THE JADID IDEA OF "ENLIGHTENMENT, ACTIVISM AND UNITY" AS A SOCIO-PHILOSOPHICAL SOURCE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN NEW UZBEKISTAN

Tukhtasinov Shukurjon Shavkatjon ugli
Doctoral student, Namangan State University, Uzbekistan
Scientific supervisor: **N.B. Dekhkanov**
DSc (Political Sciences), Professor

Abstract. The thesis examines the social and philosophical views of the Turkestan Jadids of the late 19th and early 20th centuries as an endogenous source of civil society in Uzbekistan. It argues that the Jadid triad of enlightenment, civic activism and national unity anticipated key attributes of modern civil society: informed citizens, voluntary associations and a public sphere. The paper concludes that this heritage can strengthen the value orientation of young people and the legitimacy of current civil society reforms.

Keywords: Jadidism, civil society, public sphere, enlightenment, civic consciousness, voluntary associations, New Uzbekistan, Third Renaissance.

Introduction. Civil society is usually described in Western theory as the sphere of voluntary association located between the family and the state. Its classical sources are J. Locke's social contract, G.W.F. Hegel's notion of "bourgeois society" and J. Habermas's concept of the public sphere [1; 2]. For post-Soviet states, however, an important question remains: does civil society have to be imported, or does it have local historical roots? In Uzbekistan, the Concept for the Development of Civil Society for 2021–2025 (Presidential Decree PF-6181) and the Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan for 2022–2026 place civil institutions at the centre of reform [3; 9]. This makes the national intellectual heritage, and above all the Jadid movement, a relevant object of socio-philosophical analysis.

The Jadid movement (from Arabic *usul-i jadid*, "the new method") emerged in Turkestan, Bukhara and Khiva at the end of the 19th century under the influence of Ismail Gasprinski's reform ideas and his newspaper "Tarjumon". Its leaders – Mahmudkhoja Behbudiy, Munavvar qori Abdurashidkhonov, Abdurauf Fitrat, Abdulla Avloniy, Ishoqkhon Ibrat, Cholpon and Abdulla Qodiriy – were teachers, writers, publishers and religious scholars. They worked under colonial rule, when the local population was largely excluded from state administration. For this reason, the Jadids had to build their project of social renewal not through the state but through society itself. This feature makes their legacy especially relevant for civil society studies.

Aim of the study. The aim of the thesis is to identify the socio-philosophical content of Jadid ideas that correspond to the basic attributes of civil society and to show their significance for current reforms in Uzbekistan.

Methods. The study uses historical-logical, comparative and systemic analysis. Primary texts of the Jadids (M. Behbudiy, Munavvar qori Abdurashidkhonov, A. Avloniy, A. Fitrat, Ishoqkhon Ibrat) are compared with the main criteria of civil society in modern social philosophy.

Results and discussion. The analysis shows that the Jadid programme rested on three connected principles.

1. **Enlightenment (ma'rifat) as the basis of citizenship.** For the Jadids, ignorance was the main cause of colonial dependence and social decline. New-method schools, textbooks and translated literature aimed to form a person able to think independently. Behbudiy's article "How do nations

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progress?" (1913) directly links a nation's progress to education and knowledge of its rights [4]. In modern terms, this is the formation of the informed citizen, without whom civil society cannot function.

2. **Activism (faollik) as voluntary self-organisation.** Charitable societies, reading rooms, theatre troupes and periodicals such as "Oyna", "Samarqand" and "Sadoi Turkiston" were created and financed by citizens themselves, without state support [5]. They performed the functions that non-governmental organisations perform today. The Jadid press also created a space for open public discussion, close to what Habermas calls the public sphere [2].

3. **Unity (birlik) as social solidarity and tolerance.** The Jadids understood the nation not only as an ethnic or religious community but as a community of shared historical memory, language and civic responsibility [8]. They called for consolidation across social groups and for dialogue between religious and secular knowledge. This corresponds to the notion of social capital as trust and cooperation among citizens [6].

The proclamation of Turkestan Autonomy in Kokand in November 1917 showed that the Jadids sought to turn these ideas into institutions of representative self-government. Although the Autonomy was destroyed in February 1918 and most Jadid leaders were later repressed, their ideas formed a lasting intellectual tradition [7].

From a socio-philosophical perspective, the three principles do not operate separately but form a single system. Enlightenment creates the cognitive basis of citizenship: a person who understands the causes of social problems and knows his or her rights. Activism turns this knowledge into practice through voluntary associations, schools and the press. Unity provides the moral and value framework that keeps a diverse society together and prevents civic energy from turning into conflict. In this sense, the Jadid model can be described as a combination of epistemological (knowledge), praxeological (action) and axiological (values) dimensions of civil society.

Comparison with Western theories shows both similarity and specificity. Like the European Enlightenment, the Jadids placed reason, education and individual responsibility at the centre of social progress. Unlike many European liberal theories, however, they did not oppose the individual to the community or religion to modernity. Behbudiy, Fitrat and Avloniy sought a balance between religious tradition and secular science, between national identity and openness to the world. This "dual" approach anticipates a contemporary understanding of civil society as a space where different value systems coexist through dialogue and tolerance.

The relevance of this legacy for New Uzbekistan is visible in several current policies. The new edition of the Constitution adopted in 2023 declares Uzbekistan a democratic, legal, social and secular state and places human dignity at the centre of state policy. The Concept for the Development of Civil Society for 2021–2025 provides for state support for NGOs, the development of public control and the expansion of citizens' participation in decision-making [3]. The establishment of the State Museum of Jadid Heritage in 2024 and the posthumous state awards granted to Jadid leaders in 2020 show that their legacy has become part of official memory policy. At the same time, the key challenge remains the same as in the Jadid era: civil institutions become effective only when they are supported by informed and active citizens.

Conclusion. The Jadid triad of enlightenment, activism and unity can be regarded as an endogenous model of civil society in Central Asia. It shows that the values of an open, law-based society are not alien to the region but grow from its own reformist tradition. In New Uzbekistan this heritage can serve three practical purposes: shaping the civic value orientation of young people,

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increasing public trust in civil society reforms, and giving NGOs and the mahalla system a historical and cultural legitimacy. It is therefore advisable to integrate the study of Jadid social thought into university courses in the social sciences and into civic education programmes.

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