

**NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND PRESS ORGANS OF
THE UZBEK DIASPORA IN TURKEY:
HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURAL-DIPLOMATIC
SIGNIFICANCE**

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Abstract: *This article analyzes the formation and historical development of the national organizations and press organs of the Uzbek diaspora in Turkey, as well as their significance in preserving national and cultural identity. In particular, it examines, in historical sequence, educational initiatives that emerged in the early twentieth century, youth and community organizations established in the 1920s and 1930s, and periodicals that covered diaspora life. The institutional and communicative development of the diaspora is explored through examples such as the Bukhara Tamimi Ta'lim Society, the Turkistan Turkish Youth Union, Young Turkistan, New Turkistan, Eslek, Bo'lak, the Information Bulletin, and Beautiful Turkistan. The article also considers the opportunities available to diaspora organizations after Uzbekistan gained independence to promote Uzbek culture in Turkey and develop cultural and humanitarian relations between Uzbekistan and Turkey.*

Keywords: *Uzbek diaspora, Turkey, Turkistanis, national organizations, diaspora press, national identity, historical memory, cultural diplomacy, Uzbekistan–Turkey relations.*

The activities of organizations and press organs are of particular scholarly importance in studying the history of national communities

living abroad. The development of a diaspora is not determined solely by the number of people who have moved to a particular territory or by migration processes. Above all, it is closely connected with community members establishing mutual contacts, uniting around shared interests, preserving national values, and transmitting historical memory to subsequent generations. The formation of the Uzbek diaspora in Turkey is likewise associated with complex historical processes. During the twentieth century, political changes, forced displacement, emigration, and later educational, labor, and family migration contributed to the formation in Turkey of Uzbek communities and other communities originating from the historical region of Turkistan. Some of these groups were referred to in historical sources as "Turkistanis." Therefore, when studying their organizations and press, it is important to distinguish historical terminology, ethnic composition, and social functions. In examining the organizational development of the Uzbek diaspora in Turkey, particular attention should be paid to educational and enlightenment initiatives that emerged in the early twentieth century. During this period, access to education, the preparation of educated young people, and support for their future activities became important issues associated with national development. The Bukhara Tamimi Ta'lim Society, which began operating in Istanbul in 1909, is an important historical example of this process. Its activities were associated with supporting young people who sought education, assisting their studies, and expanding their educational opportunities. The initiative is significant because it illustrates the links between educational activity abroad and the aspirations of the enlightenment movement in Turkistan. The historical significance of the society lies in

its contribution to connecting education and enlightenment with collective development in an emigrant environment. Such initiatives not only helped young people obtain knowledge but also created conditions for them to establish contacts and unite around common interests. By the 1920s, a new stage of organizational activity had emerged among Turkistanis in Turkey. The need to bring young people together, organize national and cultural activities, and communicate issues concerning Turkistan to the public became more pronounced. In particular, the establishment of the Turkistan Turkish Youth Union (Türkistan Türk Gençler Birliği, TTGB) in Istanbul on 29 September 1927 was an important event in the history of diaspora organization. Its formation provided an institutional platform for involving young people in collective activities, strengthening their contacts, and discussing national and cultural issues. Compared with the Bukhara Tamimi Ta'lim Society, the TTGB placed greater emphasis on uniting young people and conducting public activities. It would not be accurate, however, to regard all historical organizations as structures that performed identical functions. Their activities differed according to the period in which they emerged, the social composition of their members, and their stated objectives. Nevertheless, a key feature they shared was the effort to preserve community ties and ensure national and cultural continuity under conditions of emigration.

In the historical development of Uzbek and Turkistani communities in Turkey, the press became an important instrument complementing the work of organizations. Diaspora publications informed community members about current events, reported on organizational activities, expressed national perspectives, and helped preserve historical memory.

A distinctive feature of the diaspora press is that its functions changed in response to historical circumstances. Early publications tended to emphasize national and political issues and collective mobilization, while later publications also gave significant attention to cultural heritage, customs, community life, and the preservation of links between generations.

In the 1920s and 1930s, Young Turkistan and New Turkistan became important examples of the diaspora press. Young Turkistan published materials on youth activities, organizational life, and national issues. Such publications did more than record the activities of organizations: they also helped shape shared objectives and historical perceptions among diaspora members. In a later period, the publication National Turkistan also occupied an important place in the history of the Turkistani émigré press. The dissertation associates this publication with the period from 1942 to 1975 and notes that it carried international news and material related to the idea of national independence. Its historical significance lies in communicating diaspora perspectives and issues concerning Turkistan beyond the community itself. The publications *Eslek* and *Bo'lak*, which emerged in the life of communities in Adana, served different functions. *Eslek* helped facilitate information exchange and mutual communication within the community. The first issue of the *Bo'lak* magazine, dated 20 March 1959, stated its aim of promoting national customs, traditions, and the cultural characteristics of Turkic peoples. According to the dissertation, ten issues of the magazine were published between 1959 and 1962. The publication of the *Information Bulletin* by the Turkistanis Assistance Society from 1968 onward further illustrates the institutional functions of the diaspora

press. It carried information about general meetings, the society's activities, national days, weddings, and deaths. Although these items may appear to concern everyday life, they are important sources for studying community relationships, ceremonies, and institutional memory. Thus, three principal functional directions can be identified in the historical development of the diaspora press: expressing national and political perspectives, maintaining communication within the community, and transmitting cultural memory to future generations. These functions were not entirely separate; rather, they overlapped and complemented one another in different periods.

After Uzbekistan gained independence, the relationship between the Uzbek diaspora in Turkey and its historical homeland began to acquire new meaning. Whereas earlier periods had prioritized the preservation of national identity, mutual assistance, and historical memory, the subsequent stage expanded opportunities to promote contemporary Uzbek culture, organize cultural events, and develop links between the publics of the two countries. These changes are also visible in the activities of diaspora organizations.

The activities of Chokay Kochar are noteworthy as a practical example of cultural mediation in the post-independence period. Born and raised in Adana, Turkey, and of Uzbek ethnic origin, Kochar participated for many years in the Turkistanis Society. Later, through the activities of the Society for Uzbek Culture, Solidarity and Cooperation, he continued to take part in efforts to represent the national and cultural interests of Uzbeks and promote Uzbek culture in Turkey.

On 29 July 2025, Chokay Kochar was recognized as an "Ambassador of Uzbek Culture" tasked with promoting Uzbek culture in Turkey. This

event demonstrated opportunities for cooperation between diaspora representatives and official diplomatic institutions. It also illustrates that cultural diplomacy can develop not only through formal intergovernmental meetings but also through community initiatives and the activities of diaspora members. From this perspective, the experience of the historical organizations and press organs of the Uzbek diaspora in Turkey remains important for contemporary cultural diplomacy. The historical memory and collective solidarity formed through earlier publications can be sustained today through cultural events, educational projects, translation, academic links, and digital communication. Studying the history of the national organizations and press organs of the Uzbek diaspora in Turkey makes it possible to understand the organizational, spiritual, and communicative dimensions of diaspora development as an interconnected whole. Analysis of the historical material leads to the following conclusions. First, the formation of diaspora organizations in Turkey was closely associated with the needs for education, mutual assistance, support for young people, and community solidarity. The activities of the Bukhara Tamimi Ta'lim Society in 1909 and the Turkistan Turkish Youth Union in 1927 represent different stages of organizational development. Second, the diaspora press served as an important means of preserving national and cultural identity and transmitting historical memory. Publications such as Young Turkistan and New Turkistan promoted national-political and intellectual communication, while Eslek, Bo'lak, and the Information Bulletin played an important role in maintaining internal community links and recording everyday cultural life. Beautiful Turkistan is also significant as an example of a later period of diaspora publishing.

Third, the ethnic composition and activities of organizations described in historical sources as “Turkistani” should be analyzed separately. Some brought together emigrants from different regions, and interpreting all of them exclusively as ethnic Uzbek organizations could oversimplify the historical reality. Fourth, after Uzbekistan gained independence, diaspora organizations increasingly had opportunities to promote Uzbek culture in Turkey and develop cultural and humanitarian relations between Uzbekistan and Turkey. The work of Chokay Kochar is one practical example of this process. Fifth, drawing on this historical experience, contemporary diaspora organizations could strengthen cooperation with relevant Uzbek state and cultural institutions, expand educational projects relating to the Uzbek language and culture, digitize the historical legacy of diaspora publications, and encourage the active participation of younger generations.

Overall, the national organizations and press organs of the Uzbek diaspora in Turkey have been important social institutions that helped preserve historical memory, strengthen national and cultural solidarity, and develop communication among communities. Studying their historical experience in connection with contemporary cultural diplomacy has scholarly and practical value for developing the public, cultural, and humanitarian dimensions of Uzbekistan–Turkey relations.

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