

THE MULTIDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

VOLUME-5, ISSUE-4

ECHOES OF CENTURIES-OLD CRIES

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Annotation: This article explores the Jadidism movement, its key contributors, and provides brief insights into the lives and works of Fitrat and Cho‘lpon. It also discusses the spread of knowledge and enlightenment in our country, and highlights individuals who lived with burning concern for the fate of their homeland.

Keywords: Jadid, colonialism, Usuli Jadid, progressive, Munozara

At the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, the Jadidism movement emerged as a socio-political and cultural movement in Central Asia, especially in the Turkestan region. Its main goal was to enlighten the people, awaken them through science, modern education, and culture, and free them from the oppression of colonialism. To lead the people toward enlightenment, the Jadids implemented various reforms.

Through educational reform, the Jadids aimed to replace the old, religious-based education system in schools and madrasas with a new, secular system based on contemporary knowledge. They promoted a new teaching method known as Usuli Jadid.

Press and Literature – The Jadids published newspapers and journals, calling the people to enlightenment. Through their literary works, they spread the ideas of national awakening.

National Identity and Freedom – The Jadids urged people to resist colonial oppression and advocated for the preservation and development of national identity, language, and culture.

The Jadids were pioneers in spreading enlightenment ideas throughout Central Asia. They served to expand knowledge and culture among the people and stirred opposition to colonialism. Their work greatly influenced the development of modern education and culture in Uzbekistan.

Initially, Jadidism was active as a cultural movement. Its representatives fought for progress, called for the development of Turkic languages and enrichment of their literature, the study of secular sciences, the use of scientific achievements, and for gender equality.

They often called themselves progressives, and later became known as Jadids. The progressive forces of that time, especially intellectuals, understood that the local population was falling behind in terms of global development and realized the need for societal reform. In essence, Jadidism was a political movement.

1. The Meaning of the Word "Jadid"

The word “Jadid” is derived from Arabic and means “new” or “renewed.” “Usuli Jadid” refers to the “new method of education,” which, unlike traditional religious instruction, was based on modern sciences and secular knowledge.

2. The First Schools

The schools established by the Jadids were revolutionary innovations at the time. In these schools, students studied subjects like geography, mathematics, history, and biology, while also becoming familiar with ideas of national identity, patriotism, and freedom. Lessons were conducted using blackboards, maps, and charts – which was a novelty for that era.

3. Fitrat's "Munozara" Was Also Staged

Abdurauf Fitrat's famous work "Munozara" was not only published as a book but also performed on stage. Through this piece, he aimed to convey the superiority of modern education to the general public.

4. The Jadids Were Founders of Theater

The foundation of Uzbek professional theater was also laid by the Jadids. They developed national dramaturgy and used stage performances to promote enlightenment among the people. For instance, Munavvarqori Abdurashidkhanov was one of the pioneers of early theatrical activities in Tashkent.

5. The Jadids Were Also Founders of National Press

The Jadids are considered the founders of the national press. They established newspapers and journals such as Taraqqiy, Sadoi Turkiston, Hurriyat, and Buxoro Axbori to encourage people to embrace new ideas and thinking.

6. They Also Fought for Women's Education

The Jadids placed great importance on women's education. At that time, this was an extremely bold and progressive stance. For example, Abdulla Avloniy wrote that "The girls of Turkestan have the right to education." They even established schools specifically for girls.

Famous Jadids such as Mahmudkhoja Behbudiy, Abdulla Avloniy, Fayzulla Khojayev, Abdurauf Fitrat, Sadridin Ayni, Munavvarqori Abdurashidkhanov, and Abdulhamid Cho'lpon are well known. They lived passionately for their homeland and sacrificed their lives for it.

In particular, Abdurauf Fitrat is undoubtedly one of the most prominent and influential intellectuals of Central Asia in the first quarter of the 20th century. He was known as a writer, poet, journalist, political figure, and one of the ideological leaders of the Turkestan Jadidism. Through his writings and speeches, Fitrat called on people to escape ignorance and backwardness and to pursue knowledge and science. He supported opening new-style schools and modernizing curricula. Fitrat wrote many plays, poems, and articles. One of his most famous works is Munozara, which presents a debate between supporters of old and new schools, demonstrating the superiority of modern education.

His works such as Sayha, True Love, Indian Revolutionaries, and Abulfayz Khan convey themes of national awakening, freedom, love, and enlightenment.

As an advocate of language reform, he worked on the scientific development of the Uzbek language and promoted the unity of Turkestan peoples and a common Turkic literary language.

During the early Soviet years, he held several important positions in Uzbekistan, especially in the fields of science and education. However, during the political purges of 1937, he was declared an "enemy of the people" and was executed in 1938.

Fitrat was one of the individuals who deeply understood and fully embodied the spirit of Jadidism. His works continue to inspire young people toward enlightenment, patriotism, and self-awareness.

Another great intellectual and enlightenment figure we must mention is Abdulhamid Cho'lpon. Born in 1897 in Andijan, he first studied in a traditional school and then in a Russian-native school. In 1914, he moved to Tashkent and began working with the Sadoi Turkiston newspaper. His works were also in newspapers and magazines in Orenburg, Ufa, Kazan, and Bakhchisarai.

From 1916 to 1917, he lived in Orenburg, where he worked as a secretary for the Bashkir government court. He later returned to Tashkent and worked for TurkRosTA until 1920. That same year, he participated in the Congress of Eastern Peoples in Baku. At Fitrat's invitation, he went to Bukhara and led the Uzbek-language newspaper Buxoro Axbori. After about a year, he returned to Tashkent and focused on literature published and culture.

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Between 1924 and 1926, Cho'lpon lived in Moscow and headed the newly established Uzbek drama studio.

His poetry collections such as Uzbek Young Poets, Beautiful Writers, Fragments of Literature, as well as his own collections Awakening, Springs, Secrets of Dawn, and Melody played an important role in the development of modern Uzbek poetry.

His prose works like the novel Night and Day and stories Doctor Muhammadyor, A Tulip in the Snow, The Baker Girl, and On Moonlit Nights made significant contributions to the development of modern Uzbek fiction.

His plays such as Yorqinoy, Khalil the Foreigner, The Servant's Rebellion, I Will Marry Again, The Boxer, Comrade Qarshiboev, and Attack demonstrate his achievements in drama.

The ideas of national independence and freedom were at the heart of Cho'lpon's works. Like other Jadids, he was oppressed by the Tsarist Empire. The second part of Night and Day was destroyed during those times. But the Jadids never stopped creating or striving forward.

They lived with fire in their hearts and gave their lives for this cause.

The contribution of the Jadids to the comfortable life we enjoy today is invaluable. Every creative work written by the Jadids is a treasure of our national heritage. They held a torch against the darkness, guiding people toward awakening and knowledge. Their hearts beat for the homeland, their souls for the people, and their pens and words embodied truth.

We are filled with pride and honor to be the descendants of such noble ancestors.

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