THE HISTORICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF ENLIGHTENMENT IDEAS IN CENTRAL ASIA

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Abstract: This article examines the level of scholarly research on Enlightenment ideas in Central Asia from a historiographical perspective. It analyzes the contributions of domestic and foreign researchers to the study of the region's intellectual and educational heritage. The paper highlights the main directions, methodological approaches, and achievements in the study of Enlightenment thought, while also identifying existing research gaps and promising areas for future investigation. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the development of Enlightenment ideas and their role in the social, cultural, and educational transformation of Central Asia.

Keywords: Central Asia, Enlightenment, Enlightenment ideas, historiography, intellectual history, cultural development, historical research.

Introduction. The study of the evolutionary development of Enlightenment ideas, as well as their continuity, consistency, and patterns of intellectual succession in the history of Central Asian socio-philosophical thought, constitutes one of the key research priorities of contemporary social sciences and the humanities. Enlightenment should not be regarded merely as an accidental intellectual phenomenon that emerged during a particular historical period and subsequently disappeared. Rather, it represents a comprehensive conceptual system that evolved in response to the region's distinctive socio-cultural needs, spiritual and moral values, and historical transformations.

The present analysis is situated at the intersection of subject–object relations, social philosophy, cultural studies, pedagogy, and political science. In assessing the current state of research on this topic, we adopt a holistic epistemological approach

rather than artificially dividing the problem into separate components or historical periods. This approach enables us to examine the integration of previous studies through their conceptual orientations, philosophical and methodological paradigms, and the contributions of different scholarly schools.

Western academic schools, particularly those in the United States, France, and Germany, have made significant contributions to the study of the genesis of Enlightenment and modernization ideas in Central Asia, their socio-political dynamics, and the principles of cultural continuity. Within Western sociology and political philosophy, the Enlightenment movement in Central Asia is interpreted not merely as a localized campaign for the dissemination of knowledge, but as an intellectual and institutional response of traditional society to the challenges of global modernization.

Literature review. Among the most influential scholars in this field is the American historian and sociologist Adeeb Khalid, whose works constitute a fundamental contribution to the historiography of Central Asian Enlightenment. In his studies of the intellectual history of the region, Khalid examines the Jadid movement in Turkestan through the prism of Western social theory. According to Khalid, Central Asian Enlighteners did not simply imitate Western or Ottoman cultural models; rather, they synthesized these influences with the region's unique religious, philosophical, and historical foundations, thereby creating an original model of Enlightenment. He explains the continuity of Enlightenment ideas through the emergence of new social institutions-such as the press, New Method (Jadid) schools, and the theatre-and their ideological confrontation with the traditional religious elite (the conservative *ulama*). In his interpretation, Enlightenment represents a discursive process aimed at transforming cultural hegemony and reconstructing national identity.

Another prominent Western scholar, Edward Allworth, conducted a systematic study of the cultural and intellectual history of Central Asia, particularly the Enlightenment thought of the Uzbek people. According to his interpretation, the

Enlightenment ideas promoted by the region's intellectual elite preserved essential elements of classical Eastern philosophy and literature dating from the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries while adapting to the socio-political crises of the early twentieth century.

A prominent representative of the French schools of Soviet studies and Oriental studies, Hélène Carrère d'Encausse, examined the process of the politicization of the Enlightenment movement in Turkestan. Her research analyzes the continuum extending from cultural reformism to the emergence of the ideas of national liberation and state independence.

The German orientalist Ingeborg Baldauf focused on the literary and philosophical content of Enlightenment ideas and their relationship with the sociology of language. Her studies provide a linguo-philosophical analysis of the connections between the ideas articulated in early twentieth-century Enlightenment publications, textbooks, and national poetry and the region's historical cultural heritage, thereby demonstrating the continuity of the Central Asian intellectual tradition.

Among the most significant theoretical contributions in this field are those of the sociologist and historian Ahmet Kanlidere. In his scholarly works, he provides a comparative sociological analysis of the ideological foundations of the Muslim intellectuals of the Russian Empire, with particular emphasis on the Enlightenment movements in Turkestan and the Volga-Ural region. According to Kanlidere, the Central Asian Enlightenment should not be interpreted merely as a manifestation of Westernization; rather, it represents an attempt to revive the traditions of Islamic rationalism

Another prominent Turkish scholar, Nadir Devlet, examined the cultural and social life of Turkestan under Russian imperial rule from a socio-political perspective. According to his interpretation, the Enlightenment ideas that emerged in the region and the Jadid movement were interconnected through a continuous chain of intellectual

and ideological links. He argues that Ismail Gasprinsky's newspaper *Tercüman* and his *Usul-i Jadid* educational system played a decisive role in awakening the intellectual elite of Turkestan. At the same time, he emphasizes that local Enlighteners-including Mahmudhoja Behbudiy, Munawwar Qari, and Abdurauf Fitrat-further developed and adapted this educational model to the specific socio-economic, cultural, and religious conditions of Central Asia.

Results and discussion. The genesis, stages of development, and continuity of Enlightenment ideas in Central Asia have also been extensively examined in Turkish historiography and socio-philosophical scholarship. Turkish researchers generally interpret the Central Asian Enlightenment-particularly the Jadid movement-as an integral component of the broader Turkic intellectual awakening and as one of the principal foundations for the modernization of the Islamic world.

Representatives of the Turkish schools of Turkology and social philosophy, including Ahad Andican, Timur Kocaoğlu, Mehmet Saray, and İnci Enginün, have systematically examined the role of Enlightenment ideas in the formation of national consciousness, social mobility, and intellectual resilience. Their studies demonstrate that the Central Asian Enlightenment was not merely an educational movement but also a significant intellectual force that contributed to the social, cultural, and political transformation of the region.

Similarly, Timur Kocaoğlu examines the philosophical, aesthetic, and socio-political writings of thinkers such as Abdurauf Fitrat and Cho‘lpon (Abdulhamid Sulaymon o‘g‘li). He emphasizes that their concepts of freedom and Enlightenment represent a distinctive synthesis of the classical cultural heritage of the East and the intellectual achievements of Western civilization, thereby illustrating the unique character of the Central Asian Enlightenment tradition.

Conclusion. The analysis of scholarly literature demonstrates that the study of the continuity, evolution, and succession of Enlightenment ideas in Central Asia

occupies an important place in contemporary socio-philosophical research. The works of Western, Turkish, and Arab scholars reveal that the Enlightenment movement in the region was not a temporary intellectual phenomenon but rather a historically grounded and continuously developing system of ideas shaped by the interaction of local traditions and global modernization processes.

The reviewed studies indicate that Central Asian Enlightenment thought emerged as a unique intellectual model that combined the principles of Islamic rationalism, national cultural values, and modern educational reforms. In this regard, the Jadid movement played a decisive role in institutionalizing Enlightenment ideals through the establishment of new-method schools, the development of the press, and the promotion of social and cultural reforms.

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