

THE ROLE OF ALPARSLAN TURKESH IN THE POLITICAL HISTORY OF TÜRKİYE

N. E. Mammadov 

ABSTRACT

Alparslan Türkeş was a famous political figure in the history of 20th-century Türkiye and the founder and leader of the Nationalist Movement Party (NMP). A. Türkeş was born in 1917 in Nicosia, Northern Cyprus. In 1963–1964, A. Türkeş and his friends established contacts with the Republican Peasant Nation Party and became its members. In 1965, he became the leader of the party. At the party's 1969 Adana Congress, A. Türkeş further strengthened his position in the party leadership, and the party was renamed the Nationalist Movement Party (NMP). In the elections held that year, A. Türkeş was elected as a deputy from Adana. The Cyprus issue of 1974 and the rise of nationalist slogans and sentiments among the population led to an increase in the NMP's prestige. In the 1977 elections, the party doubled its share of the vote to 6.4 percent and increased the number of its seats to 16. The party was disbanded after the military coup in 1980, and its leaders were arrested. In 1983–1985, the party was re-established and operated under the name of the Conservative Party, and its leadership was changed several times. The party was renamed the Nationalist Labor Party (NLP) at the 1985 Congress. After the lifting of political bans, in 1987 A. Türkeş returned to the party leadership. This party operated until the end of 1992. At an emergency congress in early 1993, the party was renamed the Nationalist Movement Party. In 1997, NMP leader A. Türkeş died. At the extraordinary congress held that year, party secretary Devlet Bahçeli was elected as the party leader.

Keywords: Türkiye, Alparslan Turkish, Leader, Nationalist Movement Party, Conservative Party, Ideology

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Citation:
Mammadov N.E. The Role of
Alparslan Turkish in the Political
History of Türkiye // Adam Alemi.
– 2026. – Vol. 28. – No. 3 (109).
– P. 162–166.
– DOI: 10.48010/fws4wx36

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Received: 13/08/2026
Accepted: 05/09/2026
Published online: 30/09/2026

Түркияның саяси тарихындағы Алпарслан Түркештің рөлі

Аңдатпа. Алпарслан Түркеш 20 ғасырдағы Түркия тарихындағы әйгілі саяси қайраткер, Ұлтшыл қозғалыс партиясының (ҰҚП) негізін қалаушы және көшбасшысы болды. А. Түркеш 1917 жылы Солтүстік Кипрдің Никосия қаласында дүниеге келген. 1963–64 жылдары А. Түркеш және оның достары Республикалық шаруа ұлты партиясымен байланыс орнатып, оның мүшесі болды. 1965 жылы ол партияның жетекшісі болды. Партияның 1969 жылғы Адана съезінде А. Түркеш партия басшылығындағы орнын одан әрі нығайтты және партия Ұлтшыл қозғалыс партиясы (ҰҚП) болып өзгертілді. Сол жылы өткен сайлауда А. Түркеш Аданадан депутат болып сайланды. 1974 жылғы Кипр мәселесі, халық арасында ұлтшылдық ұрандар мен сезімдердің күшеюі ҰҚП беделінің артуына әкелді. 1977 жылғы сайлауда партия дауыс санын екі есеге арттырып, 6,4 пайызға, ал орындар санын 16-ға жеткізді. 1980 жылы әскери төңкерістен кейін партия таратылып, оның жетекшілері тұтқындалды. 1983–1985 жылдары партия Консервативтік партия атауымен құрылып, жұмыс істеді, оның басшылығы бірнеше рет ауыстырылды. 1985 жылғы съезде партия Ұлтшыл еңбек партиясы (ҰЛП) болып өзгертілді. Саяси тыйымдар алынып тасталғаннан кейін, 1987 жылы А. Түркеш партия басшылығына қайта оралды. Бұл партия 1992 жылдың соңына дейін жұмыс істеді. 1993 жылдың басындағы төтенше съезде партия Ұлтшыл қозғалыс партиясы болып өзгертілді. 1997 жылы ҰМП жетекшісі А. Түркеш қайтыс болды. Сол жылы өткен кезектен тыс съезде партия хатшысы Девлет Бахчели партия жетекшісі болып сайланды.

Түйін сөздер: Түркия, Алпарслан түрік, көшбасшы, Ұлттық қозғалыс партиясы, Консервативтік партия, идеология.

Роль Алпарслана Тюркеша в политической истории Турции

Аннотация. Алпарслан Туркеш — известная политическая фигура в истории Турции XX века, основатель и лидер Партии националистического движения (ПНД). А. Туркеш родился в 1917 году в Никосии, Северный Кипр. В 1963–64 годах А. Туркеш и его друзья установили контакты с Республиканской крестьянской национальной партией и стали её членами. В 1965 году он стал лидером партии. На съезде партии в Адане в 1969 году А. Туркеш ещё больше укрепил свои позиции в руководстве партии, и она была переименована в Партию националистического движения (ПНД). На выборах, состоявшихся в том же году, А. Туркеш был избран депутатом от Аданы. Кипрский вопрос 1974 года, рост националистических лозунгов и настроений среди насе-

ния привели к повышению престижа ПНД. На выборах 1977 года партия удвоила свою поддержку, получив 6,4 процента голосов, и увеличила количество мест до 16. Партия была распущена после военного переворота в 1980 году, а её лидеры были арестованы. В 1983-1985 годах партия была создана и действовала под названием Консервативная партия, и её руководство несколько раз менялось. На съезде 1985 года партия была переименована в Националистическую рабочую партию (НЛРП). После снятия политических запретов в 1987 году А. Туркеш вернулся к руководству партией. Эта партия действовала до конца 1992 года. На чрезвычайном съезде в начале 1993 года партия была переименована в Партию националистического движения. В 1997 году умер лидер НЛРП А. Туркеш. На внеочередном съезде, состоявшемся в том же году, секретарем партии был избран Девлет Бахчели.

Ключевые слова: Турция, Алпарслан Тюркеш, лидер, Партия националистического движения, Консервативная партия, идеология.

Introduction

Alparslan Türkeş founded the Nationalist Movement Party (NMP) and was its leader for a long time. The NMP has been one of the strongest political movements in Turkey's political life for more than half a century. Although its official establishment as a political party took place in February 1969, the formation of the NMP's ideological foundations dates back to the early twentieth century. At the same time, its systematic formation, both organizationally and ideologically, is associated with the name of the famous socio-political and military figure Alparslan Türkeş. During its activity, the history of the formation and development of the party went through certain stages. Under the leadership of A. Türkeş, the party formed a social base among the Turkish population and went through a challenging path of development.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative historical research design to examine the role of Alparslan Türkeş in the political history of Turkey and to assess his contribution to the institutional and ideological development of the Nationalist Movement Party (NMP). The research is based primarily on historical analysis, document analysis, and the comparative interpretation of political developments within their chronological context.

The chronological framework of the study covers the major stages of Türkeş's political career, beginning with his involvement in the military and political developments surrounding the May 27, 1960 military coup and continuing through his participation in the Republican Peasant Nation Party, the establishment and consolidation of the Nationalist Movement Party, the political crises of the 1970s, the consequences of the September 12, 1980 military coup, and his return to active party politics

following the removal of political restrictions. Particular attention is also paid to the reorganization of the nationalist movement during the late 1980s and 1990s.

The source base consists of scholarly works on Turkish political history, studies focusing specifically on the Nationalist Movement Party and Turkish nationalism, political party histories, analytical reports, memoir-based sources, contemporary political documents, and the published writings of Alparslan Türkeş. These materials are examined through source criticism and contextual analysis in order to identify recurring political, ideological, and organizational patterns.

Content analysis is used to evaluate Türkeş's ideological discourse, particularly the principles associated with the "Nine Lights" doctrine, Turkish nationalism, anti-communism, conservatism, secularism, and the Turkish-Islamic synthesis. The study also analyzes the relationship between Türkeş's ideological formulations and the organizational practices of the NMP.

A historical-comparative approach is applied to distinguish different stages in the evolution of the party. The pre-1969 organizational background, the NMP period between 1969 and 1980, the post-1980 restructuring process, and the restoration of the NMP name in 1993 are treated as interconnected but distinct phases. Election results, participation in coalition governments, changes in party organization, and the effects of military interventions are used as indicators of political development.

Rather than evaluating Türkeş solely in terms of electoral performance, the study considers his broader influence on party institutionalization, ideological consolidation, cadre formation, political mobilization, and the long-term establishment of nationalist politics as a distinct current within the Turkish political system. The findings are therefore derived from the combined interpretation of political events, ideological texts, organizational developments, and secondary historical literature.

Main part

Who is Alparslan Türkesh and how did he join politics?

Alparslan Türkesh was a famous political figure in the history of 20th-century Turkey and the founder and leader of the Nationalist Movement Party (NMP). A. Türkesh was born in 1917 in Lefkoşa, Northern Cyprus. His ancestors were originally from Kayseri Province in central Anatolia and were exiled to Cyprus in the 1860s. The environment in which Türkesh grew up was important for his future life. At that time, the island of Cyprus was under British rule. His family moved to Istanbul in 1933, and A. Türkesh graduated from the military lyceum and the military academy between 1933 and 1938. He studied military science and economics in the United States from 1947 to 1957 and returned to Turkey in 1957. Later, he studied in Germany for a period of time.

The military coup of May 27, 1960, was one of the important turning points in the life of A. Türkesh. He was considered one of the main figures in the military coup, and after the coup, he became an adviser to the prime minister. A. Türkesh was one of the most influential members of the newly formed National Unity Committee (NUC). He was considered more educated than most of his colleagues and a charismatic figure who spoke English fluently [4, p. 398]. Due to disagreements within the NUC, a number of its members, including A. Türkesh, were sent abroad under the pretext of military service. However, he returned to Turkey in 1963. In 1963–1964, A. Türkesh and his associates established contacts with the Republican Peasant Nation Party and became its members. In 1965, he became the leader of the party [2, p. 53].

To what extent did historical circumstances affect the formation of the NMP?

Socio-political figures who were active in the early twentieth century, such as Mustafa Celalettin Pasha, Fuad Köprülü, Ömer Zeki Validi Togan, Erol Güngör, and others, were important figures who formed the basis of modern nationalist thought. These individuals made significant contributions to the formation of the political, cultural, and social dimensions of NMP ideology. The NMP's policy is built on such a strong foundation [6, p. 4].

The foundation of the modern NMP as a political party was the Nation Party. The founders of the party were, in fact, people who had split from the Democratic Party, one of the most important political parties of the time. Among them were such important socio-political figures as Fevzi Çakmak, Enis Akaygen, Hikmet Bayur, General Sadık Aldoğan, and Osman Nuri Konu. The Nation Party was formed by them in July 1948. However, the party was unable to function for a long time and was closed in January 1954 on the grounds that it was an instrument of religious politics [5, p. 73]. However, its members continued to seek to establish a new political party. At their initiative, a new party, the Republican Nation Party, was formed in February 1954. The leader of the party was Osman Bölükbaşı. In October 1958, the Republican Nation Party, which merged with the Peasant Party, was renamed the Republican Peasant Nation Party [10, p. 17]. The party operated under this name until 1969.

Formation and activity of NMP (1969-1980)

At the 1969 Adana Congress of the Republican Peasant Nation Party, A. Türkesh further strengthened his position in the party leadership, and the party was renamed the Nationalist Movement Party (NMP). In the elections held that year, A. Türkesh was elected as a deputy from Adana. A. Türkesh changed the emblem of the party to three white crescents on a red background, while the emblem of the youth organizations featured a gray wolf inside the crescent. The youth branches of the NMP operated under the name "Idealist Hearths Education and Culture Foundation." The Idealist Hearths was founded in 1968. It was also closed and reopened at different times and operated under different names. Like its slogan, its activities focused on anti-capitalist and anti-communist elements. In 1969, A. Türkesh first addressed the youth as "Bozkurtlar" (Grey Wolves). Anti-communist militia cadres began to be trained in command camps organized during the summer months [5, p. 86].

With the opening of his party to Anatolia, the main stronghold of his party, A. Türkesh saw that religious faith had a great impact on every aspect of life for the people of Anatolia. For these reasons, he defined his policy as "Turkish-Islamic." Put forward in 1969, the idea that "we are as Turkish as Mount Tanrı and as

Muslim as Mount Hira. Both philosophies are our motto" became an important ideological statement [1, p. 54]. Since that time, racists and Turanists have been expelled from the party, and the party became ideologically closer to Islam. At that time, differences of opinion also caused some conflicts. In March 1967, at a meeting of the National Turkish Students' Union, a conflict broke out between Turanists and Islamists, and Hüseyin Özdemir, a Turanist, was severely beaten [9, p. 21].

Ideas about secularism and religion also played an important role in shaping the MHP's core ideology. "The principle of secularism is a necessary principle for our country," Türkeş said. "The principle of secularism requires the separation of religious affairs and state affairs. Secularism does not mean interfering in the religious activities of people and citizens or putting pressure on their religious lives" [8, p. 67].

At the 1967 Congress, A. Türkeş was proclaimed "Başbuğ," and his Nine Lights Doctrine (Nationalism, Idealism, Morality, Science, Population, Peasantry, Freedom and Personality, Development and Populism, Industry and Technology) was defined. As can be seen from this doctrine, nationalism was at the forefront. What does Turkish nationalism mean? A. Türkeş answered the question as follows: "Turkish nationalism is an expression of deep love for the Turkish nation, a sense of attachment, a common history and a common goal ... Turkish nationalism is a way of thinking based on love, not hatred and prejudice" [8, p. 82].

Along with the 1969 Congress, A. Türkeş formed a strong structure within the party using the skills he acquired through his military education. The NMP, especially since the 1970s, became a center where the voices of those who felt threatened by capitalist modernization, belonged to the economically middle and lower-middle classes, and were culturally forced to change with the changing world could be heard. Through their policies, they sought to appeal to a poor and conservative social base with Islamic beliefs. At the same time, the anti-communist spirit that developed in the command camps was forming a base with militant cadres. The provincial organizations formed the core of the NMP, based on nationalism as well as morality [5, p. 86].

In the general elections of 1973, they did not achieve the desired success. With 3.4% of the vote, they

To what extent did the military coup of 1980 affect the activities of the NMP?

Like other political parties in Turkey, the NMP was disbanded after the 1980 military coup, and its leaders were arrested. Cases were filed in court against the NMP and the Idealist organizations. Türkeş was accused of establishing criminal organizations in order to abolish the existing system and establish a fascist state. Many people, including A. Türkeş, were sentenced to death. The trial lasted until April 1987, when Türkeş and many other NMP leaders were acquitted [2, p. 111].

In 1983–1985, the party was re-established and operated under the name of the Conservative Party, and its leadership was changed several times. The party was renamed the Nationalist Labor Party (NLP) at the 1985 Congress. After the lifting of political bans, A. Türkeş returned to the party leadership in 1987. The party operated under this name until the end of 1992. At an emergency congress in early 1993, the party was renamed the Nationalist Movement Party. A. Türkeş's activity from 1987 to 1993 can also be characterized as a period of strengthening the party by restoring it to its previous position. At the same time, the USSR and the idea of communism collapsed, and the Turkic peoples of the Caucasus and Central Asia established their own independent states. Such developments made it important to introduce changes to the ideology and activities of the MHP. In 1997, NMP leader A. Türkeş died. At the extraordinary congress held that year, party secretary Devlet Bahçeli was elected as party leader.

Conclusion

The NMP has gone through ups and downs in its political life for more than half a century. Its ideology has also gradually changed. The NMP and its nationalist and secular orientation have made it an integral part of Turkish political life. The NMP's leadership structure, ideology, the social groups it addresses, and other characteristics are among the elements that distinguish it clearly from other parties. A. Türkeş, the leader of the party, made a significant contribution to the formation and development of all these aspects.

It is true that the party did not achieve significant success in the parliamentary elections held in Turkey until 1997. However, it was represented

in government in the First and Second Nationalist Front governments formed together with the Justice Party in the 1970s. This can be considered an indicator of its political and ideological orientation, as well as its growing prestige.

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