

EDUCATIONAL STAGES AND CURRICULA IN THE JADID SCHOOLS OF TURKESTAN

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Abstract. *This article traces the intellectual and institutional origins of the Jadid movement in Turkestan and examines the educational stages and curricula of its new-method schools. It situates Jadidism within the socio-political contradictions of colonial Central Asia, follows the reformist line from Abu Nasr Qursaviy and Shihobiddin Marjoniy through the early twentieth-century revival of the movement, and sets out the reform programmes advanced first by Marjoniy and then by the Jadids themselves. The study argues that, for the Jadids, knowledge and enlightenment served as the principal instrument of socio-economic and cultural progress, and that the reform of education stood at the centre of their broader project of national renewal.*

Keywords: *Jadidism, Turkestan, educational reform, usul-i jadid school, Qursaviy, Marjoniy, Behbudiy, madrasa, native-language instruction, national idea.*

INTRODUCTION

The Jadid movement in Turkestan was not an accidental phenomenon but rather a product of the socio-political contradictions of the life of the time. The socio-political and enlightening dimensions of the Jadid current were set out in detail by Professor B. Qosimov in his research. From the beginning of the nineteenth century, among the reform-minded Muslim imams and intellectuals of Bukhara, the idea began to emerge of reforming the system of madrasas and maktabas and of purifying Islam of the innovations (bid'a) that had entered it. Supporters of such reform came to be called Jadids – that is, advocates of the new (the word “jadid” derives from the Arabic for “new”). From that period onward, the opposing current – people imbued with feudal-medieval and religiously fanatical attitudes – came to be called qadimists (advocates of the old).

MAIN PART

The origins of the reform movement: Qursaviy and Marjoniy

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, a number of enlightened teachers came forward with the idea of reforming the nearly two hundred madrasas of the city of

Bukhara. At the head of this movement stood the madrasa teacher Abu Nasr Qursaviy. The qadimists accused them of infidelity and godlessness. The emir of Bukhara, Haydar, had Qursaviy cast into prison and sentenced to death; but his supporters helped him escape. Qursaviy continued his activity in Kazan and died in 1813. In the 1850s and 1860s the religious reform movement expanded further. Now at its head stood the Bukharan teacher and historian Marjoniyy (1818–1889), domla Fozil of Gijduvon, Mo‘minjon Vobqandiyy, mulla Xudoyberdi Boysuniyy, and other teachers. They wrote that they favoured not the wholesale reform of madrasas and schools but rather the removal of superfluous lessons. As the leader of the reformers, Marjoniyy set out the following six principal questions in his programme:

1. On every religious question in the Qur’an, people should reason freely on the basis of knowledge.
2. The blind imitation of one person by another should be strictly forbidden.
3. Lessons of empty content – such as the marginal glosses (hoshiya) and commentaries (sharh) taught in the madrasas, which are useless to pupils and waste eight to ten minutes of their time – should be removed from the timetable.
4. In the madrasas, lessons such as the Holy Qur’an, the noble Hadith, their translations, and the history of Islam should be taught.
5. No resistance should be shown to the study of secular sciences such as arithmetic, history, geography, medicine, geometry, logic, philosophy, and others.
6. In every matter, Muslim practice should aim to return to the ancient Islamic culture of the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Marjoniyy and the Jadids of that period who supported him were among the Muslim progressives; they made it a condition that, alongside religious lessons, secular subjects – as in the era of classical Islamic culture – be taught in the madrasas. However, owing to the reactionary policy of the qadimists and of the emir, Marjoniyy, who had come under persecution, was forced to leave Bukhara. Many of his comrades were thrown into prison and, after receiving seventy-five lashes on the back, repented and promised not to do such things again.

The rise of the Jadid movement under colonial rule

At the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, as a result of the intensification of tsarist colonialism in Turkestan, the Jadid movement gained strength

in many parts of Central Asia. Because this movement was directed at restructuring the socio-cultural foundations of the existing society, it met with the strong resistance of the supporters of the old order, the old way of life, and the old school. The representatives of this opposing force were called qadim or qadimists, while those who strove to bring the breezes of a new life received the name jadid or Jadids. For them it was clear as day that it was no longer possible to live in conditions of social degradation and economic and cultural backwardness. The grave situation in the country ruled by the “white tsar” gave rise to the revolution of 1905; the Iranian bourgeois revolution of 1907 and the Turkish bourgeois revolution of 1908 likewise played a great part in the formalization and strengthening of the Jadid movement in Central Asia. The progressive intellectuals of Central Asia, having become acquainted with this programme, followed their Tatar brethren and joined the Jadid movement.

The Jadid movement defined its principal task as the development of society through reforms rather than through revolution. In carrying out this task it did not rely on a single class – the proletariat alone. Jadidism was not, in general, an advocate of dividing humanity into classes. The Jadids even formed alliances with the qadimists, raising the idea of working together for the good of the people and the future – in today’s terms, the idea of the peaceful and harmonious coexistence and labour of strata of the people holding differing political views. Setting out this idea of a “united” front, Behbudiy wrote: “If our scholars, our intellectuals and progressives, our wealthy and our common people unite and serve the development of religion, nation, and homeland ...” Already in 1906 the Jadids began to spread their ideas by publishing a newspaper named “Taraqqiy,” and before long new newspapers such as “Khurshid” and “Shuhrat” saw the light of day. Jadid schools opened in profusion in the various cities of Central Asia, in which secular knowledge was widely promoted alongside religious learning.

The programme of the Jadids

If stated concisely, the programme of action of the Jadids was directed at resolving the following questions:

1. The struggle against religious bigotry and fanaticism.
2. The establishment, in place of the medieval schools founded on religious dogma, of new-method schools adapted to teaching secular European-type knowledge in the native language, and the reform of the feudal-era system of education.

3. The development of a new Uzbek literary language in order to convey Jadid ideas to the broad masses, the struggle for freedom of the press, and the creation of a literature and theatre comprehensible to the people.

4. The transformation of the lot of women by freeing them from the veil and ensuring their attendance at Jadid schools, and the carrying out of reform within the family.

5. The political and economic equality of the local wealthy and merchant classes with the Russian bourgeoisie, and the struggle against the oppression of local officials by the tsarist authorities – thereby reforming colonial policy.

For the Jadids, whose principal demands consisted of just these points, knowledge and enlightenment were the sole weapon, and with the aid of this weapon they sought to struggle for the socio-economic and cultural progress of the region.

Behbudiy and the new-method school

Just as the name of Ismoilbek Gaspirali – who brought a genuine revolution to the spiritual life and schooling of the Eastern peoples and became a true pride of the Turkic nations through the “usul-i jadid” he devised – occupies a great place in history, so too the name of Behbudiy occupies a broad place in the schooling and enlightenment of Turkestan. He is considered one of the first propagandists and practitioners of organizing schools of this new type in the region, and in this sphere he learned many new approaches from Gaspirali. The newspaper “Tarjimon” became for Behbudiy an essential means of grasping the situation of the day; later its pages gave broad space to founding new schools and disseminating advanced ideas. For this reason Behbudiy chose Gaspirali’s path, sought his counsel, and became his like-minded comrade.

CONCLUSION

The Jadid movement in Turkestan grew out of an internal reformist tradition – reaching back to Qursaviy and Marjoniy – and matured under the pressures of tsarist colonial rule and the influence of the revolutions of the early twentieth century. Its leaders chose the path of reform rather than revolution and placed the renewal of education at the heart of their programme: replacing the dogmatic medieval school with new-method, native-language instruction, developing a modern literary language and press, and seeking social and economic equality for the peoples of the region. The educational stages and curricula of the Jadid schools thus embodied a wider vision in which knowledge and enlightenment were the decisive instruments of national progress.

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