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HISTORICAL TRUTH AND NATIONAL IDENTITY IN THE LEGACY OF JADID THINKERS

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between historical truth and national identity in the intellectual legacy of Jadid thinkers in Central Asia. The Jadid movement emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as an important intellectual and educational movement aimed at modernizing society, reforming education, and promoting national consciousness. Jadid intellectuals such as Mahmudkhoja Behbudi, Abdulla Avloni, Abdurauf Fitrat, and Munavvarqori Abdurashidkhanov contributed significantly to the development of modern education, literature, journalism, and historical awareness. Their works emphasized understanding the nation's historical experience, overcoming ignorance, preserving cultural heritage, and developing critical thinking. The article explores how Jadid thinkers interpreted historical events, criticized social backwardness, and encouraged people to recognize their national identity through education and cultural renewal. A qualitative historical approach is employed to analyze selected writings, educational ideas, and intellectual activities of prominent Jadid representatives. The study argues that the Jadid movement helped shape modern Uzbek national consciousness and provided intellectual foundations for the reinterpretation of history. The Jadid legacy remains relevant to contemporary historical education, national self-awareness, and responsible citizenship.

Keywords: Jadid movement, historical truth, national identity, national consciousness, Central Asian history, educational reform, cultural heritage, historical memory.

1. Introduction

The study of historical truth and national identity is an essential component of understanding the intellectual and cultural development of any nation. Historical knowledge enables societies to understand their origins, evaluate past experiences, preserve cultural traditions, and develop a clearer vision of their future. National identity is formed through the interaction of historical memory, language, cultural heritage, social values, and collective experiences. In Central Asia, the Jadid movement became one of the most influential intellectual movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Its representatives sought to renew society through education, modern sciences, literature, journalism, and critical engagement with social and political realities.

Jadid thinkers believed that a society unable to understand its history and recognize its cultural potential would struggle to overcome ignorance and

dependence. They promoted new-method schools, educational materials, newspapers, and theatrical works to broaden public knowledge and encourage social reform. Their efforts were not limited to educational modernization; they also helped cultivate historical awareness and a sense of collective responsibility.

This article aims to analyze how the legacy of Jadid thinkers connects historical truth with national identity. It considers their educational and intellectual activities, examines the role of historical memory in their ideas, and discusses the relevance of their legacy to contemporary history teaching.

2. Methods

The study uses a qualitative historical and descriptive-analytical approach. It examines the intellectual activities and selected writings of prominent Jadid representatives, including Mahmudkhoja Behbudi, Abdulla Avloni, Abdurauf Fitrat, and Munavvarqori Abdurashidkhanov. Historical contextualization is used to situate their ideas within the social, cultural, and political conditions of Central Asia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The analysis focuses on three interconnected themes: the role of education in developing national consciousness, the relationship between historical memory and cultural identity, and the use of literature and journalism to encourage social reform. Comparative interpretation is applied to identify common principles in the Jadids' intellectual positions while recognizing differences in their approaches and areas of activity. The study is interpretive in nature and does not claim to provide a quantitative measurement of the movement's influence.

3. Results

The analysis identifies education as a central means through which Jadid thinkers sought to strengthen national awareness. They advocated modern teaching methods and the inclusion of contemporary knowledge alongside the study of language, history, and cultural traditions. Their educational initiatives aimed to prepare individuals capable of understanding social change and contributing to the development of their communities.

A second finding concerns the importance of historical memory. Jadid intellectuals encouraged society to reflect on its past, recognize its cultural achievements, and learn from historical difficulties. Their ideas challenged indifference toward social problems and promoted a more active relationship between people and their collective heritage.

A third finding is the significance of print culture, literature, and theatre. Newspapers, educational texts, essays, and dramatic works provided Jadid thinkers with ways to communicate reformist ideas to wider audiences. These forms of public communication helped discuss issues such as ignorance, unequal access to education, social responsibility, and the need for renewal.

The findings also indicate that the Jadid legacy should not be treated as a single,

uniform doctrine. Individual thinkers differed in their priorities and interpretations, yet many shared a commitment to educational reform, cultural development, and greater public awareness. Their experiences demonstrate that national identity can be strengthened through critical engagement with history rather than through an unexamined glorification of the past.

4. Discussion

The relationship between historical truth and national identity in Jadid thought is best understood as a process of critical cultural renewal. The Jadids valued their people's heritage while also criticizing practices they considered obstacles to progress. This combination of respect for tradition and openness to reform distinguished their approach from both uncritical traditionalism and the rejection of cultural roots.

Their intellectual legacy remains significant for history education. Teaching the Jadid movement through historical documents, biographies, newspapers, literary works, and contextual analysis can help students distinguish evidence-based interpretations from unsupported claims. Such an approach encourages learners to understand historical figures within the conditions of their time and to recognize the complexity of social change.

The Jadids' experience also demonstrates that national identity is not static. It develops through education, public discussion, language, cultural memory, and the interpretation of historical experience. For contemporary educators, their work offers an opportunity to connect historical knowledge with critical thinking, civic responsibility, and respect for cultural diversity.

At the same time, the study of Jadid thinkers should avoid reducing their ideas to present-day slogans. Their writings and activities need to be examined in their historical context, with attention to the different political circumstances they faced and the diversity of their intellectual positions. A balanced interpretation strengthens historical understanding and gives students a more reliable basis for reflecting on national identity.

5. Conclusion

The intellectual legacy of Jadid thinkers reveals a close relationship between historical awareness, educational reform, and the development of national identity in Central Asia. Through new-method schools, journalism, literature, and public debate, Jadid representatives sought to broaden knowledge, encourage critical reflection, and renew society while maintaining a connection with cultural heritage.

The study concludes that historical truth and national identity are mutually connected: a responsible understanding of the past can strengthen collective awareness, while a mature sense of identity encourages society to study its history critically. In modern education, the Jadid legacy can support evidence-based historical inquiry, independent thinking, and civic responsibility. Further

research may compare individual Jadid thinkers in greater depth and examine how their writings are represented in contemporary history curricula.

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