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JADIDS AND THE STRUGGLE ON THE PATH OF ENLIGHTENMENT

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Abstract: This article is devoted to the activities of the Jadids, who at the beginning of the 20th century regarded changing the fate of Turkestan as the main purpose of their lives. The Jadids were great intellectuals who considered the pen a weapon and the school a means of national salvation. During a period dominated by ignorance, they opened new-method schools, published newspapers and journals, and tried to awaken public consciousness through theater. Prominent Jadid figures such as Mahmudkhoja Behbudi, Abdurauf Fitrat, and Abdulla Avloni, despite threats and persecution, struggled for enlightenment and the future of the nation. The article highlights the bravery, dedication, and enlightenment activities of the Jadids shaped by historical events, revealing their exemplary legacy for today's generation. This study invites readers to become closely acquainted with the lives of the Jadids and their great struggle for the destiny of the nation.

Keywords: Jadids, enlightenment, science, education, nation, textbooks, press, newspapers, repression, persecution, historical memory

Introduction: At the beginning of the 20th century, a movement called Jadidism emerged in Turkestan for national enlightenment and scientific development. The Jadids introduced new pedagogical methods and called society toward education through schools, textbooks, and the press. At the same time, they faced resistance from conservative groups and the Russian authorities. For example, the first Jadid newspaper, *Taraqqiy*, opened in 1906, was shut down after a short period. In Jadid schools, along with religious subjects, secular sciences were also taught, which was considered progressive compared to the traditional education system of that time. This article covers the activities of the Jadids in the path of knowledge and enlightenment, their work in schools and the press, and the repression and injustice they faced. The oral narratives presented after the introduction help to reveal the spirit of that era and more clearly show the dedication of the Jadids.

Oral Narrative Section. Although historical documents contain information about the repressions of 1937–1938, some events were preserved not in written sources but in oral memories passed from teacher to student. The following story about the execution of Jadid intellectuals is one of such historical memories. Do you know why we are obliged to study well and live well? Then come closer. I heard this story from my teacher, and my teacher heard it from their teacher. October 4, 1938 — that tragic day when Abdulla Qodiriy, Cho'lpon, Otajon Hoshim, and other Jadids were executed. We all know they were executed on October 4, but the court decision was made on October 5. However, many of us do not know one thing. That day, most of the Jadids were brought to the NKVD

training ground in Tashkent. They were lined up and shot one by one. But at that moment, there was not enough ammunition for one person — Cho'lpon. They said they would execute him the next day. But Cho'lpon said: "No matter what happens, kill me together with these people. I cannot live any longer." After that, he was killed with an axe. Later, all the bodies were gathered in one place and buried. It is said that no funeral prayer or any ritual was performed. Some sources even say that chlorine and manure were poured over the bodies to make them decompose faster. The most striking part is that later a brick factory was built over the burial site, near Alvasti Bridge. That factory became one of the main brick factories in Tashkent and contributed to the construction of many buildings. Imagine hearing this information. My teacher said that when their teacher told this story to students, they said: "Even the building we are standing in may have been built in those years. Right now, Abdulla Qodiriy's eyebrows, Cho'lpon's eyes, and Otajon Hoshim's hands might be looking at you from these walls. After such sacrifice, how can you not study well, how can you not live well?". When I heard this story, I was frozen in shock. Indeed, someone's eyebrows, someone's eyes, someone's hands might have been mixed into those bricks. That is why we must study well and live well. Because once, the Jadids sacrificed their lives for our future generation.

Main Part. The Jadids did not live in easy times. The new-method schools they opened were not welcomed in many places. In some areas, these schools were forcibly closed; in others, they were deliberately burned. The reason was simple: the Jadids wanted children to be educated, to think, and to be literate — something that did not please supporters of the old order or the authorities. Jadid books and textbooks were also destroyed many times. Published works were confiscated, and some were burned publicly. Their newspapers and journals did not last long; they were shut down after only a few issues. Despite this, they did not stop writing and teaching. Every well-known Jadid suffered in their own way. Behbudi was persecuted for openly speaking about injustice in society. Avloni lived under constant pressure for writing about children's education. Fitrat's ideas were considered dangerous, and he was constantly monitored. Cho'lpon and Abdulla Qodiriy faced the harshest punishments for telling the truth through literature. In 1937–1938, injustice reached its peak. Many Jadids were imprisoned; some were executed. Their schools were closed, their works banned, and even mentioning their names became dangerous. But their efforts did not disappear. At the cost of their lives, the Jadids opened the road for future generations.

The Jadid movement was not limited to simply opening schools or writing books; it was a broad initiative aimed at awakening society, transforming people's thinking, and struggling for the future of the nation. The Jadids did not confine themselves to educating children; they sought to elevate public consciousness, encourage the pursuit of knowledge, and develop critical thinking to modernize society. They placed particular emphasis on women's education, recognizing that societal progress was impossible without literate and active women. For this

reason, schools for girls were established, articles on women's literacy and upbringing were written, and these ideas were widely promoted through the press to inspire people to adopt a new way of thinking. In addition, the Jadids gave great importance to reforming the national language and literature, striving to simplify the complex, outdated language, and create a living, accessible literary language. Through textbooks, articles, and literary works, they contributed to the development of language and cultural thought, while also spreading ideas of social progress and modernization. Theater and stage art served as powerful educational tools for them, not merely for entertainment, but to open the eyes of the public and critically highlight social issues; through performances, ignorance, injustice, and societal ills were exposed, encouraging ordinary people to reflect on their lives and future. Moreover, the Jadids were not only educators but also intellectuals concerned with political thought, advocating for justice, the rule of law, and the protection of the people's interests. Although there were differing opinions within the movement, they were united by a single goal: that the nation should not fall behind, should progress alongside the times, advance through knowledge and thought, and strive toward modernization. In this regard, the activities of the Jadids can be regarded as the beginning of the modernization process in Central Asia. Their dedication, courage, commitment to enlightenment, and willingness to sacrifice themselves serve as both an example and a source of inspiration for today's generation, encouraging us to study diligently, develop ourselves, and recognize our responsibility to society.

Conclusion: The oppression and injustice experienced by the Jadids are not just historical facts but a heavy yet necessary lesson for today. Their schools were burned, their works banned, and they were forced into silence. Nevertheless, they did not lose faith in the future of the nation. They fought with knowledge, intellect, and the power of the word. If today we can study, write, and express opinions freely, we must understand that these opportunities did not come by chance. The lives of the Jadids demand not only remembrance but responsibility — to be educated, not to remain indifferent, and to feel our duty before our time. Their tragic fate should inspire not despair but awareness and conscious living. What would Abdulla Qodiriy say if he saw our society today? I think any great person of their time would restore their position in any era. Even if Abdulla Qodiriy came to our time, he would still become a great thinker and writer. But he might be surprised and say: "The novel 'O'tkan kunlar,' which I wrote as practice, is still considered the best. What have today's writers done?"

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