkand by Mahmudkhoja Behbudi, one of the leaders of the Jadid cultural and educational movement in Turkestan. This document outlined a program for cultural and political reforms in the Turkestan region. Written in Uzbek using the Arabic script and certified with Behbudi’s personal seal, this paper was presented by Behbudi himself to the Muslim faction of the Third State Duma in St. Petersburg in November 1907. Until recently, this 19-page manuscript was kept in the personal archive of Ismail Gasprinsky, who received it from Ismail Bey’s daughter, Shafiq Khanum, and then gave it to Dr. Najib Hambetoglu in Ankara [8.6]. Historian Shamsiddin Kamoliddin writes: “Mahmudkhoja Behbudi’s ‘Turkestan Cultural Autonomy Project’ was a very bold political move for its time. It is of great importance for studying the history of national movements in the early 20th century.” After Russia’s defeat (1905-1907) in the

war with Japan and the events of the First Russian Revolution, Tsarism demonstrated its weakness and was forced to make concessions and reforms, including the establishment of the State Duma. Revolutionary events that swept through all of Russia reached Turkestan as well and increased political activity among Muslim clergy and national-patriotic movements. The political activity of the local population mostly consisted of petitions demanding freedoms in religious life. It was in such a socio-political environment that Mahmudkhoja Behbudi, then serving as the mufti of the Samarkand Court Administration, prepared the “Turkestan Cultural Autonomy Project.”

Several articles by Behbudi were published in the newspapers “Turon,” “Hurriyat,” and “Bukhara-i Sharif.” In his article “An Open Letter to Our Kazakh Brothers,” Behbudi writes: “Dear brothers! Muslim brothers! You all know that Turkestan is a Turkic land, and the peoples here – Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Sarts, Uzbeks, Turkmens, Tatars – are all originally descendants of... Tamerlane or his brothers. The Arabs, khojas, and sayyids of Turkestan, too, have lost their languages and have completely Turkified, even forgetting their Arab origins. and have united in all aspects. In the smallest towns and some mountains of Turkestan, there are some Persians, that is, Tajiks, but they are also true Muslims and share your faith. Their way of life is almost indistinguishable from the Uzbeks’ [9]. In this appeal, the call to preserve the unity of Turkestan is addressed to the people, with the goal of safeguarding independence: “Autonomy will be gained by the Turkestan children themselves, united and with determination. Of course, it will not be given by others. If others have the power, they will not give it. If we show weakness and the peoples of Turkestan do not unite and strive for autonomy,

then surely even our current autonomy on paper will be taken away – we can be certain of this, and no one can dispute it” [9]. The implementation of this political aspiration led to certain results in the political sphere by the 1920s. In the “Turon” project, aimed at uniting the peoples of Turkestan and creating a single state, Turar Ryskulov, a major political figure of Turkestan, envisioned that Madaminbek’s army would form the basis of the Muslim army. However, this idea was crushed by the central authorities: “Although the adoption of the flag of the Turkestan Republic and its objectives seemed rather moderate, the center could not make concessions on such an important issue as the formation of a Muslim army, especially if it was under the leadership of Madaminbek” [10. 179].

The very fact that this movement manifested itself in a national context was a revolutionary event, since prior to the emergence of Jadidism, the identification of local peoples in Central Asia was carried out on a territorial rather than a national basis. Even contemporary Western theories argue that national integration in Central Asia is not a natural phenomenon, but rather formed under the influence of ideas imported from Europe. These objections have several ideological aims: first, to undermine the national roots of the independent states of Central Asia; second, to justify territorial division as a result of the “division by ax” policy implemented in 1924, and to provoke national-territorial conflicts, etc. Therefore, it is especially important to show that Jadidism was a national movement by its very nature, expressing national ideas and the goals of statehood, and that it represented the intellectual stratum that mobilized the process of national formation among the peoples of Turkestan.

Behbudi's following ideas about establishing charitable societies also had a significant impact on the reform plans: "As long as this society collects money from the people and educates the nation's children, it will be necessary for the nation's future to train judges, that is, qadis, lawmakers, that is, legal scholars, engineers, that is, engineers, teachers for new-style schools, patrons and servants of the nation, that is, deputies for the new state Duma, those who will reform and revive our national industrial enterprises, that is, technical commercial houses and those who will help us in banks, that is, merchants who have studied commerce ... We must train people who will work for us, for the nation, for the homeland, for religion, for Islam, for the weak, for the citizens." [11]

The program "Reform and Bukhara" written by Abdurauf Fitrat was also politically advanced for its time. This program was written in 1917. In 1917, Fitrat was entrusted with drafting the organization's program as the flagbearer of the Young Bukharans. The "Reform and Bukhara" program compiled by Fitrat was accepted as the minimum program of the Young Bukharans. In this program, Fitrat focused on political, economic, and cultural issues. Its main purpose was to build a legal state and ensure the prosperity of this state. "Reform and Bukhara" consists of thirteen chapters, and its significance lies in the fact that this program, which began with the educational enlightenment movement, over the years, despite obstacles, political pressures, and persecutions, reached the level of a doctrine capable of solving political and state issues as a result of ideological development [12].

In the article "Hidden Stories About the Jadids" by the American Turkologist E. Allworth, there is information about the reform plans of the Young

Bukharans party or the group of reformers. He writes as follows:

1. We strive to eradicate illiteracy, to elevate the thinking of the people, and for this, we fight to open new schools and to widely spread Jadid literature.

2. We fight against misguided clergymen: our goal is to expose the ideas of the clergy and madrasa students and to initiate the reform of madrasas (transitioning them to the new method).

3. To show the people the depravity and cruelty of government officials. To this end, to show the essence of state laws and the attitude of judges toward people, and to protect, as much as possible, the rights of poor people and rural residents, since they have suffered much oppression and injustice from the state.

4. To expose to people the wealth and baseness of the Emir and the palace dwellers. To explain that the wealth in the treasury is not the personal property of the Emir or his prime minister (qushbegi), but belongs to the common people.

5. To curb immorality and innovation among the population, to observe religious laws and rules as much as possible during circumcision and funeral ceremonies.

6. To put an end to the remnants of the old among the population. To stop the rivalry of fanatics, their mutual insults, and rude attitudes towards each other. [13]

The awakening of nations at the beginning of the 20th century became a turning point for the peoples of Central Asia.

**Conclusion:** The purpose of the article was to study and analyze how, at the beginning of the 20th century, the Muslim intellectuals of Turkestan began to reimagine their societies and their place in the world, and the development programs they began to create for this purpose. This endeavor demonstrates

that, in the history of Central Asia, culturally intellectual groups capable of uniting for national interests and goals were organized and acted with consistent strategic objectives. During this period, the national bourgeoisie was formed, which ensured economic and political growth and the emergence of new class structures and ideological associations. Jadidism was a progressive doctrine for its time, striving to adapt Turkestan to global development as an integral region

in economic, cultural, and educational aspects. These ideas, in particular, laid the foundation for a new modern era in the modernization of society, education, and culture. Especially in the present, when external imperial confrontations and global challenges are threatening, studying doctrines like Jadidism should be put on the agenda, as it is an important ideological task that is beneficial for all Central Asian countries.

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### ЖАДИДИЗМДІ ОРТАЛЫҚ АЗИЯНЫҢ ҚАЗІРГІ БІРТҰТАС ТАРИХЫ ТҰРАҚТЫСЫНАН ЗЕРТТЕУ

**Аңдатпа.** Шығыс зиялы элитасының ішінде, 19 ғасырдан бастап Батыс жаулап алуларына реакция ретінде оянған жадидизм салыстырмалы түрде жетілген саяси, идеологиялық және діни қозғалысқа, уақыт талаптарына сәйкес тұжырымдамалық көзқарастар мен ұлттық стратегия тұрғысынан мезгіл-мезгіл жаңартылып отыратын саяси ілімге айналды. Ұлттық ояну құбылысы ретінде танылған жадидшілік қозғалыс туралы зерттеулердің бұрын-соңды болмаған көлемін ескере отырып, оның ұлт рухына жақын саяси және стратегиялық әдістері мен философиясын зерттеуді жалғастыру өте маңызды.

Бүгінгі таңда интеграция және Орталық Азияның жаһандық дамуының бірыңғай аймақтық стратегиясы тұрғысынан оның тамырларына және ұлттық даму механизмдеріне негізделген идеологиялық ілімдер қажет. Жадидизм өзінің негізінде прогрессивті бола отырып, сол кездегі жаңғыртудың ең прогрессивті жолдарын ұстанған елдердің тәжірибесін синтездеуге негізделген ұлттық стратегиялық тұжырымдаманы жасады. Бұл мақалада жадидтік қозғалыстың саяси және стратегиялық ілімдерін зерттеудің маңыздылығы және оның Орталық Азия тарихындағы рөлі талданады.

**Тірек сөздер:** Жадидизм, Түркістан, саяси стратегия, отарсыздандыру саясаты, жадидизмнен кейінгі кезең, жеке бас, идеология

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## **ИЗУЧЕНИЕ УЧЕНИЯ ДЖАДИДИЗМА С ТОЧКИ ЗРЕНИЯ СОВРЕМЕННОЙ ЕДИНОЙ ИСТОРИИ ЦЕНТРАЛЬНОЙ АЗИИ**

**Аннотация.** В рамках интеллектуальной элиты Востока, пробуждавшейся как реакция на западные завоевания с XIX века, джадидизм стал относительно зрелым политическим, идеологическим и религиозным движением, политической доктриной, периодически обновлявшейся в соответствии с требованиями времени в плане концептуальных взглядов и национальной стратегии. Учитывая беспрецедентный объем исследований движения джадидизма, признанного феноменом национального пробуждения, крайне важно продолжить изучение его политико-стратегических методов и философии, близких к духу нации.

Сегодня, в контексте интеграции и единой региональной стратегии Центральной Азии к глобальному развитию мира, необходимы идеологические учения, основанные на его корнях и механизмах национального развития. Джадидизм, будучи прогрессивным по своей сути, создал национальную стратегическую концепцию, разработанную на основе синтеза опыта стран, которые в то время имели наиболее прогрессивный путь модернизационного развития. В данной статье анализируется значение изучения политических и стратегических учений джадидского движения и её роль в истории Центральной Азии.

**Ключевые слова:** джадидизм, Туркестан, политическая стратегия, политика деколонизации, пост-джадидизм, идентичность, идеология

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