

THE JADIDISM ERA PRESS AND THEATER: A NEW STAGE IN THE CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF TURKESTAN**Adiba Abdusaidova Gaybullo kizi**

a student of Navoi University of Innovations, majoring in “Philology and Language Teaching: Uzbek Language”.

Scientific Supervisor: PhD in Philology **Payzullayeva R.M.**

Abstract: The article analyzes the activities of Turkestan Jadids in the fields of press and theater. The Jadid press played a significant role in promoting enlightenment and awakening national consciousness, while the theater served as a vivid and emotional medium to convey these ideas to the public. Based on the views of Munavvarqori Abdurashidkhanov and Abdulla Avloni, the study highlights the educational and cultural importance of the press and theater. The findings show that the Jadid legacy remains relevant today as a vital spiritual and cultural value.

Keywords: Jadidism, press, theater, enlightenment, national awakening, Avloni, Munavvarqori.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the Jadidism movement that emerged in the Turkestan region was a broad educational and intellectual reform movement aimed at renewing the political, social, and cultural structure of the local society. The primary goal of this movement was to re-evaluate traditional madrasa-based teaching methods, acquaint the population with modern science and enlightenment, and awaken national consciousness. To achieve these objectives, the Jadids used the press and theatre as two of the most effective tools: on the one hand, articles, pamphlets, and journals enabled wide public discussion, while on the other hand, theatrical performances brought social issues to life on stage and directly contributed to public education.

The Jadid press—newspapers and journals—successfully reached a wide audience by conveying new ideas in simple language, discussing issues of schooling and family life, and raising questions concerning women’s education and the national language. These publications performed an “educational” function, disseminating not only scientific and didactic materials but also shaping social criticism and modern publicistic writing. Through the press, Jadid intellectuals expressed their views on new-method (usul-i jadid) schools, textbooks, the role of teachers, and pedagogical innovations.

Theatre became the “living school” of the Jadid movement. Jadid dramatists brought social and moral subjects to the stage, addressing themes such as family relations, the consequences of ignorance, and the conflict between national and modern values. Travelling theatre troupes performed in cities and villages alike, turning the stage into an educational tool that presented life-like dramatic situations rather than abstract philosophical speeches. In this way, the theatre established direct communication with the public and nurtured new ideas among various layers of society.

The institutions of the press and theatre complemented one another: while the press disseminated theoretical ideas, the theatre depicted these ideas practically and emotionally, embedding them into the minds of broader audiences. As a result, the national awakening process manifested not only among the intelligentsia, but also in new educational institutions, family life, and community (mahalla) culture.

This process significantly influenced the development of language and literature, giving rise to new schools of drama and journalism as well as early examples of modern Uzbek literature.

The activities of Turkestan Jadids unfolded under the conditions of Imperial Russia. They studied the experiences of foreign reform movements—particularly the Tatar Jadids and the ideas of Ismail Gasprinski—and adapted them to regional conditions. Consequently, their press and theatrical activities sometimes faced censorship and restrictions. However, such obstacles did not completely halt the movement; rather, they compelled Jadids to formulate their materials more cautiously and broaden their audience base.

In the introduction of this article, we examined the cultural and educational significance of Jadidism and how it spread through the press and theatre. The following sections analyze: major Jadid publications and their themes; the organization, repertoire, and social role of Jadid theatre; and the long-term influence of these two institutions on national awakening and the formation of modern Uzbek culture. The aim of the article is to analyze the press and theatre activities of Turkestan Jadids in their historical context and to elucidate their contribution to the cultural development of the region.

This study employs a historical-analytical approach. Newspapers and journals of the Jadid period (“Taraqiy,” “Shuhrat,” “Oyna,” etc.), as well as dramatic works (“Padarkush,” “Baxtsiz kuyov,” and others), were analyzed in terms of content. Comparative methods were used to contrast Jadid press and theatre with reformist movements among other Muslim peoples (particularly Tatar Jadidism). Based on source studies, articles, historical documents, and academic research from that period were examined.

The study reveals that during the Jadid era, the press and theatre played a decisive role in the moral awakening of Turkestan society. Jadid press became the primary means of transforming public consciousness. Mahmudhoja Behbudiy emphasized the importance of the press, stating: “The press is the eyes, ears, and tongue of the nation.” This view highlights the invaluable role of newspapers and journals in disseminating knowledge among the peoples of Turkestan. In another article, he explained the economic and intellectual foundations of national progress: “The progress of nations depends on this, and these works require money; and money is with the wealthy!”

Theatre became the practical expression of Jadid ideas. In Behbudiy’s drama *Padarkush* (1913), the character of the teacher (domulla) warns of the consequences of ignorance: “God willing, your son will grow up without even knowing the first letter, and you will be guilty for not educating him.” Behbudiy highly valued the influence of theatre, writing: “Every word and gesture on the stage enters the heart of the viewer as a lesson.”

Other examples of Jadid theatre also exposed social issues. In Abdulla Qodiriy’s *Baxtsiz kuyov*, the character Solih expresses the weight of orphanhood and social inequality: “O God, if You do not correct my affairs, the burden is too heavy for me, your orphan servant.” Such dramatic expressions deeply affected audiences, prompting reflection and moral conclusions.

The Jadids were also inspired by the ideas of Ismail Gasprinski, who famously declared in the *Tercüman* newspaper: “Unity in language, thought, and action.” This slogan became an important

source for Turkestan Jadids in their pursuit of national unity and awakening through the press and theatre.

Thus, the press and theatre together created the foundation for the establishment of new schools, the rise of literacy, and the strengthening of national identity. Articles published in newspapers found vivid expression on stage, encouraging not only reflection but also action. Consequently, Jadidism became not merely a literary and cultural process, but a reformist movement aimed at renewing the whole of society.

During the Jadid era, the press and theatre served as unique spiritual schools that awakened national consciousness. Jadid intellectuals used newspapers and journals to encourage their people toward enlightenment and progress, raising issues of literacy, women's education, and national language and culture. The theatre conveyed these educational ideas in a vivid and emotional manner, prompting audiences to think, debate, and draw practical conclusions. The journalistic and dramatic legacy of Behbudiy, Qodiriy, Avloniy, and other Jadid intellectuals played a vital role in shaping national consciousness, reforming the education system, and improving social life. In this respect, the harmony between press and theatre created an effective mechanism for promoting Jadid ideas: the press disseminated theoretical principles, while the theatre depicted them in real-life situations with greater emotional impact.

This synergy encouraged society to abandon ignorance, strive for renewal, and strengthen national identity. Though the Jadids faced political pressure, conservative opposition, and limited financial means, they nevertheless found creative solutions and preserved their influence. Today, Jadid press and theatre are valued as symbols of enlightenment, renewal, and progress in the history of Uzbek national awakening. Studying this heritage, digitizing archival materials, and integrating their works into modern education and theatrical practice are among the important tasks for strengthening national consciousness and promoting cultural development. The ideas and methods of the Jadids have not lost their relevance today and continue to offer new opportunities for national progress.

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