The Jadids were Muslim modernist reformers within the Russian Empire in the late 19th and early 20th century. They normally referred to themselves by the Turkic terms Taraqqiparvarlar ('progressives'), Ziyalilar ('intellectuals') or simply Yäşlär/Yoshlar ('youth'). Jadids maintained that Muslims in the Russian Empire had entered a period of decay that could only be rectified by the acquisition of Modern Scientific Education. Although there were substantial ideological differences within the movement, Jadids were marked by their widespread use of print media in promoting their messages and advocacy of the Usul ul-jadid or "new method" of teaching in the maktabs of the empire, from which the term Jadidism is derived. A leading figure in the efforts to reform education was the Crimean Tatar Ismail Gasprinski who lived from 1851 to 1914. Intellectuals such as Mahmud Khoja Behbudiy (author of the famous play The Patricide and founder of one of Turkestan's first Jadid schools) carried Gaspirali's ideas back to Central Asia. Jadid members were recognized and honored in Uzbekistan after the fall of the Soviet Union. Jadid thought often carried distinctly anti-clerical sentiment. Many Ulama (traditional Islamic Scholars) opposed the Jadid's programs and ideologies, decrying them as un-Islamic, heretical innovations. Many Jadids saw these "Qadimists" (proponents of the old ways) not only as antagonists of modern reform but also as corrupt, self-interested elites whose authority lay not in Islamic ideology as dictated by the Quran and Sunnah but rather in local tradition that were both inimical to "authentic" Islam and harmful to society. In his Cairo publication al-Nahdah, Gasprinski published cartoons that depict mullahs and sheikhs as rapacious and lustful figures who prevented women from taking their rightful place as social equals and exploited the goodwill and trust of lay Muslims. One of the Jadid's principal aims was educational reform. They wanted to create new schools that would teach quite differently from the maktabs, or primary schools, that existed throughout the Muslim areas of the Russian empire. The Jadids saw the traditional education system as "the clearest sign of stagnation, if not the degeneracy, of Central Asia." They felt that reforming the education system was the best way to revive a Muslim society ruled by outsiders. They criticized the maktabs' emphasis on memorization of religious texts rather than on explanation of those texts or on written language. In 1884, Ismail Gaspirali founded the first, "new method" school in Crimea. Though the prominence of such schools among the Tatars rose rapidly, popularized by such thinkers as Ghabdennasir Qursawi, Musa Bigiev, and Gaspirali himself, the spread of new method schools to Central Asia was slower and more sporadic, despite the dedicated efforts of a close-knit community of reformers. Many Jadids were heavily involved in printing and publishing, a relatively new enterprise for Muslim Russians. Early print matter created and distributed by Muslims in Turkestan were generally lithographic copies of canonical manuscripts from traditional genres. From 1905 to 1917, 166 new Tatar language newspapers and magazines were published. Turkestaní Jadids, however, used print media to produce new-method textbooks, newspapers and magazines in addition to new plays and literature in a distinctly innovative idiom. Private (i.e., not state-run) newspapers in local languages were available to Tatar Muslims earlier and Gasprinski's newspaper Tercüman ("Interpreter") was a major organ of Jadid opinion that was widely read in all Muslim regions of the Empire.

After 1917 Revolution
With the October Revolution of 1917 in Russia, the Bolsheviks aimed to create nation states for separate ethnic groups that answered to a central authority. The Jadids, greatly attracted to
the promotion of Central Asian nationalism, embarked on language reform, "new-method" teaching, and expansive cultural projects with renewed fervour after 1917. By the early 1920s, the Jadids finally felt comfortable navigating the channels of Bolshevik central bureaucracy, allowing them to participate in the government on a more equal standing with the Russians. Also, in order to further reap the benefits of the Soviet system, large numbers of Jadids joined the Communist Party.

After lasting only one year, 1917–1918, Kokand was brutally crushed by the forces of the Tashkent Soviet; around 14,000 people, including many leading Jadids, were killed in the ensuing massacre. Unfortunately for the Jadids, by the late 1930s, the Bolshevik nation building program resulted in the division of Turkestan into five distinct national territories: Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Kyrgyzstan.

With the death of Vladimir Lenin in 1924, Joseph Stalin began his push for power, ultimately leading to the elimination of his political opponents for consolidation of power. As a result of this consolidation, by 1926 the Communist Party felt secure in its Central Asian regional power to lead the charge against traditional Muslim authorities without the assistance of the Jadids. Even worse, the Jadids became the victims of the very same purges inflicted upon their primary rivals, the Ulama and the Islamic clergy. The Jadids were denounced as the mouthpiece of the local bourgeoisie and were considered counterrevolutionary agents that should be stripped of their jobs, arrested, and executed if necessary.

Throughout the remainder of the 1920s and 30s, virtually the entire intelligentsia of Central Asia, including leading Jadid writers and poets such as Cholpan and Abdurrauf Fitrat were purged. However, Jadids have now been rehabilitated as 'Uzbek National Heroes' in Post-Soviet Uzbekistan.