

MUSTAFA CHOKAYEV'S VISION OF TURKIC UNITY AND ITS MODERN RESONANCE IN THE ORGANIZATION OF TURKIC STATES*

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Abstract

This article examines the intellectual and historical foundations of Mustafa Chokayev's vision of unity in the Turkic world, formulated in the 1920s, and analyzes how these ideas resonate with current interstate cooperation among independent Turkic republics. Chokayev's approach is grounded in common language, cultural affinity, and shared historical consciousness. His model, based on voluntarism, equality, and strategic realism, offers a pluralist and pragmatic alternative to ethnonationalist Pan-Turkist ideologies. First, the study contextualizes Chokayev's political experience in Turkestan before 1921 and his exile years in Europe, highlighting his publishing activities and his efforts to promote Turkestan's cause in the international arena. It then draws parallels between his ideas and the institutional practices of the Organization of Turkic States (OTS), particularly in the areas of education, alphabet reform, cultural cooperation, and economic integration. The article argues that the OTS embodies a modern continuation of Chokayev's principles and vision. In this regard, the primary aim of this study is to examine Mustafa Chokayev's intellectual legacy on Turkic unity and analyze how this legacy resonates with contemporary multilateral cooperation mechanisms, particularly within the Organization of Turkic States. Consequently, Chokayev emerges not merely as a historical figure, but as a strategic thinker whose legacy continues to shape the evolving political and cultural landscape of the Turkic world today.

Keywords: Mustafa Chokayev, Turkic World, Idea of Unity, Organization of Turkic States, Historical Continuity

MUSTAFA ÇOKAY'IN TÜRK BİRLİĞİ VİZYONU VE BUNUN TÜRK DEVLETLERİ TEŞKİLATI'NDAKİ ÇAĞDAŞ YANSIMALARI

Öz

Bu makale, Mustafa Çokay'ın 1920'lerde şekillendirdiği Türk dünyasında birlik vizyonunun entelektüel ve tarihsel temellerini incelemekte ve bu fikirlerin günümüzde bağımsız Türk cumhuriyetleri arasındaki devletlerarası iş birliğiyle nasıl örtüştüğünü analiz etmektedir. Çokay'ın yaklaşımı, ortak dil, kültürel yakınlık ve paylaşılan tarih bilinci üzerine kuruludur. Onun gönüllülük, eşitlik ve stratejik gerçekçilik esasına dayanan modeli, etnik-milliyetçi

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Pantürkist ideolojilere karşı çoğulcu ve pragmatik bir alternatif sunar. Çalışmada öncelikle 1921 öncesi Türkistan'daki siyasi tecrübesi ile Avrupa'daki sürgün yılları bağlamında Çokay'ın yayın faaliyetleri ve Türkistan davasını uluslararası alanda tanıtmaya çabaları ele alınmaktadır. Ardından, onun fikirleri ile Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı'nın (TDT) eğitim, alfabe reformu, kültürel iş birliği ve ekonomik entegrasyon gibi alanlardaki kurumsal uygulamaları arasında paralellikler kurulmaktadır. Makale, TDT'nin Çokay'ın ilke ve vizyonunun çağdaş bir devamı niteliğinde olduğunu ileri sürmektedir. Bu bağlamda çalışmanın amacı, Mustafa Çokay'ın Türk dünyası birliği konusundaki entelektüel mirasını tarihsel ve kavramsal düzeyde incelemek ve bu mirasın günümüzde Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı bünyesindeki çok taraflı iş birliği modelleriyle ne ölçüde örtüştüğünü ortaya koymaktır. Sonuç olarak, Çokay yalnızca tarihî bir şahsiyet değil, aynı zamanda Türk dünyasının değişen siyasi ve kültürel manzarasını bugün de etkilemeye devam eden stratejik bir düşünür olarak öne çıkmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Mustafa Çokay, Türk Dünyası, Birlik Düşüncesi, Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı, Tarihsel Süreklilik

Introduction

The first half of the 20th century represents a turbulent period for the Turkic peoples of the Turkestan region, during which not only political sovereignty but also identity, culture, and historical memory were targeted for reconfiguration. The colonization policies long pursued by Tsarist Russia assumed a new ideological form after the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. However, in essence, these policies continued to aim at undermining the political will of the region's peoples and integrating them into a new, Moscow-centered system of domination. During this process, both locally and externally driven nationalist thought movements emerged. Among the leading figures of these movements, Mustafa Chokayev played a significant role in conducting a national struggle in the intellectual realm.

Mustafa Chokayev (1890–1941) was a thinker who believed that political independence for the peoples of Turkestan could not be sustained unless it was supported by cultural and historical foundations. The struggle he led throughout his life was not only against Soviet imperialism but also involved a broad intellectual mobilization in areas such as cultural awakening, historical consciousness, and language unity—crucial for enabling Turkic peoples to realize their own potential. Especially Chokayev, who lived in exile in Europe between 1921 and 1941, defended the ideal of “United Turkestan.” This idea had emerged from his previous experiences in the Alash Orda and Hokand autonomies in 1917-1918. He further developed and popularized this idea through his publishing activities in Europe.

Chokayev's conception of unity is based on a peaceful, egalitarian, and voluntary model. In his view, establishing a genuine union among Turkic peoples requires the adoption of a common Turkic language, the cultivation of a shared historical consciousness, and the strengthening of cultural solidarity. A common language is seen not merely as a tool for communication but also

as a means of resistance against Russification policies. In this context, his statement that a newspaper published in Istanbul should be readable in Samarkand reflects his vision of a unity grounded in practical objectives.

Similarly, Chokayev's understanding of history goes beyond the mere learning of the past; it sees historical knowledge as a guiding force for constructing the future. Believing that the Soviets used history as an ideological tool, Chokayev emphasized the necessity of an objective and scientific historiography to help Turkic peoples reclaim their identities. This perspective allows him to be seen not only as a political figure but also as a thinker with original views on historical methodology.

As the method; this study was conducted using the qualitative research method framework and the comprehensive analysis technique (documentary analysis). Primary sources by Mustafa Chokayev (especially the *Yaş Türkistan / Young Turkestan* journal articles and materials from his exile period) as well as comprehensive academic literature were reviewed. Regional analysis and modular methods were also employed. The study was built on a conceptual analysis model that aimed to relate Chokayev's ideas to contemporary institutions within the context of historical continuity.

Literature Context and Justification of the Study

Studies on Mustafa Chokayev generally focus on his political activities during his years in exile, particularly his brief administrative experiences with the Alash Orda Government and the Kokand Autonomy. However, there is a notable lack of research examining the intellectual continuity between Chokayev's ideas on unity and current developments. Yet, the Organization of Turkic States (OTS)—which started with presidential meetings after the Turkic republics became independent in 1991, was officially formed in Nakhchivan in 2009, and quickly became more organized after 2021—can be considered a real example today of Chokayev's idea of unity. The projects undertaken by the OTS in areas such as a common alphabet, cultural heritage, shared language, and educational programs closely mirror the goals articulated by Chokayev in the 1930s.

In this context, the primary justification of this study is to address the scholarly gap in evaluating Mustafa Chokayev's ideas not only within a historical framework but also in relation to contemporary models of cooperation in the Turkic world. The compatibility of Chokayev's model of voluntary unity and cultural solidarity with modern international cooperation norms is also noteworthy.

This article seeks to answer several key questions. For instance, what fundamental principles underlie Mustafa Chokayev's intellectual framework on unity in the Turkic world? To what extent does Chokayev's vision of cultural and political unity overlap with the objectives of today's Organization of Turkic States? Additionally, how can Chokayev's vision of unity be updated or reinterpreted in light of current integration processes among Turkic nations? In light

of these questions, this study aims to conduct a comparative analysis in both historical and contemporary contexts.

Mustafa Chokayev's Pre-European Activities and Political Experience

The direct political experience Mustafa Chokayev gained up until 1921 was the most influential factor in shaping his political thought and the independence struggle, he would later lead in Europe. His homeland, Turkestan, had been subjected to systematic colonial policies by Tsarist Russia since the second half of the 19th century and had become a center of social resistance in the early 20th century due to both political repression and cultural assimilation under Soviet rule. This historical context enabled Chokayev to become engaged in politics at an early age and to develop a political consciousness deeply attuned to the independence aspirations of the Turkestanis peoples.

Born in 1890 in Kyzylorda in the Syr Darya province of the Turkestan Governorate-General, Chokayev came from a prominent Kazakh family. His ancestors had served in significant military and administrative positions during the Kokand Khanate, which contributed to his upbringing in an environment imbued with a strong sense of social responsibility. The religious, musical, and general education he received early in life were formative in shaping his character. (Kara, 2013, pp. 28–35) In this respect, Chokayev can be seen as an intellectual prototype nourished by both traditional and modern educational systems.

An important turning point in his political career occurred in 1916, when he completed his law studies at St. Petersburg University. In these years, major political changes were taking place throughout Russia, and mass revolts against the Tsarist rule erupted, especially in Central Asia. During these events, known as the 1916 Uprising, the resistance of the Central Asian peoples against conscription paved the way for Chokayev to analyze the political crisis in Turkestan in depth and to grasp the need to find political solutions in this context. (Kara, 2013, pp. 53–71)

The role of Alihan Bukeikhanov, the leader of the Kazakh Alash National Movement, in the political experience of the young Mustafa Chokayev, both in the 1916 rebellion and in subsequent political developments, is extremely decisive in terms of both individual guidance and institutional guidance. Bukeikhanov's contribution to Chokayev's intellectual and political maturation process paved the way for his development as a political figure and was influential in determining his direction. (Kara, 2013, pp. 47–52)

Bukeikhanov stood out among Kazakh intellectuals not only for his political stance but also for his moral integrity, historical awareness, and intellectual depth. (Togan, 1981, p. 498) Chokayev's first official political responsibility was his appointment to the Muslim Fraction Bureau of the Russian Duma, a position he assumed with the direct support of Bukeikhanov. His work at the Bureau was not limited to technical consultancy but also involved elevating Turkestan's issues to the imperial center. This opportunity provided Chokayev with valuable insight into the inner workings of Russian bureaucracy and first-hand political experience. (Kara, 2013, pp. 71–84)

Perhaps the most dramatic and instructive episode in Chokayev's political life occurred after the October Revolution of 1917. Following the Bolsheviks' seizure of power, Chokayev held important positions in the short-lived Turkestan Autonomy declared in Kokand in November 1917 and the Alash Autonomy declared in Orenburg in December of the same year. These autonomies represented the first concrete steps by Turkestani intellectuals to determine their own political destiny. However, both governments were soon dismantled by Bolshevik forces. (Esmagambetov, 2012b, pp. 127–157; Kara, 2013, pp. 129–168; Togan, 1981, pp. 364–365; Yorulmaz, 2016) Chokayev's active roles in these structures reflect his close association with Bukeikhanov and the trust placed in him by the leadership. During this period, Chokayev emerged not only as a statesman but also as a negotiator and strategist.

After the dissolution of these political entities, direct political activity in Central Asia became impossible for Chokayev. Fleeing Soviet persecution, he first moved to the Caucasus, then to Georgia, where he collaborated with local politicians in the struggle against the Bolsheviks. However, when the Bolsheviks prevailed there as well, he fled to Turkey and eventually made his way to Europe in 1921. (Kara, 2013, pp. 168–203) This forced exile did not mark the end of his political struggle but rather signaled its transformation into a new phase. Indeed, the activities he would carry out in Europe from 1921 onward were both a continuation and an expansion of the experiences he had acquired earlier.

Taking all this into account, we can say that Chokayev's political activities prior to 1921 established the fundamental basis of his intellectual and strategic thinking. His experiences under both Tsarist and Bolshevik rule allowed him to deeply understand the structural challenges faced by Turkestan's peoples. The short-lived autonomy attempts taught him the difficulties of state-building. His legal education in Petersburg, his tenure at the Duma, and his statesmanship in Kokand portray Chokayev not just as an opposition figure, but as a responsible and solution-oriented political leader. These early experiences formed the historical and political bedrock for the vision of unity and independence he would later develop during his years in exile.

Intellectual Struggle in Europe and the Turkestan Cause in Exile (1921–1941)

Following the violent suppression of the Kokand Autonomy by the Bolsheviks in 1918, direct political activity in Turkestan became unsustainable for Mustafa Chokayev. Far from ending his struggle, however, this development led him to pursue it on a broader, international platform. After relocating to Europe in 1921, Chokayev emerged as an exiled intellectual and political activist who brought the cause of Turkestan to the attention of the international public. This period marked a phase in which his struggle expanded into various domains, including journalism, diplomacy, intellectual discourse, and organizational work.

During his years in exile in Europe, Chokayev collaborated with two major organizations in his efforts to achieve independence for Turkestan and to resist Soviet domination: the Turkestan National Union (TNU) and the Prometheé League.

The Turkestan National Union was initially founded through the efforts of Zeki Velidi Togan in Turkestan and later transferred to Europe by Togan. (Kara, 2013, pp. 226–246; Togan, 1969, pp. 365–366) Mustafa Chokayev joined this organization with the goal of politically and culturally uniting Turkestanis living in Europe. Over time, he became one of the most influential and well-known figures in the organization. After Togan withdrew from political activity in 1928 (A. A. Andican, 2003, pp. 322–326), Chokayev assumed leadership and was appointed as the Union's representative in Europe. Through this organization, Chokayev brought the cause of Turkestan to international audiences and used the journal *Yaş Türkistan* (Young Turkestan) as both a platform for ideas and a tool of resistance. (Kara, 2013, pp. 226–246)

The second organization, the Prometheé League, was established with the support of the Polish government to unite anti-Soviet peoples. It served as a multinational platform bringing together representatives from Soviet-dominated nations such as Ukraine, the Caucasus, and Turkestan. (A. Andican, 2022; Copeaux, 1993; Kara, 2013, p. 271; Libera, 2013) Chokayev joined this organization to align his efforts with those of other people resisting Bolshevik rule. During this period, Chokayev parted ways with Russian democrats and actively supported the ideal of an independent Turkestan within the Prometheé League. (Kara, 2013, pp. 254–255; Togan, 1981, p. 484) Although he advocated for Turkestan's independence from Russia, he never harbored animosity toward the Russian people; rather, he believed in the necessity of collective resistance among all nations subjected to Soviet oppression. (Esmagambetov, 2012b, pp. 461–462) For Chokayev, the Prometheé League served as both a political refuge and a vehicle for international legitimacy. However, its activities were curtailed during World War II, following the Nazi occupation of Poland and France. (Kara, 2013, pp. 270–271)

These two organizations formed the intellectual and political foundations of Chokayev's struggle in Europe and played a decisive role in bringing the Turkestan independence movement to the international stage.

The core of Chokayev's political struggle in Europe centered on the liberation of Turkestan from Soviet rule and the establishment of an independent state. However, he held the belief that armed struggle or short-term political strategies alone could not achieve this goal. Rather, it required a long-term process of cultural and intellectual awakening. For this reason, he concentrated much of his effort on journalism and publishing. A key step in this direction was the founding of the journal *Yaş Türkistan* in Berlin in 1929. Published for nearly a decade without interruption, the journal became a crucial reference point not only for exiled Turkestanis but also for the international community. (Kara, 2013, pp. 348–367)

Yaş Türkistan was not merely a medium for political critique. It also served as a platform offering in-depth analysis of the history, culture, language, and identity issues of the Turkic world. In his writings, Chokayev emphasized the existential threat posed by Soviet imperialism to the cultural survival of the Turkestan peoples. Thus, he frequently called for unity, solidarity, and the preservation of identity. In his view, true independence for Turkestan could only be achieved through cultural reconstruction. (Kara, 2013, pp. 349–350) Accordingly, the journal can also be considered a project for restoring identity.

Chokayev did not limit his publications to the Turkic language; he also wrote in Western languages such as French and English to bring the Turkestan issue to the attention of the international community. His articles published, especially in the Paris-based *Prométhée* journal, demonstrate that he was a significant figure in the intellectual and ideological struggle against the Soviet Union. (Chokayev, 2024, pp. 13–14) This illustrates that Chokayev was well connected with European anti-communist intellectual platforms and was regarded as an influential figure in these circles.

Moreover, together with Zeki Velidi Togan, Chokayev succeeded in reaching different target audiences through various publications, such as the journal *Yeni Türkistan*, which they published in Istanbul as the official organ of the Turkestan National Union, and *Na Rubeja* (On the Border), which he had previously published between 1919 and 1921 in Tbilisi with the support of the Georgian government and the Ukrainian diplomatic mission. (Kara, 2013, pp. 344–348) These journals not only covered developments in Central Asia but also fostered solidarity with other colonized peoples.

As early as 1925, under Stalin's directive, the publication, distribution, and even reading of Chokayev's works were banned to prevent the spread of his ideas. Those who violated this prohibition were subjected to severe penalties. (Chokayev, 2024, p. 15) His name was deliberately omitted from Soviet textbooks and encyclopedias; not even a single line about him appeared in major reference works such as the 12-volume *Kazakh Soviet Encyclopedia*. (Kara, 2013, p. 321) This deliberate silence aimed to erase his influence over his people.

On the other hand, the Soviet propaganda apparatus did not settle for censorship alone but later pursued a strategy of portraying Chokayev as a traitor and Nazi collaborator. During World War II, he was accused of collaborating with Nazi Germany amid its war against the Soviet Union. (Kara, 2013, pp. 344–348) However, documents from this period indicate that his actions were not aligned with Germany's imperialist ambitions but rather aimed at protecting the rights of Turkestani prisoners of war and providing them with moral support. (Kara, 2013, pp. 297–302)

The peak of the defamation campaign against Chokayev began in 1968 with the publication of the novel *The Collapse of Greater Turkestan*, written by KGB officer Serik Shakibayev. In this so-called documentary novel, Mustafa Chokayev is portrayed as a collaborator driven by ambition for power and status, and it is even fictionalized that his death was caused by poisoning at the hands of a close friend. (Chokayev, 2024, pp. 15–16) While the book portrayed Chokayev as the mastermind behind the Turkestan Legion, archival documents today confirm the baselessness of these claims. (Kara, 2013, pp. 295–297)

In reality, Chokayev firmly rejected the Nazis' offers, fully aware that Nazi Germany had no intention of granting independence to the peoples of Central Asia. He explicitly refused to lead the Turkestan Legion. Allegations that he was poisoned on his way back to Paris have been interpreted as a consequence of his refusal to collaborate. The Soviets, however, sought to

suppress this truth by reinforcing the image of Chokayev as a traitor and collaborator. (Chokayev, 2024, pp. 15–16)

Nonetheless, a classified investigation conducted in 1948 by the Soviet Ministry of Defense in Berlin yielded no documents indicating Chokayev's collaboration with the Nazis—a fact that was reflected in official reports. (Chokayev, 2024, pp. 15–16) Not a single piece of evidence was found in the archives of Germany, France, or Poland to support claims of collaboration. On the contrary, numerous documents confirming his refusal to cooperate were identified. (Chokayev, 2024, p. 16)

The Soviet Union's targeting of Mustafa Chokayev demonstrates the effectiveness and perceived threat of his independence struggle. Through his political activities in exile for the freedom of the Turkestan peoples, Chokayev not only opposed the Soviet system but also challenged its historical and ideological legitimacy. Consequently, the Soviet regime waged a systematic and long-term campaign of defamation and censorship aimed at discrediting him and erasing his legacy from public memory.

The Soviet smear campaign against Chokayev did not target him alone but was aimed at undermining the entire cause of Turkestan's freedom. Contrary to the falsehoods spread by the Soviet regime, the truth—now revealed through scholarly research and declassified archival materials—demonstrates that Chokayev remained committed to the struggle for independence, even at the cost of his life. Today, thanks to academic efforts and access to archival records, the unfounded Soviet claims are unraveling, and Mustafa Chokayev is rising again as a hero of freedom with his true historical identity.

Mustafa Chokayev's activities in Europe should not be viewed merely as a political opposition movement but rather as a comprehensive intellectual project aimed at the peoples of Turkestan. The cognitive unity he sought to establish through journals and books was regarded as a prerequisite for political independence. His calls for anti-colonial solidarity, his efforts in historiography, and his emphasis on a common language and education were not merely acts of resistance but components of a broader vision for the future.

In this context, Chokayev's post-1921 activities in Europe can be considered forming the theoretical foundations for contemporary efforts at unity in the Turkic world. His vision of Turkestan-centered independence and solidarity—articulated through his publishing and intellectual production—demonstrates historical continuity with present-day institutional structures such as the Organization of Turkic States. Chokayev was not merely a political exile but a prominent actor who left a lasting mark on the political and intellectual history of the Turkic world in the 20th century.

The Foundations of Mustafa Chokayev's Vision of Unity

Mustafa Chokayev's approach to the idea of unity in the Turkic world is not a superficial or romantic ideological construct but rather a multidimensional thought system grounded in historical experience, socio-political reality, and strategic awareness. His vision of unity rests

on three fundamental pillars: a common language, a shared culture, and a collective historical consciousness. These three elements, which Chokayev frequently emphasized in his writings and political activities, represent indispensable components of his conception of an integrated Turkic world.

Common Language: The Foundation of Communication and Resistance

In Chokayev's understanding, language is not merely a means of communication; it is also a bearer of identity, a basis for social solidarity, and an instrument of resistance against colonial cultural policies. He believed that in a geography destined to remain adjacent to Russia, a common Turkic language would serve as a "shield" against political and ideological Russification. (Esmagambetov, 2013b, p. 454) Therefore, language is not just a cultural matter but also a strategic and political one.

Within this framework, Chokayev advocates the selection of a metalanguage that will facilitate understanding and ensure commonality among the peoples without considering any Turkic language superior to any other. In particular, he said that a newspaper published in Istanbul should be able to be read in Samarkand and considered it vital for unity that Turkic peoples read and understand each other's intellectual and cultural productions. (Kara, 2013, pp. 349–350) In this regard, language not only serves to connect peoples but also functions as a "spiritual defense system" against external domination. In his journal *Yash Turkestan*, which he published for 117 issues between 1929 and 1939, he used a mixed Turkic language that borrowed words from the languages of Turkic peoples such as Azerbaijan, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Uzbek, Turkish and Turkmen, and called it *Chagatai* (Kara, 2013, pp. 356–357).

Chokayev's linguistic approach can be seen as one of the early intellectual foundations of contemporary language policies in the Turkic world, such as the adoption of a common alphabet, shared educational language, and standardized terminology.

Common Culture: The Social Cement of a Unified State

Chokayev believed that the Turkic peoples of Central Asia shared a common historical origin, cultural lifestyle, and traditional values (Esmagambetov, 2012b, p. 378). According to this idea, peoples such as Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Uzbeks and Turkmen have existed in the same geography throughout history, with similar lifestyles and in interaction. According to him, migrations and modern nationalization processes dispersed the Turkestan Turks, and from a single Turkic nation, five separate "national republics" were created, each with its own language, separated from each other by a "Chinese wall" and an "impassable moat" (Esmagambetov, 2013b, p. 278). Despite the forces of migration and modern nation-building, he believed that a strong bond of cultural brotherhood persisted among these communities. Despite this, a strong bond of cultural fraternity has been and continues to be maintained between these peoples. Because, in the words of Chokayev, *"Turkestanians are Turkists. Because they are Turks. For them, Turkism is as natural as their Turkishness. As they will act on the basis of this unity in their own country, they adopt their cognate nationals outside the natural, geographical unity with*

the same naturalness.” (Esmagambetov, 2014, p. 355) According to Chokayev, it is not possible to secure the future of Turkestan unless all Turkestan Turks, such as Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Uzbeks and Turkmens unite around the Turkestan national ideal. (Mustafa Chokayev, 1932b, p. 5)

Chokayev viewed the idea of unity as a natural outcome of this shared cultural foundation. He argued that Turkic peoples should return to their roots, remember their common values, and unite around them. By stating that “*it is natural for Turkestanis to be Turkists because they are Turks,*” he emphasized the importance of shared traditions and values within a unified geographical and cultural space.

This perspective is based not on ethnic superiority but on cultural affinity and historical interconnectedness. For Chokayev, unity is not an ideological imperative but a sociological and historical necessity. He believed that these peoples must come together because their shared past, common values, and collective future make them partners in the same destiny.

Common Historical Consciousness: The Memory of Identity and Resistance

The third and perhaps the deepest layer of Mustafa Chokayev’s vision of unity is the common historical consciousness. According to him, national historical consciousness not only ensures a correct understanding of the past; it is also the most solid ground for uniting around a common identity, cultural solidarity and developing a common orientation towards the future. In this context, he sees the fact that Turkey has become the center of Turkish historiography as a promising development for the Turkic peoples under Soviet rule. The writing of history in a scientific, independent and self-driven manner plays a fundamental role in the construction of the national self. (Esmagambetov, 2013a, p. 305) For this reason, history has a strategic meaning.

Chokayev draws attention especially to the ideological character of Soviet historiography. According to him, the Soviets falsified history from the perspective of class struggle and distorted historical facts to suppress the national consciousness of the peoples. Therefore, the science of history became not only an academic but also a political field. (Mustafa Chokayev, 1931a, pp. 4–6) It is not possible for peoples to recognize themselves and build unity without revealing the true history.

In Chokayev’s opinion, history is a fundamental source for a people in order for it to survive and preserve its identity. Falsification of this source through false and prejudiced interpretations not only misleads different communities of that people but also weakens their moral resistance and their claim to have equal rights with other nations. As a matter of fact, the Turkic peoples have directly experienced such ideological manipulations carried out by the West in the name of science. (Esmagambetov, 2013a, p. 305)

Economic Independence and Integration

According to Mustafa Chokayev’s views, political independence can only gain meaning through economic independence. (Chokayev, 2024, p. 72) Criticizing the dependence of

Turkestan on cotton production during the Soviet period, Chokayev stated that this unidirectional economic structure made the peoples of the region fragile and dependent on foreign countries. (Chokayev, 2024, pp. 102–104; Esmagambetov, 2012a, p. 396) According to him, in order for the peoples of Turkestan to build an independent future, it is essential to establish an economic order based on economic diversity, open to mutual benefit and free from exploitation. (Chokayev, 2024, p. 108) Mustafa Chokayev sees economic independence not only as a matter of development but also as a fundamental condition for political independence and becoming an equal actor in international relations. According to him, the condemnation of Turkestan to a unidirectional agricultural structure that serves Moscow's cotton policies leads the people to hunger and makes the region dependent on foreign countries. In order to prevent this situation, he emphasizes that Turkestan must first of all achieve an agricultural production system that will meet its own food needs.

While talking about the need to build Turkestan on fully independent foundations in both political and economic terms, Chokayev emphasizes that this independence does not exclude relations with the world. On the contrary, he argues that a Turkestan that has achieved prosperity and has full control over its own resources can establish economic relations with other countries on equal terms. This approach shows the strategic importance of economic independence and sustainable development for the integration of Turkic states and balanced relations with the outside world. (Esmagambetov, 2012a, p. 344)

Chokayev argues that Turkic countries may be in alliance with different nations according to their geographical locations and political balances. However, these differences should not prevent Turkic peoples from supporting each other culturally and spiritually. For example, Azerbaijan can develop closer political and economic relations with Georgia and the Caucasus than with Turkistan. Likewise, Crimea may need to have closer relations with Ukraine. However, despite belonging to different groups on political issues, Turks should support each other culturally and spiritually. (Mustafa Chokayev, 1932a, p. 10)

In an article he wrote in 1931, Chokayev points out that the Bolsheviks wanted to establish a Central Asian Federation by dividing Turkestan into provinces such as Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Karakalpakistan, but wanted to keep Kazakhstan separate from this federation. However, Chokayev criticizes this approach and says the following: *“Our goal is indivisible national Turkestan. We envision our future independent national Turkestan as an indivisible state. In its establishment, it is possible to establish several cantons (provinces) as autonomous, as it is here, as required by the conditions. One of the most important tasks of the future national independent Turkestan government is to boil the Turkic tribes in a cauldron with a careful and skillful policy and turn them into a great state.”* (Mustafa Chokayev, 1931b, p. 9)

According to Chokayev's idea, the relations between the Turkic peoples should be based on cultural unity; on the other hand, politically, each of them should form separate federations and these federations should unite under the roof of a confederation. Chokayev does not rule out the possibility of each Turkic people establishing autonomous structures like the Swiss cantons,

which protect their own characteristics and have laws regulating their internal life. According to the findings of Prof. Dr. Koshim Esmagambetov, who is known for his research on Chokayev, in any case, the issue of the form of political unity should be a matter to be considered after the Turkic states gain their independence. (Esmagambetov, 2012b, p. 381)

Mustafa Chokayev's idea of unity is a multifaceted strategic vision shaped in the triangle of language, culture and history. The basic principles he puts forward are not only a reaction to the problems of his time, but also a systematic road map for the Turkish world of the future. The construction of a common language, the consolidation of cultural brotherhood and the revitalization of historical memory are indispensable prerequisites for the Turkic peoples to act together.

Critique of Panturkism and a Realistic Understanding of Unity

According to Chokayev, Panturkism or Panturanism is a complex concept that needs to be addressed in different contexts. He states that the Bolsheviks initially used the ideas of Panislamism and Panturkism for their own propaganda in line with their revolutionary aims in the East. (Chokayev, 2024, p. 192) However, Chokayev emphasizes that the Bolsheviks later began to see Panturkism as a threat to their control and began to divide the Turkic peoples to create separate "national autonomous" republics. (Chokayev, 2024, pp. 80, 191)

He notes that the Soviets and figures such as Kerensky accused Kemalist Turkey of harboring Panturanist ambitions, such as annexing Turkish regions in Russia. (Chokayev, 2024, p. 147) Chokayev firmly rejects these claims and says that the focus of modern Turkey is "Turkism" that is, the consolidation of its national independence and democratic regime. (Chokayev, 2024, p. 147)

According to Chokayev, the most important thing for Turkestanis is to gain their national independence by getting rid of Russian domination, no matter what color it is (red or white). (Chokayev, 2024, pp. 99, 108) Although there were historical aspirations for the unification of Turkic peoples, the primary struggle was for self-determination. (Chokayev, 2024, p. 230) The idea of unification with Turkey did not form the basis of their movement. (Chokayev, 2024, p. 147)

In the Soviet context, Chokayev states that figures such as Sultan Galiyev used the idea of the "Turan State" as a means of resistance against Moscow's centralist "pan-Russian" policies. This was aimed at establishing a people's democracy based on state capitalism and did not necessarily imply unification with Turkey.

In sum, according to Chokayev, Panturkism or Panturism could express the desire of the Turkic peoples for unification, but it could also be considered an ideology used and later suppressed by the Soviets for their own interests, a source of unfounded accusations against Turkey, and a form of reaction against "pan-Russian" domination within the Soviet Union. In particular, Chokayev emphasized that Kemalist Turkey had no such expansionist ambitions and that Turkestan's priority was its own independence. (Chokayev, 2024, pp. 150, 155)

Mustafa Chokayev's ideas on unity in the Turkic world were characterized as "Panturkist" or "Panturanist" by some circles of the period. However, Chokayev firmly rejected such accusations and repeatedly stated that his understanding of unity was not based on ethnic superiority or an expansionist ideology. His approach is a voluntary, peaceful and egalitarian model of unity based on cultural and historical commonality. According to Chokayev, the struggle against the Soviet Union could not be carried out under the banner of either Islamism or Pan-Turkism. This struggle had to be carried out within a framework of universal values based on the right of peoples to self-determination and cultural freedoms.

Chokayev's realism is also reflected in his gradual and strategic approach to the idea of unity. He argued that instead of a sudden and centralized unity model covering all Turkic peoples, federations based on regional affinities should be formed and these structures should be integrated within the framework of a confederative union over time.

It is based on the principle that each person should unite toward common goals while preserving their internal structure and cultural characteristics. In this respect, Chokayev developed a pluralist and pragmatic political theory compatible with the early models of international cooperation.

These views show us that Mustafa Chokayev's criticism of Panturkism reveals that he adopted an understanding of unity based on the needs and realities of the peoples, far from ideological dogmatism. This perspective continues to offer a strong foundation for contemporary cooperation initiatives within the Turkic world.

This intellectual framework is echoed in the activities of the Organization of Turkic States today; the principles Chokayev advocated a century ago have evolved into institutional and internationally applicable models. Therefore, Chokayev's vision of unity is not merely a historical concept, but a robust theoretical foundation for the Turkic cooperation projects of both today and tomorrow.

Intellectual Continuity Between Mustafa Chokayev's Vision of Unity and the Organization of Turkic States

The ideas developed by Mustafa Chokayev on unity in the Turkic world are not merely historical perspectives articulated in the early 20th century; they also constitute a conceptual and political precursor to the contemporary cooperation efforts among today's Turkic states. In this context, the Organization of Turkic States (OTS), founded in Nakhchivan in 2009 and undergoing institutionalization since 2021, demonstrates remarkable parallels with Chokayev's vision of unity. The OTS's initiatives in the fields of language, culture, economy, and history can be regarded as contemporary manifestations of the strategic principles that Chokayev consistently advocated in his writings and political discourse.

The activities of the OTS, such as common alphabet studies, common educational curriculum projects, terminology unity initiatives and youth programs (*Organization of Turkic States Strategy For "2022-2026,"* (No Date Specified); *Türk Dünyası 2040 Vizyonu*, (No Date

Specified)), are a direct institutional continuation of Chokayev's proposal. The Organization of Turkic States attaches great importance to the deep-rooted and rich common history of its member states. It is certain that the ancient, deep and rich common history of the Turkic states, which gained their independence after the collapse of the Soviet Union, was influential in the establishment of the organization. For this reason, the member states aim to develop these relations by rediscovering common culture, history, religion, language and many similar rich relations. (Çinar & Uzun, 2023, p. 144)

The preparation of a common history book, which is one of the projects of the Turkic Academy within the OTS, aims to build a multinational, multilayered history based on common values instead of the ideological historiography criticized by Chokayev. The Organization of Turkic States' publication titled Strategy of the Organization of Turkic States 2022-2026 provides direct information on the preparation of common textbooks. In this context, it is planned that textbooks on Common Turkic History, Geography of the Turkic World and Common Turkic Literature will be prepared by the Turkic Academy and included in the curricula of the national educational institutions of the interested parties. (*Organization Of Turkic States Strategy For "2022-2026,"* (No Date Specified), p. 27)

Economic cooperation projects, logistics networking and trade liberalization steps of the OTS are in line with Chokayev's views on economic independence and integration. As stated earlier, according to Chokayev, in order for the peoples of Turkestan to build a free future, an economic structure that is closed to exploitation, based on mutual benefit and diversified, should be established. In his opinion, economic independence is the basis not only for development but also for political sovereignty and an equal voice in the international arena. The OTS vision of economic cooperation includes increasing trade and investment among the member states and promoting economic growth and integration into the global economy. Concrete steps are being taken to develop logistics networks and trade facilitation, aiming at deeper economic integration and trade liberalization in the future. (*İşbirliği Alanları Detay*, n.d.; *Organization Of Turkic States Strategy For "2022-2026,"* (No Date Specified), pp. 5–11) The Middle Corridor Project aims to strengthen transportation and trade links between Turkic states while at the same time creating alternative routes to counter economic pressure from great powers such as Russia and China. (Kaya, 2024)

The OTS offers a mechanism that respects the sovereignty of member states but is based on political coordination, common interests and cooperation on regional security issues. This structure is based on equality, mutual respect and common interests, not ethnic or sectarian superiority. This multilateral cooperation directly corresponds to the Chokayev model of economic solidarity based on equal relations.

Conclusion and Evaluation

Mustafa Chokayev was a multifaceted intellectual who led the struggle of Turkestan peoples for political independence, cultural freedom and preservation of their historical identity at the intellectual level in the early 20th century and carried this struggle to the international level

during his years of exile. The understanding of unity he developed was shaped on the basis of a common language, common historical consciousness and common culture; instead of ethnic superiority or ideological dogmatism, he put forward a model based on voluntarism, equality and strategic realism. Chokayev's intellectual universe created a field of mental resistance against Russian imperialism and Soviet ideological domination, defending the ability of peoples to exist with their own identities.

Chokayev's vision of unity overlaps significantly with the multilateral cooperation mechanisms developed among independent Turkic states today. In particular, the OTS offers a structure close to the federative and confederative cooperation model proposed by Chokayev and creates an integration process that operates on the principles of voluntary participation, equal representation, cultural partnership and economic solidarity. Chokayev's calls for the reconstruction of historical memory have found an institutional response in OTS's current practices, such as a common alphabet, educational curriculum, scientific terminology unity and cultural policies.

A similar continuity is observed in the economic sphere. Chokayev's approach criticizing Turkestan's dependent structure based on cotton monopoly during the Soviet era is parallel to the cooperation strategies developed by the OTS in the fields of transportation, logistics, trade and investment. In this context, multinational projects such as the Middle Corridor aim not only at economic integration but also at enabling independent Turkic states to act more effectively and autonomously on a global scale.

Chokayev's conception of unity rests on a realistic and pluralistic perspective. His proposal presents a viable model for a politically decentralized structure where different Turkic peoples can cooperate while preserving their distinct identities, even within today's multipolar international order. The OTS's development of relations grounded in cultural proximity and historical ties—without pursuing claims of ethnic superiority—serves as a contemporary embodiment of Chokayev's inclusive vision.

In conclusion, there is a clear intellectual and institutional continuity between the ideas of Mustafa Chokayev and the current relations among independent Turkic states. His envisioned model of unity offers a framework based on historical and cultural ties, advocating equality and strategic cooperation. Today, this model is being implemented through structures such as the Organization of Turkic States. Thus, Chokayev should be regarded not merely as a historical figure but as a pioneering thinker and strategist whose legacy continues to shape the Turkic world's contemporary vision.

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Geniřletilmiř zet

Mustafa okay’ın Trk Dnyası Birlięi Vizyonu ve Trk Devletleri Teřkilatı’ndaki aędař Yansımaları

Bu alıřma, 20. yzyılın ilk eyreęinde Mustafa okay tarafından formle edilen Trk dnyasında birlik dřncesinin tarihsel, entelektel ve ideolojik temellerini analiz etmektedir. Aynı zamanda, sz konusu vizyonun gnmzde baęımsız Trk cumhuriyetleri arasında kurumsallařan ok taraflı iř birlięi modelleriyle, zellikle de Trk Devletleri Teřkilatı (TDT) bnyesindeki uygulamalarla ne lde rtřtęn tartıřmaktadır.

Mustafa okay’ın birlik anlayıřı, klasik etno-milliyeti Pantrkist yaklařımlardan farklı olarak, gnlllk, eřitlik, kltrel ortaklık ve tarihsel bilin ilkeleri etrafında řekillenen oęulcu ve pragmatik bir modele dayanmaktadır. Bu baęlamda, ortak dilin yalnızca bir iletiřim aracı deęil; aynı zamanda kimlik, dayanıřma ve kltrel direniřin temel tařı olduęu vurgulanmaktadır. okay’ın tarih anlayıřı ise, gemiřin ideolojik biimlendirmelere karřı korunması gereken bilimsel bir alan olarak deęerlendirilmiř; ulusal belleęin inřası ve korunması aısından tarih bilincinin stratejik nemi savunulmuřtur.

Çalışma, Çokay'ın siyasi tecrübesinin özellikle 1921 öncesi Türkistan'daki faaliyetleri ve 1921 sonrası Avrupa'daki sürgün yılları boyunca yürüttüğü yayıncılık ve diplomasi çabalarıyla şekillendiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Bu dönem, onun düşünsel dönüşümünü tamamladığı ve Türkistan davasını uluslararası boyuta taşıdığı bir safhayı temsil etmektedir. *Yaş Türkistan* dergisi gibi yayın organları aracılığıyla, kültürel kimliğin korunması ve entelektüel direnişin sürekliliği sağlanmaya çalışılmıştır.

Makale, Çokay'ın öngördüğü birlik modeli ile TDT'nin çağdaş faaliyetleri arasında kurumsal ve kavramsal paralellikler kurmaktadır. Ortak alfabe çalışmaları, ortak tarih ve edebiyat kitapları, gençlik programları, ekonomik entegrasyon ve lojistik ağ projeleri gibi TDT'nin yürüttüğü girişimler, Çokay'ın öne sürdüğü ilkelerin günümüzdeki somut karşılıklarıdır. Bu çerçevede, Çokay'ın eleştirdiği Sovyet merkezli tarih yazımı yerine, çok sesli ve ortak değerlere dayalı bir tarihsel anlatının inşası hedeflenmektedir.

Ekonomik bağlamda ise, Çokay'ın tek yönlü tarımsal üretim (özellikle pamuk) eleştirisi ile günümüzde TDT tarafından geliştirilen ticaret serbestisi, yatırım iş birlikleri ve ulaşım projeleri arasında dikkat çekici bir benzerlik gözlemlenmektedir. Orta Koridor Projesi gibi girişimler, yalnızca bölgesel entegrasyonu değil, aynı zamanda bağımsız Türk devletlerinin küresel ölçekte daha etkin ve otonom aktörler haline gelmesini amaçlamaktadır.

Çokay'ın Pantürkizm eleştirisi ise onun realist yaklaşımının bir yansıması olarak değerlendirilmektedir. Çokay, Türk birliğinin etnik üstünlük temelli değil; kültürel yakınlık, tarihsel ortaklık ve stratejik dayanışma ilkelerine dayandırılması gerektiğini savunmaktadır. Bu anlayış, bugün TDT çatısı altında sürdürülen çok taraflı iş birlikleriyle büyük ölçüde örtüşmektedir.

Sonuç olarak, Mustafa Çokay yalnızca tarihî bir figür değil; aynı zamanda çağdaş Türk dünyasının kültürel ve siyasi entegrasyonuna yön veren vizyoner bir düşünürdür. Onun çoğulcu, barışçıl ve gönüllülük esasına dayalı birlik modeli, bugün Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı'nın kurumsal çerçevesinde hayata geçirilen stratejilerle entelektüel süreklilik arz etmektedir. Dolayısıyla, Çokay'ın fikirleri tarihsel bir miras olmanın ötesinde, günümüz Türk dünyasının geleceğine yön veren teorik bir referans noktası niteliğindedir.