TÜRK AKADEMİSİ

Siyasi Sosyal Stratejik Araştırmalar Vakfı

TURKISH NATIONALISM AND
THE NATIONALIST MOVEMENT PARTY
IN THE CENTENNIAL OF THE REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE

CONTENTS

TÜRK AKADEMİSİ
Siyasi Sosyal Stratejik Araştırmalar Vakfı

FOREWORD

The national identity of the Turkish nation, with its ancient roots, and the loyalty to this identity have been significant since its emergence on the historical stage. This attachment, which has persisted from the past into the present, has manifested as nationalism in the modern era. Modern Turkish nationalism exhibits a distinct character compared to most contemporary forms of nationalism, particularly those developed in the West. Primarily, Turkish nationalism is an ideology that rejects all forms of exclusion and aggression, fundamentally opposing racism. By centering its principles around the concepts of homeland and nation, it views Turkishness not as an ethnicity but as a definition of nationhood based on a shared sense of belonging. These attributes set it apart from its Western counterparts and modernist interpretations, rendering Turkish nationalism unique.

The racist ideologies that emerged during the first half of the 20th century, along with the aggressive racist interpretations fueled by increasing anti-immigrant sentiments in the 21st century, are both indefensible. These ideologies cannot be classified as nationalism in any meaningful sense. The notions presented as nationalism in Western literature are fundamentally incompatible with Turkish nationalism.

While the definition of a nation views the world as a community of nations, Turkish nationalism also aspires to a world in which human rights are more robustly upheld. It advocates for a more equitable international system. To achieve a just, prosperous, and peaceful world, there must be an understanding that places the reality of nations at its core. Each nation should be regarded as a cultural asset, and every nation must pursue the goal of preserving and enhancing its own culture. In this way, each nation will contribute to the advancement of global civilization.

In line with this understanding, TASAV has prepared this book to elucidate the fundamental ideological foundations and principles of Turkish nationalism, articulate the mission of the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) as the political representative of this ideology, and narrate the party's political history. Our objective is to convey the distinctive aspects of Turkish nationalism and the MHP, emphasizing their commitment to human values and their vision for civilization, all while employing academic language and a scientific perspective.

This book seeks to enhance the understanding of Turkish nationalism and the MHP's role in shaping Türkiye's national identity by examining the ideological foundations and historical developments associated with the party. It also aims to highlight the MHP's contributions to Turkish politics while emphasizing the importance of an inclusive and constructive form of nationalism, as represented by the MHP. In doing so, we hope to enrich the ongoing discourse on national identity and cultural preservation, providing insights that resonate both within Türkiye and in the broader international context.

To achieve this aim, we have prepared this book by translating key sections from the previously published Turkish work titled "*Cumhuriyetin Yüzüncü Yılında Türk Milliyetçiliği ve Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*," which was released to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Republic of Türkiye. We hope this work will serve as a valuable reference for scholars in the field and provide insights for all readers interested in the subject.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the book's editors, Asst. Prof. Hasan Bozkurt ÇELİK and Konur Alp KOÇAK, a Member of Parliament representing the MHP, as well as to all the contributing authors, the TASAV staff, and everyone involved in the publication process.

İsmail Faruk AKSU
President of TASAV

PREFACE

Hasan Bozkurt ÇELİK[1]
Konur Alp KOÇAK[2]

This study has been prepared by translating selected sections of the book titled "*Cumhuriyetin Yüzüncü Yılında Türk Milliyetçiliği ve Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*," which was originally published in Turkish in 2023 to commemorate the centenary of the establishment of the Republic of Türkiye.

While rooted in ancient traditions, Turkish nationalism began to develop its modern form during the late periods of the Ottoman Empire. It is important to emphasize the use of both "ideology" and "sentiment" in this context. In the literature, nationalism is often discussed either solely as an invented ideology or merely as a feeling or emotion, which is an insufficient approach. Both perspectives are incomplete; therefore, nationalism should be examined as a dual-faceted phenomenon.

This study focuses not on theories of nationalism per se but rather on the example of Turkish nationalism and the place and role of the Nationalist Movement Party within Turkish political life. In both Turkish and English literature, texts that attempt to transcend or elim-

---

[1] Asst. Prof., Gumushane University, Departmant of Political Science and Public Administration, hbozkurtcelik@gmail.com
[2] Member of Parliament (representing the Nationalist Movement Party), Grand National Assembly of Türkiye, konur.alp.kocak@tbmm.gov.tr

inate nationalism often interpret Turkish nationalism in a negative light. However, nationalism should not be viewed solely in positive or negative terms. As one of the most influential and defining ideas of the modern era and one of the most striking sentiments in human history, nationalism must be approached with the goal of understanding. Here, "understanding" refers to identifying rather than adopting. Every event or phenomenon in political history should be examined objectively rather than subjectively.

This study aims to understand and explain the ideological, social, and political dimensions of Turkish nationalism and the Nationalist Movement Party. This endeavor necessitates a multifaceted and interdisciplinary approach. Any discourse on this subject will inevitably be incomplete, representing a significant limitation of this study. Each chapter of the book has been developed using different methodologies. However, in selecting the topics for these chapters, consideration has been given to aspects such as the interpretation of Turkish nationalism and the Nationalist Movement Party in relation to political life, perspectives on international relations, the theoretical meanings attributed to the concepts of nation and nationalism, and comparisons with similar phenomena worldwide.

The first chapter of the book is titled "*Turkish Nationalism: Ideological and Theoretical Boundaries*," written by Prof. Tevfik Erdem. In this chapter, Erdem examines the ideological significance of Turkish nationalism and provides his definition of the concept of nation. He addresses the deep historical roots of Turkish national identity and explains the emergence of modern Turkish nationalism. Furthermore, while assessing the Republican era, Erdem discusses the future of Turkish nationalism in the context of globalization. However, this chapter emphasizes the ideological foundation rather than providing a historical narrative, interpreting other elements within this framework.

Following the ideological discussion, the book examines the impact of Turkish nationalism on the founding philosophy of the Republic of Türkiye. The chapter titled "*Turkish Nationalism as the Founding Philosophy of the Republic and the Nationalist Movement Party as Its Institutional Representation*," written by Prof. M. Hanifi Macit, explores this subject. Macit first examines the philosophy of the Turkish state, offering a historical and philosophical perspective. He focuses on concepts such as

state intellect[3] and survival while emphasizing the decisive role of nation and nationalism.

After exploring the impact of Turkish nationalism on the founding philosophy of the Republic of Türkiye, it is beneficial to analyze its political history. The chapter titled "*Turkish Nationalism: From Empire to Republic,*" written by Res. Asst. Satuk Buğra Çetinkaya, serves as a starting point for this discussion. It is considered a starting point because it addresses the evolution of modern Turkish nationalism from the imperial period to the republican era. It is important to note that while many of the writings in this book contain a narrative of political history, this chapter specifically emphasizes an analysis from the perspective of political history.

Following Çetinkaya's chapter, which focuses on the late Ottoman period, Hasan Bozkurt Çelik's work titled "*The Mark of Turkish Nationalism on Turkish Political Life: The Nationalist Movement Party and the Idealist-Nationalist Movement, Past and Present*" examines the role of Turkish nationalism in political life, beginning with nationalist political organizations of the late Ottoman era. The study explores the emergence of nationalist politics as a "third way" during the early years of the Republic. It traces the evolution from the Millet (Nation) Party—the political representative of traditional Turkish nationalism—to the founding of the Nationalist Movement Party. Once established, the unique position of the Nationalist Movement Party in Turkish political life is analyzed in depth. The chapter investigates the party's distinctiveness compared to other political organizations, while also offering a historical account of key political events the party has experienced.

It is also important to examine the ideological background of Turkish nationalism in a comparative context, beyond the realm of political life. The chapter written by Prof. Nihat Yılmaz serves this purpose. The chapter, titled "*A Comparative Evaluation of Nationalism Perceptions and Understandings: Western Nationalisms vs. Turkish Nationalism,*" compares Turkish nationalism with Western nationalism. It juxtaposes the perceptions of nation and nationalism in Western societies with those expressed by Turkish nationalists. In doing so, it compares the

---

[3] What is meant here is not the concept of *raison d'état*. Rather, it refers to the notion of reason as opposed to mere interest. In a political sense, it represents the intellect of the state as a foresighted and overarching rationality.

meanings that not only nationalists but also societies attribute to the concepts of nation and nationalism. Yılmaz emphasizes that the concept of nation in the West aligns more closely with a homogenizing understanding, whereas in Turkish society, it is based on a tradition of coexistence that is more inclusive. He argues that Turkish nationalism is not aggressive or derogatory, but rather inclusive and focused on strengthening its own nation, using significant concepts from Turkish history as a foundation.

Following this comparative analysis, the subject is approached from a more specific perspective by Assoc. Prof. Gökberk Yücel, who argues that Turkish nationalism presents an ontological security approach, which is further exemplified by the Nationalist Movement Party. In the chapter titled "*Ontological Security Approach in Turkish Nationalism: Nationalist Movement Party*," Yücel discusses the role and impact of nationalism in the formation of Turkish ontological security, drawing from the ontological security framework in international relations. He examines this not only within the borders of Türkiye but also in the context of the Turkic world.

After a chapter that encompasses both international relations and the perspective of the Turkic world, it is necessary to include a study on the international vision of the Nationalist Movement Party. The chapter titled "*Analyzing the 'Leader Country' Vision of the Nationalist Movement Party in the Context of Turkish Foreign Policy*," written by Prof. Yalçın Sarıkaya, addresses this topic. The section examines the party's frequently emphasized goal of elevating the Republic of Türkiye to a "leader country" status in the world within the context of Turkish foreign policy. This study, which includes the party's interpretations of Turkish foreign policy in political life, explores the "leader country" objective as an alternative to the global order.

This study, enriched by the contributions of esteemed scholars, seeks to enhance the English-language literature on Turkish nationalism and the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP). While the range of topics and concepts covered is broad, the central aim is to provide a comprehensive analysis of Turkish nationalism and the MHP's role across various domains, from political history to international relations. The work endeavors to challenge the often negative interpretations found in the literature, offering instead a more balanced and scientific perspective.

The significance of this book lies not only in its contribution to the academic discourse on Turkish nationalism but also in its potential to inspire further research and dialogue on the role of nationalism in shaping political ideologies and movements. As the Nationalist Movement Party continues to evolve and address both domestic and international challenges, it is crucial to revisit and critically assess its ideological foundations. This book provides a platform for such reflection, encouraging scholars and readers to explore the depth of Turkish nationalism and its influence on Türkiye's political landscape. By fostering this exploration, the book seeks to deepen understanding of nationalism as a dynamic and impactful force in modern political history.

TURKISH NATIONALISM: IDEOLOGICAL AND THEORETICAL BOUNDARIES

Tevfik ERDEM

Professor, Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University
Department of Political Science and Public Administration

Introduction

One of the most exploited and despised terms in social science litera-ture is nationalism. The reason for this is due to the efforts of academ-ics or authors with different ideologies who make so-called objective evaluations in order to equate nationalism with racism and fascism by treating their own ideological prejudices as if they were scientific hypotheses. Of course, Turkish nationalism also strongly receives its share of this process. However, nations and nationalisms have their own history and therefore their own stories. Presenting shallow and reductionist approaches under the disguise of scholarship leads to a misunderstanding of nationalism as a historical reality. Therefore, aca-demic sensitivity and honesty require understanding and explanation by acting more objectively toward the object of study.

In order to define nationalism, it is first necessary to define the actor that gives it spirit, namely the nation. However, there is no universally accepted definition of *nation* and *nationalism*. It is not possible to say that social scientists agree not only on the definition but even on the timing of when a nation emerges. The reason behind this is that nation and nationalism are the subjects of social sciences. The main character-

istic of the social sciences, unlike the natural sciences, is the difficulty of establishing a general rule that transcends theory for all eras and locations. This is because the social scientist cannot approach the object of study as objectively as a physicist approaches optics or a chemist approaches the element sodium. However, they cannot produce a scientific study without finding ways to overcome this objectivity or without starting to work by revealing his own prior knowledge and value judgments.

This study proceeds from the presumption that the author feels that he belongs to this nation while evaluating the nation, nationalism and especially Turkish nationalism. However, the author reveals the process in which he tries to prevent these elements from affecting his evaluations while being aware of his identity and values. Here, too, ethical values and empathy are included in the process in order to eliminate the ethnocentric perspective. Otherwise, the study would be no different from the ideological evaluations of supporters of scientific socialism, who claim to analyze social structure from a pseudo-scientific perspective.

What is a nation?

There is a vigorous debate about the recognition and definition of the nation and nationalism. A key reason for this intensity is the question of whether a nation should be defined solely by objective characteristics—such as ethnicity, language, religion, territory, shared history, common origin or ancestry (kinship), and culture—or by subjective characteristics, including will, memory, self-awareness, solidarity, loyalty, devotion, patriotism, and collective will. The subjective definition of a nation is often associated with Ernest Renan's famous concept of the nation: "The nation is a spirit, a spiritual being. This spirit is composed of a rich heritage of shared past memories and the willingness to live together. The worship of ancestors is the most legitimate worship. Our ancestors made us what we are. A past full of heroism, great men, glory, and honor... This is the social capital on which a nation can be built. To have experienced common glories and honors in the past, to have a common will in the present, to have accomplished great things together, and the willingness to accomplish such things again—these are the main conditions for becoming a nation!" (1946:120).

A definition of a nation based solely on objective elements is not unique to any specific nation, as these characteristics do not necessarily distinguish one nation from another. For example, the English language is not what defines a nation. English is spoken in England (or Great Britain), the USA, and Australia, yet these are considered distinct nations.

"As an important source of reference in the literature on nationalism, Smith's definition of nation can be seen as an inclusive definition (2009, 32): "A nation is a group of people who share a historical territory or country, common myths and historical memory, a mass public culture, a common economy, and common legal rights and duties." However, this definition reveals certain deficiencies when it comes to nationalism. Since nationalism places the nation at the center of daily life, thoughts, and political goals, it is not sufficient to explain it solely by objective factors, law, or common culture. The nation is not only a community of people with a shared culture (language, religion, tradition, etc.), but also reflects a sense of belonging, love, and devotion toward that culture. At this point, Renan's and other subjective definitions of nation can be considered more compelling for nationalists."

Turkish nationalism's understanding of the nation is culture-oriented, as reflected in Ziya Gökalp's definition. Gökalp (2015: 40) succinctly defines the nation as "a group that possesses a unique culture."

Proving that it is insufficient to define the nation through variables such as race, tribe, and geography, Gökalp, drawing from sociological knowledge, views the bonds of a nation as rooted in shared upbringing and culture—essentially, in shared emotions. He defines the nation as follows (Gökalp 2015: 37): "The nation is not a racial, tribal, geographical, political, or voluntary group. A nation is a group of individuals who share the same language, religion, morals, and arts—that is, who have received the same upbringing. The Turkish peasant describes it as 'whose language matches my language, whose religion matches my religion'."

Not only is the definition of the word "nation" a matter of debate, but so is the time of its emergence. For modernist theorists, who claim that nationalism arose with modernization, the nation did not exist in ancient history but developed only in recent times. However, for primordialist theorists, nations have existed since antiquity and have

retained their essential characteristics (national qualities) without undergoing significant change. Modernist theorists argue that the nation began to emerge alongside the modern state and industrialization—essentially, as part of the modernization process. In contrast, ethno-symbolists see nations as the transformation of ancient ethnicities into nations through and around a dominant ethnicity, facilitated by changes that took place in the modern era. A nation, they argue, refers to a professional, hierarchical, and differentiated social structure characterized by increased population density, and in this sense, it marks a departure from traditional, tribal-based social structures. However, this historical and social change does not imply that the characteristics of the nation only emerged recently, nor does it deny the existence of societies that had already become nations. This situation can be understood as a cyclical transition.

What modernist theorists fail to see is that their cumulative understanding of science, rooted in the classical (positivist) paradigm, mirrors the view presented by Thomas Kuhn in The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, which argues that scientific progress does not follow a straight line but occurs through periodic revolutions. For example, the Turks, who achieved national unity during the Gokturk period, rallied around a single sovereign against external powers (such as China) and governed themselves as a sovereign state, realizing their national identity and unity through national consciousness. The Orkhon Monuments reveal the high level of national identity consciousness during this period, particularly in resisting exploitation and assimilation by China. This process is what Hobsbawm describes as pre-nationalism or pre-national feelings. However, it is clear that all three elements of a nation, as mentioned by A. Smith—national identity, national unity, and self-determination—can be seen in the Gokturks. Therefore, it is evident that the origins of the nation and certain aspects of nationalism can be traced back to the depths of history. This idea is particularly applicable to nations with historical depth, whose roots extend back to ancient ethnicities.

What is nationalism?
Like the nation, there is no single agreed-upon definition of nationalism. Nationalism is sometimes defined as an emotion, sometimes as

love for the state paired with patriotism, sometimes as a political and social movement, and sometimes as an ideology. Lawrence summarizes the challenge faced by many writers on nationalism under a few key points (2005: 39): The term nationalism is problematic because it has numerous broad definitions. Sometimes it is an abstract ideology; other times, it is a political doctrine. This doctrine is based on the belief that homogeneous nations with distinct characteristics govern themselves.

Sometimes, nationalism is the emotion felt by people belonging to a nation in their daily social relations and at other times, as Voltaire emphasized, the freedom of the citizen is more important than the unity of the nation. Sometimes it appears on the stage with the liberal- liberalizing meaning belonging to the 19th century, it takes the form of exclusionary, aggressive and integral (nation- and state-centered) nationalism. Nationalism is sometimes a widespread and popular expression of socio-cultural identity (Lawrence 2005:4). This popular socio-cultural identity is manifested in national matches or other types of national competitions. Even people who do not consider themselves nationalists often display their identity in popular demonstrations and marches with their national flags. This is why nationalism makes its presence felt in every sphere—from the economy to sports competitions, from warfare to the individual psyche—and can have an advantage over other ideologies in terms of public display.

Although the roots of the concept of the nation can be traced back to the 15th century, especially in France and England (with some authors even tracing them further back), the concept of nationalism emerged in the literature in the late 19th century. At this point, nationalism became associated with both self-determination and democracy. Thus, nationalism is both theoretical (the belief that every nation should have its own country) and practical (the idea that ethnicity and culture are important and worth defending) (Hastings 1997: 4).

Based on the assumption that every nation has the right to a state or self-government, and that every nation's culture is important and valuable in its own right, "nationalism is an ideology that places the nation at the center of its concerns and seeks to maximize its well-being" (Smith 2013: 20). Three specific goals are set for this ideological purpose: national identity, national unity, and national autonomy.

Stating that nations that cannot achieve these three goals cannot survive, Smith's definition also reveals why nationalism is an ideology: "an ideological movement that aims to achieve and preserve autonomy, unity, and identity on behalf of a population, some of whose members intend to form an actual or potential 'nation'." (Smith 2013: 20).

According to Smith (2013: 15; 2009: 119), while nationalism refers to the process of establishing and developing nations and national states, it also encompasses the feeling of belonging to a nation and the sense of security and welfare associated with that nation. Nationalism is an ideology and a socio-political movement that contains prescriptions for achieving the nation's goals and realizing the national will. As can be seen, nationalism is viewed not only as a feeling or social or political movement but also as an ideology in itself.

Nationalism and ideology

In political science, nationalism is considered an ideology with a specific program, set of concepts, and goals. However, because the nationalist literature views nationalism as a "false consciousness" in Marxist terms, which prevents the ideology from being narrow and real, and as a "straitjacket put on our perceptions" in the words of the late Cemil Meriç, it is expressed as a theory or doctrine. Yet neither theory nor doctrine is sufficient to capture the action-oriented side of ideologies or nationalism, since ideologies (and nationalism) are not merely a matter of theory, doctrine, or sentiment but a form of attitudinal action. Ideologies "claim both to describe and to prescribe" (Vincent 2006: 24). For example, nationalism as an ideology seeks to reveal not only a feeling or an attitude but also an action. In this context, viewing nationalism as a paradigm that encompasses theory, action, attitude, and emotion seems more meaningful for expressing nationalist literature and activism.

The argument made by those who claim that nationalism is not a comprehensive ideology is based on its ability to articulate different ideologies; that is, nationalism can encompass conservative, socialist, and liberal ideologies. Therefore, it is quite flexible and does not possess the inclusiveness typical of a comprehensive ideology. However, this claim can be extended to other ideologies as well. For example, 'social liberalism' combines features of both liberalism and socialism, which are often seen as opposing ideologies. The counterpoint to so-

cial liberalism, positioned on the right side of the political spectrum but with claims that do not seem too far left, is social democracy. The conception of social democracy put forth by Eduard Bernstein, which articulates basic Marxist views (1850-1923), represents a deviation from the Marxist-Communist line. More recently, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe have radically criticized the class-based socialist conception of socialism and developed the theory of "radical democracy" based on culture and identity, continuing the radical critique initiated by Antonio Gramsci. The class-based classical socialist and communist perspectives are harshly critical of these new theories that deviate from orthodox Marxism. Therefore, given the various adaptations not only in nationalism but also in other ideologies, the criticism of nationalism as lacking the quality of being a comprehensive ideology can be dismissed.

It is difficult to assert that a clear boundary exists between nationalism and other ideologies because the liberal interpretation views nationalism as a liberating movement and thought. Just as human beings deserve freedom, so too do nations. This freedom is ensured by their right to self-determination. In this sense, nationalism, like other Enlightenment ideologies, is seen as "progressive and emancipatory" (Heywood 2007: 210).

On the other hand, against this optimistic perspective, the tribalist aspect—expressed as the dark side of nationalism—that perceives the other as a threat is emphasized (2010: 212). It is impossible to overlook that the expression "dark side" here relates to a perception of threat originating from National Socialism (Fascism) within the European tradition.

Another liberal criticism of nationalism is that it is a collectivist ideology that threatens individual freedoms by mobilizing the masses (Spencer and Wollman 2020: 24). However, this criticism also applies to identity politics, which is a central argument of radical democracy as a new socialist theory. For example, an aggressive and dominating political style based on gender identity can threaten not only individuals but also the healthy future of society and the family. Similarly, when identity politics is used to manipulate the voting behavior of an ethnic group (e.g., the identity pressure exerted by the HDP on Kurdish citizens in Türkiye), the phenomenon of identity, defined as emancipa-

tory, can become a tool that oppresses others and prevents them from exercising their free will.

For Marxist ideology, nationalism is viewed as an element of the superstructure and is defined within the framework of the infrastructure-superstructure distinction used in social structure analysis. In this context, nationalism emerges as a reflection of the mode of production, which is fundamentally a combination of the means of production and the relations of production, influenced by these networks of relations. This dependent variable characteristic of nationalism leads the ruling classes to oppress other classes, equipping them with false consciousness and confronting them with nationalism as a veil that prevents them from seeing the truth. Like religion, nationalism is also a tool of oppression and a source of false consciousness for the ruling classes that maintain the oppressive-exploitative state to exploit other classes.

In Türkiye, criticism of nationalism is based on a colonialist understanding of the state. However, as illustrated in the text, in Turkish nationalism, the state is not viewed as an instrument of oppression; rather, those who govern the state strive to feed the hungry and clothe the naked, as seen in the Orkhon Monuments. This perspective reflects the understanding of the state in Turkish nationalism, which has remained unchanged for centuries. The state is, of course, the absolute authority with the power of violence, but in Turkish political culture, the state is also seen as the father, the hand of compassion, and the hand of mercy.

The ancient roots of Turkish national identity:
Orkhon Monuments

Since nationalism studies typically begin with the French Revolution (1789), it is often assumed that there were no nations, no sense of nationality, and therefore no nationalism before that date. This assumption stems from the dominant hegemony of modernist theory. Any viewpoint expressed outside the modernist framework regarding nationalism is often dismissed as emotional and ideological blindness, or, in short, subjectivity. Consequently, discussing different historical and socio-cultural developmental trajectories outside of Western history has almost amounted to excommunication from the church of science. For instance, claiming that feelings of national identity and nationality among the Turks were articulated in the Orkhon Monuments long

before the French Revolution was enough to be accused of stepping outside the realm of pure heroism and science. Nation and nationalism are perceived as concepts that belong to the post-French Revolution period.

With the Gokturk State (552-745) founded by Bumin Khan, the term "Turk" appears in the name of a state for the first time in history. The Gokturk State represents a structure where ethnic identity and the state are identified, making it an exceptional example in Turkish history. Additionally, the messages conveyed by the rulers of this state to the people-nation and the dominant other (China), perceived as a threat, serve as a source of motivation that reinforces the national identity of the Gokturk nation.

The information revealed by the Orkhon Monuments, which provide insights about the Gokturk State and its people, indicates that awareness of national identity was high, yet the history of nationalism is not extended to this period. The primary reason for this is tied to the variables regarding how nation and nationalism are defined and what their criteria are. For example, since nationalism is associated with modern terminology such as self-determination and popular sovereignty, the data and spirit of the monuments are not considered within the scope of nationalism. However, concepts like national identity, a sense of national consciousness, the power that mobilizes a nation, and the motivation to defend one's own culture against others are directly emphasized in the text and are relevant to the ideals of nationalism.

In these monuments (Ergin 1970), the perception of Ötüken as a sacred homeland, the characterization of the Turkish nation as a nation chosen by God, and the heroic deeds of the past, as expressed in İlteriş Kağan's statement, "the nation that had been without a province, without a khan, the nation that had become concubines, the nation that had become servants, the nation that had abandoned the Turkish tradition, was created and raised by the tradition of my ancestors," evoke ideas reminiscent of Ernest Renan. Furthermore, the monuments illustrate the relationship between national identity and the survival of the state by emphasizing the loss of national identity through the abandonment of Turkish heritage.

The Orkhon Monuments highlight a state based on an ethnic foundation. This state comprises an organic people living peacefully in the

sacred homeland of the Turkish nation, known as Ötüken, within the framework of their own customs. In the homeland called Ötüken, we can talk about a nation consisting of people with the same identity and emotions formed over time.

The dominance of modernist theory on nationalism and ethnicity assumes, with certainty, that phenomena such as nation and nationalism are recent developments. Connor, a proponent of this view, argues that it is incorrect to speak of a nation before the nineteenth century, as there was no broad-based national consciousness among many peoples recognized today as nations. According to him, national consciousness is a sentiment that should be shared not only by the elite but also by the masses (the people). He asserts that the masses, who were semi- or completely illiterate until recently, remained largely silent about identity(s) (2005:42; 2004:43). Stating that the phenomenon of nation and national consciousness emerged in the 18th century, Connor cites the Altai Turks (Gokturks) as an exception, while expressing doubt about encountering these phenomena before this date (Connor 2005:45). He highlights the "Altai Turks" (Gokturks) as his favored community regarding nation and national consciousness.

Unlike early European histories that focus on the elite, the Orkhon Monuments address not only the attitudes of the lords and nobles but also those of the masses, referred to as the Kara Budun, indicating the existence of national consciousness among the Turks at a very early period of history. He describes how the Kara Budun, once satisfied with their kings, became corrupt and degenerated under Chinese influence, submitting to Chinese rulers and khans, marrying Chinese women, and adopting the Chinese language, clothing, and lifestyle; thus, the Kara Budun, whose golden age came to an end in this way, began to harbor resentment toward the Chinese. Consequently, it is emphasized that the national consciousness of the Gokturks was not limited to the elite, as seen in Western societies, but that all segments of society shared the same sentiments.

As a political ethnicity, the Turks gathered under the Gokturk State can be seen as a nation with a sense of national identity and nationalism because they perceived themselves as part of a kinship-cultural community with similar characteristics living under the same roof, distinct and separate from others (China).

Nationality and Turkishness in the Ottoman Empire

In the 11th century, the arrival of the Turks in Anatolia coincided with the Crusades. "Türkiye" is the European name for Turkish-speaking Anatolia, a term that has been used since the first Turkish conquest of the region in the 11th century (Lewis 2010:3). For the Islamic world, the influx of Anatolian converts to Islam represented "the Muslim East's resistance to the massive Crusader onslaught from Europe, and then the military and religious vigor that would enable it to repulse the Crusaders" (Lewis 2010:8). The arrival of the Turks in Anatolia, referred to as Asia Minor, led to the definition of this geography as a Turkish homeland.

During the Ottoman period, the word "Turk" was used in the following ways:

1. *Strong and Powerful*: The word "Turk" was used to convey strength and power.
2. *Ignorant and Rude*: It was also used in a derogatory sense to refer to those living in the countryside and villages. The erroneous portrayal of these negative connotations as the only meanings of "Turk" throughout Ottoman history does not reflect the truth. When this perception intersects with the religion-based social structure of the Ottoman Empire, one encounters an Ottoman history largely devoid of Turks.
3. *Distinction Among Ottomans*: The term was used to distinguish between Turkish-speaking Ottomans (Muslims) and those who spoke other languages. It was sometimes employed among Muslims to highlight ethnic differences, such as between Turks and Tatars.
4. *Western Perspective*: In the eyes of Westerners, "Turk" referred not only to Ottoman Turks but also to all Muslims within the state.
5. *Equating Muslim and Turkish Identity:* The term was used to equate Muslim and Turkish identity. This ethno-religious combination was also employed to emphasize the strength and power of the Turk in opposition to the infidel.

While Turkishness as an ethnic identity continued to exist among nomads and peasants, the idea of Turkish nationality was revived in the 19th century through Turkology studies in Europe. This revival was

further fueled by the arrival in the Ottoman Empire of members of Turkish descent who had undergone Russification policies in the Russian Empire and had developed a distinct Turkish identity in reaction to Slavization.

In the Ottoman Empire, the concept of "nation" could be understood in several ways. Initially, it referred to a religious community, particularly in relation to non-Muslim communities, as seen in the millet system introduced by Mehmet the Conqueror. However, with the Tanzimat reforms and the weakening of the empire, the millet system began to dissolve and started to take on the modern meanings of "nation" or "people" (Kushner 2009:54-55). The late 19th century marked a period of conceptual debates within the Ottoman intellectual sphere, where "nation" and "nationality" were often discussed in conjunction with Islam, while the term "tribe" was linked to Turkishness or viewed as a Western concept (Kushner 2009:54-55).

Initially, Ottoman subjects did not identify as Turks, nor did they use the term "Ottoman" to express a sense of nationality; their primary self-identification was as Muslims. The terms "Ottoman" and "Osmani," which emerged later, were initially used to denote pride in the dynasty and the state. However, with the Tanzimat reforms, these terms came to encompass all subjects (Muslims, Christians, and Jews) within the framework of creating Ottoman citizenship, which was the main goal of that era.

The Birth of Turkish Nationalism

Since its emergence in the late Ottoman period, modern Turkish nationalism has taken many different forms, ranging from cultural nationalism to anti-colonial nationalism, and from racism to socialist nationalism. Turkish nationalism aims to work for the benefit of the Turkish nation, preserve its national culture, and elevate the Turkish state to the level of modern nations.

Just as there is no universally accepted definition of nationalism, the meanings attributed to nationalism by proponents of Turkish nationalism vary widely. Turkish nationalism, which initially emerged as cultural nationalism in the Ottoman Empire from the Tanzimat period to the Second Constitutional Monarchy, later manifested as anti-colonial nationalism from the Second Constitutional Monarchy to the foundation of the Republic.

The use of various terms to describe different types of nationalism—such as citizenship-based nationalism, Atatürk's nationalism, Kemalist nationalism, racist nationalism, Turkism, and Turkish nationalism—has created confusion regarding the meanings attributed to both nationalism and Turkish nationalism. This confusion arises because Turkish nationalism has held different meanings at various stages of the Republic's history, influenced by the political positions and worldviews of individuals.

Turkish nationalism began to take shape in the Ottoman Empire towards the end of the 19th century. Despite this delayed emergence, it developed with astonishing speed. The reasons behind this rapid development are closely linked to the factors that gave rise to it. The key reasons for the birth of Turkish nationalism are as follows (Kushner 2009:26-27, Georgeon 2013:1-21, Sarınay 1995:23-76):

1. *Orientalists' Interest in Asia:* The intense interest of Orientalists in Asians during the 19th century led to a more nuanced portrayal of Turks in Europe. This shift highlighted their virtues and culture, contrasting with the previous depiction of "barbarian Turks.

2. *Cultural Nationalism:* Cultural nationalism emerged under the influence of Western writers and their works, fostering a renewed sense of identity among Turks.

3. *Rise of Pan Movements:* In the second half of the 19th century, various Pan movements arose in Europe, beginning with Pan-Germanism, aimed at uniting all Germans, followed by Pan-Slavism. In response, Turkic intellectuals advocating for Pan-Turkism migrated to Türkiye from Turkistan and other regions of Russia, driven by Russian pressure.

4. *Interest in Compatriots Abroad:* Turks began to take a growing interest in their compatriots outside the empire, spurred by reports from Western writers published in newspapers that shaped public opinion.

5. *Events Following the Declaration of the Second Constitutional Monarchy:*
    a. The revival of new currents of thought with the return of opposition intellectuals from exile.
    b. Economic boycotts against products from the occupying country and its collaborating tradesmen.

c. Expansion of freedom of association into the ethnic sphere.

d. Increased diversity in the broadcasting landscape.

e. Nationalism emerged as a reaction against ethnic national-ism.

f. The rise in the proportion of the Turkish population in Ana-tolia, particularly due to territorial losses from wars like the Balkan War, necessitating migration to Anatolia.

g. The usage of "Turks" and "Türkiye" by Europeans when referring to the Ottomans elevated the prestige of these terms, as enhanced relations with Europe brought new meaning to "Turk."

Europeans often used the terms "barbaric" and "immoral" to de-scribe the Turks, reflecting a history of animosity and slander direct-ed at a people they had fought against for centuries. The Turks were viewed as a significant threat. However, alongside these negative por-trayals, there was also an acknowledgment of their virtues and cultural contributions. Western studies focusing on Turkish history and culture revealed that the origins of the Turks trace back thousands of years to Turkistan (Central Asia).

Turkish nationalism is a middle-class intellectual movement

Some of the theorists writing on nationalism claim that nationalism is a middle-class intellectual movement. These intellectuals became aware of their own culture, national identity and nationality, and ex-pressed through their works of poetry, literature and history that they saw themselves as a distinct and unique community. This stage can be seen as 'Stage A' in Marxist historian M. Hroch's (2011:51) account of the emergence of nationalism in Eastern Europe. According to Hroch, stage A is a purely cultural period in which nationalism is based on literature and the presentation of the traditions and customs of the peo-ple. Stage B is a period of "national agitation" in which the intellectuals engaged the public through a political campaign. The advanced de-tachments of the national movement that are active in this phase are more political in their efforts to awaken national consciousness in the people. In Stage C, the people, who gained a sense of national identity and nationality through intellectuals, were transformed into a nation and drawn into politics. At stage C, nationalism has now become mass.

It is clear how important intellectuals and writers were in the beginnings of Turkish nationalism. In the emergence and development of Turkish nationalism, the expansion of the middle class, the development of the literate mass, and the influence of the media organs that would shape this mass or public opinion are very important. From Süleyman Pasha, the Commander of the War School, to Ahmet Vefik Pasha, poets such as M. Emin Yurdakul, storytellers such as Ömer Seyfettin, and intellectuals such as Ziya Gökalp clearly influenced the emergence and spread of nationalism.

Turkish nationalism is a literary and cultural movement:

Turkish nationalism emerges as a cultural movement within the national literature movement. The fact that literary works express the stories and legends reflecting the historical roots of that nation and that this is began to be given in the mother tongue is an important reason for the emergence of a sense of nationality.

Kohn states that there is a relationship between language and nationalism, but it is not only related to Turkish nationalism: "Even in Türkiye, as elsewhere, contemporary feelings of nationalism have risen with the emergence of a new and natural literary language close to the mother tongue" (Kohn 1944:12). The introduction of the concept of homeland in literature is an important issue in itself. "The word "homeland", which had hitherto meant home or birthplace, was now taken to mean (Fatherland). And the word (millet), which until then had been used to mean "religious sect", was taken to mean the people and the people-specific (national), as opposed to the palace, which previously meant the entire state activity" (Kohn 1944:13). With the work "Vatan Yahut Silistre" by Namık Kemal, who is known as the poet of the homeland, the concept of homeland comes to the fore.

It is possible to see the first example of the birth of national poetry in Mehmet Emin (Yurdakul) Bey (1869-1944), who was titled the national poet. His poem "While Going to the Battle", written during the Turkish-Greek War (1897), is an important work that feeds the idea of Turkism by expressing the feeling of Turkish nationality in a concise manner. Y. Akçuraoğlu (2006) emphasizes the importance of this poem as follows: "For the first time among all Turkish poets, the poet of Turkish Poems consciously realized and shouted that his language was Turkish, his nation was Turkish, and the majority of the nation was the people."

Pan-Turkism had an impact on the development of
Turkish nationalism

The Turkistan (Central Asia) roots of Turkish nationalism manifest themselves in two ways: First, the roots of the alperen, who helped Turkify Anatolia, go back to Ahmet Yesevi in Turkestan in the 12th century. The other is the idea of Pan-Turkism brought by those who migrated to the Ottoman Empire under Russian pressure in Turkistan in the 19th century.

While Islam developed in Anatolia with Turkish ethnic traditions, the followers of Sufis such as Ahmet Yesevi, who formed the roots of Turkish Sufism in Central Asia, also formed the roots of Turkish nationalism (Karpat 2010a:144).

Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turkism emerged as part of the process of the birth of nationalism among Muslims in Russia in the 19th century (Karpat 2010a:121). The cradle of Pan-Turkism was the city of Kazan, the center of the Turkic intellectual world in Asia, and its iconic figure was Ismail Gaspıralı. From 1883 onwards, when Gaspıralı launched the newspaper Tercüman, his goal was to achieve "unity in language, thought, and work" throughout the Turkic world. The idea of Pan-Turkism in the Ottoman Empire was revived after the Second Constitutional Monarchy (1908) when all the dissidents returned from exile. The front opened by Gaspıralı was expanded by Hüseyinzade Ali, Yusuf Akçura and Ahmed Ağaoğlu.

Turkish nationalism was a political way to solve the problems of the empire: The first time Turkism was presented as a political choice for the Ottoman Empire was in Yusuf Akçura's (1876-1935) treatise "Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset". The main characteristic of Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset is that, for the first time, the formation of a Turkish nation (Turkism) as a race-based policy was clearly and directly expressed as a political choice.

The emergence of political nationalism alongside cultural nationalism occured during the Second Constitutional Monarchy. The declaration of the Second Constitutional Monarchy (1908) resulted in a wind of freedom in the world of the press and organization (associations). The opening of many magazines (Genç Kalemler 1910-1911; Türk Yurdu 1911; Halka Doğru 1913) and associations (Türk Derneği 1908; Türk Yurdu Cemiyeti 31 August 1911; Türk Ocağı 1912) in various fields shows the cultural and political vitality of this period.

Turkish nationalism developed as a result of the territorial losses in the empire: When the Second Constitutional Monarchy was proclaimed, the empire was still spread over three continents despite major territorial losses. However, the Balkan Wars (1912-13) had resulted in the loss of European Türkiye. The Balkan Wars were followed by uprisings by Muslim Albanians and Arabs. Each uprising meant the loss of a piece of territory. The uprising of Muslims in addition to the uprising of Christians showed that the idea of Islamism as well as Ottomanism was no longer a binding idea for the subjects of the Empire. So there was only one idea left to save the state: Turkism.

Economic boycotts in the Empire strengthened the sense of nationality: The significance of the economic boycotts is that with the boycott, the distinction between us and them, which is the essence of nationalism and which reinforces national identity, emerges sharply. Turkish nationalism, as a national reaction against the Western colonial powers and their local collaborators (e.g., the non-Muslim communities of the empire), led to the consolidation of national identity within the country and eventually to the emergence of national unity.

Economic boycotts are one of the forms of action that paved the way for political and national consciousness. The first example of these boycotts was the commercial boycott against the Greek state after the Greeks of Crete decided to unite with Greece (1866). One of the most important boycotts in the Ottoman Empire was the boycott launched in Istanbul against the goods of Austria-Hungary after its occupation of Bosnia in 1908 and then against Italian goods after the Italian occupation of Tripolitania in 1911.

The second major boycott was the boycott of Greek tradesmen in Istanbul in 1913-14. This Greek battleship, the *Averof*, which was purchased with donations from "Ottoman Greeks who supported Greece in the Balkan Wars and prevented the Ottoman navy from entering the Aegean, largely the product of profits from Turkish Muslim customers" (Findley 2011:228), virtually imprisoned the Ottoman navy in the Sea of Marmara. The Averof battleship was the main reason for the boycott: Due to the Averof, the Ottoman navy could not sail to the Aegean during the Balkan War and could not defend Thessaloniki and the Ottoman islands in the Aegean. On the other hand, the troop transport of the period was carried out by sea due to the impossibility of land transportation. Because of the Averof, troops could not be

shipped from İzmir and Beirut to Rumelia. A single Greek ship tied the hands of the Ottoman navy (Toprak 1995:109). In the face of these developments, Muslim people were encouraged to buy from Muslim merchants and Muslims were encouraged to become prominent in commercial life to replace non-Muslim merchants.

Turkish nationalism was reinforced by the struggle for independence against imperialist powers: Turkish nationalism refers to the struggle against the colonial powers and their supporters in order to reclaim the occupied territories of the remaining lands of a disintegrated empire with the War of Independence (1920-1922). For this reason, Turkish nationalism, as the Kadro Journal (1932-34) first articulated it, is the first example of the struggle against the colonial powers and a guide for the Third World countries. However, it is also erroneous to reduce Turkish nationalism to a Third-Worldist revolt because although Turkish nationalism developed as a movement against European hegemony and colonialism, it was not anti-Western. The replacement of Western culture, which was criticized for causing cultural degeneration in Ottoman modernization, with Islam as the cause of cultural degeneration in the Republic (Georgeon 2013:9) is meaningful in terms of showing the cultural and political position vis-à-vis the West.

Turkish Nationalism in the Republican Era
With the foundation of the Republic and the establishment of the new nation-state, nationalism became one of the main principles (the "six arrows") of the official state party. While abandoning and denouncing the ideal of Turanism, the new state aimed to create a homogeneous "nation" based not on religion but on Turkishness. For the idealist Turkish intellectuals of the Republican era, nationalism (Karpat 2010:329) was a nationalism that had been stripped of its religious shell, capable of encompassing both the national and the universal. The Republic imposed upon its citizens the duty to abide by and embrace its founding principles. The new theme of nation and nationalism sought to build a "new nation" by leaving aside not only the Islamic religion but also the Ottoman past. Within this framework, the Republic served as the key to initiating a new life guided by the principle of nationalism; therefore, everything connected to the Ottoman past was severed (Karpat 2010:329).

Republican Türkiye recognized that the rapid modernization of the West was affecting the entire world and that the Ottoman Empire had collapsed because it could not keep pace with this modernization process. For the founders of the new state, modernization not only entailed economic development and a new political organization but also a socio-cultural transformation that included integration into Western civilization. The young republic rapidly embarked on industrialization initiatives for economic development while adopting the principle that sovereignty rests with the people in the 1921 Constitution, even before a republic replaced the monarchy. A significant source of motivation in addressing crises such as economic downturns, national liberation wars, and social integration during this transformation was the awareness of national identity that resisted colonialism. In fact, in the eyes of Western writers and journalists during the period of national struggle, this struggle was viewed as one of Turkish nationalists and an example of oppressed nations fighting against colonialism.

Nationalism serves as a remedy for the problems encountered during the modernization process. "Rapid industrialization and modernization require a flexible political system to maintain social solidarity and an ideology such as nationalism that integrates the individual with the state. Nationalism, therefore, helps to bridge the gap between more traditional communities (Gemeinschaft) and modern organizations (societies)" (Vincent 2006:391). In the transition from traditional to modern societies, processes such as the development and establishment of democracy, industrialization, popular sovereignty, and the desire for self-government (self-determination) illustrate that nationalism is an important means of social integration.

The modernization of the Republic, while building a regime based on national sovereignty by ending the dynasty in a society ruled by monarchy and based on the ummah axis, also resulted in the construction of a new national state. In this new central state, the focus of political organization is no longer the *ummah* but the *nation* (in the sense of nation).

Confirming some of the claims of the modernization theorists of nationalism, the young Turkish Republic began to create a new nation and a new identity through a widespread education and training network that would spread national consciousness to all citizens of the

country. At this point, the fact that the activities of the Turkish Hearths, which were spread all over the country before the Republic, continued in the post-Republic period also indicates the dissemination of national identity and culture to all segments of society through these hearths.

The Republic, which emerged as a result of the nationalist movement's struggle against colonialism, as one of the founding principles of the Republic, gradually shifted from civil nationalism to official nationalism, which was identified with the status quo by the official institutions of the state, with the closure of the Turkish Hearths (Türk Ocakları) in 1931 and the establishment of Community Centres (Halkevleri) a year later. "Now nationalism is a state affair. The Community Centres are seen as a means of creating a new collective identity in Anatolia. By distributing an enthusiastic, small group of elites to cities and towns, engaging with local traditions and creating a network of information and news distribution through numerous magazines and cultural performances" (Georgeon 2013:20). The stabilization of nationalism continued with the introduction of theories such as the Turkish History Thesis and the Sun-Language Theory, which fell out of favor after the death of Ghazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Both of these theories were articulated in order to construct a modern national identity, not to be excluded from European civilization and to assert the claim of civilization-building. Thus, indirectly, the Ottoman Empire, which had been ignored in terms of Turkish history throughout the history of the early republic, was seen as an important part of Turkish history.

The Republic of Türkiye has been based on the idea of nationalism since its foundation. Article 88 of the 1924 Constitution defines Turkishness as "The inhabitants of Türkiye are called Turks by citizenship without distinction of religion or race." Being a Turk is defined on the basis of citizenship without distinction of religion or race. The 1961 Constitution reformulated the definition of Turkishness as "everyone who is bound to the Turkish State by the bond of citizenship is a Turk". The 1924 Constitution defined Turkishness (the Turkish nation) not in terms of ethnic origin, religion, or language, but in relation to citizenship. In the founding years of the Republic, the positions of non-Muslims, especially Jewish Turkish nationalists such as Tekin Alp (Moiz Kohen), within the Ottoman-era Turkish nationalism and the theorizing of Turkish nationalism were also legitimized. Until the

1930s, Atatürk's views on race should not be interpreted differently from those of the Islamist Mehmet Akif Ersoy. However, it should be noted here that the word "race" was not used in the sense of race, which refers to biological characteristics and differences, but in the social anthropological sense, that is, in a way that points more to ethnic and national identity. Although from time to time a definition based on race is attempted, the maxim "How happy is the one who says I'm a Turk" actually indicates that a citizenship-based understanding of nationhood is at the forefront.

With the Republic, nationalism, apart from Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turkism, declared a piece of land surrounded by national borders as a homeland. This declaration actually meant formulating a new nationalism in which Islam and Turkism would no longer be the leaven of nationalism. This new nationalism would be a Western-style rational nationalism based on the history of a nation purged of its Ottoman past. A new, more rational (linking citizenship to loyalty to the Turkish state), secular (completely eliminating the unequal structure of the Ottoman millet system, integrating non-Muslims into the system and removing Islam as the primary leaven of the nation), and materialist (not defining the nation on the basis of religion), but more official, understanding of nationalism was emerging. This official nationalism would paradoxically bifurcate in the 1930s with the emergence of conservative nationalism, such as Nihal Atsız's, which attempted to carve out a space solely on the basis of the Turkish race and later blended it with Islam.

Perception of nationalism in Türkiye
If those who write on nationalism in Türkiye have nationalist sentiments, whatever they write is from the outset considered to be patronizing, subjective and unscientific. These writers are not only pushed out of the scientific community but also belittled. They are accused of not yet having completed the process of intellectual evolution, or of reviving or keeping alive an idea that has remained on the dusty shelves of history. The reason why contempt turns into accusation is that what they do is to provoke people into doing what the national fascists did once again. But is socialism like this? Karl Marx's "Scientific Socialism", as it is called, makes a (pseudo) scientific analysis of all societies,

explaining in scientific language (in reality, prophesying) how societies have gone through and will go through a process of change. Socialism is the name of the course of development and liberation of all societies. Whoever or whatever tries to prevent this is fascist, and their ideology is fascism. The pseudo-intellectuals who accuse nationalists of "accusing everyone of being communists!", while lumping everyone who is not a socialist together with liberals, conservatives, nationalists and Islamists and accusing them of fascism, claim that they act with an objectivity that evaluates the objective truth of the matter and history from the perspective of scientific socialism, not reductionism.

The united front of academics, columnists, intellectuals, and investigative journalists writing on nationalism in Türkiye and Turkish nationalism, all start their articles with the words "Nationalism in Türkiye, ülkücüler, nationalist thought..." and end with racism and fascism. In doing so, they refer to the 'so-called' history of the Nationalist Movement, which began in the 1960s and has been characterized by violence, hatred and crime. The same front describes those who went to Marxist guerrilla camps in Lebanon in the 1960s to receive terror training as "youth leaders". Their training is seen as legitimate and rightful, but the struggle against those who attempt to overthrow the Republic of Türkiye and change the regime is presented as a reactionary, fascist and racist struggle. The struggle and reaction against those who are trying to reverse the history of humanity, which is to progress (!) in accordance with dialectical materialism, is presented as innocent and oppressed, and their aggression as legitimate. And despite all this, those who try to protect their own state and their own lives from terrorists are stigmatized. The baseless accusation is made by so-called objective journalists as follows: "Nationalist youth were using terror against left-wing workers, students and intellectuals in the streets, schools, factories and squares"

The approach to nationalism and nationalists is so vulgar and offensive that professors talk about the "rise" of nationalism, not its rise. In a highly reductionist language, nationalist writers are equated with fascism and racism. They are often described as dreamy and sentimental at their most innocent, but more frequently as racist, fascist, and rabid. Violence is not associated with left-wing and socialist movements but is portrayed as an inherent phenomenon of right-wing

and nationalist movements. This right-wing violence is characterized, according to so-called objective writers and journalists, by the implication that left-communist-revolutionary violence is inoculated and victimized, suggesting that they even shoot their own friends—other nationalists—and that this greed and ruthlessness offer a double gain. In this case, nationalists are blamed twice: once for killing their own friends and again for stirring up trouble and creating discord. The martyrdom of nationalists during these periods is always an "unsolved death" because it is not clear where the bullet came from. However, the murderer of every communist or leftist who is killed is necessarily and absolutely labeled a fascist. In contrast, left-revolutionary violence is seen as aligning with the nature of things; therefore, "revolutionary violence" is regarded as a legitimate form of action inflicted on those who deserve it.

The most objective writers belonging to the Turkish left who write about nationalism start their works by stating how impartial and scientific they are regarding Turkish nationalists, and then immediately on the second page they return to their founding settings by saying "fascists" or even "… those rabid, racist, aggressive… fascists!". Despite this defamation, slander, delirium and intellectual vomiting, their work is presented as completely scientific and objective. Therefore, it is clear that there is a clear need to write the history of idealism in Türkiye with a truly objective lens for future generations and to clarify some of the misrepresentations of the past.

Turkish Nationalism as a Political and Social Movement: 1960s and 1970s

The transformation of Turkish nationalism from a cultural movement to a political movement began theoretically with Akçura's *Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset* (1904) and continued with the War of Independence, which led to the actual establishment of a national state. The early years of the Republic were the period when Turkish nationalism was reformulated, reconstructed and formalized as a developmental and state ideology. In this period, nationalism was embodied as an ideology of development and inclusion in Western civilization for the construction of a more secular and modern society. As part of the founding ideology, nationalism was included in the constitution as one of the six prin-

ciples of the CHP in 1937. However, different Turkists such as H. N. Atsız, criticized this official nationalism. Behind these criticisms was the distrust of individuals who had witnessed the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire and the occupation of the country by local collaborators against the whole world and non-Muslims within, and their hatred and resentment against the occupying states.

With the Republic, being Turkish became more prestigious due to the aphorisms of Ghazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and the new, special meaning he attributed to Turkishness, leading to an increased interest in Turkish history. Towards the end of Ghazi's life, although nationalism appeared to be prioritized as a constitutional principle, in reality — especially towards the end of the Single Party period (1930-1945) — the rising far-left movements were perceived as a threat to Turkish nationalists. The perception of a growing far-left threat and the failure to take serious measures against cultural degeneration were criticized by those representing Turkish national identity. During this period, nationalism remained one of the six founding principles (the six arrows) that did not come to the forefront, and a discourse was developed by the bureaucracy and some intellectuals that Turkishness, previously ignored in the Ottoman past due to the influence of Islam, was being rebuilt. "In the first twenty-five years of the Republic, Turkish nationalism had a rationalist, secular, and materialist identity, an identity that only a small group of intellectuals could accept. Although the masses remained under the influence of its cultural front, they adopted it by equating nationalism with religion" (Karpat 2010:332). The understanding of nationalism by the people and that by some intellectuals and bureaucrats reflects Gökalp's contradiction between intellectuals and the masses. The public's sense and interpretation of nationalism would pave the way for the emergence of a new political and social movement in the later years of the Republic, emphasizing nationalism as a founding principle.

May 3, 1944, marked a turning point in the transition from official nationalism to civil nationalism for Turkish nationalism, as well as the concretization of the public visibility and civil reactions of Turkish nationalists. However, it is also clear how brutal the methods of punishment for this outburst were. The struggle of intellectuals and young people who were punished in the so-called "coffin" cells led to the

emergence of Turkish nationalism as a political movement. This reaction was not limited to 1944; the end of the 1960s also brought Turkish nationalism to the forefront as a political and social movement.

Turkish nationalism revived both in the late 1960s and the 1970s. An important reason for this was the struggle to prevent regime change against a socialist model such as the Soviet Union, China, etc., which communist and socialist far-left movements planned to establish in Türkiye through a violent revolution.

Turkish nationalists saw themselves as patriots fighting for the survival of the Turkish state during this period. The way Alparslan Türkeş, the leader of the nationalist movement, defined the nationalist youth, who represented Turkish nationalism in this process, for this purpose is particularly significant (Turhan 2016:VIII): "The nationalist movement is heroic. The history of the nationalist movement is full of glory and honor. By preventing the Turkish nation from being dragged into captivity like Afghanistan, the young sons of our country risked martyrdom on the soil of the homeland without blinking their eyes."

Especially in the late 1970s, Türkiye was full of activities by forces trying to invade the country. The extreme leftists occupied universities and refused admission to anyone who did not share their rigid and bigoted ideology. New weapons, which were not in the hands of the state, were being used by the militants of communist and socialist organizations; these weapons were mainly manufactured by the Soviet Union. It is not only universities that are controlled and occupied in the country, but also public institutions and the streets, which are occupied by extreme leftists who use violence as a means to achieve their goals. The so-called revolutionaries are trying to take control of the whole country in the name of the people but with violence against the people. In the 1970s, Türkiye seemed to be experiencing the harshest periods of the Cold War. The magnitude of the threat to Türkiye is clear, but it is not only Türkiye that is under threat; NATO is also at risk. Therefore, it is necessary to prepare a coup environment that will ensure NATO's security.

To understand the seriousness of the communist threat in Türkiye, we need to look at the example of Afghanistan. The fact that the communist Babrak Karmal, who won the elections in Afghanistan, invited the USSR to invade his country is both a significant example for the

communists in Türkiye and a new security concern for NATO. On December 26, 1979, the USSR's (communist) expansionism, which began with the invasion of Afghanistan, was interpreted as a threat to NATO and the United States. Moreover, the growing sympathy of extreme leftist movements in Türkiye towards Russia is very disturbing for the U.S. Similarly, the overthrow of the pro-U.S. Shah regime in Iran in 1979 and the establishment of a religious regime led by the anti-U.S. Khomeini is another area of concern. Drawing experience from the 1960s, the U.S. believed that the growing strength of leftist terrorist organizations in Türkiye could be interpreted as a sign that Afghanistan, Iran, and then Türkiye were losing their grip. The fact that Greece, which was also on the same route, left NATO at the end of the so-called Colonels' Junta (1967-1974) in 1974, using NATO's lack of reaction to Türkiye's intervention in Cyprus as an excuse, created a major security gap. This situation paved the way for the September 12 military coup in Türkiye to avoid a security problem for the U.S. and NATO.

At the end of the 1960s, the rising leftist violence against those who did not think like them in schools led young people from different parts of Anatolia who were committed to their national identity to come together and establish their own civil organizations, which naturally pushed them towards solidarity. The main goal of these young people with a national consciousness is to serve their country and nation as a source of pride for their families after receiving a good education. The reaction to the refusal of students from different parts of the country to attend universities in big cities for their education by far-left communist and socialist students in the schools compelled Turkish nationalist students to take a stand and react. Turkish nationalism and the "ülkücü" organizations of nationalist youth created a strong solidarity network for these young people. This network is an "emotional compensation for the unfamiliarity of city life" (Roger 2008:38). On the one hand, this network is a national consciousness movement against the hoisting of red flags with sickle-hammers in city squares (Öznur 1996: 175-176), and on the other hand, it signifies a unity of power that will enable them to resist the leftist violence against them.

Behind the emergence of the Ülkücü youth organizations was the occupation of autonomous universities by communist and socialist student groups, as well as the fact that both the school administration

and the institutions responsible for security and public order turned a blind eye to the actions of extreme leftist organizations. The press statement made on January 23, 1971, by the Second President of the Ankara Union of Ülkü Ocakları shows the gravity of the situation in the country, the rampage of the extreme leftists, and the consequences of the inability of security forces to enter universities on the pretext of university autonomy. "We, as Ülkü Ocakları, have been informing all constitutional institutions, government officials, and university administrators, especially our head of state, about the situation for six months and demanding that the security of life and property of hundreds of nationalist students, who are not allowed into schools, and their right to study and freedom of opinion, which are guaranteed by the constitution, be upheld" (Turhan 2016:98). Both the university administration and the relevant public institution administrators turned a blind eye to the violation of the constitutional right to education. No one took any steps to solve the problem of young people from different parts of Anatolia being deprived of their right to education through violence and threats.

On January 27, 1971, young people marched to the Governorship of İstanbul with banners reading "Communist Kurdists are on the prowl at the University," "We want to study," and "Incapable Government, the situation at the University is your work." The youth who wanted to make a press statement were dispersed by the community police with batons and were detained (Turhan 2016:98). The only thing these young Turkish nationalists wanted to do was to exercise their constitutional rights to get an education. When young people who organized against this prevention reacted to the violence against them in schools, they were described as aggressive fascists by so-called neutral writers. Behind the association of Turkish nationalists with aggression and terrorism is the aim of hiding the rampage and aggression of communist and socialist organizations. The sole purpose of these young people who organize against leftists is to ensure their security, which the state is unable to provide. For this reason, they enter and leave school en masse, because when they come to school individually, they are subjected to attacks by leftists who see violence as both a means and an end. This situation was the same not only in the late 1960s but also in the 1970s.

Behind the problem faced by these young people with a national consciousness lies the continuation of the intellectual-public dichotomy, which has been expressed since Ziya Gökalp, in its new form with the separation between the bureaucrats (rulers) and the public. Since May 3, 1944, the problem that Turkish nationalists have been experiencing stems from this dualism. According to Türkeş (1978:38-39), the rulers are always distant from the people; they do not tell the people the truth and cannot mobilize them in line with the goals that are in the interest of the country and the nation. Since intellectuals, just like the rulers, despise the people, interpret their religious beliefs as reactionary, do not understand the problems of the citizens, and live a lifestyle separate from the people, the public does not believe in their rulers or intellectuals.

Neither industrialization nor urbanization alone played a major role in the emergence of Turkish nationalism as a political and social movement. For this reason, it does not seem very useful to transfer the theories that would explain the developments in Western societies to this context. For example, the state's control of power and the construction of a society through intellectuals (elite), or explaining nation and nationalism as a result of industrialization or capitalism, are theoretical explanations that cannot be applied to Turkish society in this period. While in the 1960s, the transformation of individuals into 'one-dimensional human beings' by over-industrialization and thus capitalism in Western societies was articulated by the legendary gurus of the 1968 student protests, such as Herbert Marcuse, one of the leading figures of the new socialist thought, the debate in Türkiye focused on why we could not industrialize and become a Western society.

The emergence of Turkish nationalism as a political and social movement, which gradually became more visible and influential over time since the 1960s, was a resistance against the efforts of socialist and communist movements, which were very influential in these years, especially in universities and the press, to transform Turkish society and the idea of building a new society. In this period, in which Turkish nationalism was redefined and tried to make its voice heard as a civilian force in the political, social, and cultural spheres, the idea of national development, on the one hand, and the idea of building a society with a sense of history and national consciousness against foreign movements

and ideologies, on the other hand, were brought to the forefront. The main goal here is to ensure development with individuals who have the same feelings. This is the driving force behind the idea of Turkish nationalism.

In the assessment of the leader of Turkish nationalism in this period (Türkeş 1978:88-89), competition and mutual competition between nations are possible only if the people who make up the nation unite around common feelings and national consciousness and direct their existence toward certain goals. If nationalism, which expresses the love for their homeland and nation by people whose hearts beat with the same feeling, is directed toward the Turkish nation, then it is called Turkish nationalism. In this context, according to Türkeş, on the one hand, Turkish nationalism is seen as a source of motivation that ensures the development of the country and the ability to compete against other nations, and on the other hand, "Turkish nationalism is the expression of the deep love and sense of loyalty towards the Turkish nation, and the consciousness of a common history and a common goal" (Türkeş 1978:89). Thus, Turkish nationalism expresses not only development for the welfare of the nation but also, and primarily, national love, loyalty, humanistic goals, national consciousness, and socio-cultural similarity.

**Globalization, the future of nationalism and
Turkish nationalism**

Globalization, which has made national borders permeable all over the world with the fluidity of information, knowledge, raw materials, and capital, and has eroded the sovereignty of nation-states through international agreements, has caused and is causing a challenging process for national cultures and nation-states due to the cultural homogenization it brings with it. With its economic, cultural, and media power, the United States, which made a power experiment on the whole world after 1989 (the fall of the Berlin Wall) and 1991 (the collapse of the USSR), is the triggering actor of globalization and has great transformative power over local cultures and identities. Although this post-Cold War military, economic, and cultural hegemony of the US is now under discussion, it continues to exist. However, what is certain is that this hegemony can no longer be sustained smoothly or in a way that

allows it to do and be done as it pleases. The reason for this is that the power of local elements, which emerged as a reaction against the homogenization—McDonaldization or Americanization that started with the globalization process, has gradually reached a dimension that will affect global functioning. This process is referred to as the inter-twining of the global and the local (multilocalization/glocalization). In addition, anti-globalization brings with it a growing awareness of the importance of "particular cultures" and their authenticity (Çelik, 2022).

Against the emphasis on the uniqueness and distinctiveness of a nation, concepts such as nationalism, internationalism, or cosmopoli-tanism—which do not separate all the peoples of the world based on differences such as religion, language, etc., but rather see them as a whole—highlight the perspective of optimistic globalizers in terms of perceiving the world as a single entity. However, neoliberals, with an optimistic approach to the globalization process, see the peoples (actu-ally states) of the world as different and competing structures. If cos-mopolitanism means the end of national identities and the establish-ment of a common political loyalty that unites all peoples (Heywood 2007:225), it would be a pipe dream to expect such a form of organi-zation to emerge. It is not possible to speak of a single post-Cold War view of the world or ideology (such as F. Fukuyama's End of History theory). Regional organizations may exist for economic and political purposes, but to view these organizations as transregional or transcon-tinental and to extend them to the whole world would be nothing more than a utopia.

In the debate on whether nationalism can be replaced by alternative concepts and theories, Delanty and O'Mahony (2002:175-182) mention four views on the alternatives and limits of nationalism:

1. *Proponents of internationalism:* They see nationalism as a sign of degradation and degeneration. Representatives include Gellner and Hobsbawm. According to this internationalist view, nation-alism is a xenophobic state of degeneration. It is based on a false understanding of the world, rooted in myths, inventing tradi-tions, and presenting a distorted view of the national past.

2. *Those who attempt to save nationalism from nationalists* advocate a kind of liberal "patriotism." Proponents of this view define themselves as patriots, not as narrow-minded nationalists. Be-

hind this distinction lies the desire to distance themselves from the dark shadows of German fascism and racism. In Türkiye, individuals claiming to be patriots rather than nationalists often resort to fascist ideologies. However, fascism does not represent an ideology or a past that should be embraced; it serves as a black stain on Turkish nationalism.

3. Those who reject both nationalism and patriotism advocate for transnational cosmopolitanism. This perspective differs from early internationalism in its strong antipathy toward ethnically discriminatory nationalism and the concept of the nation-state. They argue that politics is no longer tightly controlled by nation-states, and cosmopolitans often support their ideas with moral universality. For them, cosmopolitanism is a moral imperative and holds as much relevance in the modern world as nationalism.

4. The fourth group, advocates of postmodern transnationalism, combines features of nationalism and cosmopolitanism. They argue that nationalism and cosmopolitanism are intertwined, both being highly divided and insufficient on their own. Instead of envisioning a cosmopolitan future that overrides nationalism, they advocate for a more reflexive and hybrid consciousness within nationalism, which is not understood as liberal patriotism. In postmodern transnationalism, migrants, women, and citizens of exploited states are viewed as global actors who occupy a more significant place in the contemporary definition of the concept of the nation. In this view, nationalism is not an artificial construct created by elites; rather, it is a field of diverse forms of resistance—especially from those who deviate from the norm, such as migrants, women, and citizens of exploited states. Cosmopolitanism must be reinterpreted in light of this alternative perception of diasporic nationalism. Recent studies emphasize transnational, postcolonial cosmopolitanism, where national identities are reconstituted as sites of resistance under the conditions of globalization.

In fact, beginning with Kant's cosmopolitan ideals, none of the alternative perspectives on nationalism that have emerged alongside globalization have successfully mounted long-term resistance to it. This is

largely because the protective umbrella, sense of loyalty, and altruism that nationalism offers remain unmatched. Additionally, the division of the world into nation-states underscores the primary competition at play. While globalization seeks to create a universal world citizen and a homogeneous perception of reality, local and national identities are, paradoxically, becoming increasingly pronounced. Delanty and O'Mahony highlight this phenomenon, arguing that globalization reconstitutes national identities as sites of resistance.

While globalization has increased the number and strength of regional alliances, it has also given rise to a world where multinational corporations wield economic power comparable to that of nation-states.

In the process of globalization, the signatures of nation-states on international agreements imply acceptance of decisions that affect their own borders. For example, the obligation to comply with decisions made by international courts that conflict with those of their own independent courts may arise. In such cases, local and national reactions against globalization can emerge, paradoxically strengthening local and national loyalties and identities. Thus, the convergence theory, which begins with modernization and extends into globalization—asserting that all societies will increasingly resemble each other despite differences in ideologies (such as socialism and liberalism)—may present a flawed interpretation when it comes to nationalism. Nationalism has already triumphed ideologically over mainstream ideologies like liberalism and socialism. This victory has been acknowledged by Marxist historians, including E. J. Hobsbawm. However, Hobsbawm, like many modernist thinkers, contends that the power of nationalism will diminish over time and become a secondary force. Similarly, political scientist Heywood's (2007:229) prediction that globalization will lead to the "final collapse of political nationalism" in the 21st century (not a scientific claim!) is an underestimation of nationalism's resilience in the global era.

Claims that existing nation-states will lose power and see their sovereignty erode, or that they will be challenged by multinational corporations, reflect a global interpretation of the old modernist claim. However, it can be succinctly stated that it is the nation-states that ultimately make the final decisions on these matters.

It is often claimed that nationalism will lose its power in the process of globalization, which is viewed as a higher stage of Western modernization. This assertion posits that globalization will diminish the influence of nation-states, erode their sovereignty, and lead to cultural and organizational homogenization (McDonaldization), thereby rendering local cultures less important and valuable. However, nation-states remain a more effective decision-making force compared to global corporations. The real challenge faced by nation-states is not global corporations, but rather "the distribution of power and resources among the constituent ethnicities of national states" (Smith 2002:117).

For optimistic globalizers, the association of nationalism with World War II-era racism, dark thoughts in the human psyche, and aggression suggests that it has no place in a happier and more peaceful future.

The criticism of nationalism often centers around the idea that it is the root cause of many of the world's ills. As Smith (2002:169) suggests, nearly all the evils on the planet are attributed to nationalism. He cynically argues that, without nationalism, humanity could potentially exist in a world of peace and tranquility. For instance, he posits that without nationalism, millions of lives might not have been lost during Mao's 'Cultural Revolution' in China, and many Turkish intellectuals in Turkistan might not have been massacred under Stalin's regime.

What many modernist theorists who discuss the relationship between nationalism and evil overlook is how to explain the problems that existed before the French Revolution of 1789. Would massacres and genocides not have occurred without nationalism? The main issue here is the tendency to equate nationalism with fascism, which undermines nationalism's role in promoting national culture, consciousness, and identity while combating cultural degeneration.

When nationalism is understood as a means of protecting national identity and culture and striving for the well-being of one's own nation, it becomes a primary motivator that triggers and strengthens international rivalry. This motivation—directing people toward a common goal, aligning their hearts with the same emotions, and embracing differences as a richness despite social divides—is a hallmark of nationhood. The power of nationalism lies in the sacrifices individuals are willing to make for their nation and state. At the Battle of Jena (1806), the militias of post-revolutionary France triumphed over the

disciplined and professional Habsburg army because they fought for France. As Gökalp noted, nationalism can transform ordinary people into brave warriors.

The fundamental condemnation of all nationalist movements is also challenged by some modernist theorists, such as Tom Nairn and Michael Hechter. Rather than attributing a negative connotation to nationalism, they view it as a source of struggle to address existing inequalities and internal exploitation. Moreover, it is evident that Turkish nationalism, after its emergence in the cultural sphere, evolved into the political realm during the War of Independence, ultimately generating the energy necessary to establish an independent state from the empire. Therefore, to fully understand nationalism, it is essential to move beyond the reductionism and shallowness of conflating all nationalisms into a single narrative.

The emergence of nationalism in the form of techno-nationalism is an important strategy for global competition and for maintaining the superiority of nation-states. This new face of nationalism manifests as techno-nationalism, characterized by the reluctance to share technology with others. Beyond protecting a country's territory, nationalism also entails safeguarding the technology produced within its borders. Just as national culture is a unique element that must be preserved and belongs to the nation, so too is technology. It is what makes a country (or nation) superior and distinctive.

Robert Reich (1987) defines techno-nationalism as an attempt to "protect America's future technological breakthroughs from exploitation at the hands of foreigners, especially the Japanese." Initially, the term was applied to Japan, then to other Asian economies, and today, it is often used in reference to China. Techno-nationalism is perceived as an ideal for uplifting a nation. Ziya Gökalp's vision of modernization aligns closely with this concept. Adam Segal and David Kang describe techno-nationalism as "the desire of Asian states to free themselves from dependence on Western technologies" (Kennedy 2013:911).

Türkiye's struggle against terrorist organizations for nearly half a century has led to significant advancements, particularly in military technology. Projects such as UAVs, UCAVs, DİHAs, and MİLGEM exemplify techno-nationalism and embody Gökalp's vision of modernization. Moreover, Turkey is leveraging this technology not only for

its own civilizational geography and for supporting oppressed nations but is also developing an export sector that contributes to the country's economic growth.

The reasons why globalization cannot discredit nation-states, nations and nationalism can be explained as follows. The main claim about nationalism was that its power would diminish as modernization continued. Isaiah Berlin (2016:427), who said of nationalism, "No influential thinker that I know of has predicted its future", was actually explaining the general tendencies and predictions of social scientists on this issue. Modernization theory states that nationalism would decrease, with the resolution of the problems faced by societies. For example, when exploitation ended, nationalist feelings for oppressed and exploited nations would also decrease and nationalism would begin to decline. Nationalist sentiments were rising because the right of nations to self-determination was being denied, so when self-determination was realized, nationalist sentiments would diminish.

Nationalism has proven time and again, with positive and negative examples, that it is not a temporary anomaly or an ignored reality that modern society faces, as modernity and later globalization theorists claim. The phenomenon of the nation has also proven time and again that loyalty and orientation extend far beyond loyalty to structures and institutions such as class perspective (socialism), ideologies that emphasize individual rights and freedoms (liberalism), and feminism; and structures and institutions such as the family belong to and should belong only to the nation, and has proven its superiority over other ideological structures.

Therefore, it is not correct or possible to claim that the value and importance of nationalism and the nation as an actor have diminished or disappeared. Smith (2002:175-182) explains that the interest in nationalism will not diminish for three arguments:

1-Nationalism is politically necessary because it is a means of struggle for oppressed or unrecognized states in an unequal and unfair interstate system. The same applies to cultures and communities that are not accepted within a state. Again, only nations and nationalism can coincide with the principles of popular sovereignty and popular will. It is the principle of nationality that can mobilize the people of the state and provide legitimacy. Within the scope of these characteristics,

it does not seem possible to talk about a new political order that makes it possible to overcome global interstate competition with a new order. Although it is said that its power is diminishing and its sovereignty is being eroded, "nations and national states are still the only protectors against imperial tyranny" (Smith 2002:176).

2-National identity is politically functional because in modern society the cohesion of heterogeneous social and ethnic elements with different aspirations is realized through national myths, memories, symbols and ceremonies. All social energy is directed towards the sacred 'motherland'. The perception of the fraternity of all citizens turns the nation into a community with high internal solidarity, allowing them to feel the strength of their collective identity and increase their self-awareness. This spirit makes it possible for many to sacrifice their lives for the sake of their nation. The rate of this sacrifice is so high that Smith says it is unimaginable for any other collective identity.

3- The nation is historically embedded in pre-modern ethnic structures. As the modern inheritor of ethnicity, the nation is uniquely capable of national liberation and popular mobilization in the ancestral homeland. The nation becomes embedded by combining three elements:

a-   the symbols, myths and emotions of pre-modern ethnicity;
b-   popular sovereignty; and
c-   the power of public mass culture.

This triple combination makes the nation and its power and energy unique. Therefore, the modern nation, like the ethno-religious communities of the past, gives mortals a sense of immortality. "It is the ability to satisfy this desire for immortality that distinguishes nationalism from other ideologies and belief systems in the modern world. Nationalism reveals a transcendental dimension that sweeps the individual off his feet and detaches him from the present" (Smith 2002:181).

It is not possible to think that nationalism will disappear either with the process of modernization or with globalization's ideal of creating a one-world society; the same claim applies to national identity. Cultural affinity or McDonaldization may be widespread in terms of consumer culture and organizational style, but the resistance of local culture to these global elements is a socio-cultural and economic reality. Claims that the sovereignty of the national state (or nation-state) will be eroded

by allegiance to inter-state organizations, or that they will show demo-
cratic weakness in the face of multinational corporations, have failed to
demonstrate much validity. National states are still very powerful, and
even if regional political or economic organizations are established, it
does not yet seem realistic to speak of an integrated world or perfectly
functioning regional alliances.

Nevertheless, the dynamism of national identities, long-standing in-
ternational problems, and debates ranging from nationalism to racism
as a reaction against the "other" arising from global migration move-
ments are the primary agenda items of political and social life. One
of the ideologies (communism and its soft version, socialism), which
tries to build a cosmopolitan world through different means, seems to
have lost all its power and sympathy compared to the past. The other
dominant ideology (liberalism) still seems to be strong because of its
ability to adapt to all existing processes and because it incorporates
individual and collective actors (such as the state) who hold power and
capital, but its articulation —from time to time, such as with conserva-
tism in recent decades— is open to debate on the basis of the criterion
of success. This negative perception of nationalism, which is constantly
criticized alongside all these ideologies and is associated with National
Socialism (German fascism) at a certain historical moment in the West,
and in this context with violence, racism, and dark emotions, cannot
produce a conclusion about nationalism alone. First, it is not an eman-
cipatory practice based on popular sovereignty. Secondly, it is clear
that nationalism is one of the most fundamental emotions motivating
the struggle for decolonization in non-Western societies, often against
colonial Western states.

Nationalism gains superiority over other ideologies because it leads
to the dedication of power and loyalty not to class, family, or individ-
ual, but directly to the nation, and because it successfully realizes this.
Moreover, nationalism does not divide society into classes; divisions
based on loyalty to the nation are less problematic than class-based
divisions. Class theories try to solve society in an irreconcilable, con-
frontational, and ultimately violent way. However, since nationalism
conceives of society as an organic whole, it focuses more on inter-state
conflicts rather than intra-national divisions. This does not mean ig-
noring or postponing the struggle against views that lack a sense of

national identity and national history, as was the case in the 1970s. For example, in the context of gender theories, statements, interpretations, and practices that threaten the Turkish family structure are seen and interpreted as an important internal threat of foreign origin. Globalization is not only fought against in the face of globalization that destroys national culture but also against the face of globalization that disrupts the family structure and is not suitable for the Turkish social structure. The Chairman of the MHP (Nationalist Movement Party), the leading party of Turkish nationalism, Dr. Devlet Bahçeli, has made a very meaningful speech on this issue: "*We will resist, we will resist, we will resist, we will resist, and we will never give in to the neo-liberal harassment that exploits our national and spiritual soul roots; and we will resist, we will resist, we will resist, and we will never give in to the corruption of our national existence by ideological pressure and indoctrination that is corrupt and devoid of humanitarian heritage*."

Pessimistic theorists, who see the process of globalization as a negative process of change, oppose the process by emphasizing that this process produces great injustices in global income distribution. Since Turkish nationalist thought does not read society in terms of class distinctions or differences, it takes a stand against both the global inequitable distribution of income and the domestic inequitable distribution of income caused by globalization.

Nationalism takes the nation, which it sees as a collectivity, as its main focus, but this does not mean neglecting the people who make it up. The understanding of Turkish nationalism emphasizes the unique attitudes and behaviors of people rather than classes in shaping history and the economy. In the words of Dr. Devlet Bahçeli, "Man is not a being who pursues only economic interests with rational impulses. There is a price for making Anatolia our homeland, and we will inevitably have to endure the pains of this price until the end of time. When I'la-yi Kelimetullah, which is our ultimate goal, is realized and dominated worldwide, then the Muslim Turkish nation will put its seal on the era and the call of humanity.

References

Akçuraoğlu, Y. (2006). *Türkçülük*. İstanbul: Toker Yayınları.

Akçura, Y. (2016). *Üç tarz-ı siyaset* (7th ed.). Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları.

Bahçeli, D. (2023). *11 Temmuz 2023 tarihli grup toplantısında yaptığı konuşma*.

Berlin, I. (2016). *Akıntıya karşı: Fikirler tarihi üzerine denemeler* (E. Erbatur, Trans.). İstanbul: Profil.

Connor, W. (2005). The dawning of nations. In A. Ichijo & G. Uzelac (Eds.), *Nationalism and ethnosymbolism: History, culture and ethnicity in the formation of nations* (pp. 40-46). Abingdon, UK: Routledge.

Connor, W. (2004). The timelessness of nations. In M. Guibernau & J. Hutchinson (Eds.), *History and national destiny: Ethnosymbolism and its critics* (pp. 35-46). UK: Blackwell Publishing.

Çelik, H. B. (2022). Küreselleşme ve kimliklere etkisine tikellik-çeşitlilik perspektifinden eleştiriler. *SDE Akademi Dergisi, 2*(5), 98-115.

Delanty, G., & O'Mahony, P. (2002). *Nationalism and social theory: Modernity and the recalcitrance of the nation*. London, UK: Sage.

Erdem, H. (2016). *Osmanlı kaynaklarından yansıyan Türk imaj(lar)ı* (6th ed.). İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi.

Findley, C. (2011). *Modern Türkiye tarihi*. İstanbul: Timaş.

Gat, A., & Yakobson, A. (2019). *Uluslar* (Ş. Özcan, Trans.). İstanbul: Bilge Kültür Sanat.

Georgeon, F. (2013). *Osmanlı-Türk modernleşmesi (1900-1930)* (A. Berktay, Trans.) (1st ed.). İstanbul: YKY.

Gökalp, Z. (2015). *Türkçülüğün esasları* (3rd ed.; First published in 1923). İstanbul: Ötüken Neşriyat.

Hastings, A. (1997). *The construction of nationhood*. UK: Cambridge University Press.

Heywood, A. (2007). *Siyasi ideolojiler*. Ankara: Adres Yayınları.

Hroch, M. (2011). *Avrupa'da milli uyanış* (A. Özdemir, Trans.). İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.

Karpat, K. (2010). *Türk demokrasi tarihi*. İstanbul: Timaş.

Karpat, K. (2010a). *İslam'ın siyasallaşması* (4th ed.; Ş. Yalçın, Trans.). İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları.

Kennedy, A. B. (2013). China's search for renewable energy: Pragmatic techno-nationalism. *Asian Survey, 53*(5), 909–930.

Kohn, H. (1944). *Türk milliyetçiliği* (A. Çetinkaya, Trans.). İstanbul: Hilmi Kitabevi.

Kushner, D. (2009). *Türk milliyetçiliğinin doğuşu 1876-1908* (2nd ed.). İstanbul: Kesit Yayınları.

Lawrence, P. (2005). *Nationalism: History and theory*. London, UK: Pearson Longman.

Lewis, B. (2010). *Modern Türkiye'nin Doğuşu* (4th ed.; B. B. Turna, Trans.). Ankara: Arkadaş.

McCrone, D. (1998). *The sociology of nationalism*. London, UK: Routledge.

Renan, E. (1946). *Nutuklar ve konferanslar (Millet nedir?)* (Z. İshan, Trans.). Ankara: Sakarya Basımevi.

Muharrem Ergin. (1970). *Orhun Abideleri*. İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi.

Öznur, H. (1996). *Ülkücü hareket I, 1908-1980*. Ankara: Akik Asya Kitap Kulübü.

Roger, A. (2008). *Milliyetçilik kuramları* (A. U. Kılıç, Trans.). İstanbul: Versus.

Sarınay, Y. (1994). *Türk milliyetçiliğinin tarihi gelişimi ve Türk ocakları (1912-1931)*. İstanbul: Ötüken.

Smith, A. D. (2002). *Küresel çağda milletler ve milliyetçilik* (D. Kömürcü, Trans.). İstanbul: Everest.

Smith, A. D. (2013). *Milliyetçilik: Kuram, ideoloji, tarih* (Ü. H. Yolsal, Trans.). Ankara: Atıf.

Spencer, P., & Wollman, H. (2020). *Milliyetçilik* (Kelebekoğlu, Trans.). İstanbul: Yeni İnsan Yayınları.

Toprak, Z. (1995). *Türkiye'de ekonomi ve toplum (1908-1950)*. İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayınları.

Turhan, M. (2016). *Ülkü ocakları 1966-1980*. Ankara: Panama.

Türkeş, A. (1978). *9 ışık*. İstanbul: Hamle.

Vincent, A. (2006). *Modern politik ideolojiler* (A. Tüfekçi, Trans.). İstanbul: Paradigma Yayınları.

TURKISH NATIONALISM AS THE FOUNDING PHILOSOPHY OF THE REPUBLIC AND THE NATIONALIST MOVEMENT PARTY AS ITS INSTITUTIONAL REPRESENTATION

M. Hanifi MACİT

Professor, Atatürk University, Faculty of Letters,
Department of Philosophy

Introduction: Turkish State Philosophy

The philosophy of the state is "a discipline of analytical and normative philosophy that questions what and how the state is and how it should be; it is a discipline of philosophy that examines the nature, meaning, sources, aims and scope of the state and deals with the origins and foundations of the state with a philosophical method."[1] The philosophy of state, as a sub-discipline of philosophy, has formed its basic problem on the concept of "state". Within this context, the questions of how the state should be, what its source or origin is, the place of the state in human life, and how a just government should be constituted are the basic problems of the philosophy of the state.In the light of these general evaluations of the state and state philosophy, the question of whether the Turks had a state philosophy has been answered by various aspects of the historical scene. It is also possible to answer this question with today's dynamics and patterns of understanding. However, what

---

[1] Ahmet Cevizci, Büyük Felsefe Sözlüğü, Say Yayınları, İstanbul, 2017, p. 534.

makes the definition of "Turkish State Philosophy" possible is to reveal what the state is or what should be understood from it based on the principles reached, and to determine whether the historical experience of the Turks fits within the framework of these principles.

How did the Turks, who ruled over a vast cultural geography through material and spiritual cultural elements, manage to be so powerful as to be both the constructors and the bearers of history? This is an important and valuable question. The necessity of understanding and explaining this question highlights another reality that should not be forgotten, which reveals the importance of the question and its value as a guide for today's people.

From ancient times to the present day, man, who has the ability to be an observer and constructor, has made various practical contributions to his life by imitating the events taking place around him. In parallel with this, the order and harmony in the universe in which he lives attracted his attention, and he tried to capture this harmony in his own life through examples such as the succession of seasons and the endless transformation of day and night. The idea that the state was born as a result of such tendencies of human beings can be seen as a very plausible explanation.

When such a theoretical background is placed at the core of the state, a number of other problems arise. It is possible, but unnecessary, to raise some questions about how order can be maintained, through which references harmony can be achieved, and how this claim of order can be prevented from turning into chaos. However, thinking about these problems, philosophizing on the organized structure referred to as the state, means the emergence of a philosophy of the state. The harmony, consistency, or order emphasized here has been attempted to be created by the organization called the state among the Turks and has generally continued from the past to the present on certain foundations.

In the early Turkish states, the understanding of the state was an extension and a result of the understanding of the universe. According to Turkish cosmology, the universe was formed in a binary system: the sky and the earth. While the sky represents the creative and ruling power, the earth represents the sacred, referring to the concept of the homeland on which one lives. In the early Turks' worldview, the state

was established by God to create a universal sovereignty. This is described in the Orkhon Inscriptions as follows: *When the blue sky above and the swarthy earth below were created, human beings were created between the two, and my ancestors were made rulers over human beings. And they organized the state and tradition of the Turkish Nation and governed the state.*"

As can be understood from the text, when God created the universe and human beings, He gave one lineage the authority to rule the whole world and made them superior to others. The source of sovereignty was based on transcendent authority, and this God-given authority to rule was called "kut." The early Turks, who pointed to the one and only true supreme power as the source of the legitimacy of sovereignty, have used titles expressing this authority since the Huns. In addition, the ruler's marquee (otağ) and encampment were considered the center of the earth and sacred. In the Oghuz Kağan Epic, the fact that the woman married to Oghuz Kağan emerged from a beam of light descending from the sky and that the three sons born from each of his wives were the founders of the Turkish tribes is also a manifestation of the legitimacy of sovereignty being based on divine power. Likewise, in the first Turkish states, not only the source of the legitimacy of power but also the state organization, the training of the people who will rule the state, and the protocol hierarchy reveal that there is a strong state system.

The army, one of the most important powers of the state among the ancient Turks, is also the most critical basis of existence. Therefore, the army is a mechanism that has been emphasized with sensitivity since the early periods of the Turkish nation. The decimal system attributed to Mete Han and its application within the tribes connected the nation with a command-centered systematic bond and ensured the execution of national unity and solidarity through this system. In addition, the "toy," which is a consultative assembly separate from the government where the internal and external affairs of the state are discussed and decided, can also be considered a traditional legislative body. In the first Turkish-Islamic states, the pre-Islamic understanding of the state was maintained, the conception of kut, the source of sovereignty, was preserved, and the concepts and institutions that shaped Islamic political thought were used in the formation of the state. During this period, many areas of public and public administration began to be institution-

alized, and numerous institutions and rules that did not exist before in both the judiciary and finance were systematized.

While the state organization was gradually idealized in the first Turkish-Islamic states, on the other hand, discussions were held on what the ideal state order could be, and political treatises, which can be shown as the theoretical sources of this field, were written. The most prominent of these sources are the *Kutadgu Bilig*, written by Yusuf Has Hacib and the *Siyasetname* (*Political Treatise* in English) written by Nizam al-Mulk. In the Kutadgu Bilig, Yusuf Has Hacib not only explained the responsibilities of those who govern the state but also outlined the responsibilities of the people towards the state. According to these sources, the responsibilities of the state are to establish and ensure justice, ensure economic stability, and sustain an environment of security and peace. On the other hand, the duties of citizens are to obey the law, pay taxes and recognize the state's friends as friends and enemies as enemies. The value of a system in which the relations between the state and the nation are laid out in such detail and in such a way that it is still valid today is beyond doubt as a historical experience in the modern era. Nizam al-Mulk not only explained the principles of the ideal state administration in his political treatise but also presented practical prescriptions for what the state should do, including settlement, zoning and public works.

The Ottoman Empire, which is the representative of this ancient state tradition in the course of history, continued the understanding of the state that it inherited from the Turkish-Islamic states and the pre-Islamic Turkish states before it. In this sense, the state has shown an understanding of statehood that has developed and changed over time due to the vastness of its geography and its long duration. The Ottoman Empire, which formed its organization and institutions under the influence of the Anatolian Seljuk Empire and the Ilkhanids during its foundation period, was also influenced by the Byzantine and Balkan principalities, Venice, the Mamluk Empire, and the Timurid states. Until the 15th century, this accumulation in state administration was well-utilized by the Ottoman rulers, and the state reached a point that surpassed its own era. It can be said that the main reason for the Ottoman Empire's dominance over three continents and its longevity was this new understanding of the state. This conception of the state was

transferred from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic of Türkiye, and the Republic has left behind a history of 100 years today. Understanding Turkish nationalism and the Nationalist Movement Party in accordance with its own reality and correctly grasping the views expressed below makes it necessary to take this theoretical background into account.

The Origins of Nation and Nationalism in Turkish State Conception

In order to understand a nation, one must first penetrate its world of thought. This requires examining its religion, science, and philosophy, that is, entering the world of mind and the field of action of this nation, which is shaped around the concepts of God, the Universe and Man. In other words, the world of thought of a nation is shaped around these three basic concepts. The institutions shaped within the framework of the thoughts of this nation and the functions of these institutions gain functionality only and only with the shaping of the expressed world of the mind. In reality, all kinds of meaning activities are constructed through God, the Universe and Man, and the endeavor to understand based on them permeates every aspect of life. In this respect, the concepts of nation and nationalism have a distinct place in the Turkish state conception and the world of thought.

The concepts of nation and nationalism have been among the most difficult topics to discuss since they first entered the political literature. In this respect, it is very difficult to make a general definition of nation and nationalism. The reason for this difficulty is that the meanings of the concepts of nation and nationalism can change according to place, time and people. It is possible to encounter different definitions of nation and nationalism in different parts of the world, in different societies of various societies within the same geography, and even among different groups in the same society.[2] In short, a nation is a group of people who mostly live on the same territory and have a unity of language, history, emotions, ideals, traditions and customs.[3] In other words, the nation is composed of individuals who have come

---

[2] Murat Kılıç, "Allah, Vatan, Soy, Milli Mukaddesat" Türk Milliyetçiler Derneği (1951-1953), İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2016, p. 11.
[3] Türkçe Sözlük, Türk Dil Kurumu, Ankara, 2005, p. 1396.

to terms with their own form of existence and have accepted this form and its necessities.[4] Although the term did not carry a political connotation until the late 18th century, by the 19th century, it came to refer to a political doctrine or movement.[5]

Nationalism is the concept of prioritizing the interests of the nation and its country above all else, in material and spiritual terms.[6] In this context, nationalism is both an ideology and a movement and it has emerged as a creative and unifying force through historical experiences.[7] The development of the idea of nationalism as a political ideology in the modern sense, which is shaped by the conception of the nation, coincides with the late 18th century.[8] In the 19th century, this became a political movement that aimed at the establishment of independent national states.[9] By the 20th century, various types of nationalism had emerged, making it almost impossible to determine their common character Therefore, to understand the ideology of nationalism, it is important to grasp the fundamental concepts of nation, nationality, national character, and national interest, as well as the basic principles of nationalism, such as language, religion, organic society, history, and culture.[10]

Nationalism as a political ideology does not have a monolithic image like all other ideologies. While there are different types of nationalism, the core values they choose as their main themes also vary.[11] In this context, different types of nationalism can be classified as liberal nationalism, conservative nationalism, and extreme nationalism.[12] When analyzing the types of nationalism, it is important to note that

---

[4] Milay Köktürk, Eleştirel Yazılar 1: Millet ve Milliyetçilik, Ötüken Yayınları, İstanbul, 2016, p. 13.
[5] Andrew Heywood, Siyasî İdeolojiler, Çev. Ahmet Kemal Bayram, Özgür Tüfekçi, Hüsamettin İnaç, Şeyma Akın, Buğra Kalkan, Adres Yayınları, Ankara, 2013, p. 161.
[6] Türkçe Sözlük, p. 1397.
[7] Rıdvan Akın, Dağılma Devri ve Türkçülük Hareketi (1908-1918), Der Yayınları, İstanbul, 2002, p. 15-16.
[8] Anthony D. Smith, Milliyetçilik: Kuram-İdeoloji-Tarih, Çev. Ümit Hüsrev Yolsal, Atıf Yayınları, Ankara, 2013, p. 15.
[9] Akın, p. 16.
[10] M. Hanifi Macit - Alper İplikci - Mustafa Bingöl, Siyaset Felsefesine Giriş, Pegem Akademi, Ankara, 2018, pp. 141-146.
[11] Heywood, p. 21.
[12] Heywood, pp. 174-181.

although the earliest form of nationalism in the modern sense can be traced back to the French Revolution of 1789, this does not mean that nationalism did not exist before. The origins of nationalism must be sought much deeper in history.[13] In much earlier societies, one can find unique nationalist attitudes that emphasize nationalism. This indicates that nationalism is not only an ideology originating from the West in the modern era but also that there are examples of it in the unique pasts of various societies.[14]

Historically, it is possible to observe that great nations had the idea of nationalism in pre-modern times, evident in the examples of nationalism that existed in their own unique pasts until modern times. This can be exemplified in different ways for different nations. It is important to consider and evaluate the understanding of nationalism in the modern period and the historical origins of nationalism separately. Although it is accepted that feelings of nationalism began to emerge in the West at the end of the 18th century and that the Turks were also influenced by it, this general opinion has its shortcomings. While the European view of nationalism may be accepted by the Western world, such an acceptance should be met with skepticism and may even be rejected in terms of Turkish history. This is because the Turks, one of the oldest nations in history, have had the idea of nationalism since they emerged as a nation and established their first state. In fact, traces of nationalism among the Turks, dating back two thousand years, have been identified by European scholars.[15] However, even if not in the modern sense, the Turks have had some form of national consciousness since the beginning of history. It can be said that the idea of Turkish nationalism, as it is perceived in the West in recent times, or, more generally, the idea of Turkish national identity, emerged and developed later than in other nations.[16]

There are several reasons why the idea of Turkish nationalism and Turkish national identity manifested late among Turks in the modern period. The most important reason is that the Ottoman Empire, found-

---

[13] Acar Sevim, Halk Milliyetçiliğinin Öncüsü: Herder, Bilge Kültür Sanat Yayınları, İstanbul, 2008, p. 22.
[14] Macit-İplikci-Bingöl, p. 147.
[15] İbrahim Kafesoğlu, Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Meseleleri, Ötüken Yayınları, İstanbul, 1999, p. 19.
[16] Turgay Uzun, Türk Milliyetçiliği ve MHP, Ebabil Yayınları, Ankara, 2005, p. 123.

ed by Turks, had a multinational structure. As the original owners of the state, the Turks made various efforts to prevent its disintegration. When the minorities within the Ottoman Empire were influenced by nationalist ideas and pursued separatist policies in the 19th century, the state took various measures to counter this. In this context, the Tanzimat and Islahat Edicts were proclaimed, and a constitutional administration system was implemented to ensure the continuity of the state. Additionally, the movements of Ottomanism and Islamism were promoted. However, when these efforts failed to yield results, the Turks embraced the idea of Turkism. For this reason, instead of stating that the idea of nationalism and Turkish national identity developed late among Turks, it would be more accurate to assert that the desire to preserve the state and ensure its survival came first.

Based on the idea that Turkish nationalism should be distinguished from the nationalist ideologies that emerged in the late 18th century and developed in the 19th century, it is appropriate to base this distinction on the following points. The Turkish nation possesses its own language, historical background, enduring traditions, statehood, and national consciousness; this new Republic was founded on this consciousness. The 19th-century reshaping of Turkish nationalism stems from the same foundational idea. Nationalism, which emerged as a political movement in the West, encountered Turkish society in modern times with the rise of the Turkism movement during the Ottoman Empire.[17] The emergence of Turkism represents nationalism in both its classical and authentic sense.[18] The development of Turkism, particularly in the 19th century, occurred in three stages: scientific, literary, and political. In the first two stages, similar to many nationalist movements, Turkism manifested through studies in the fields of language, literature, and history. The transformation and organization of Turkism into Turkish nationalism, that is, into a political ideology, took place in the early 20th century during the Second Constitutional Monarchy Period.[19] In this period, proponents of the idea of Turkism

---

[17] Murat Kılıç, "Erken Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Tipolojisi", SDÜ Fen Edebiyat Fakültesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi, Sayı: 16, Aralık 2007, p. 116.
[18] Tarık Zafer Tunaya, Türkiye'de Siyasal Gelişmeler Kanun-ı Esasî ve Meşrutiyet Dönemi (1876-1938), İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, İstanbul, 2009, p. 137.
[19] Kılıç, "Erken Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Tipolojisi", p. 116.

focused on the thesis of establishing a new empire rather than advocating for the creation of a new national state in the face of a collapsing empire. Therefore, they transformed the nationalism movement into broader concepts of Turkism and Turanism.[20]

With the idea of Turkism, the Turkists promised a new life to the citizens of the Ottoman Empire. This new life would be achieved through the salvation of the Ottoman Empire. The formula for this salvation was grounded in the idea and action of Turkish nationalism. Turks would first develop a national consciousness within the Ottoman Empire, and in the second stage, they would unite with Turks from all over the world to establish a great nation called Turan. Under the leadership of Ziya Gökalp, the Turkism movement was further developed by prominent figures of the period. These included intellectuals such as Yusuf Akçura, Ömer Seyfettin, Hamdullah Suphi Tanrıöver, Mehmet Fuat Köprülü, Ahmet Ağaoğlu, Munis Tekinalp (M. Kohen), and Kazım Nami Duru.[21]

The Establishment of the Republic of Türkiye on National Foundations

The state is one of the most significant phenomena in the life of a nation, evolving into an institutional entity by embodying the indicators of such a world of thought. It was the Turkish thinker Ziya Gökalp who understood this philosophical foundation in all its dimensions. In all his works, Gökalp's goal was to establish the epistemic foundation for the Turkish nation's determination to sustain its historical existence, particularly during the founding of the Republic. As a prominent intellectual, Gökalp advocated for an analytical approach to social and political problems, rejecting any singular, monopolistic truth as a final judgment. Instead, he is characterized by a synthesist approach. However, these ideas of his require further explanation and new justifications in relation to today's social issues.

---

[20] Tunaya, Türkiye'de Siyasal Gelişmeler Kanun-ı Esasî ve Meşrutiyet Dönemi (1876-1938) p. 137; Kılıç, "Erken Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Tipolojisi", p. 117.
[21] Tarık Zafer Tunaya, Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler: İkinci Meşrutiyet Dönemi (Cilt 1), İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2007, p. 43.

For this reason, the central claim of Turkish nationalists is that the social institutions of the National-State were constructed around Gökalp's conception. This argument is logical, as the Turkish nation has witnessed both the theoretical discussions and their practical implementation. Ultimately, Gökalp passed away as a contented individual, having seen his ideas become institutionalized. The value of this historical mission and the results achieved are captured in Gökalp's thought, which is immeasurable. However, the historical trajectory of the Republic of Türkiye has, at times, witnessed events that overshadow this historical consciousness. Revolutions, social and political crises, issues surrounding language, feelings of isolation, and various traumas and drifts have all contributed to attempts to undermine Turkish nationalism and its proponents. Nevertheless, as this idea derives its strength from historical wisdom and centuries of experience, today it continues to persist with the same determination and resolve, both theoretically and practically, in response to the needs of the present age.

During the First World War, the Ottoman Empire was unable to achieve its objectives and withdrew from the conflict by signing the Armistice of Mondros with the Entente Powers. Subsequently, a significant portion of the country was occupied, and in response to these occupations, the Turkish nation initiated a war of liberation and independence. This struggle is, in fact, the clearest demonstration of the Turkish nation's understanding of nationhood, nationalism, statehood, and its deep attachment to independence. It is the embodiment of the phrase: "The Turk remains an orphan; he does not remain without a homeland," and it marks the rise of national resistance movements in Anatolia. While the nation as a whole showed its resolve to defend itself, it initially struggled to act in a unified manner, as different solutions to the crisis were proposed. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the leader of the National Struggle, expressed this as follows:

> "*Now, Gentlemen, I will ask you what decision could have been arrived at under such circumstances for salvation.*
>
> *As I have already explained, there were three propositions that had been put forward:*
>
> *1. To demand protection from England;*
>
> *2. To accept the United States of America as a mandatory Power.*
>
> *The originators of these two proposals had as their aim the preserva-*

tion of the Ottoman State in its complete integrity and preferred to place it as a whole under the protection of a single Power, rather than allow it to be divided among several States.

3. The third proposal was to deliver the country by allowing each district to act independently and according to its own capability. Thus, for instance, certain districts, in opposition to the theory of separation, endeavoured to remain an integral part of the State. Others holding a different opinion already appeared to regard the dismemberment of the State as an accomplished fact and sought only their own safety.

Gentlemen, I did not think any of these three proposals could be accepted as the correct one, because the arguments and considerations on which they were based were groundless. In reality, the foundations of the Ottoman State were themselves shattered at that time. Its existence was threatened with extermination. All the Ottoman districts were practically dismembered. Only the fatherland, affording protection to a mere handful of Turks, still remained, and it was now suggested also to divide this.

Therefore, what could be a serious and correct solution?

In these circumstances, one solution alone was possible, namely, to create a New Turkish State, the sovereignty and independence of which would be unreservedly recognised by the whole world."[22]

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk explained the logic behind this decision as follows: "The main point was that the Turkish nation should live in honour and dignity. Such a condition could only be attained by complete independence. As vital as considerations of wealth and prosperity might be to a nation, if it is deprived of its independence it no longer deserves to be regarded otherwise than as a slave in the eyes of civilised humanity.

To accept the protectorate of a foreign Power would signify that we admit a lack of all human qualities, weakness and incapacity. Indeed, it is impossible to envisage people who have not descended to this degree of abject servitude willingly accepting a foreign master.

But the Türk is both dignified and proud; he is also capable and talented. Such a nation would prefer to perish rather than subject itself to the life of a slave.

---

[22] Kemal Atatürk, Nutuk 1919-1927, Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, Ankara, 2004, pp. 8-9.

Therefore, Independence or Death!

Let us suppose for a moment that in trying to accomplish this we had failed. What would have been the result? — why, slavery!

In that case, would not the consequence have been the same if we had submitted to the other proposals?" [23]

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk succeeded in the National Struggle, which he initiated on the basis of this vision and whose key elements were outlined in the decisions of the Amasya Circular, the Erzurum and Sivas Congresses, and the Misak-ı Milli. Under his leadership, the Turkish nation gained its freedom and independence and established the Republic of Türkiye. The qualities of the new Turkish State include the principles of the national state, full independence and national sovereignty that are central to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's understanding of the state. In addition, these qualities emerge from the goal of modernization that guided all of his breakthroughs and reforms.[24]

When we look at the goals set and the rational activities carried out, it is clear that Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's understanding of nation and nationalism is unifying and collective. It is also shaped by concrete steps for the benefit of the nation and realistic goals for the construction of the future of the nation and the state. This conception of nation and nationalism is based on the principles of national unity, national consciousness, and national existence. It rejects racism, all forms of sectarian discrimination, and class conflict. It is peaceful and humane, not aggressive. It is oriented toward democracy and is open to modernization and innovation. It is active, not static.[25]

Institutional Representation of the Idea of Turkish Nationalism and the Nationalist Movement Party

Society and the nation, which is its form of national identity, are not only names of social and cultural unity in the historical flow but also the product of a political compromise, as a necessity of wanting to live

---

[23] Atatürk, pp. 9-10.
[24] Mehmet Kayıran - Mustafa Yahya Metintaş, "Atatürkçü Düşünce Sistemi: Atatürkçülük (Kemalizm)", Ankara Üniversitesi Türk İnkılâp Tarihi Enstitüsü Atatürk Yolu Dergisi, Sayı: 51, Bahar 2013, p. 586.
[25] Yücel Özkaya, "Altı İlke", Ankara Üniversitesi Türk İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü Atatürk Yolu Dergisi, Sayı: 8 (1991), pp. 652-656.

together. The state where this reconciliation takes place represents the formalized institutional structure of the social, cultural, and political alliance.[26] The Turkish nation has historically had an understanding of nation and state from the first Turkish states to today and has put forward a principle of nation and nationalism within this framework. The conception of nation and nationalism among Turks has gone through different processes until the establishment of the last Turkish state, the Republic of Türkiye. In today's Türkiye, the main representative of nationalist thought in the political arena is the Nationalist Movement Party. Founded on February 9, 1969, and with a history of fifty-five years, the political tenets of the Nationalist Movement Party were laid out by Alparslan Türkeş within the framework of the Nine Lights Doctrine. The principles of this doctrine include Nationalism, Idealism (Ülkücülük), Moralism, Scientism, Communitarianism, Peasantism, Freedom and Personalism, Progressivism and Publicism, Industrialism, and Technicism..[27]

When the Doctrine of Nine Lights was put forward by Alparslan Türkeş, it pointed to a new path that would save Türkiye. In this respect, the principles of Nine Lights have shaped the policy followed by the Nationalist Movement Party from the past to the present. Within the framework of the policy, the aim of the Nationalist Movement Party as a political party is to work for the country and ensure its development. Considering the period, Türkiye's liberation plan is drawn by calculating its material and moral power by taking into account its own realities.[28] In the context of this approach, Türkiye's problems cannot be solved, and the country cannot be developed by imitating the doctrines and management systems of foreign countries within the framework of their own conditions. Therefore, a new political existence must be realized through the country's own originality. The system and vision that will develop Türkiye must be a national vision that is in ac-

---

[26] Siyasete Türkçe Bakış, Text of the Speech of the Chairman of the Nationalist Movement Party, Devlet Bahçeli, at the "Politics and Leadership School 1st Term Certificate Ceremony", 26 December 2009, p. 9; http://www.devletbahceli.com.tr/usr_img/kitap_pdf/siyasete_turkce_bakis.pdf (Date Accessed: 10.09.2024).

[27] Alparslan Türkeş, Millî Doktrin Dokuz Işık, Kutluğ Yayınları, İstanbul, 1975; Uzun, p. 310.

[28] Alparslan Türkeş, Temel Görüşler, Dergâh Yayınları, İstanbul, 1975, p. 38.

cordance with the characteristics of the Turkish nation, that takes into account the Muslim-Turkish reality, and that accepts modern science and technology as a guide.[29] This can only be possible through a return to the essence, by embracing historical wisdom, by referring to experienced tradition, and by working day and night, hand in hand, in an unshakable unity.[30]

This policy can be realized through nationalist thought. The Nationalist Movement Party is a movement with an ontology-based on this episteme. This movement struggles to achieve the best, the most correct and the most beautiful for the Turkish nation under any circumstances. In the beginning, there may be a small number of men of a cause (Turkish: dava adamı) who are well-equipped in terms of ideals, cause and courage. But what is important is not the quantity but the quality, the course of action and the source from which this action is fed. The supporters of the Nationalist Movement are older individuals who remain young in spirit and mind, young people with mature and adult hearts and minds, the invincible vital force of the great Turkish state, the guarantee and future of the Turkish nation, the youth.[31] In this context, the first political move is to call on idealists (Turkish: ülkücüler) who will work and sweat for the Turkish nation without any self-interest under the flag. Fighters of virtue, who are always willing to sacrifice and give everything for their nation and state, never thinking of their own interests, are called upon. Fighters who will fight with renunciation, without being captive to fame and glory and without fear of anything, are called to stand up to raise the Turkish nation to new horizons under the leadership of science.[32]

For the Nationalist Movement Party, the principle of preserving, glorifying, and immortalizing the existence of the Turkish nation supersedes all other considerations, causes, and actions. The most sacred source of power that will ensure the rise of the Turkish nation is nationalism and Turkism. Nationalism entails a profound love for the Turkish nation, the Turkish homeland, and the Turkish state, along with a firm commitment and awareness of their well-being and advancement.

---

[29] Türkeş, Temel Görüşler, p. 43.
[30] Türkeş, Temel Görüşler, p. 28.
[31] Türkeş, Temel Görüşler, p. 25.
[32] Türkeş, Temel Görüşler, p. 36.

Turkism, by contrast, is the aspiration to ensure that all aspects of culture, science, technology, politics, economy, and commerce conform to Turkish-specific norms and values. In other words, it reflects the belief embodied in the principle, "Everything for Turkishness and according to the Turk."[33]

The Nationalist Movement Party, which formulated its principles and ideology within the framework of the Nine Lights Doctrine at the time of its founding, continues its political activities today based on the same ideological axis and nationalist perspective. In line with its historical legacy, Turkish nationalism now shapes its political discourse around the philosophy of the Nationalist Movement Party's Chairman, Devlet Bahçeli: "*First my country and my nation, then my party and then me.*" This statement underscores the application of historical legacy in realpolitik.[34] The principle articulated by Devlet Bahçeli reflects an approach that prioritizes the existence of the Republic of Türkiye and the Turkish nation above all political considerations.[35] This philosophy embodies a statist and nationalist understanding of realpolitik, transcending short-term political interests.

Devlet Bahçeli stated: "*Nationalism is the consciousness of belonging to a nation. Turkish nationalists are bound to the Turkish nation with both a consciousness and an unprecedented love. Therefore, we do not conform to classical political templates, we cannot calculate interests.*"[36] In this context, the principle of "*My country and my nation first, then my party and then me*" serves as a cornerstone, emphasizing that the Nationalist Movement Party, throughout its fifty-five years of political life, has never been a tool for short-term political maneuvering, but rather advocates for enduring and continuous objectives. This concept is also a politi-

---

[33] Türkeş, Temel Görüşler, p. 31-32.

[34] M. Hanifi Macit, "Alparslan Türkeş'in 'Demokratik Millî Devlet' Projesi", Doğumunun 100. Yıl Dönümünde Lider Türkiye İçin Alparslan Türkeş Vizyonu, Türk Akademisi Siyasi Sosyal Stratejik Araştırmalar Vakfı, Ankara, 2017, p. 264.

[35] M. Hanifi Macit, "Millet, Milliyetçilik, Türk Milliyetçiliği ve MHP", Kuruluşunun 50. Yılında Milliyetçi Haraket Partisi - II, Düşünce Dünyasında Türkiz, Sayı: 50: Şubat 2019, pp. 285-305.

[36] Speech by Devlet Bahçeli, Chairman of the Nationalist Movement Party, at the Closing Session of the Joint Meeting of Provincial Chairmen and Mayors in Antalya, 25 November 2018; http://www.mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/4480/index.html (21.09.2024).

cal standard aimed at distancing itself from the potentially unsavory aspects of politics.[37] According to Devlet Bahçeli, Chairman of the Nationalist Movement Party, politics is "*not a running track where short-term and cheap personal interests compete elbow to elbow. It is not a gathering place for those without intellectual consistency, whose principles are trampled underfoot, and who approach issues on a day-to-day basis. It is not a waiting room for those who deny their political roots and fall prey to foreign centers of attraction.*"[38] Defining political activity within this framework of legitimacy, Bahçeli further emphasizes: "*We do not seek politics for ourselves, nor do we demand it for ourselves. This is what we mean when we say, 'my country and my nation first, then my party, and then me.*"[39] This is the clearest expression of the party's political stance. A correct understanding of this principle will also enable the consistent practice of nationalist politics to be fully recognized.[40] Bahçeli's statement clearly reveals the Nationalist Movement Party's priorities in politics.

According to Devlet Bahçeli, the current political activity of the Nationalist Movement Party, under his leadership, reflects a realpolitik approach grounded in historical and existential consciousness, setting aside short-term political concerns to open bright horizons for the Republic of Türkiye. The objective is to demonstrate a firm commitment to guiding the Turkish nation toward a secure future.[41] The party's nationalism, at this stage, aims to preserve the national values of the Turkish nation, which have been forged throughout history, while integrating the advancements of the modern era. Simultaneously, this vision is rooted in the evaluation of both national and universal el-

---

[37] Text of the Speech of the Chairman of the Nationalist Movement Party, Devlet Bahçeli, at the "Politics and Leadership School 1st Term Certificate Ceremony", 26 December 2009, pp. 13-14.

[38] Text of the Speech of the Chairman of the Nationalist Movement Party, Devlet Bahçeli, at the "Politics and Leadership School 1st Term Certificate Ceremony", 26 December 2009, p. 3.

[39] Text of the Speech of the Chairman of the Nationalist Movement Party, Devlet Bahçeli, at the "Politics and Leadership School 1st Term Certificate Ceremony", 26 December 2009, p. 22.

[40] Macit, "Millet, Milliyetçilik, Türk Milliyetçiliği ve MHP", pp. 285-305.

[41] Election Declaration of the Nationalist Movement Party on June 7, 2015, Ankara, 3 May 2015, p. 5. https://www.mhp.org.tr/usr_img/mhpweb/MHP_Secim_Beyan-namesi_2015_tam.pdf (Date Accessed: 10.09.2024).

ements, merging the local with the global.[42] A review of the Nationalist Movement Party's fifty-five-year history and political trajectory reveals that the principle of "prioritizing the state and the nation" has remained consistently intact.[43]

According to Devlet Bahçeli, the Nationalist Movement Party has steadfastly adhered to the values it upheld in the past, and despite facing difficulties and numerous objections, it has never compromised its principles, ideals, or consistency. Everyone can be certain that, even if the political consequences for the party are severe, and even if similar circumstances arise again, it will maintain the same stance, without making the slightest concession in its responsibilities toward history, ancestors, and the nation.[44] According to Devlet Bahçeli, as the 50th anniversary of the Party's founding approaches, this great movement—this magnificent resurgence—will have completed half a century. In other words, the Nationalist Movement Party has been serving the nation for fifty years, striving for its ideals and the country. Furthermore, the Party continues to march on the path established by Founding President Alparslan Türkeş, adhering to the principles he set forth and the direction he indicated, without faltering or deviating. The Party views his life of struggle as its guide and embraces his determination to elevate the cause to the highest level as its road map.[45]

Devlet Bahçeli articulates the development of the Nationalist Movement Party from its foundation to the present and its unity with the Turkish nation in the following words: "*Over the years, we met the nation like dried soil meeting water. Like rivers overflowing their banks, we reached every part of Anatolia. Sometimes we were forgotten, sometimes they thought we had forgotten. At times we were struck to the core, at times we breathed life*

---

[42] Text of the Speech of the Chairman of the Nationalist Movement Party, Devlet Bahçeli, at the "Politics and Leadership School 1st Term Certificate Ceremony", 26 December 2009, p. 19.

[43] Macit, "Millet, Milliyetçilik, Türk Milliyetçiliği ve MHP", pp. 285-305.

[44] Press Statement by Devlet Bahçeli, Chairman of the Nationalist Movement Party, on "The Rising Wave of Threats in the Run-up to the Local Elections on March 31, 2019", 12 December 2018; http://www.mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/4488/index.html (Date Accessed: 21.01.2024)

[45] Speech by Devlet Bahçeli, Chairman of the Nationalist Movement Party, at the Closing Session of the Joint Meeting of Provincial Chairmen and Mayors in Antalya, 25 November 2018.

into life. We endured many difficulties with patience, reason, faith, and ideal-ist (ülkücü) *consciousness. Yet we did not give up, yet we did not lose hope. We were right, we waited for the delivery of our rights. We were dignified, we sought for this to be recognized, acknowledged, and recorded. We resisted the dominance of the clouds of pessimism, the epidemic of pessimism, the current of evil, we stood upright against its offensive. We said, 'My country first, the nation first'. We were nourished by the phrase 'Happy to be a Turk'. We said we were Turks, we said we were Turkists, and of course, we were adorned with the ideal of Turan. As Turkish nationalists who found their source in the Turkish-Islamic Idea, we challenged the dark circles that had lost their minds enough to shroud the Turk, if necessary, we were prepared to sacrifice our lives in this political struggle. We have come to this day by resisting cosmopolitan rampages, communist currents, globalist, separatist and colonialist rogues, stoning the devils, destroying the snake's lair.*"[46]

Devlet Bahçeli outlines the Nationalist Movement's vision for the future as follows: "*We have a goal, we have an ideal, and let no one doubt its purity. Our ideal is to keep the Great Turkish nation alive forever as long as humanity exists, by understanding, comprehending, protecting, and devel-oping the magnificent set of values embedded in its language, spirit, morality, faith, reason, and conscience, which gives it difference, meaning and value, which it has brought by composing from the depths of history, as a blessed relic, without severing them from their roots. And, we strive for our national state, which we aim to embody these exalted values, to become the most pow-erful state on earth, for the peace, tranquility, justice, and well-being of Turk-ishness, Islam, and all of humanity.*"[47]

The Reason of the State for Ideal Governance,
Nationalist Movement Party, and the Survival (Beka) Issue

Although the term "reason of the state" conceptually entered political literature in the modern period, the doctrine itself has existed since ancient times. The existence of the doctrine is more ancient than the introduction of the concept. Its presence predates the introduction of

[46] Speech by Devlet Bahçeli, Chairman of the Nationalist Movement Party, at the Closing Session of the Joint Meeting of Provincial Chairmen and Mayors in Antal-ya, 25 November 2018.
[47] Speech by Devlet Bahçeli, Chairman of the Nationalist Movement Party, at the Closing Session of the Joint Meeting of Provincial Chairmen and Mayors in Antal-ya, 25 November 2018.

the concept, having emerged in various forms throughout different historical periods[48], and it has become a crucial guiding element in state governance. Generally, the "reason of the state" is defined as state administration, political strategy, and conception. However, politics conducted in accordance with the reason of the state is often seen as having a statist orientation. This approach views the state as the paramount value and asserts that the state's legitimacy resides within itself. Thus, any measures deemed necessary to preserve the state's existence and power may be utilized. There are no legal or moral constraints limiting the methods employed to neutralize threats to the state's survival or power. The reason of the state becomes most visible during times of crisis[49], when the state's supreme value requires intervention to avert threats. This intervention involves the knowledge and application of the tools required to establish the state, protect and sustain its existence and power, and resolve crises as they arise[50].

Accordingly, the reason of the state is a culmination of historical experience. The body of knowledge derived from this experience plays a pivotal role in the construction, survival, and problem-solving capacities of the state. Within the framework of Turkish nationalism, and guided by historical experience, the reason of the state is never considered an arbitrary intervention. The suspension of law and similar measures are deemed legitimate when the state's existence is threatened, and it is engaged in a struggle to maintain this existence. For these reasons, the reason of the state is the conceptual embodiment of a political philosophy that places the state at the center. It expresses a statist attitude, recognizing the state as an end in itself. According to the doctrine, when the existential interests of the state are at risk, all other interests—whether individual, social, or economic—become secondary until the crisis is resolved. n this context, the reason of the state is fully integrated into the state's essence,[51] with the ultimate goal being the state's perpetuity.

---

[48] Salim Orhan, "Devlet Aklı Doktrini ve Modern Türkiye'ye Geçiş Sürecinde Bir Tezahürü Olarak Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa", Dicle Üniversitesi Hukuk Fakültesi Dergisi, Cilt: 23, Sayı: 39, 2018, p. 377.

[49] Orhan, p. 377.

[50] Orhan, p. 377.

[51] Orhan, p. 380.

There are two approaches to the historical origin of the reason of the state. The first approach traces its origin to Western Europe during the 14th and 17th centuries, arguing that it later gained global prevalence from there. In this perspective, the reason of the state is evaluated solely in the context of the modern state. According to the second approach, the origins of the state and the reason of the state do not correspond to a specific time frame and are understood in a historical context. Accordingly, the state is not exclusively viewed as the modern state, nor is the reason of the state considered only within this framework. In other words, while the state undergoes various changes based on time and circumstances, it possesses a permanent essence constituted by the reason of the state. This essence is shaped and characterized within the framework of historical conditions, with origins tracing back to ancient times. To attribute the historical experience of the oldest civilizations solely to the modern period and Western Europe would limit the concept and detract from its significance. Even though the term "the reason of the state" emerged in the modern period, this does not alter the reality that the phenomenon has existed since ancient times. The historical experiences and knowledge of ancient civilizations have consistently influenced state governance, leading to their ongoing intervention in governance practices. Since this is a common situation across most civilized nations, it reflects a universality in both time and space.

As the Turkish nation is rooted in a deep-seated civilization, it is argued that the Turks possess an effective and unique reason of the state in governance, grounded in their historical experiences. Consequently, the reason of the state for the Turks aims to establish and maintain an ideal state structure while protecting it against all forms of threats. Acting upon the rationale of the reason of the state in times of necessity is based not only on the objective of preserving the state but also on safeguarding the ideals of Turkishness, striving for the best outcomes for the nation, and ensuring the provision and protection of law, morality, and justice. If, as suggested in the definition of the concept, it becomes necessary to breach legal or moral rules under conditions of urgency, such actions are taken in line with a higher ideal of morality and justice. Different situations may arise in other societies regarding the reason of the state. However, the reason of the state for the Turks

embodies a historical mindset aimed at perpetuating the state for the protection of common justice, goodness, and prosperity, reflecting a deep-rooted historical background spanning thousands of years.

A general overview of the historical nature of the Turkish state structure provides insight into the nature of the Turkish reason of the state. First and foremost, the idea of the state and nation emerged and developed very early in history. The Turks established great states, which hold significant positions in world politics, by creating large political and military organizations that function in accordance with "töre" (the early Turks' law and moral system) and laws. Notably, it is crucial that "töre" lies at the core of state organization. Among the Turks, the state has always been considered in conjunction with töre; thus, töre has always represented unwritten laws, and there has never been a state without it[52]. This underscores that the Turks have operated with a rule of law understanding since ancient times and that they place great importance on the supremacy of laws, both morally and legally. The presence of such a historical experience among the Turks signifies that the concept of the rule of law holds a vital place within their state mentality.

"Bilge Kagan's "*Turk! As long as the sky above does not collapse and the earth below is not pierced, who can destroy your state and töre?*", the Ottoman belief in "*the state is eternal* (Turkish: Devlet-i ebed müddet)" and Mustafa Kemal's words "*But the Republic of Türkiye will remain forever!*" are not wishful thinking, but expressions of thousands of years of historical experience."[53] "Turks have never been without a state and organization in any period of history. That is, for the Turks, the state is an indispensable institution that protects the national existence against all kinds of dangers, keeps the people living in order, *töre* and justice, and ensures their material and spiritual development and welfare. Therefore, the idea and conception that the state is an eternal institution (Turkish: Bengü İl/Devlet-i ebed müddet) has always prevailed among the Turks. Turks have always been aware and conscious of the fact that the state is an indispensable institution that protects, maintains and develops the national existence"[54], and that is why, the state

---

[52] Salim Koca, Türk Kültürünün Temelleri, Berikan Yayınevi, Ankara, 2019, p. 79, 80.
[53] İskender Öksüz, Türk Milliyetçiliği Fikir Sistemi, Panama Yayıncılık, Ankara 2017, p. 47.
[54] Koca, p. 80.

has always been accepted as the highest value of the society. Beyond all personalities, the state, which has a position that transcends everyone, is built on the common interest, values, welfare and existence of everyone in society and has become its representative. So, the idea that the existence of the state must be perpetual and whatever is necessary to protect the existence and unity of the state must be done includes the philosophical thought that forms the basis of the reason of the state.

In the early Turkish states, the political organization and establishment of the state, as well as the new holders of power, greatly benefited from the experiences of previous Turkish states while forming their organization.[55] The reason of the state among the Turks has served as a foundation for state establishment since ancient times. Just as historical experience was the basis for the state's foundation and motivation for action in antiquity, this experience has remained fundamental in later periods and today; thus, the reason of the state continues or should continue to function. The Turkish state tradition has always been characterized by the idea that the state exists for the people, and Turkish rulers have consistently aimed to ensure the prosperity of the populace.[56] This understanding among the Turks indicates that the reason of the state also seeks what is best for the people. All practices of the reason of the state, in both ordinary and extraordinary conditions, have consistently aimed to ensure the well-being of the populace. Therefore, the Turkish reason of the state is not subject to any of the various criticisms directed at the general concept of the reason of the state mentioned above. In this vein, the survival (Turkish: beka) of the state signifies the survival and happiness of the people.

"The early Turkish ruler was both the head of the entire state organization and the leader of the society. He was responsible not only for the present but also for the future of the state and society. His mission was extremely significant, and only well-educated, talented, knowledgeable, and experienced individuals could accomplish this demanding task."[57] Accordingly, in the Turkish state tradition, the aforementioned definition of a statesman has been an understanding adopted since ancient times. Therefore, the statesman, as the executor of the

---

[55] Koca, p. 91.
[56] Koca, p. 96.
[57] Koca, p. 97.

reason of the state, must possess the competency necessary to assume responsibility. Thus, among the early Turks, it is essential for the ruler to embody a statesman figure capable of managing the state in accordance with the reason of the state while also effectively handling moments of crisis. Such a personality would govern in alignment with the reason of the state to ensure both the survival (beka) of the state and the happiness of the people.

One of the most important qualities of a Turkish Kagan is wisdom. "Wisdom is a concept that expresses high comprehension, deep thought, and great intuition." The wise thoughts of the Turkish Kagan are also related to the future of the state and society, and he holds himself responsible for this. As a wise leader, the thoughts of Bilge Kagan in the Göktürk Inscriptions have gained an immortal quality and transcended their time. Bilge Kagan wisely identifies and shows the upcoming and distant threats to the Turks. Additionally, Ton Yukuk, the state counselor of the Göktürks, is also a wise individual. By forming his thoughts through knowledge based on experience, he strives to solve problems before they escalate, and by serving the Three Göktürk Kagans for 46 years, he has the honor of contributing to their successes and ensuring a prosperous life for his society.[58] In this context, both Bilge Kagan and Ton Yukuk serve as examples of statesmen in the full sense of the word, and at the same time, they are accepted as the most important sources of the reason of the state from the past to the present. The basis of this reason is rooted in the aforementioned understanding and a historical experience whose reality can be obtained through research within this field of meaning, and this way of understanding continues to exist today.

"The Turkish state weakens in the times of kagans who are incompetent in administration, the state and social order are shaken, and the *töre* is disrupted. In such cases, it is the kagan's duty to reorganize and protect the töre. On the other hand, it is also among the duties of the Turkish kagan to ensure the rule of law (*töre*) and order. In fact, in the Turkish states, there has never been a form of administration without laws and dependent on the personal will of the ruler. In particular, every ruler is obliged to establish correct laws and implement them with

---

[58] Koca, pp. 101-103.

justice. This is because the Turks have an understanding of law that considers justice as the foundation of the state"[59], and the reason of the state of the Turks has been shaped based on the principles of the rule of law and has always aimed to ensure this.

The existence of assemblies in the early Turks is an indication that the Turkish kagans did not take decisions on state affairs alone. In these assemblies called *toys*, and *kurultays*, many political, social, economic, military and cultural issues were discussed, debated and decided.[60] I t is also a fact of historical experience that such structures are evidence of the emergence of the reason of the state and the execution of governance in this direction.

At the heart of the Turkish reason of the state is the idea system of Turkish nationalism. Since the Turks, with a history of thousands of years, are one of the oldest nations on earth, the idea system of Turkish nationalism is one of the most ancient forms of nationalism. This intellectual structure is a social reality as well as a political and legal one. That is, the Turkish state cannot be separated from the intellectual foundations of Turkish nationalism.[61] In this context, the Turkish reason of the state is the expression of a holistic traditional thought system in which moral and legal sensitivities are at the heart of its politics, not an understanding that sacrifices law and morality to politics or leads to the idea and criticism of such a sacrifice.

The doctrine of the reason of the state has always been valid in modern Turkish politics, manifested in different forms, and is deeply rooted.[62] In this way, the idea system of Turkish nationalism, which is both deep-rooted and strong as a system, has been processed and developed, constituting the basic philosophy of the Republic of Türkiye.[63] The reason of the state is based on this system of ideas, which was at the foundation of the construction of the Republic of Türkiye, and has an active presence as the historical essence of the Republic of Türkiye.

Beka, which means eternity and immortality, corresponds to the state of existence and continuity in the life of states. The Turks have

---

[59] Koca, p. 105.
[60] Koca, p. 107.
[61] Öksüz, pp. 46-47.
[62] Orhan, p. 378.
[63] Öksüz, p. 47.

established many states and empires under different conditions in different geographies from the earliest periods of history until today. The most important reason why the Turks were able to establish great states and powerful empires in every period of history, from the first Turkish states to the Republican period, is that they have an organizational structure and the idea of "the state is eternal".

The Nationalist Movement Party, one of the main actor parties in Turkish politics today, is based on the concept of "the state is eternal". The Nationalist Movement Party was officially founded in 1969 and traces its historical roots back to the Millet Party (1948). The age of the Nationalist Movement Party is equal to the age of Turkishness[64], and its Founding Chairman, Başbuğ Alparslan Türkeş, had set a political direction for his party years before. When Alparslan Türkeş defined the blessed cause of the Nationalist Movement Party as "*to glorify the existence of the Turkish nation and to continue it forever*", his emphasis on eternity reveals his desire to carry Turkishness and national existence to the climate of eternity.[65] This idea put forward by Başbuğ Alparslan Türkeş is reflected in today's politics in the words of Devlet Bahçeli, Chairman of the Nationalist Movement Party: "*First my country and my nation, then my party and me*".

At the point we have reached today, providing a better future for the Republic of Türkiye with the vision of "Leading Country Türkiye" and ensuring its eternity will only be possible with the Nationalist Movement Party and the ideas it accepts as its basis. The Nationalist Movement Party aims to meet the expectations of the Turkish nation at the highest level by adhering to its fundamental views and principles and by reading the changes and developments in the world correctly. To do this, it puts forward its programs, goals, policies and projects by considering the benefit of both its own nation and humanity and makes policies in this direction[66]. In this respect, according to Devlet

---

[64] https://www.mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/mhp/4499/mhp/Milliyetci_Hareket_Partisi_Genel_Baskani_Sayin_Devlet_BAHCELI__nin_Belediye_Baskani_Aday_Takdim_Toplantisinda_yapmis_olduklar_.html (Date Accessed: 03.09.2024).

[65] Text of the Speech of Devlet Bahçeli, Chairman of the Nationalist Movement Party, at the Opening of the 10th Ordinary Grand Congress, 4 November 2012, p. 25; https://www.mhp.org.tr/usr_img/_mhp2007/kitaplar/10kurultay_turkmilleti_sensiz_asla.pdf (Date Accessed: 02.09.2024).

[66] Nationalist Movement Party, the Program of the Party, "Towards the Future", Ankara, 8 November 2009, Presentation Section.

Bahçeli, the Chairman of the Nationalist Movement Party, says, "*Tür-kiye is always on my mind. No attitude, no action that does not serve the idea of protecting and raising the existence of the Turkish nation and taking it to eternity, which is not in accordance with this idea, cannot be legitimate for the Turkish nation. The future vision of Turkish nationalists is a long-term ideal point that aims at the highest level that the Turkish nation plans to reach in the world.*"[67]

On the other hand, while Devlet Bahçeli, the Chairman of the Nationalist Movement Party, constantly emphasizes survival in politics within the framework of the idea of "*the state is eternal*", some of his interlocutors and opponents state that Türkiye does not have a survival problem. Devlet Bahçeli rightly counters these views with the following statements: "*Great nations always have a question of survival, even if the ignorant and murderous do not know it. Because great nations aim to exist forever. In order to achieve this goal, they endure many hardships, they endure oppression, they endure ordeals, and they know how to be reborn from discomfitures and defeats. The Turkish nation is great and will always remain great..*"[68]

In this respect, the Nationalist Movement Party has shown its determination to carry Türkiye into a secure future with the idea of "*the state is eternal*" by opening bright horizons in front of Türkiye from its foundation until today. The Nationalist Movement Party has been the indomitable, indestructible, and impregnable political bastion of the "*the state is eternal*" cause. The commitment to uphold and sustain the understanding of "one homeland, one flag, one nation, one state, one language" has been the political framework of the movement to build a new civilization centered on morality, sacredness, and Türkiye, fostering reconciliation in national unity and brotherhood.[69]

Conclusion

Various definitions and explanations have been offered regarding the concepts of nation and nationalism. In some of these, the end of the

---

[67] Text of the Speech of Devlet Bahçeli, Chairman of the Nationalist Movement Party, at the Opening of the 10th Ordinary Grand Congress, p. 26.

[68] https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/politika/mhp-genel-baskani-devlet-bahceli-bu-yuk-milletlerin-her-zaman-beka-meselesi-vardir/1414077# (Date Accessed: 03.09.2024).

[69] Nationalist Movement Party, National Resurrection Blessed Rise, pp. 4-5; https://cdnuploads.aa.com.tr/uploads/userFiles/c09e217d-a61f-47f8-a355-ddf8004cfef9/MHP_secim_beyannamesi.pdf (Date Accessed: 03.09.2024).

18th century and the French Revolution of 1789 are regarded as the beginning of nationalism in the modern sense. However, as an ancient nation, nationalism among the Turks began long before this period and has evolved into different forms according to the requirements of the time. Near-term Turkish nationalism emerged as **Turkism** at the end of the 19th century. This understanding of Turkism initially manifested itself in the fields of language and literature and evolved into a political ideology at the beginning of the 20th century. It took on a more modern form during the Republican period. Since its inception, Turkish nationalism has played a crucial role in the existence of the Turkish nation and Turkish states, facilitating the transfer of national and state philosophy, language, culture, civilization, customs, traditions, and national interests to future generations. In this context, Turkish nationalism is expected to continue to persist in the same manner in the future.

Today, the Nationalist Movement Party, as the political representative of Turkish nationalism in Türkiye, serves as a meeting place for nationalists, drawing on its fifty-five-year history. The Nine Lights Doctrine, introduced by Alparslan Türkeş, the founder of the Nationalist Movement Party, plays a crucial role in shaping the ideological frameworks of nationalists. In this context, the Nine Lights Doctrine represents a philosophical construct that illustrates how the idea of Turkish nationalism should be situated between the past and the future.

The 20th and 21st centuries have witnessed significant changes and transformations in world political history. In this context, the Republic of Türkiye must analyze these developments to define its position for the future. Throughout this process, Türkiye should consistently prioritize its national and state interests and act accordingly. Such a course of action can only be achieved through nationalist thought. The primary political movement representing this ideology in Türkiye today is the Nationalist Movement Party. The statement by Nationalist Movement Party Chairman Devlet Bahçeli—"*First my country and my nation, then my party, and then me*"—encapsulates this sentiment. This statement represents not an ordinary political discourse but rather an expression of a philosophy that prioritizes the nation and the state. This perspective is deeply rooted in the Turkish state tradition, emphasizing the imperative that both the nation and the state must always be upheld.

References

Akın, R. (2002). *Dağılma Devri ve Türkçülük Hareketi (1908-1918)*. İstanbul: Der Yayınları.

Atatürk, K. (2004). *Nutuk 1919-1927*. Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi.

Cevizci, A. (2017). *Büyük Felsefe Sözlüğü*. İstanbul: Say Yayınları.

Election declaration of the Nationalist Movement Party on June 7, 2015. (2015, May 3). Retrieved January 10, 2019, from https://www.mhp.org.tr/usr_img/mhpweb/MHP_Secim_Beyannamesi_2015_tam.pdf

Heywood, A. (2013). *Siyasî İdeolojiler* (A. K. Bayram, Ö. Tüfekçi, H. İnaç, Ş. Akın, & B. Kalkan, Trans.). Ankara: Adres Yayınları.

Kafesoğlu, İ. (1999). *Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Meseleleri*. İstanbul: Ötüken Yayınları.

Kayiran, M., & Metintaş, M. Y. (2013). Atatürkçü düşünce sistemi: Atatürkçülük (Kemalizm). *Ankara Üniversitesi Türk İnkılâp Tarihi Enstitüsü Atatürk Yolu Dergisi, 51*, 579-615.

Kiliç, M. (2016). *Allah, Vatan, Soy, Milli Mukaddesat: Türk Milliyetçiler Derneği (1951-1953)*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.

Kiliç, M. (2007). Erken Cumhuriyet dönemi Türk milliyetçiliğinin tipolojisi. *SDÜ Fen Edebiyat Fakültesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi, 16*, 113-140.

Koca, S. (2019). *Türk Kültürünün Temelleri*. Ankara: Berikan Yayınevi.

Köktürk, M. (2016). *Eleştirel Yazılar 1: Millet ve Milliyetçilik*. İstanbul: Ötüken Yayınları.

Macit, M. H., Iplikci, A., & Bingöl, M. (2018). *Siyaset felsefesine giriş*. Ankara: Pegem Akademi.

Macit, M. H. (2017). Alparslan Türkeş'in 'demokratik millî devlet' projesi. In *Doğumunun 100. yıl dönümünde lider Türkiye için Alparslan Türkeş vizyonu* (pp. 251-264). Ankara: Türk Akademisi Siyasi Sosyal Stratejik Araştırmalar Vakfı.

Macit, M. H. (2019). Millet, milliyetçilik, Türk milliyetçiliği ve MHP. In *Kuruluşunun 50. yılında Milliyetçi Haraket Partisi - II: Düşünce dünyasında Türkiz* (pp. 105-118). Ankara: Düşünce Dünyasında Türkiz.

Nationalist Movement Party. (n.d.). *National resurrection blessed rise*. Retrieved September 3, 2023, from https://cdnuploads.aa.com.tr/uploads/userFiles/c09e217d-a61f-47f8-a355-ddf8004cfef9/MHP_secim_beyannamesi.pdf

Nationalist Movement Party. (2009, November 8). *The program of the party: Towards the future*. Presentation section.

Orhan, S. (2018). Devlet aklı doktrini ve modern Türkiye'ye geçiş sürecinde bir tezahürü olarak teşkilat-ı mahsusa. *Dicle Üniversitesi Hukuk Fakültesi Dergisi, 23*(39), 375-409.

Öksüz, İ. (2017). *Türk Milliyetçiliği Fikir Sistemi*. Ankara: Panama Yayıncılık.

Özkaya, Y. (1991). Altı ilke. *Ankara Üniversitesi Türk İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü Atatürk Yolu Dergisi, 8*, 647-674.

Press statement by Devlet Bahçeli, chairman of the Nationalist Movement Party, on "The rising wave of threats in the run-up to the local elections on March 31, 2019." (2018, December 12). Retrieved January 21, 2019, from http://www.mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/4488/index.html

Sevim, A. (2008). *Halk Milliyetçiliğinin Öncüsü: Herder*. İstanbul: Bilge Kültür Sanat Yayınları.

Siyasete Türkçe bakış: Text of the speech of the chairman of the Nationalist Move-ment Party, Devlet Bahçeli, at the "Politics and Leadership School 1st Term Certificate Ceremony" (2009, December 26). Retrieved January 10, 2019, from http://www.devletbahceli.com.tr/usr_img/kitap_pdf/siyasete_turkce_bakis.pdf

Smith, A. D. (2013). *Milliyetçilik: Kuram-İdeoloji-Tarih* (Ü. H. Yolsal, Trans.). Anka-ra: Atıf Yayınları.

Speech by Devlet Bahçeli, chairman of the Nationalist Movement Party, at the closing session of the joint meeting of provincial chairmen and mayors in An-talya (2018, November 25). Retrieved September 21, 2024, from http://www.mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/4480/index.html

Text of the speech of Devlet Bahçeli, chairman of the Nationalist Movement Party, at the opening of the 10th ordinary grand congress (2012, November 4). Retrieved September 2, 2024, from https://www.mhp.org.tr/usr_img/_mhp2007/kitaplar/10kurultay_turkmilleti_sensiz_asla.pdf

Tunaya, T. Z. (2009). *Türkiye'de siyasal gelişmeler: Kanun-ı Esasî ve meşrutiyet dönemi (1876-1938)*. İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları.

Tunaya, T. Z. (2007). *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler: İkinci Meşrutiyet Dönemi (Cilt 1)*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.

Türk Dil Kurumu. (2005). *Türkçe Sözlük*. Ankara.

Türkeş, A. (1975). *Millî Doktrin Dokuz Işık*. İstanbul: Kutluğ Yayınları.

Türkeş, A. (1975). *Temel Görüşler*. İstanbul: Dergâh Yayınları.

Uzun, T. (2005). *Türk Milliyetçiliği ve MHP*. Ankara: Ebabil Yayınları.

TURKISH NATIONALISM:
FROM EMPIRE TO REPUBLIC

Satuk Buğra ÇETİNKAYA

PhD Candidate, Ankara University Faculty of Political Sciences

At the dawn of the 19th century, nationalism began to permeate multi-religious and multi-national empires and remained important for nearly 150 years. In the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars, questions of how people define themselves and who they are became the main agenda item in political debates and power struggles. In its most general form, nationalism can be defined as a matter of belonging to a community. Nationalism refers to a particular community to which one feels one belongs, to which one defines who one is socially. When this reference has a specific ethno-cultural nomenclature and content, and when this content is transformed into a political program, it falls within the scope of nationalism.[1] Turkish nationalism also developed within the two multinational empires of the 19th century. The Ottoman Empire and the Russian Tsardom were the 19th-century owners of the historical spaces where Turkish nationalism took shape. In this study, the focus on the development of Turkish nationalism will be on the Ottoman Empire. From the 18th century onwards, the Ottoman Empire was challenged internally by the "ayans" and externally by various European powers, notably the Russian Tsardom. In the early 19th century, the Ottoman lands witnessed the first nationalist uprisings. The

---

[1] Smith, A. D. (2010). Nationalism, Theory, İdeology, History, 2.Ed. Politiy Press. 5-7

general causes of internal and external challenges are beyond the scope of this study. Therefore, the study will focus only on the modernization and nationalist policies that the Ottomans implemented to deal with these challenges.[2] In order to deal with the problem of protecting the territories under its sovereignty, the Ottoman Empire had to both modernize and resort to a new ideology that could hold the society together. However, both continuing with the multinational imperial regime and building a modern state created a contradiction. In the 19th century, there was no healthy country other than the imperialist Great Britain that could solve this problem. Under these circumstances, Turkish nationalism emerged as a result of the aim to resolve the aforementioned contradiction. In this article, the historical adventure of Turkish nationalism will be analyzed within the framework of this contradiction.

Russia's invasion of Crimea in 1792 and France's invasion of Egypt in 1799 resulted in the loss of territories whose populations were predominantly Muslim and which had been considered important political centers before the rise of the Ottoman Empire. Accompanying these losses was the deterioration of central authority and the Ottoman territorial system, which crippled the state's ability to raise troops and collect taxes. When the Ottomans determined that ideological and political supremacy could no longer be sustained, they recognized the need for a more comprehensive implementation of reform. This also meant experimenting with new procedures from the West.[3] When the Ottoman Sultan Selim III attempted to introduce various reforms in finance, the army and the system—referred to as "nizam-ı cedit" (new order)—it was clear that this was not a return to the ancient laws of the Ottoman golden ages. Sultan Selim III sought to recapture the traditional power of the sultans through modern political means. He introduced some practical innovations without destroying tradition.[4] However, his efforts did not last long, and he was deposed in a rebel-

---

[2] Karpat, Kemal H. (1972) "The transformation of the Ottoman State, 1789-1908." International journal of Middle East Studies 3.3: 246-247

[3] Turan, N. S. (2004) "Osmanlı Diplomasisinde Batı İmgesinin Değişimi ve Elçilerin Etkisi (18. ve 19. Yüzyıllar)." Trakya Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi, 6 (2)., 57-86

[4] Başaran, Betül. (2014) Selim III, Social Control and Policing in Istanbul at the End of the Eighteenth Century: Between Crisis and Order. Brill, 78-80

lion. Unlike his predecessors, Mahmut II, who ascended to the throne with the support of the ayans and the penal administration, successfully overcame the ayans and the political actors in Istanbul. However, in the last years of his reign, the Egyptian issue caused him to interrupt his reform projects.

The Tanzimat Period was a product of the consensus between the palace and Bab-ı Âli that the problems faced by the Ottoman Empire could not be solved solely through administrative and military reforms. The necessity for new and comprehensive arrangements in the relations between the state and society was clearly reflected in the spirit of the Gülhane Hatt-ı Hümayun (Tanzimat Fermanı).[5] On the other hand, the statesmen of the Tanzimat period had no doubt that the internal and external problems of the Ottoman Empire could not be separated from one another. The Ottoman rulers believed that in the imperial struggle known as the "Eastern Question," a balanced policy should be pursued in accordance with their domestic and foreign policy objectives.[6] Beginning in the early 19th century with the Serbs and Greeks, a series of revolts continued until the establishment of the republic, and the problems initially viewed as internal revolts became subjects of foreign intervention by European states. The idea that these problems had international ideological and cultural motivations, as well as administrative and financial discontent between the state and society, was brought to the forefront in the Treaty of Paris after the Crimean War (1854-1856) and was reflected in the text of the Islahat Fermanı (Royal Reform Edict). While the Edict of Reform stipulated equality between Muslims and non-Muslims, it also provided indirect advantages to non-Muslim communities. Through consulates, non-Muslims were de facto granted more freedom in education and the economy than Muslim subjects. This was met with backlash from the nascent Muslim middle classes.[7]

---

[5] İnalcık, H. (2006). "Tanzimat Nedir?". Tanzimat: Değişim Sürecinde Osmanlı İmparatorluğu (Ed). Seyidanlıoğlu, M. ve İnalcık, H. İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları.

[6] Çiçek, N. (2010). The Young Ottomans. London: I.B. Tauris.

[7] Findley, C. V. (2019). Modern Türkiye Tarihi. (Çev:Güneş Ayas) İstanbul:, Timaş Yayınları, 118-120

Tanzimat, Bureaucrats and Ottomanism

Since the beginning of the 19th century, the Ottoman Empire underwent a massive transformation process in order to preserve its political existence. Two fundamental issues intersected this process. The first issue was the concern for maintaining the multi-ethnic and multi-religious structure of the Ottoman Empire due to its status as an empire. The second issue was the modernization of state and social life to preserve independence. Both issues are interconnected and intertwined to a great extent. The process that began with the Tanzimat Edict marks the abandonment of customary structures concerning both issues. The Ottomans had organized different religious groups side by side within the framework of the "millet system" and loyalty to the sultan.[8] Accompanying this was a socio-economic system of "erkan-ı erbaa", or four strata.[9] This classical order was replaced by disorder by the 19th century. The revolt in 1829, when Greek nationalists organized themselves with the Ethniki Eteria organization and eventually separated from the Ottoman Empire to establish a new state, is a concrete reflection of the ideas spread by the French Revolution. In the face of these and similar situations, the Ottomans felt the need to change the nature of their ideology of coexistence.[10] The socio-economic order, on the other hand, began to deteriorate rapidly at a time when the effects of capitalism had already crossed traditional customs. The process following the 1838 Treaty of Balta Port transformed the Ottoman economy in favor of capitalism and began to alter traditional social relations in the Ottoman port cities. The 1840 Vidin Rebellion and the 1860 Lebanon Revolt were events in which socio-economic and ethno-religious tensions were intertwined.[11]

---

[8] Ortaylı, İ. (2008). Türkiye Teşkilat ve İdare Tarihi. Ankara:Cedit Neşriyat, 449-451. "Millet" doesn't mean nation in Ottoman Empire in 19th centruy. Millet, means religious community.

[9] Karpat, K. (2018). Osmanlı'da Milliyetçiliğin Toplumsal Temelleri. İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 32

[10] Hanioğlu, Ş. (1985). Osmanlıcılık. Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi, 5,, 1389-1393

[11] Wallerstein, I., Decdeli, H. ve Kasaba, R. (2002) The incorparation of The Ottoman Empire into world-economy. The Ottoman Empire and Word-Economy. (Ed) İslamoğlu, H.C. Cambridge University Press., 88-91

It did not take long for the Ottomans to realize that they needed a new principle for coexistence. The idea that dominated the Tanzimat Period was the formulation of the new unifying principle under the name of "Ottomanism". Ottomanism refers to a relationship of subordination and loyalty based on the concept of Ottomanism, prioritizing loyalty above all ethnic and religious affiliations that might tend toward separatist tendencies. Ottomanism was an attempt to adapt Western-type institutions to the Ottoman Empire while simultaneously responding to the nationalist ideas emerging in Europe. Ottomanism also points to the effort to produce a "Tanzimat man" as a human profile whose individuality is legally registered and who knows his responsibilities. Leaving ethnic and religious differences at the level of the individual, the idea of an artificial and abstract collective entity such as Ottomanism as a new collective structure became the main principle of the "order". For non-Muslims, especially the Orthodox ethnic communities in the Balkans, Ottomanism was largely an identity policy aimed at preventing their independence. Muslim groups such as Albanians and Arabs began to break with this Ottoman identity at a later stage, towards the end of the 19th century. When the masses in Egypt chanted "Down with the Turks" in 1881, they knew that these Turks were Ottomans.[12] The Tanzimat was conceived in the writing sets in the offices of Bab-ı Âli. However, in order to spread its innovations and principles to society, innovations were also needed in the field of culture and communication. In the words of Şerif Mardin, this situation points to the necessity of creating a public at the level of the state and the people. What is meant by "public" here is an integrated social sphere that emerges as a result of the relationship between language and the political institution. Mardin draws attention to the public at two levels. The first is the bureaucratic public functioning at the state level. The second is the general public, which also includes the bureaucratic public.[13] Until the last quarter of the 19th century, Ottoman bureaucratic elites, unlike their counterparts in Europe, did not have the support of a particular social class. Consequently, they lacked

---

[12] Hanioğlu, Ş. Osmanlıcılık, 1390
[13] Mardin, Ş. (2006). Some consideration on the building of an Ottoman public identity in the nineteenth century. In Religion, Society and Modernity in Turkey. Syracuse University Press., 126-130

legitimate ideological and social bases other than the authority of the sultan when faced with a crisis of both their own power and the coexistence of society.

The search for belonging and loyalty beyond the sultan's charisma has been clearly reflected in edicts and minutes since the reign of Selim III (c. 1789-1807). Selim III, in his address to the men of state in the council of meşveret, felt the need to underscore the importance of belonging to an abstract idea of the state beyond his own existence by defining them as "shareholders of the state".[14] In 1810, Mahmut II delivered a speech to senior administrators during a divan convened to overcome the crisis created by the Ottoman-Russian War, explaining the importance of "the spirit of the ummah and the solidarity required by state affairs".[15] The main issue, reflected in the official minutes from the beginning of the Tanzimat, was the spirit of unity and integrity to be achieved at the state level. In order to achieve this, some modern concepts and reforms were employed. The formation of the bureaucratic public began to take shape within the work learning and work culture of the "kalemiye".[16] From there it moved on to army units and educational institutions. Therefore, the products of the aforementioned effort to create symbols of loyalty and belonging beyond the sultan's charisma also flourished in these institutions. In sum, with the Tanzimat Period, Ottomanism emerged as a response to the need for an integrative ideology and bureaucrats became the carriers of this ideology.

Islahat Edict and Patriotism of the Young Ottomans

The expansion of the press and publishing in Istanbul, along with a deeper understanding of social issues by Muslim students sent to Europe compared to the first generation of the Tanzimat, allowed for the emergence of intellectuals who could channel the reactions of the Muslim middle classes on a political level. As the Ottoman rulers sought to implement sweeping reforms to realize their vision of a modern state and sustain the empire, the traditional millet system was redefined,

---

[14] Karal, E. Z. (1999) Selim III.'ün Hattı-ı Hümayunları. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları.

[15] Mardin, Ş. (2006) op.cit., 127-128

[16] Findley, C. V. (2011). Kalemiyyeden Mülkiyeye Osmanlı Memurlarının Toplumsal Tarihi. (Çev: Gül Çağlalı Güven). İstanbul: Türkiye Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları.

and the status of Muslims as "millet-i hakime" was diminished. Journalists, as a new intellectual group, began to increase the sensitivity and solidarity of the Muslim middle class regarding identity and began to oppose this reform project and the reformist Bab-ı Âli (Sublime Porte). Thus, the tension between the requirements of the modern state and the traditional codes of the spirit of unity began to be openly discussed in the Ottoman capital.

When we examine the traditional political instruments of the Ottoman Empire, we can see that instruments such as advice books, political treatises, justice texts, and Sharia itself do not provide sufficient philosophical infrastructure for creating a modern political whole and collective spirit. One of the most concrete examples of this is that the numerous reforms aimed at modernizing the Janissary Corps, which continued for nearly two centuries, did not yield sufficient change in the motivation and mindset of the corps members as late as 1826.[17] Therefore, a new unifying principle required the gradual and selective absorption of Western liberal ideas. Efforts to strengthen the ideology of Ottomanism and provide it with a more fundamental motive emerged in the 1860s as a result of the reinterpretation of Western political ideas through an Islamic lens. Throughout the 1860s and 1870s, the influence of the Young Ottomans, as an oppositional group, began to be felt in newspaper circles, among exiles, in literary works, and in all areas that shaped Ottoman cultural life. The idea of Ottomanism also evolved in a different direction in the hands of the Young Ottomans.

Unlike the first generation of the Tanzimat, the Young Ottomans operated within the constraints of public opinion and new communication techniques. İbrahim Şinasi founded Tercüman-ı Ahval (1860), which he considered essential for the dissemination of Istanbul Turkish. According to him, journalism is a public enlightenment activity. By using the term "general public," he refers to a concept that transcends the obedient connotation of "subjects." This horizon opened by Şinasi would lead to the idea that "the people are the only legitimate interlocutor" on the path to constitutionalism. In the poems of this period, Tanpınar underscores the change in the way poetry is addressed to an

---

[17] Berkes, N. (2017) Türkiye'de Çağdaşlaşma. (Çev: Ahmet Kuyaş). 25. Baskı. İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları., 174-176

audience, rather than solely to the reader as in the past.[18] Şinasi highlights the distinction between subjects and the people from a liberal perspective, emphasizing the right of the people to express their opinions about the country in exchange for obeying the law and fulfilling their duties.[19]

The Young Ottomans, who initiated Turkish journalism in Europe with newspapers such as *Muhbir* and *Hürriyet*, used colloquial English and French in their publications. As was fashionable in Europe, the Young Ottomans were referred to as "Jeunes-Turcs" (Young Turks). In the political landscape of the period, the title "Jeunes" (young-new) was commonly applied to groups that transcended personal affiliations and infused concepts such as people, homeland, and constitution into political discourse and community life. Conversely, they appeared under different names in various newspapers. In the February 21, 1867, issue of *Muhbir*, the Young Ottomans were referred to as "Efkâr-ı Cedide Eshabı" (group of new ideas), and in an article by Namık Kemal in *Tasvir-i Efkar*, they were called "Erbab-ı Şebabı of Turkistan" (young community of Turkish hands). As Tütengil states, the core of the conscious or unconscious manifestation of ideas of freedom and nationality can be observed in the Young Ottomans.[20]

The emphasis on the language of the people served as an infrastructure for individuals to participate in politics as political actors. Through the concept of "homeland," the Young Ottomans endeavored to create the motivation for all Ottoman elements to remain united. For Namık Kemal, the concept of homeland encompassed more than just a limited geographical area. He invoked a romantic image that transcended the land referred to by the dynasty as "property." The homeland is "a binding space in which the memories of ancestors reside, and in which the memories of one's own youth and past experiences all have a place."[21] In his essay entitled "Vatan," Namık Kemal depicts

[18] Tanpınar, A.H. (1988) 19.Asır Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi. 7.Baskı. İstanbul:Çağlayan Kitabevi., 251

[19] Mardin, Ş. (2006) op.cit., 129

[20] Tütengil, C. O. (2011) Yeni Osmanlılardan Bu Yana İngiltere'de Türk Gazeteciliği 1867-1967. İstanbul:Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları., 20

[21] Mardin, Ş. (2015) Yeni Osmanlı Düşüncesinin Doğuşu. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları., 362

the homeland as an object of conscientious and emotional love. With this love for the homeland, he advocates for social unity, the foundation of a new unifying principle. According to Namık Kemal, a person loves their homeland because it is where their life begins; because it is where their material existence unfolds; because it holds traces of their past; because it is where they find their freedom, comfort, interests, and well-being; because it is the home of those with whom they share language and interests; because it is the playground of their future children; and because they share in the sovereignty over this land.[22] Many of the reasons for love of the homeland listed by Namık Kemal aim to encourage ordinary people to cherish the homeland, rather than loyalty to a ruler. For example, the comfort of individuals is mentioned alongside their freedom. The unity of homeland, language, and interests was considered more important than merely being subjects of the same sultan. Namık Kemal transformed the notion of "stakeholder" that Selim III had conferred upon statesmen into a partnership of the people in sovereignty.

Considering the popularity of the concept of homeland and the meanings attributed to it by Namık Kemal, it can be said that Young Ottoman thought encompasses three aspects. First, the idea of human beings as individuals—where the homeland is the place where the sum of these individuals resides—has a liberal tone. Secondly, the common values around which all Ottomans would cluster are expressed as the unity of language, interests, and homeland. We can refer to this as a form of Ottoman patriotism. This is because neither Namık Kemal nor the other Young Ottomans included a principle related to Turkishness in their political program and objectives. They viewed Turkishness as a cultural phenomenon. Thirdly, they perceived the public as the social counterpart of public opinion. For the Young Ottomans, the legitimate source of sovereignty was the approval of the people. In determining the approval of the people as the main principle for sovereignty, they drew from both Islamic and Western sources, creating a kind of synthesis.

These ideas began to gain popularity after 1856. The Young Ottomans disseminated these ideas through newspapers. For many Muslim

---

[22] Namık Kemal, "Vatan", İbret, 12 Mart 1873.

Ottoman subjects, who felt that their position as "millet-i hakime" (sovereign nation) was endangered after the Edict of Reform, there arose a need to respond to non-Muslims' efforts to legitimize their separatist demands with administrative and political negativity. This Muslim middle class perceived traditional answers as inadequate. Therefore, they found new arguments in the newspapers of the Young Ottomans. The Ottoman bureaucrats recognized the necessity of developing a new policy towards the interventionist European states. Constitutional rule became a desirable solution for urban Muslim subjects. After 1871, Ottoman bureaucrats gradually accepted the necessity of constitutionalism as a survival strategy. Thus, by 1876, both wings of Ottoman public opinion—the upper wing, the bureaucrats, and the lower wing, the literate Muslims—were reconciled around the ideas of the Young Ottomans. The Young Ottomans based the ideological foundation of their survival strategy on Muslim-Ottoman patriotism. The institutionalization of this ideology marked the transition to a constitutional regime. The first constitutional step in Ottoman-Turkish modernization was implemented in 1876. The background of this institutional-constitutional innovation is significant in illustrating the close relationship between patriotism and democracy in the Ottoman Empire.

The Young Ottomans' arguments included theses about the relationship between a modern state and its society. According to them, a modern state derives its power first and foremost from its own people. The administration is strictly responsible for the happiness and security of the people. The people have rights and duties towards the state that are defined by law. The legitimate foundations of the state are based on the principles of Sharia, which, in turn, is grounded in the "allegiance" of all subjects. The sultan-khalifa has the right to rule; however, the sultan-khalifa must consult the representatives of the people in his governance. The allegiance is not absolute but is contingent upon the protection of individual rights. All these determinations led to the realization that the legitimate basis of power is the people, and the legitimate will of the people is embodied in a "parliament." The Young Ottomans' ideas on political representation reference the social contract tradition. This social contractualist content is framed by Islamic norms and customs. Therefore, while the idea of a unity

of elements (Ottomanism) can be defined as patriotism in ideological terms, the concept of a parliament representing this unity emerged in institutional terms. Ziya Bey (Pasha), one of the leading figures of the Young Ottomans, wrote in the 99th issue of the Hürriyet newspaper, "In the administrative republic, there is no sultan, emperor, grand vizier, or foreign minister. The sultan of the country is (...) the people of the country."[23]

It can be said that the period leading up to the Young Turk era presented primitive manifestations of nationalism and modernization in the political sphere. With the expansion of the new public opinion created by the Young Ottomans, the idea of Ottoman patriotism, as a proto-nationalism, continued to grow in influence. Ottoman patriotism, like other ideas proposed throughout the 19th century as a survival strategy to prevent the dissolution of the empire, was primarily embraced by Turks. As Hanioğlu points out, very few groups other than the Turks leaned towards Ottomanism.[24] On the other hand, in institutional terms, the constitution and parliament were seen as the only political arrangements that could hold the various elements together. The experience gained from the Tanzimat's "Şura-yı Devlet"[25] and provincial assemblies yielded positive results during Mithat Pasha's governorships in the Danube and Iraq. Relying on this experience, the constitutionalist Ottomans envisioned the constitutional order as the tool that would accelerate modernization and ensure "ittihad-ı anasir" when they succeeded in declaring constitutionalism through a revolutionary attempt.[26]

---

[23] Eraslan, C. (1994). Yeni Osmanlılar'dan Atatürk'e Türk Aydınında Cumhuriyet Düşüncesi. İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi. Takdim Tezi., 13

[24] Hanioğlu, op.cit., 1391

[25] Tarık Zafer Tunaya gives the following information about the Şura-yı Devlet. The Şura-yı Devlet (1868) gathered the powers to supervise the state budget and to personally deal with the reform demands of the provincial administrative councils. Moreover, the first Şura-yı Devlet was in line with the principle of Ottomanism in that it was composed of 28 Muslim and 12 non-Muslim members, representing the Ottoman elements in general. The institution was an important step in the preparation for the Constitutional Monarchy.

[26] Ortaylı, İ. (2018). İlk Osmanlı Parlamentosunun Yapısında Eyalet İdare Meclislerinin Etkisi. Batılılaşma Yolunda içinde. Ortaylı, İ.. 4.Baskı. İstanbul: İnkılap Yayınları., 79-83

Abdülhamid II and the Islamic Community Nationalism

The Ottoman Empire began the year 1875 with a financial and political crisis. On April 13, rebellions erupted in Herzegovina, followed by uprisings in Bosnia and Bulgaria in May, which rapidly strained the atmosphere in the Balkans. In the same year, Britain's policy of protecting the territorial integrity of the Ottomans against Russia, a stance maintained since the beginning of the 19th century, changed.[27] The rising anti-Turkish sentiment in Britain should be added to this shift. These rebellions, combined with the change in British policy, led the Ottoman Empire to take swift and radical measures. Public opinion, which had been developing for nearly forty years and whose voices could be heard through newspapers, also played a significant role in this context. In the foreign press, the orientalist discourse on Ottoman/Muslim identity began to focus specifically and directly on the Turks. Dr. George Washburn, a missionary teacher at Robert College in Istanbul, repeatedly informed British and American diplomats that the Turks were ignorant, barbaric, and inferior people from Asia, that they were not inclined towards progress and civilization, and that this perception was also rooted in their Islamic beliefs. The information received by the foreign press through missionaries and embassies in the Ottoman Empire was full of allegations regarding the horrific massacre of Turks in Bulgaria.[28] Domestic public opinion, in contrast, emphasized the massacres committed by Bulgarians against Turkish peasants and framed the issue as a defense of Muslim identity against the rebellion. Against this backdrop, it was decided to convene a conference in Istanbul under the leadership of Britain and Russia. The conference aimed to openly intervene in the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire.

The policy of Ottomanism underwent changes due to international developments and the fact that Muslims constituted the majority of the population in the Ottoman lands. In 1878, the results of the Ottoman-Russian War were disastrous for the Ottomans. Based on these

---

[27] Rautsi. I, (1993) The Eastern Question Revisited: Case Studies in Ottoman Balance of Power. Helsinki: Helsinki Printing House.

[28] Çiçek, N. (2017). "Bulgarian Horrors" Revisited: the Many-Layered Manifestations of the Orientalist Discourse in Victorian Political Construction of the External, Intimate and Internal Other. Belleten, 81(291), 52

circumstances, the sultan-caliph consolidated power in the palace. In 1878, when Abdülhamid II consolidated his power, the constitution was suspended, and the activities of parliament were halted for 30 years. At a time when authority was concentrated in the palace and the Young Ottomans were exiled along with their ideals, the politics of Ottomanism evolved in an Islamic direction by emphasizing the caliphate. Although Ottomanism had always persisted as an ideal until the end of the empire, it had lost its social relevance after the Tanzimat Period.[29] The unifying principle that had evolved into Ottoman patriotism with the Young Ottomans was transformed into a discourse that emphasized the spirit of the Islamic community and highlighted the Ottoman caliphate during the reign of Abdülhamid II.

It can be said that the Abdülhamid II period had two main ideological axes. The first is the palace-centered and ummah-based discourse that emphasizes the caliphate and has a Pan-Islamist tone. The second is the formation of a populist reflex in response to socio-economic problems. Both found expression in a reactionary manner on the political ground. Both ideas aimed to mobilize the objections of ordinary people against the hegemony of the West. The Abdülhamid II period was dominated by a more closed ethic that emphasized discipline and a turn inward, contrasting with the liberal and tolerant social ethic of the Tanzimat. Additionally, it contained elements that emphasized the cultural characteristics of the Muslim lower and middle classes. Therefore, the ethical understanding of the period aimed to establish a connection between ordinary people and the center of power through symbols. The bureaucratic public of the Tanzimat had expanded to a public of literate people with the Young Ottomans. The Abdülhamid II period broadened this public to include illiterate segments, with the concept of homeland extending beyond their villages into regions where the European economic system spread.[30]

In his article on the change in the public image of the state during the reign of Abdülhamid II, Selim Deringil points to the influence of "pan-ideologies" (Pan-Slavism, Pan-Germanism, etc.). Abdülhamid II carried out ummah-based propaganda from a Pan-Islamist framework.

---

[29] Hanioğlu, op.cit., 1391
[30] Ahmet Cevdet Paşa. (2021). 19.Yüzyılda Osmanlı Devlet Yönetimi Tezakir 1. Cilt. 2.Baskı. İstanbul: Yeditepe Yayınları.

However, unlike other "pan" ideologies, this propaganda was not expansionist but defensive. Pan-Islamist propaganda covered Africa, India, Turkestan, and Arab regions.[31] Karpat categorizes the nationalism of the period into two types. The first is nationalism that evaluates those within the borders of a certain country based on the principle of a single nation. The second, which he conceptualizes as communal nationalism, is the nationalism that includes the responsibility of being the protector and guardian of ethnic and religious relatives outside the borders of the country. It can be said that a kind of Muslim community nationalism was emphasized during the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid.[32] In addition, an attempt was made to respond to the claims of an Arab caliphate, which were circulated with the encouragement of the British. Therefore, the ideological tone of the unifying principle shifted in an Islamic direction. The reflections of this Islamic emphasis can also be seen in domestic politics. There was a shift from the Ottomanism of the Tanzimat period, which emphasized the equality of all elements, to an ummahist Ottomanism that underlined the universal concerns of Muslims during the reign of Abdülhamid II. The leading statesmen of the period, Ahmet Cevdet Pasha and Şirvanizade Rüşdü Pasha, were also proponents of the nationalist campaign against the Muslim community[33] Abdülhamid II engaged in defensive counter-propaganda at a time when imperialism and biological racism were on the rise in Europe. Since this propaganda activity required a certain intellectual capacity and practical thinking, it facilitated the development of more systematic thought practices in the Ottoman Empire. While modern schools trained cadres who could compete with their Western counterparts, they also allowed new ideas to flourish. Initially, the intellectual efforts brought about by propaganda worked in favor of the palace, but over time they also allowed the development of dissenting ideas. The Sultan not only had the works of Muslim philosophers such as al-Ghazali simplified and distributed but also allowed modern science

---

[31] Deringil, S. (1993). "The Invention of Tradition as Public Image in the Late Ottoman Empire, 1808 to 1908" Comparative Studies in Society and History. (35)1., 4-12
[32] Karpat, K. (2004). Balkanlarda Osmanlı Mirası ve Ulusçuluk. (Çev:Recep Boztemur). Ankara:İmge Yayınları., 13
[33] Duguid, S. (1973). "The Politics of Unity: Hamidian Policy in Eastern Anatolia," Middle Eastern Studies, (9)., 139-155.

to be included in school curricula. This attitude of Abdülhamid II is a concrete example of the tension mentioned at the beginning of this article. The tension between the requirements of modernity and the preservation of tradition can be clearly seen in school curricula.[34]

Secondly, the socio-economic reaction that developed outside the official propaganda fermented populist reactionism among the Muslim Ottoman subjects. Populism expressed the collective reaction of the Ottoman productive class, especially artisans and peasants. The privileged position of the Ottoman court and foreign entrepreneurs led to the rapid politicization of economic problems. As the Muslim middle classes and peasants were caught between the identity propaganda of the Ottoman court and the requirements of the new economic relations, the crisis among the literate spread to the wider masses.

This tension is between remaining the same and changing. Traditional social codes were based on Islamic principles and local customs. Modernity, on the other hand, involved the necessities of survival for the Ottomans. To overcome this tension, alternative theses were put forward from the Tanzimat period onwards. Another alternative thesis gradually began to develop in the field of culture. Turkism emerged in this period not as a political program but as a cultural curiosity. Although the Ottomans' interest in Turkish history as an element of their own, outside the known traditional codes, began with the Tanzimat period, it spread among the literate masses during the reign of Abdülhamid II.

Cultural Turkism in Late Ottoman
The 1860s witnessed a series of developments in which the Ottoman public became increasingly interested in the Central Asian Turks. Ahmet Vefik (later Pasha) translated Abu-l Gazi Bahadır Khan's "Evşâl-ı Şecere-î Türkî" from Chagatai Turkish into Ottoman Turkish in *Tasvir-i Efkar* during 1863-1864. In his *Dictionary of Ottoman Turkish*, written in 1876, he stated that Ottomans spoke a dialect of Turkish. Ali Suavî, also a Young Ottoman in the 1860s, wrote articles about the language and history of Turks in the newspaper *Ulûm*, published in Paris.

---

[34] Mardin, Ş. (2012). 19.yy'da Düşünce Akımları ve Osmanlı Devleti, Türk Modernleşmesi. (Der: Türköne, M. ve Önder, T.). İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları., 81-100

Mustafa Celaleddin Pasha's book *Les Turcs anciens et modernes*, written in French, was influential for the future Young Turks due to its theoretical background and historical material. With its anthropological assertions, the book expresses the influence of material developments on the nature and outlook of societies. Another noteworthy work of the period before Abdülhamid II, which contributed to the transition from cultural Turkism to political nationalism in terms of its results, is *Tarih-i Âlem* by Süleyman Hüsnü Pasha, the commander of the Mekteb-i Harbiye. The emphasis on the army maintaining the original traditions of the Turks, references to the Turkishness of the Ottoman dynasty, and the qualities of the Turks in the human world influenced the Ottoman officers who were tasked with saving the state and basing this salvation on a certain social ideology and institutional framework.

Sultan Abdülhamid II attempted to make Arabic the official language of the state in 1878, but Mehmet Said Pasha prevented this attempt by saying that "this would be the end of Turkishness and the collapse of the state".[35]

During this period, studies on cultural nationalism were not subjected to any significant restrictions. In his articles published in *Sabah* and *İkdam* newspapers, Şemseddin Sami classified Ottoman Turkish as "garb-i Türkler" and the Turkish dialects of Central Asia as "şark-i Türkler," positioning the Ottomans as members of the Turkish family. From 1893 onwards, *İkdam*, one of the most important newspapers of the period, was published with the subtitle "Türk gazetesidir." In 1897, Mehmet Tahir, in his work titled "Türklerin Ulûm ve Fünûna Hizmetleri" (*Services of Turks to the Sciences and Arts*), stated that one-third of the people who contributed to the spread of Islam and the acquisition of scientific knowledge were Turks. In 1898, Necip Asım translated Ali Şir Nevaî's "Muhamatu'l Lügateyn," in which he compares Persian and Turkish, into Ottoman Turkish. Based on this work, Necip Asım asserted that the original Turkish language was "fantastically" adequate for life in modern times.[36] At the beginning of the 20th century, although tightening censorship restricted the study of Turk-

---

[35] Karal, E. Z. (1983) Osmanlı Tarihi Cilt 8. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları. 402
[36] Kuran, E. (1995) "19.yy'da Milliyetçiliğin Türk Eliti Üzerindeki Etkisi". (Ed). William Pork and Richard L. Chambers. Ortadoğu'da Modernleşme. İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları., 157-167

ish culture in the Istanbul press, it was still possible to find newspapers publishing articles on Turkish language and culture in important provincial cities such as Izmir, Thessaloniki, and Trabzon. The 1897 Ottoman-Greek War reinforced the emphasis on Turkishness in a romantic tone. Mehmet Emin (Yurdakul) prepared a series of poems for the newspaper *Asır* in Thessaloniki to motivate the soldiers. The second of these poems contains an explicit national declaration: "*I am a Turk; my religion and my ethnicity are great.*" Heyd highlights an important feature of Mehmet Emin's poems and writings. According to him, Mehmet Emin writes in a tone that mobilizes the poor and desperate peasants of Anatolia. Heyd's assessment is largely correct.[37] The poetry and writings of this cultural phase of Turkish nationalism expressed the opposition of Turkish peasants in Anatolia, who were frustrated by the regime and the government's tax oppression. These peasants were well-informed enough to compare their situation with both non-Muslims and foreigners. Moreover, Ahmet Mithat's novels in the folk tale genre expanded the aforementioned general public by voicing the problems faced by ordinary people in various centers of the Ottoman provinces. Writing about the daily lives of ordinary people made it easier for these individuals to take an interest in public opinion.[38] Therefore, the nationalist-populist call, which would later emerge as the "towards the people" movement, did not go unanswered by Anatolian Turks.[39]

Article 18 of the 1876 Constitution recognized Turkish as the official language. This was accompanied by a mobilization to use plain Turkish in *iptidai*, *rüştiye* and *idadiye*. *Harbiye*, *Tıbbiye* and *Mülkiye* were conscious of using Turkish. Colmar Freiherr von der Goltz Pasha wrote in his memoirs that Turkishness was the main motivation that accompanied the efforts of cadets and privates to regain their strength. However, he notes that this motivation was very weak in 1883 but de-

---

[37] Heyd, U. (1950). Foundations of Turkish nationalism: The life and teachings of Ziya Gökalp. <u>Luzac And Company Ltd.</u>, 108

[38] Mardin, Ş. (1991). Kültür ve Kitle. Türk Modernleşmesi. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları., 297. Also see: Mardin, Ş. (1974). "Super Westernization in Urban Life in the Ottoman Empire in the Last Quarter of the Nineteenth Century". In *Turkey*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill.

[39] Karal, E. Z. (1983) Osmanlı Tarihi Cilt 8. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları. 402

veloped over time. In 1897, Goltz Pasha, referring to the influence of ethno-symbolist Turkism among the literate, stated that the Turks had found the unifying principle they were looking for and that they could establish their own "kulturstaat" (state inspired by Turkish and Islamic values).[40]

It cannot be said that this kind of nationalism, which developed at the cultural level, transformed into a political program during the reign of Abdülhamid II. However, it has a remarkable aspect. At a time when Ottomanism maintained its official supremacy and Islamism legitimized this supremacy, Turkism emerged as a distinct and vibrant cultural phenomenon.

Jeune Turc, From Secular Patriotism to Turkish Nationalism

The Young Turk (Jeune Turc) Movement can be divided into two distinct phases based on a unifying ideology. The first phase spans the years 1889 to 1909, while the second extends from 1909 to 1922. During the first period, secular Ottoman patriotism was prominent, whereas Turkish nationalism gained greater significance in the second phase. The concept of secular Ottoman patriotism in the first phase corresponds to the time when the movement was in opposition. In the second phase, the movement functioned either as the protector of the constitutional monarchy or as a governing entity. These two phases will be analyzed below, highlighting their continuities and ruptures.

The Young Turk movement exemplifies the concrete impact of the expanding Ottoman public opinion over nearly half a century. In the last decades of the 19th and early 20th centuries, both wings of Ottoman public opinion deliberated on the state of affairs in the country. After 1878, the Ottomans were increasingly convinced of the need for urgent and permanent solutions. This led to a heightened significance attached to the concepts of homeland, freedom, and representation. The foremost issue was the loss of territory, which represented not only a loss of living space but also a loss of historical honor. Rebellions were perceived as internal causes of these territorial losses. Non-Muslim subjects were thought to have weakened their loyalty to the state by

---

[40] Karpat, K. (2005) Tarih Süreklilik, Kimlik Değişimi ya da Yenilikçi, Müslüman, Osmanlı ve Türk Olmak. Osmanlı Geçmişi ve Bugünün Türkiye'si (Der) Karpat, K. (Çev: Sönmez Taner). 2.Baskı. İstanbul:İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları., 46

lacking representation, which led them to seek protection from European powers. The primary reason for the revolts was identified as poor governance. For the Young Turks, poor governance signified a lack of freedom. In response to this situation, secret organizations that considered themselves the heirs of the Young Ottomans began to emerge. The first phase of the Young Turk movement was shaped around one of these secret organizations.

France's acquisition of Tunisia in 1881 and Britain's acquisition of Egypt in 1882, along with the revolt of the Bulgarians in 1885 and the establishment of the Armenian insurgent organizations named Hunchak in 1887 and Dashnaktsutyun in 1890, illustrate that the Ottoman Empire continued to lose its political power rapidly. For the Ottoman intellectuals of the period, the causes of the structural problems created by this situation pointed to two main categories: modernization and the issue of the unifying principle of society. The nomenclature of the Union and Progress is noteworthy as it reflects the search for a solution to this fundamental problem. The Ittihad-i Osmani organization, founded in 1889, although it had a cell-type organization, exhibited a predominantly intellectual outlook until the Armenian terrorism of the 1890s. The founders of this first organization at the Military Medical School were students named İshak Sukûti, Mehmet Reşit, Abdullah Cevdet, İbrahim Temo, and Hüseyinzâde Ali. These students were Ottoman patriots who aimed for the proclamation of a constitutional monarchy. They were all Muslims and came from cosmopolitan areas of the Ottoman Empire, specifically from middle and lower-middle-class families.[41]

The Young Turks do not constitute a coherent and homogeneous structure in general. Different currents of ideas and prescriptions for salvation managed to find a place within the Young Turk movement. The organization developed from 1889 to 1908, becoming more concentrated in terms of ideas. Founded in 1889 at the Military Medical School under the name "Union of Ottomans", the group was renamed the "Committee of Union and Progress" in 1894. Despite the influence of various individuals and ideas, the common goal of the Young Turk

---

[41] Akşin, S. (2017). Jön Türkler ve İttihat ve Terakki, 8.Baskı, Ankara: İmge Yayınevi.,48-52

movement was shaped around the question of "how to save this state." The various answers given to this question constitute the ideological aspect of the leadership struggle within the Committee of Union and Progress.

The leadership conflict between Ahmet Rıza Bey and Prince Seba-haddin Bey in 1902 caused a split in the movement. The background to this tension was disagreement over what the reform prescription should be and how it should be implemented. Intellectuals like Ahmet Rıza and Prince Sebahaddin represented secular Ottoman patriotism as the unifying principle. The main difference between the two think-ers lay in whether to integrate the Ottoman subjects through equal, centralist political citizenship or a federal, individualist reform pro-gram that preserved privileges and prerogatives. This tension surfaced in the Young Turks' publications and debates in Europe. Unlike their predecessors, the Young Ottomans, Ahmet Rıza and Prince Sebahad-din shared a more secular program.

The Young Turk movement gained real momentum in 1895 when Ahmet Rıza, the former agricultural director of Bursa, published the newspaper *Mechveret* in Paris. A year earlier, Ahmet Rıza had been in contact with the Ittihad-i Osmanî organization in Istanbul, and the name of this organization was changed to the "Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress." It is no coincidence that this momentum began in 1895 with a propaganda mechanism. In 1894, the British consul in Van organized a trip to Bitlis to inspect the reforms in the Armenian ar-eas. Shortly thereafter, the Sason Rebellion broke out and was brutally suppressed. When Britain's protest and open interference in Ottoman internal affairs were rejected by the Ottoman government, Armenians in Istanbul began to agitate and riot. Violent protests between Muslims and Armenians lasted for three days and could only be suppressed with difficulty.

In May 1895, a Christian governor was appointed to Crete, where tensions had been escalating for two years, under pressure from Brit-ain. In response, members of the Committee of Union and Progress secretly distributed two leaflets in Istanbul, emphasizing that the acts of violence and foreign intervention in the Ottoman realm were the consequence of "istibdat." At the same time, Ahmet Rıza in Paris pre-sented Abdulhamid II with six papers on the state of the country and

a "prescription." He began publishing *Mechveret* in French, addressing international public opinion. Sultan Abdülhamid II responded to these reactions and suggestions with arrest orders, leading many prominent members of the society — such as Mizancı Murat, Temo, Sukûti, Tunalı Hilmi, Âkil Muhtar, and Dr. Nazım — to flee to Europe. Although various action plans were formulated, no significant results were achieved.

Between 1896 and 1902, the society made efforts to organize and establish a unity of purpose. In 1897, the center of the student organization shifted from the Military Medical School to the Harbiye Mektebi (Military School). This change is significant for two reasons. First, on a practical level, Harbiye had a much higher potential for action compared to Tıbbiye and Mülkiye. Second, at the theoretical level, the education at Harbiye included much more Turkish culture and history than the other two institutions. The harmony between modernization and the ideology of unity was more pronounced at Harbiye than in any other school. It was the only high school where the alignment between modern individuals capable of using Western tactics and equipment and the unifying ideology needed by Ottoman society was achieved. Secular practices and shared convictions about Turkish culture were defining characteristics of the officers trained there. The effects of this before and after 1908 are significant for Turkish nationalism.

Although this first generation of "cemiyet" had ideologically different characteristics, their commonalities can be summarized as follows: Rather than loyalty to a dynasty, Ottomanism expresses the effort to preserve the historical unity of the people who have lived in this homeland. Liberty is defined as the absence of any arbitrary power that limits individual goals. Human life, like that of objects, exists in a material world, which can only be understood through the methods and principles of science. An educational program should be prepared in accordance with this understanding. The Ottoman country can be saved by a program based on scientific principles, which can only be created by a parliament composed of enlightened individuals. Ottomans should be able to express their wishes and complaints in the political arena through their representatives.

From these commonalities, it is clear that the first generation of Young Turks emphasized the proclamation of constitutionalism, the inculcation of scientific principles in the public through education, ad-

herence to the requirements of modern governance in their projects, and the insistence that there would be no exceptions to the rules in the identification and solution of social problems. Thus, Ottomanism began to move toward a secular and contractual foundation.

The first generation of Young Turks understood the social aspects of these problems better than their Young Ottoman predecessors. Their conviction that institutional modernization alone is not enough is striking; however, unlike their predecessors, their secular tendencies were much more pronounced. The idea that life is a matter of struggle and will, as well as a divine gift, entered political and social discourse as a result of the Young Turks' publications. Consequently, they gave new meaning to the concepts of individual and nation by emphasizing alternative ties such as interest, history, language, race, age, and political comradeship, moving beyond the religious ties that constituted the principle of loyalty in the traditional millet system of Ottoman society.

The Congress of Ottoman Liberals, held from February 4 to 9, 1902, was marked by a rivalry between Sebahattin, the son of Damat Mahmut Pasha, and the Ahmet Rıza group. The congress began by underscoring an important situation: the distinction between the Turkish people and the Ottoman government. Prince Sebahattin emerged as the main figure of the congress. In his speech, he asserted that the nation-i hakim (the ruling nation) and the Turks, who constituted the numerical majority, favored granting equal rights to everyone, regardless of whether they were Muslim or non-Muslim. These statements reflect that "Turk" as a political category was accepted by other community organizations and the Young Turks.

Conversely, a distinction was made between the Ottoman administration and the Turkish people, indicating that the rights and interests of Turks were not upheld during the reign of Abdülhamid II. Nevertheless, it was clear that the ideals of Ottomanism persisted. In the final declaration of the congress, it was emphasized that peace and agreement should be established "between citizens of different religions and races, without any discrimination" in the Ottoman lands. This article, which explicitly references social contract theory, underscores that Ottomanism was formed on a secular basis with a political bond. In the congress declaration, the addressed audience was identified as "patriotic Ottomans." Among the demands highlighted were the restoration

of the country's integrity, the cessation of terrorist movements, and the promulgation of a constitution.

Disagreements emerged regarding reforms in accordance with the provisions of the Berlin Treaty and the supervision of foreigners. The Ahmet Rıza group rejected this article, asserting their opposition to any intervention that would undermine the independence of the Ottoman Empire. Meanwhile, Ahmet Rıza raised the issue of Turkish rights, pointing out that all non-Muslims had patrons, while the Turks had neither the support of the Sultan nor the protection of Europe. The Armenians also clarified their aims, stating that they agreed on a regime change but would pursue their own plans following the establishment of a constitutional government.[42]

As a result of the congress, it is evident that the Ahmet Rıza group shifted towards a new direction within the Young Turk movement, placing greater emphasis on themes of an independent state, rational administration, and constitutional order. In contrast, Sebahattin focused on sociological studies with a decentralized, individualistic approach that was favorable to foreign intervention under certain conditions.

The 1902 congress serves as an important starting point for the Young Turks' stance on the idea of Turkish nationalism. For the first time in a political congress, the rights of the Turkish people were explicitly highlighted, and the Turkish character of the state was discussed, albeit implicitly. However, it cannot yet be said that Turkish nationalism had evolved into a fully-fledged political program. While these developments in Paris influenced the realm of ideas, the second generation of the Young Turk movement was flourishing in the Rumelia provinces. This generation was predominantly composed of soldiers, civil servants, and teachers in bureaucratic positions. Being on the ground in the Balkans, they had a clearer understanding of the Ottoman Empire's deteriorating situation and pursued more practical objectives than their counterparts in Paris.

In 1903, escalating tensions in Thessaloniki, Bitola, and Kosovo led to the convening of a congress in Vienna on February 21. Russia and

---

[42] Ramsour, E. E. (2013) Genç Türkler ve İttihat Terakki: 1908 İhtilalinin Hazırlık Dönemi. (Çev: Etkin Yayıncılık.78-83

Austria, using the unrest in Macedonia as a pretext, proposed measures to eliminate the de facto control of the Ottoman Empire over these provinces. Bulgarian and Serbian gangs detonated explosives at the Thessaloniki branch of the Ottoman Bank, while the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization initiated a general revolt. These events persisted until 1904, resulting in the displacement of many Muslims. In exchange for mediation, Britain and Germany extracted new financial concessions from the Ottoman government.

The gang activities in the Balkans, Armenian persecution, foreign interventions, and the temporary occupation of certain areas in the Aegean Sea by European navies under flimsy pretexts provoked a serious reaction among the Ottoman public. Collectively, these processes generated an urgent need among the Young Turks to take action against the dire situation facing the Ottoman Empire.[43]

As was customary, government officials in Istanbul viewed these revolts as provocations by Europe, perceiving them as disputes that could be resolved between the sultan and his subjects. However, this perspective was not shared by the young officers serving in the armies of Rumelia, many of whom were sympathetic to Young Turk ideology. These officers had closely observed the motivations and organization of the revolutionary gangs. In this atmosphere, the second generation of the Young Turk movement began to develop ideas centered on modernization and unity, which they deemed essential for the survival of the state. Unlike their predecessors, they emphasized activism, considering public support to be secondary.

In 1906, a society called the "Ottoman Freedom Society" emerged, quickly gaining traction among military and civilian bureaucrats in the Rumelia provinces. Among its founders were Bursalı Tahir, Naci (Yücekök), Mehmet Talat, Mithat Şükrü (Bleda), Ömer Naci, Kazım Nami, İsmail Canbolat, Hakkı Baha, and Edip Servet. This movement, whose founders would later become prominent figures in Turkish nationalism, established contact with the Committee of Union and Progress in Paris. Upon learning of their activities, the government swiftly demanded their arrest. In 1907, Talat, Ömer Naci, and Hüsrev Sami

---

[43] Shaw, S. J. ve Shaw, E. K. (1994). Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Modern Türkiye Cilt 2. (Trans: Mehmet Harmancı). İstanbul: e Yayınları., 261-263

fled to Paris, where they met with Ahmet Rıza's team. On September 27, 1907, the Ottoman Freedom Society merged with the Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress. This new structure adopted the name of the former organization and assumed its legacy, while also choosing to maintain its activist character and secretive nature.

In October 1906, Enver (Paşa), who would later become a significant figure in the Turanist movement, joined the society. In the fall of 1907, İsmet (İnönü) and Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), who would later lead the Turkish nationalist movement, became members in 1908.[44] The merger of these groups laid the groundwork for the emergence of the main cadre that would bring about the Constitutional Monarchy in 1908. The new organization of the Committee of Union and Progress became a crucial platform for the development of Turkish nationalism. While secular Ottoman patriotism persisted as an official discourse among the Unionists, the idea of Turkish nationalism began to flourish, initially asserting claims to leadership in the Orient and, following the Balkan Wars, emphasizing the rights of the Turkish nation.

Unionism can be divided into two distinct phases: before and after 1908. Prior to the proclamation of the Constitutional Monarchy, Unionism functioned as a revolutionary organization limited to a relatively narrow cadre, existing primarily as a secret society. After 1908, however, it shifted toward a legal framework and expanded its organizational base. Between 1908 and 1910, the number of its branches increased from 83 to 360, while membership surged from 2,250 to 850,000.[45] This transition highlights a dual strategy: the organization emphasized secrecy when in opposition and mass mobilization when in power.

The society, which later evolved into a political party, emerged as a rival to traditional intermediary structures, such as the orders and the ayans. This shift in political sociology was filled by the emergence of a "cemiyet" or modern political organization.[46] This change indicates

---

[44] Zürcher, E. J. (1984). The Unionist Factor: The Role of the Committee of Union and Progress in the Turkish National Movement, 1905-1926. Brill., 45-50.

[45] Hanioğlu, Ş. (2009). İttihatçılık. .Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce Cilt 9, Dönemler ve Zihniyetler (Ed) Bora, T. ve Gültegingil M. 1st ed. İstanbul:İletişim Yayınları., 249-252

[46] Berkes, op. cit., 403. Politics parties as a modern political organization combined both public opinions.

that traditional identity codes and representations were replaced by a modern sense of party identity. Consequently, it opened the door to new developments in the consciousness of ordinary individuals regarding their identity and sense of belonging.

Turkish nationalism began to supplant the old patterns of dissolving solidarity, coinciding with the establishment of democratic institutions within the traditional social structure. Some generalizations can be made to understand the mentality of the Unionists after 1908. For them, the priority was not individual rights but duty; society took precedence over the individual. The cult of leadership, which had dominated propaganda during the reign of Abdülhamid II, was supplanted by the cult of the institution of the Union and Progress organization, known as "Cemiyet-i Mukaddes." They established scientific foundations for concepts such as "man for the cause" and "solidarity for the cause."

The Unionists instrumentally viewed the people, perceiving them not as competent but as a sacred entity worth fighting for. The public, essential for legitimacy, was not yet considered capable of governance. In the Bab-ı Âlî raid, although Kamil Pasha noted in his resignation letter that he resigned at the military's request, Enver Bey had the phrase "the people" added to strengthen the legitimacy of his actions. This incident illustrates that action and administration resided within the organization, while its legitimacy derived from public approval. Undoubtedly, by 1913, this "people" referred to the Turkish nation. Thus, the Unionists believed that legitimacy stemmed from the nation, but the ability to represent the national will extended beyond mere voting.

The Unionists remained on constant alert, playing a pivotal role in the proclamation of the Constitutional Monarchy in 1908 and its preservation in 1909. They were instrumental in permanently entrenching the principles of constitutionality and representation in Turkey's political life. Believing that a radical approach was necessary to resolve the ongoing tension between modernization and the unifying principle of society, they found the ideology to overcome this conflict in the concept of Turkish nationalism, which they embraced after the Balkan Wars.

Two key points should be emphasized regarding their shift toward this ideology. First, they did not accept Turkish nationalism as the official ideology. For the Unionists, Ottomanism remained the primary

official identity, albeit with a predominant emphasis on Turkishness. Secondly, while Islam consistently maintained its presence as a motif within Turkish nationalism, its political influence was subordinated.

The second phase marked a period during which the Unionists had significant influence in the administration of the country. During this time, the tension that the Ottoman Empire experienced between modernization and a unifying ideology was, for the first time, addressed by Turkish nationalists through a durable compromise. Throughout the 19th century, the order established by modern institutions was based on unifying principles and convictions that did not effectively support this order. While initial efforts to resolve this tension focused on constitutional and representative processes, the situation proved to be more complex.

Instead of starting with institutional arrangements, Akçuraoğlu Yusuf first contended that the unifying principle should be redefined to promote a minimum level of harmony between the state and the nation. Turkism defined the Turks, as the millet-i hakime, as the determining social category in power relations. The modern world necessitates nations, and modern nations enable the development of new institutions. Thus, this political design comprises political and social elements that complement each other—something that had been previously denied. According to him, the first rule of being modern is to create a modern nation.[47]

This perspective served as an important foundation for the executives of the Union and Progress Party, who distanced themselves from the idea of Islamism following the religious uprising of 1909. Many political, literary, and philosophical organizations and publications, such as Türk Derneği, Türk Ocakları, Türk Yurdu, Yeni Hayat, and Genç Kalemler, developed close relationships with the Unionists after the proclamation of the Constitutional Monarchy. In the aftermath of the Balkan Wars, Turkish nationalism was elevated to the status of an official ideology.

During this period, two important intellectuals significantly influenced the Unionists' transition from secular Ottoman patriotism to Turkish nationalism: Ziya Gökalp and Akçuraoğlu Yusuf. In 1904, the

[47] Akçura, Y. (1998). Türkçülüğün Tarihi. İstanbul: Ötüken Neşriyat., 160-163

Egyptian newspaper *Turk* published a series of articles by Akçuraoğlu Yusuf, in which he discussed the social principles that could enable the Ottoman Empire to ensure its survival. These articles were later compiled into a booklet titled *Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset*. In these writings, Akçuraoğlu Yusuf examined the benefits of the movements of Ottomanism, Islamism, and Turkism for the Ottoman Empire.

Ali Kemal Bey, a British ally, responded to Akçuraoğlu's articles with a sarcastic rebuttal. The ideological struggle between these intellectual currents intensified after 1905 with the publication of reciprocal articles. Akçuraoğlu Yusuf argued that Ottomanism contradicted the principle of nationalities, which serves as the political foundation of the modern world. Consequently, he asserted that no matter how much the political institutions of the Ottoman Empire were reformed, the necessary benefits could not be realized. According to him, Ottomanism was doomed to fail because non-Muslims had already developed their national consciousness internally, compounded by the external intervention of foreign states.

Islamism, while having made some progress due to the majority Muslim population, faced challenges as it often conflicted with the interests of many European states. In contrast, Turkism presented no serious obstacles, as both the population and the dynasty were Turkish, and it was relatively insulated from French and English interference since it primarily engaged with Russian interests. Thus, Akçuraoğlu Yusuf deemed Turkism the most advantageous in terms of practical results, supported by the idea of Turkish unity. He argued that once the Turks achieved unity, they would become the strongest branch of Islam, positioning them to advocate for the liberation of other Muslim nations.[48]

Akçuraoğlu Yusuf's conclusions were not only straightforward and accessible but also grounded in the experiences of the recent past and the expectations of the near future. His writings, which advocated for Turkism from a realistic perspective, were directed at the Ottoman public. However, his thoughts on Turkish nationalism were underpinned by a more profound philosophical background. To fully grasp this, it would be beneficial to consider his educational experiences in Paris.

---

[48] Akçura, op.cit., 160-163

Akçuraoğlu, who wrote various articles for Ahmet Rıza's *Meşveret* during his time in Paris, specifically avoided using the term "Ottoman nation" in these writings. Instead, he employed the expression "heyet-i müctemia-yi Osmanye" to refer to the people living within the Ottoman realm. This concept, derived from the root *cem*, signifies "gathered." Therefore, for Akçuraoğlu, the concepts of nation and *delegation-i müctemia* are distinct. He did not consider an aimless community without common cultural values or genealogical bonds—standing side by side but separated—as a true nation. Furthermore, he argued that a nation cannot be reduced to a mere bond of religion. According to him, a true nation is only possible through unity shaped around lineage, ideals, values, and goals that reference a shared past. This new understanding of "nation" is situated on a secular foundation. However, the emotional solidarity attributed to the nation bears formal similarities to the romanticism of Muslim Ottoman patriotism. Thus, it can be said that Akçuraoğlu reformulated both the Young Ottoman and Young Turk legacies.

During his time in Paris, Akçuraoğlu also received his university education in Political Science. The thesis by Albert Sorel, which posited that nations are the real basis of the modern world, alongside Emile Boutmy's assertion that the psychology of a nation is determinative in the political and social institutions of a country, provided a significant theoretical foundation for Akçuraoğlu's analysis of the problems within Ottoman institutions. His education in political science equipped him with the ability to approach issues through the lens of power relations. This perspective is evident in his approach to analyzing the reforms of the Ottoman Empire. He argued that to assess the reforms in the Ottoman Empire, it is essential to consider which elements a reform benefits, what advantages and disadvantages the government incurs, and how the state is affected by such reforms. Akçuraoğlu contended that Ottomanism does not benefit the Turks, as the government is continually losing economic and political power, leading the state to the brink of collapse. Therefore, he argued that a radical change is necessary. The critical question then becomes: what will be the starting point and foundation for this change?[49] It was around these determinations

---

[49] Akçura, op. cit., 160-163

and questions that Turkish nationalism gradually emerged as a political program following the declaration of the Constitutional Monarchy.

1911 is a pivotal date for Turkish nationalism. The journals *Genç Kalemler* and *Türk Yurdu* brought together key intellectuals of the nationalist movement, including Ziya Gökalp, Akçuraoğlu Yusuf, Ahmet Ağaoğlu, Hüzeyinzâde Ali, and Köprülü Mehmet Fuat. The common aim of these writers was to establish a national identity for the Turks that transcended Ottomanism. The Turkism movement, which its opponents derisively labeled "Genghis disease," quickly garnered social support. This was largely due to the works of European Turkologists aimed at the educated elite, as well as the publication of literary and poetic works intended for both the gentry and peasants. Individuals from all walks of life found something relatable in Turkist publications. The surge of publications that followed the declaration of the Constitutional Monarchy created significant opportunities for Turkish nationalism. These opportunities gained serious momentum during the Balkan Wars. In the words of Ziya Gökalp, after this war, Turks were able to collectively assert, "I exist, not we (Ottomanism)."[50]

Gökalp occupies a significant position after the Constitutional Monarchy as the thinker who addressed the question of what kind of social structure the Unionists' aspirations for a centralized and modern state should be based on. Said Halim Pasha, a member of the Committee of Union and Progress and influenced by the Egyptian philosopher Muhammad Abduh, argued in an article criticizing Westernization that the remedy in the social and moral sphere was Islamization. He bases this argument on a historical reference, asserting that societies that did not know what to abandon from their previous lifestyles before embracing Islam struggled to understand what to adopt from the West. According to Said Halim Pasha, this phenomenon was evident in the Ottoman Empire.

In contrast, Ziya Gökalp, also a Unionist, opposed Said Halim Pasha's views in his criticism published in *Yeni Mecmua*. Gökalp contended that if the reason for the current backwardness of Islamized tribes was their old customs, these customs should have been a cause

---

[50] Hanioğlu, Ş. (1985). Türkçülük. Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi, 5., 1397-1398

of backwardness from the very beginning. However, he argued that this assertion is evidently not true for the Turks. Gökalp's second criticism targets Said Halim Pasha's thesis that Muslims began to decline as a result of the Crusades. According to Gökalp, the Crusaders did not exhibit any "bigotry" in embracing the science and good customs of Muslims, which allowed them to progress. In contrast, contemporary Muslims are too puritanical to accept the requirements of modern civilization. Gökalp believes the reason for backwardness is clear: Muslims have failed to interpret their religion in accordance with the demands of new conditions. The ignorant ulema, under the guise of religion, neglected customs that were outside their sphere of influence and derived from the culture of the tribes themselves, thus leaving no cultural space for innovation.[51]

Turkist intellectuals such as Zeki Velidi argued that nations that lost their material power and could not sustain their economic and political life through new material means directed their efforts to the spiritual sphere. This perspective indicates that Turkish nationalist intellectuals viewed the West as the model for material power, while spiritual power was considered within the framework of a compromise between religion and custom.

The Gökalpian interpretation of Turkish nationalism represents a compromise between Turkishness, Islam, and modernization. In this respect, he formulated a form of Turkish-Islamic modernism. His views addressed, to some extent, the primary tension of the long 19th century, namely the disconnect between modernization and the unifying principle. On the other hand, he did not neglect the facts; experiences, inter-party struggles for power, intra-party conflicts, and the current state of culture and civilization found a place in Gökalp's program. Following Akçuraoğlu's declaration of the bankruptcy of Ottomanism, Gökalp's theses and Islamism took an ideological backseat to Turkish nationalism.

The Kazan-Crimean-Azerbaijani intellectual typology represented by Akçuraoğlu Yusuf adopted criticism and elasticity as methods within Turkish nationalism. In the Akçuraoğlu school, socio-economic issues are important factors for understanding society. According to

---

[51] Berkes, op. cit., 416-419

this perspective, Islam should be reformed to reinterpret society and the world, as religion should allow for the development of nations within it.

Anatolian Turkish nationalism, as represented by Gökalp, is synthesizing in method. In terms of content, it aims to preserve the beliefs and values of the existing people. According to Gökalp, national identity cannot be constructed in opposition to the existing beliefs of society. Culture is the most important social field for fostering a nationalist consciousness. Although religion is an inseparable part of national identity, the effort to turn toward modern civilization, which is necessary for material strength, is equally essential. For Gökalp, religion exists only with the presence of a community, and a community exists only with a shared vision. If the community aims to achieve these goals and survive, it must possess civilized capabilities. The development of civilized capability in a society is only possible through internalization of these attributes.

In Gökalp's context, the civilized capability was rooted in the Western world, which necessitated the adoption of its essential capabilities. Akçuraoğlu, as a product of the conditions in Russia and his education in Paris, utilized modern concepts of freedom and equality more explicitly. In contrast, Gökalp emphasized solidarity and development—*ittihat* and progress—within the framework of the needs of the Ottoman Empire.

It can be said that both schools found their place in the future of Turkish nationalism during the republic. Akçuraoğlu's school was adopted when Turkish nationalism was in opposition, while Gökalp's school was embraced when Turkish nationalism assumed the responsibility of power. Between 1912 and 1922, Turkish nationalism had already been embraced by the Unionist cadres of the Young Turk movement. Many theorists, such as Akçuraoğlu and Gökalp, along with key figures like Talat, Enver, Mustafa Kemal, İsmet, and Fevzi Pasha, embraced Turkish nationalism during the decade of war, thereby contributing to the foundation of the republic.

The republican regime accepted Turkish nationalism as the fundamental unifying ideology. The two public sectors—military and civilian bureaucrats—along with the general populace, were brought together during this war period. Unionists actively engaged in political activism within a non-industrialized context, with their primary

objective centered on preserving the integrity of the state. Consequently, their efforts were directed toward consolidating public sentiment, prioritizing cohesion over reliance on a fragmented national economic framework. Although they did not achieve full integration and cohesion in society, they made significant progress in this regard. The architects of the Republic were members of the Young Turk movement, instrumental in galvanizing public sentiment while bridging the historical chasm between the ethos of social cohesion and the exigencies of modern statehood.

The Republican regime attributed independence to the Turkish nation and declared that sovereignty had been transferred from the sultan-caliph to the Turks. The modern state was grounded in Turkish national identity, shaping a new life based on this identity. The National Assembly in Ankara institutionalized the sovereignty of the Turkish nation. Turkishness became the "soul-force" of the new state and way of life, functioning not only as a conscientious and cultural phenomenon but also as an institutionalized political program. The most significant characteristic of Turkish nationalism is that it emerged from a simultaneous struggle against both imperialism and the sultanate. Therefore, unlike Turanism, Turkish nationalism was shaped as a product of defensive reflexes and a survival psychology.

Conclusion

Nationalism is essentially a question of belonging. In the 19th century, nationalism was an option that people turned to in order to understand who they were and what kind of human community they belonged to. This program of coexistence and belonging was also valid for the various nations living within the borders of the Ottoman Empire.

Turkish nationalism developed at a time when coexistence within the Ottoman Empire was being problematized. For this reason, new ideologies were first created by bureaucrats and the palace, significantly influencing the Ottoman upper class. The response of the intellectuals to this policy came through newspapers. In order to sway public opinion, the written language was simplified, leading to the formation of a general public discourse.

Turkish nationalism emerged as a result of individuals who identified with the Turkish identity feeling a sense of belonging to the Turk-

ish nation. It developed in response to the Ottoman rulers' search for a unifying principle and ideology for coexistence. Throughout the 19th century, these rulers were aware of their position, yet they gradually moved away from defining their affiliation solely in terms of religion and dynasty. In the aftermath of the Balkan Wars, defining oneself politically and culturally as Turkish became a normal and motivating behavior.

The development of Turkish nationalism occurred in three distinct periods from the beginning of the 19th century to the foundation of the republic. The main tension that characterized all three periods was the mismatch between modernization and the unifying principle. The historical journey of Turkish nationalism also reflects the history of the "three styles of politics" aimed at overcoming this incompatibility.

The Tanzimat period was characterized by two primary goals: the establishment of a centralized modern state and the internalization of Ottoman identity. The bureaucratic *esprit de corps* (spirit of unity) necessary for the centralized state was achieved through the modernization of bureaucratic functions and classical etiquette. Military and civilian bureaucrats constituted the only modern organized group in the empire. They were not a distinct class but rather an autonomous social category within the power bloc. This group essentially posed the question of how to save the state. Around this question, the bureaucratic public developed rapidly.

The new schools and civil servants in the capital city created a literate human resource pool sufficient for the formation of a general public. The identity policy of the Tanzimat period was Ottomanism, a project initiated by the Bab-ı Âli (Sublime Porte). This Ottomanism was critiqued by the Young Ottomans in their newspapers. Their efforts to influence public opinion led to the formation of a new and broader public discourse. The Young Ottomans developed an alternative approach to the state-centered identity policy of the Tanzimat period by advocating for Muslim Ottoman patriotism and constitutionalism.

This emerging public opinion, which developed under the leadership of the Young Ottomans, placed the concept of homeland at the center of Ottoman identity. Politically, it defined Ottomanness within a constitutional framework and sought to transcend the traditional nation system by referencing coexistence in the homeland. Ottoman-

ism asserted that individuals should feel a sense of belonging to their homeland as strongly as they did to the sultan. However, the Young Ottomans also aimed to raise the consciousness of the Muslim middle class. Therefore, it would be more accurate to refer to them as Ottoman patriots. For them, this homeland represented not only the land they lived in together but also the rights of the "Muslims" who had sacrificed their lives for it. The unifying principle during this period was the Ottoman homeland.

During the reign of Abdülhamid II, an Islamic consciousness emerged among the Muslim middle classes, stemming from their concern over losing their status as a sovereign nation following the Edict of Reform. Two significant developments translated this consciousness into the political sphere. The first was the 1878 Treaty of Berlin, which resulted in the establishment of new states in the Balkans and triggered massive migrations toward Anatolia. The second was the colonization of nearly the entire Islamic world by Western imperialism. The office of the Caliphate and the political independence of the Ottomans prompted the Ottoman elites to leverage their influence over Muslims worldwide. These developments led to the codification of Islam as an essential component of Ottoman identity. An anti-imperialist and defensive propaganda process became embedded in the identity of Ottoman Muslims during this period.

The era following the Berlin Treaty, during which the population of the Ottoman Empire was predominantly Muslim, also saw the flourishing of cultural Turkism. Although the Turkishness of the dynasty was not explicitly emphasized, the cultural identity of the Turk began to be rediscovered. Turkish history was traced back to pre-Islamic times, and in military schools, Turks were defended as an oppressed nation. Conversely, Abdülhamid II's reign marked a crucial turning point for the Ottoman peasantry. Confronted with the influx of thousands of Muslims due to immigration, along with mounting debts and administrative challenges, the Anatolian peasantry reacted with a sense of urgency and involvement in public opinion. Unlike the literate class, these Anatolian peasants had practical concerns. Although they were susceptible to religious romanticism, they learned to engage in a common endeavor with individuals beyond their villages, influenced by the epic characters of war and heroic tales.

The Young Turks bore traces of both preceding periods. On one hand, they inherited concepts of constitutionalism, freedom, homeland, and romanticism from the Young Ottomans. On the other, they were shaped by an education system modernized and popularized by Abdülhamid II and exposed to "pan" ideologies that fostered resistance and revival. However, there were many aspects in which they differed from their predecessors. The belief that collapse was imminent drove them to seek radical and urgent solutions. They directed their allegiance and loyalty toward the "community of the sacred" and Turkish nationality rather than toward dynastic or bureaucratic patrons. They embraced principles of biological materialism and rationalism in their understanding of life. The political ideas and attitudes now conceptualized as Unionism emerged from these conditions and inspirations, shaped amidst continuous rebellions and wars.

This situation led to the idea of *millet-i müselleha* (armed nation) after 1913, which refers to the total preparation of a nation for war. Thus, it became urgent to align the unifying principle with modernity to acquire the technical and moral strength necessary for combat. Turkish nationalism was central to this solution, as it was grounded in the majority population and based on the modern principle of nationality. The aforementioned tension between modernity and the unifying principle was resolved by the cadre that emerged from the Unionists and ultimately founded the Republic.

Turkish nationalism defines Islam as a motif that the Turks carry from the past to the present, while modernity is viewed as a material force for the future of Turkishness. However, it rejects excesses from both sides. Consequently, Turkish nationalism attempts to overcome this tension with the expression "the future whose roots are in the past." For Turkish nationalists, the contradictions of Ottomanism and Islamism fundamentally arise from the fact that the state is not based on Turkish identity.

The Young Turk movement marked a significant shift in the sociology of politics. Traditional intermediary institutions were replaced by national parties and societies. This transition was a logical consequence of the aim to establish a constitutional unity based on representation, rather than a division grounded in religion. Political parties, through their organizational and propaganda activities, not only broadened public opinion but also contributed to the establishment of democra-

cy by enriching the ideas present in the public sphere. Consequently, they advanced the notion that the political body should be redefined to encompass the entire nation. In this respect, the Republican regime can be viewed as the logical outcome of the development of Turkish nationalism.

The Young Turks, more specifically the Unionists, embraced a secular identity between 1908 and 1913. For the Young Turks, the idea of a secular identity was a necessity in the modern world. They sought a foundational identity grounded in the disciplines of sociology and history. They adopted Akçuraoğlu's criticism of Ottomanism and Gökalp's interpretation of Islamism, establishing Turkish national identity as the legitimate basis of a unifying ideology with a scientific perspective.

The process of harmonizing the two publics was achieved by the Turkish political leadership at the end of a decade of simultaneous struggle for independence and popular sovereignty. A homogeneous community, which forms the basis of the modern nation-state, was thus created, allowing for the adaptation of this community to modern institutions without tension between the unifying principle of society and modernity. The two separate publics that existed in the Ottoman Empire merged into a national public with the republican regime after nearly a century of development. Consequently, it can be said that a historical process characterized by two different cultural worlds with distinct agendas came to an end. Turkish nationalism resolved the decline and internal conflict that lasted throughout the 19th century. It served not only as the ideological basis of the new state but also as the driving motivation for its rapid development. This motivation was made possible by the harmonization of the ideologies of modernization and unity, alongside the unification of two different publics.

The historical flow of Turkish nationalism from the Empire to the Republic, along with its qualities and the needs that gave rise to it, has been explained above. Each of the political programs that emerged to overcome the tension between modernity and the unifying principle has been experienced throughout history. When the cause of independence and the future became an inevitable reality, Turkish nationalism emerged as the final decision. The foundations of the new republic were built upon this final decision.

References

Ahmet Cevdet Paşa. (2021). *19. yüzyılda Osmanlı devlet yönetimi: Tezakir (1. cilt, 2. baskı).* İstanbul: Yeditepe Yayınları.

Akçura, Y. (1998). *Türkçülüğün tarihi.* İstanbul: Ötüken Neşriyat.

Akşin, S. (2017). *Jön Türkler ve İttihat ve Terakki* (8. baskı). Ankara: İmge Yayınevi.

Başaran, B. (2014). *Selim III, social control and policing in Istanbul at the end of the eighteenth century: Between crisis and order.* Brill.

Berkes, N. (2017). *Türkiye'de çağdaşlaşma* (A. Kuyaş, Çev.). (25. baskı). İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları.

Çiçek, N. (2010). *The Young Ottomans.* London: I.B. Tauris.

Çiçek, N. (2017). "Bulgarian horrors" revisited: The many-layered manifestations of the Orientalist discourse in the Victorian political construction of the external, intimate, and internal other. *Belleten, 81*(291).

Deringil, S. (1993). The invention of tradition as public image in the late Ottoman Empire, 1808 to 1908. *Comparative Studies in Society and History.*

Duguid, S. (1973). The politics of unity: Hamidian policy in Eastern Anatolia. *Middle Eastern Studies, 9.*

Eraslan, C. (1994). *Yeni Osmanlılar'dan Atatürk'e Türk aydında Cumhuriyet düşüncesi.* İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi. Takdim Tezi.

Findley, C. V. (2011). *Kalemiyyeden mülkiyeye Osmanlı memurlarının toplumsal tarihi* (G. Çağlalı Güven, Çev.). İstanbul: Türkiye Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları.

Findley, C. V. (2019). *Modern Türkiye tarihi* (G. Ayas, Çev.). İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları.

Hanioğlu, Ş. (1985). Osmanlıcılık. In *Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Türkiye ansiklopedisi* (Vol. 5, pp. 1389-1393).

Hanioğlu, Ş. (1985). Türkçülük. In *Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Türkiye ansiklopedisi* (Vol. 5).

Hanioğlu, Ş. (2009). İttihatçılık. In T. Bora & M. Gültegin (Eds.), *Modern Türkiye'de siyasi düşünce* (Vol. 9). (1. baskı). İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.

Heyd, U. (1950). *Foundations of Turkish nationalism: The life and teachings of Ziya Gökalp.* Luzac and Company Ltd.

İnalcık, H. (2006). Tanzimat nedir? In M. Seyidanlıoğlu & H. İnalcık (Eds.), *Tanzimat: Değişim sürecinde Osmanlı İmparatorluğu.* İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları.

Karal, E. Z. (1983). *Osmanlı tarihi (Cilt 8).* Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları.

Karal, E. Z. (1999). *Selim III.'ün hattı-ı hümayunları.* Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları.

Karpat, K. (2004). *Balkanlarda Osmanlı mirası ve ulusçuluk* (R. Boztemur, Çev.). Ankara: İmge Yayınları.

Karpat, K. (2005). Tarih süreklilik, kimlik değişimi ya da yenilikçi, Müslüman, Osmanlı ve Türk olmak. In K. Karpat (Ed.), *Osmanlı geçmişi ve bugünün Türkiye'si* (S. Taner, Trans.) (2nd ed.). İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları.

Karpat, K. (2018). *Osmanlı'da milliyetçiliğin toplumsal temelleri.* İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları.

Karpat, K. H. (1972). The transformation of the Ottoman state, 1789-1908. *International Journal of Middle East Studies, 3*(3).

Kuran, E. (1995). 19. yüzyılda milliyetçiliğin Türk eliti üzerindeki etkisi. In W. Pork & R. L. Chambers (Eds.), *Ortadoğu'da modernleşme.* İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları.

Mardin, Ş. (1974). Super Westernization in urban life in the Ottoman Empire in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. In *Turkey.* Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill.

Mardin, Ş. (1991). *Kültür ve kitle: Türk modernleşmesi.* İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.

Mardin, Ş. (2006). Some considerations on the building of an Ottoman public identity in the nineteenth century. In *Religion, society and modernity in Turkey.* Syracuse University Press.

Mardin, Ş. (2012). 19. yüzyılda düşünce akımları ve Osmanlı devleti: Türk modernleşmesi. In M. Türköne & T. Önder (Eds.), *İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.*

Mardin, Ş. (2015). *Yeni Osmanlı düşüncesinin doğuşu.* İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.

Mardin, Ş. (2016). *Jön Türklerin siyasi fikirleri 1895-1908.* İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.

Namık Kemal. (1873, March 12). "Vatan." *İbret.*

Ortaylı, İ. (2008). *Türkiye teşkilat ve idare tarihi.* Ankara: Cedit Neşriyat.

Ramsour, E. E. (2013). *Genç Türkler ve İttihat Terakki: 1908 ihtilalinin hazırlık dönemi* (Çev.). Etkin Yayıncılık.

Rautsi, I. (1993). *The Eastern question revisited: Case studies in Ottoman balance of power.* Helsinki: Helsinki Printing House.

Shaw, S. J., & Shaw, E. K. (1994). *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve modern Türkiye (Cilt 2)* (M. Harmancı, Çev.). İstanbul: e Yayınları.

Smith, A. D. (2010). *Nationalism: Theory, ideology, history* (2nd ed.). Polity Press.

Tanpınar, A. H. (1988). *19. asır Türk edebiyatı tarihi* (7. baskı). İstanbul: Çağlayan Kitabevi.

Turan, N. S. (2004). Osmanlı diplomasisinde Batı imgesinin değişimi ve elçilerin etkisi (18. ve 19. yüzyıllar). *Trakya Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi, 6*(2), 57-86.

Tütengil, C. O. (2011). *Yeni Osmanlılardan bu yana İngiltere'de Türk gazeteciliği 1867-1967.* İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları.

Wallerstein, I., Decdeli, H., & Kasaba, R. (2002). The incorporation of the Ottoman Empire into the world-economy. In H. C. İslamoğlu (Ed.), *The Ottoman Empire and world-economy.* Cambridge University Press.

Zürcher, E. J. (1984). *The Unionist factor: The role of the Committee of Union and Progress in the Turkish national movement, 1905-1926.* Brill.

TÜRK AKADEMİSİ
Siyasi Sosyal Stratejik Araştırmalar Vakfı

THE MARK OF TURKISH NATIONALISM ON TURKISH POLITICAL LIFE: THE NATIONALIST MOVEMENT PARTY AND THE IDEALIST-NATIONALIST MOVEMENT, PAST AND PRESENT

H. Bozkurt ÇELİK

Asst. Prof., Gümüşhane University,
Departmant of Political Science and Public Administration

Introduction

Looking at the last two centuries of Turkish history, it becomes evident that Ottoman modernization and the Westernization movements during the Republican period should be considered together, and that political life must be analyzed within this framework. Political changes can be better understood when Turkish political life is examined from a perspective that focuses on socio-cultural changes rather than solely relying on a political history narrative.

Of course, the opposite argument can also be made. The notion that political changes influenced social changes and were more determinative is also prevalent in the literature. However, the main point here is that modernization, which began in the late Ottoman period and gained momentum with the establishment of the Republic, played a decisive role in shaping political life. Additionally, the idea that this modernization was informed by an alternative framework that began to express and incorporate the values of religion, culture, and tradition — especially since 1970 — was also significant in political life.

This perspective constitutes one of the main arguments of this text and will be discussed and elaborated upon from various angles throughout the work.

To elaborate, the first main hypothesis is that the impact of social developments on political life is greater than the reverse. Even in instances where political developments occur first, societal reactions play a decisive role in shaping political life in the subsequent stages. A prime example of this is the dichotomy between democracy and tutelage, which immediately comes to mind. This idea holds true for periods when democracy functioned effectively in terms of representation. Therefore, this argument specifically pertains to the era following the transition to multi-party politics and excludes periods of military coups.

A potential criticism of this approach might be that excluding the coup periods omits a significant portion of Turkish political history. While this critique is valid from an administrative perspective, the focus here is not solely on the determination of political power. Rather, the emphasis lies on the influence of social changes and societal reactions on political developments—such as the emergence, rise, or decline of political groups and movements—and the broader effects these dynamics have on the political landscape.

The second hypothesis asserts that it is not possible to discuss Turkish modernization under a single framework. The historical developments of the last two centuries demonstrate that Türkiye's social structure has been shaped by a struggle between various modernization perspectives. While the extensive literature on these differing perspectives will not be explored in this text, as it falls outside the main scope, this diversity is viewed positively from the standpoint of postmodernity. This notion of diversity also forms a key argument in support of the third hypothesis, which will be elaborated on later in the text.

The third hypothesis expands the text beyond a simple political history narrative, positioning it as a study that aims to present a broader discussion on Turkish modernization—one of the author's primary efforts. The key argument here is that the nationalist tradition, as represented by the Nationalist Movement Party, has offered an alternative perspective on modernization, both in terms of its ideological roots and the political path it has followed over time.

One of the most influential aspects of the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), which has maintained its foundational dynamics to the present day, is its representation of an alternative approach to modernization. The MHP's perspective emphasizes the integration of culture, tradition, and religion with the core principles of the Republic, rather than adopting a purely Westernizing stance or radically rejecting the West. This approach can be described as a "third way," attempting to merge the nation's historical roots with the demands of the contemporary era.

In this study, the developments and role of the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) in Turkish political life, from its establishment to the centennial of the Republic, will be evaluated through the lens of this perspective. In addition, the study will examine the MHP's political history by focusing on the fundamental dynamics of Turkish political and social life and assess its impact on shaping these dynamics by comparing and interpreting various perspectives and opinions. This emphasis is important because many texts analyzing the MHP and nationalist mainstream politics tend to shift from critical analysis to partisanship or, conversely, aim to defend the MHP. However, common judgments in both Turkish and foreign literature that characterize the MHP as "extreme," "affirming or inciting violence," "creating paramilitary structures," or having an "exclusionary and aggressive ideological background" often stem from a departure from an objective, scientific perspective. Moreover, it is noteworthy that respected academics and researchers, more than the general public, have been instrumental in shaping these misguided views. It is important to clarify that the aim here is not to question intentions but rather to examine how certain factual inaccuracies have become widely accepted in studies on the MHP.

Although this will be elaborated upon in greater detail in the text, a few examples can be provided here for clarity. In his extensive study on the three right-wing currents in Turkish political life, Hugh Poulton attributes the murder of Musa Anter to the foreign press and claims that it was carried out by a Turkish nationalist group called *Grey Arrow*.[1] However, not only has the murder never been conclusively solved, but there is also no information or documentary evidence confirming the existence of such a group.

---

[1] Poulton, H. (1997). Top Hat, Grey Wolf, Crescent. New York University Press.

Similarly, Mehmet Ali Ağaoğulları, in the encyclopedia section where he discusses the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) in detail, refers to attacks and acts of violence allegedly carried out by *Ülkücü* youth with the support of the MHP. In this context, he mentions an organization called the ETKO (Captive Turks Rescue Army)[2] However, the fictitious nature of such an organization is evident from both the response to a parliamentary question on March 21, 1979, where the justice minister from the Republican People's Party (CHP) stated that no public case related to the organization existed[3] from the writings of some *Ülkücü* figures, who emphasized the "ridiculousness" of the allegations regarding the organization's existence. For instance, it is noted that these allegations were "derived" from a book titled *90 Days in Captive Turkish Provinces*, which was seized by POL-DER[4] police officers during a raid, further highlighting the absurdity of the claims about the organization.[5]

Over a historical process spanning more than half a century, it can be clearly stated that the MHP's ideological stance and understanding of nationalism have remained consistent, although its discourse has inevitably hardened or softened in response to specific developments.

To deepen the analysis of the MHP's ideological stance and its role in political life, it is crucial to examine the politicization of Turkish nationalism, beginning in the late Ottoman period, and to accurately interpret the process that led to the formation of the MHP. The birth of the MHP, along with its sustained influence and power in Turkish political life—unlike many of its contemporaries—is closely linked to these historical roots. Thus, this text will begin by analyzing those origins. Next, the emergence of the MHP and its role in the turbulent political environment of the 1970s will be discussed, followed by an evaluation of the events leading up to the September 12 coup in terms of both political developments and ideological shifts. Subsequent developments, such as the closure of the party after the coup and the formation of alternative parties, will be briefly summarized. Finally,

---

[2] Ağaoğulları, M.A. (1983). Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi. Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye Ansiklopedisi. İletişim Yayınları

[3] Millet Meclisi Tutanak Dergisi D:5 C:12 T:2 pp. 56-57

[4] Police association of police officers with left-wing views.

[5] https://hayatibice.net/?p=505 Yaşanmış Bir Pantürkizm Masalı

the shift in the MHP's societal profile in the 1990s after its reopening will be explored, with a focus on changes in Türkeş's policy-making approach and style rather than his ideological stance or rhetoric. Additionally, the articulationist nature of nationalism in theory[6] will be argued as being reflected in the MHP's political history, particularly in terms of its methods.

After the death of Alparslan Türkeş, the ambiguity created by the sudden loss of a leader at an unexpected moment, coupled with the ensuing chaotic situation, will be examined in relation to the significance of the congress process in political history. The election of Devlet Bahçeli as the party's president and his decision to make the party a coalition partner in the first elections, followed by its failure to meet the electoral threshold, will be analyzed in terms of internal dynamics. The Devlet Bahçeli era in the MHP is as significant as the party's founding period because, after falling below the threshold, the party's focus on institutionalization established it as one of the cornerstones of Turkish political life. The developments that followed this process will be categorized based on key concepts up to the present day. This will facilitate both a reading and analysis of recent history, specifically regarding the role and influence of the MHP and the Ülkücü Movement.

Roots: The Process Leading to the MHP

An Introduction to the Politicization Process of Turkish Nationalism

Turkish nationalism has been promoted and disseminated by numerous associations and organizations in both intellectual and social contexts since the late Ottoman period. However, this discussion will focus on the organizations that aim to represent this ideology in the political arena, as well as associations that closely resemble political parties.

The first of these is the National Constitutionalist Party, which corresponds to the Constitutional Monarchy period. This was the first party to define itself as nationalist. The name of the party was originally the Nationalist Party but was later changed to include all political or

---

[6] Turan, E. (2022). Milliyetçiliğin Eklemlenmeci Yapısını Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi Üzerinden Okumak. Türkiye'de Siyasi Partiler ve Milliyetçilik (Ed. Mustafa Yiğit). Konya: Palet Yayınları. Pp. 105-189

ethnic groups within the empire.[7] n 1912, the party was actually gathered and formed around a publication. Its place of establishment was the İfham Newspaper. Among its founders were prominent Turkist intellectuals of the period, such as Ahmet Ferit (Tek) Bey and Akçuraoğlu Yusuf Bey. The period that corresponded to the Unionist-Ittilafist confrontation, from the establishment of the party to its closure, was a time when the Unionists were in opposition and there were no elections. The party was closed in 1914 and therefore did not participate in any elections. Although this had an effect, the party was already seen as an "intellectual party." The party program is a text that lists the proposals and views of the party in various fields such as the economy, education, domestic politics, and foreign affairs.[8]

After the closure of the party due to various challenges, the Turkists of the period attempted to engage in politics through organizations in the form of associations and foundations for a time. Then, in 1919, the National Turkish Party was founded as a new nationalist party, continuing the legacy of the previous party. In fact, the party's place of establishment was the office of the İfham newspaper. In addition to Ahmet Ferit (Tek) Bey and Akçuraoğlu Yusuf Bey, prominent Turkists of the period such as Mehmet Emin (Yurdakul) Bey and İsmail Hakkı (Baltacıoğlu) Bey were among the founders. The main goal of the party, as with the National Constitutionalist Party, was to make Turkist intellectuals active in Turkish politics amid the occupying and cosmopolitan ideas that dominated the Armistice period. Despite accusations from some circles that "the party was born dead," the National Turkish Party entered the 1919 elections and successfully sent Mr. Adnan (Adıvar) to the parliament. As Tunaya states, the fact that a nationalist party was able to gain seats in the parliament in Armistice-era Istanbul provides insight into the true political tendencies of the capital, which was dominated by cosmopolitan pluralism. Additionally, the party consistently acted in harmony with the Mudafaa-i Hukuk group and sent Ahmet Hikmet (Müftüoğlu) Bey and Hamdullah Suphi (Tan-

---

[7] Yiğit, M. (2022). Türkiye'nin İlk Milliyetçi Fırkaları: Milli Meşrutiyet Fırkası ve Milli Türk Fırkası. Türkiye'de Siyasi Partiler ve Milliyetçilik (Ed. Mustafa Yiğit). Konya: Palet Yayınları. Pp. 63, 71.

[8] Tunaya, T. Z. (1988). Türkiye'de Siyasi Partiler Cilt 1. İstanbul: Hürriyet Vakfı Yayınları. Pp. 351-355

rıöver) Bey as members to the National Congress in Istanbul. After the occupation forces raided and dissolved the Parliamentary Assembly, the party became ineffective, and some of its founders joined the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye in Ankara.[9]

Along with this political representation, one important issue was the fact that, of the three major ideologies of the late Ottoman period—Islamism, Westernism, and Turkism—only the last one survived by the end of the First World War. Nationalism, which was also articulated with some ideas from Westernism, was the only ideology that persisted, and according to Karpat, after 1918, this ideology would be expanded by purifying it from Turanism. In the Republican period, both of these transformations took place most drastically. The nationalism identified with Ziya Gökalp, based on religion, history, and traditional society, was replaced by a "rational, materialist, and highly secular" nationalism, especially from the second five-year period of the republic. Gökalp's understanding of secularism, which was based on adapting Islam to the Turkish way of life, was replaced by an understanding in which religion and the state were completely separated, with the state being absolutely superior. Gökalp's idea of Westernization based on technique was extended to the cultural sphere. This differentiation, which Karpat emphasizes, is actually the distinction between classical Turkish nationalism and the Kemalist understanding of nationalism that developed after the republic and continued in Turkish political life after the birth of the MHP. Today, this distinction continues to exist in Turkish politics.[10] This differentiation, which Karpat emphasizes, is actually the distinction between classical Turkish nationalism and the Kemalist understanding of nationalism that developed after the republic and continued in Turkish political life after the birth of the MHP. Today, this distinction continues to exist in Turkish politics.

The aforementioned Kemalist nationalism also diverged from classical Turkish nationalism on the issue of "Foreign Turks", and the event in which this divergence emerged most clearly was the Turkism-Turanism Trial of 1944. However, in 1944, the negative attitude of

[9] Tunaya, T. Z. (1988a). Türkiye'de Siyasi Partiler Cilt2. İstanbul: Hürriyet Vakfı Yayınları. Pp. 531-533

[10] Karpat, K.H. (2010). Türk Demokrasi Tarihi: Sosya Kültürel Ekonomik Temeller. İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları.

the president and the government toward the Turkism-Turanists was based on the realization that the USSR and its allied forces would win the Second World War.

Nihal Atsız's critical letter to the prime minister of the time, Şükrü Saraçoğlu—in which he heavily criticized the appointment of Hasan Ali Yücel as Minister of National Education and the assignment of Sabahattin Ali in this ministry—resulted in his being taken to court by Yücel, and the first hearing of the relevant court was held on April 26, 1944. May 3 was the date of the second hearing, during which the Turkic youth who filled the courtroom at the first hearing started an anti-communist march. On May 9, just before the court convened, Nihal Atsız was arrested, followed by the arrest of other important Turkists of the period, such as Nejdet Sancar, Zeki Velidi Togan, and Alparslan Türkeş. In the following process, İsmet İnönü, the president of the period, issued a communiqué on the issue on May 18, and in his speeches on May 19, he accused the Turkists of mischief-making and harming the state, using heavy language to insult them. On the same days, the Turkist *Orhun* Magazine was closed down. The arrested Turkists were subjected to a form of torture known as coffin torture. A total of 23 detainees were released in different months in 1945, and all of them were acquitted on March 31, 1947.[11]

The 1944 events have taken their place in the pages of history as the first time Kemalist nationalism and classical Turkish nationalism confronted each other in the clearest way, even though there were also international conjunctural reasons behind it. After 1944, the Turkists continued their activities of publishing periodicals and forming associations. Founded in 1946, associations such as the Turkish Cultural Center, the Turkish Cultural Studies Association, and the Turkish Youth Organization can be cited as examples. In 1948, the Millet Party, which would later form the root of the MHP, was founded, and nationalism began to actively exist in Turkish politics as a "third way."

Nation Party

In this study, the main reasons why the party is considered to be among the roots of the MHP will be elaborated upon below in terms of the party's program, executives, and policies. The primary reason is that

---

[11] Öznur, H. (1996). Ülkücü Hareket I: 1908-1980. Asya Kitap Kulübü. pp. 68-72

the Millet Party was a nationalist third-way alternative to the lines represented by the Republican People's Party and the Democratic Party.

The ideological similarity and the emphasis on the "nationalist third way," which is the most important dimension of the aforementioned "root-tree" relationship, in addition to the reactions to political developments and the political discourse of the party, are actually most fundamentally reflected in Articles 1, 8, and 9 of the party program.[12] The first article of the program, which was presented as the founding document of the party in 1948, reads as follows: "*A political party has been established under the name MILLET PARTY on the basis of the ideals of Republic, Justice, liberalism, and Nationalism*". The party's view on the concepts of nation and nationalism, which lists the foundations of its views in the first article and includes nationalism among them, is clearly stated in Article 9 as follows:

> "*Nationalism, which is one of the main characteristics of the Republic of Türkiye, is one of the main principles of our party. In our opinion, the most important element of the concept of a nation is a kind of unity of thought and feeling, which constitutes the national conscience and the belief in a common life and future. We recognize the great role of language unity in the formation of national consciousness. The Party considers every person who says 'I am a Turk' and considers himself or herself a Turk as a Turk, believes in the ancient and honorable civilized past of Turkishness and in a future full of great hopes, considers it a national duty to implement a program that is conducive to the strengthening of national consciousness in educational and training institutions; and considers it necessary to try to raise the youth with this belief even outside of school.*"

The understanding of nationalism expressed in the article in question points to an understanding of the nation based on a sense of belonging and consciousness and considers everyone who says "I am a Turk" to be a Turk, which is the same as the words of Alparslan Türkeş mentioned in the introduction. The emphasis on school curricula to raise generations with a national consciousness and the party's duty to raise the youth with this ideal outside of school, if necessary, aligns

---

[12] Millet Partisi Parti Programı ve Tüzük. pp. 40.

with the MHP's political method and understanding. Another important point at this juncture is the last sentence of Article 8 of the program, which states that "The party is respectful of the institution of religion and national traditions." This statement shows that the party's basic policy was based on not ignoring the fact that religion was also an important value of the nation, which is quite significant considering the political spirit of the period. It is also consistent with the MHP's political stance.

For all these reasons, the Millet Party is one of the roots of the MHP and the first nationalist political party in the republican era to display these characteristics. The party was founded in 1948 with these principles under the honorary presidency of Field Marshal Fevzi Çakmak Pasha and the general presidency of Hikmet Bayur. Other founding members of the party included Osman Bölükbaşı, Osman Nuri Köni, Kenan Öner, Mustafa Kentli, Enis Akaygen, and Sadık Aldoğan.[13] At this point, it should be immediately noted that one of the most important names to be remembered when discussing a nationalist third way in Turkish politics is Field Marshal Fevzi Çakmak Pasha. Long before the formation of the Millet Party or the figure of Bölükbaşı, he opposed the Kemalist understanding of the İsmet İnönü era with a vision of nationalism that did not set aside the influence of religion.

In the 1950 elections held immediately after the sudden death of the Field Marshal, the Millet Party failed to achieve significant success, and only Osman Bölükbaşı was elected as an MP for Kırşehir. The Millet Party was dissolved in 1953 under the Democrat Party government as a result of a lawsuit filed on the grounds that people involved in reactionary activities were in the party. Osman Bölükbaşı then founded a new party, the Republican Nation Party, which can be seen as a continuation of the nationalist tradition. The Republican People's Party also included the principle of nationalism in the first article of the party program, and in Article 13, it expressed its understanding of nationalism in a content very close to the Millet Party's understanding. In addition, the phrase "a peaceful and humanitarian nationalism in international relations" was added. The party then de-

---

[13] Millet Partisi Parti Programı ve Tüzük. pp. 40.

cided to merge with the Peasant Party of Türkiye in 1958. The main reason for this merger was the belief that it would create a third major party, other than the DP and CHP.[14]

Republican Peasant Nation Party

Following the decision to merge the Republican National Party and the Peasant Party of Türkiye, the Republican Peasant National Party was founded in 1958. This party, which would later be named the Nationalist Movement Party with Alparslan Türkeş as its chairman, had already clearly stated in its founding program that it was the party of the nationalist tradition. In fact, the party program[15] included almost the same statements on the definition of nation and nationalism as the program of the aforementioned Millet Party. Article 1 of the program emphasizes commitment to the principle of nationalism. Article 7 is word-for-word identical to Article 9 of the Millet Party's program, which defines the nation, summarizes the concept of nationalism, and states that young people should be educated accordingly in and out of school. Article 9 of the CKMP program further elaborates on the issue of youth education and mentions the "need for a democratic and nationalist spirit," stating that it aims to make the necessary preparations for young people to pursue their education in the best way possible without getting caught up in party debates and to provide them with wide development opportunities when they enter life.

The founding chairman of the party was Osman Bölükbaşı, who would later resign—before Türkeş had joined the party—and re-establish the Millet Party. The reason for this resignation was that a group within the party thought that a coalition should be formed with the CHP, but Bölükbaşı strongly opposed this. As a result, Bölükbaşı resigned, and the CKMP formed a coalition with the YTP in support of the CHP. The base of the CKMP was not happy with the coalition either, as the party's vote share dropped considerably in the 1963 local elections, and the coalition disintegrated after this election.[16]

---

[14] Bölükbaşı, D. (2005). Türk Siyasetinde Anadolu Fırtınası: Osman Bölükbaşı. İstanbul: Doğan Kitap. pp. 259.

[15] Cumhuriyetçi Köylü Millet Partisi Programı. pp. 7-8.

[16] Ahmad, F. (2010). Demokrasi Sürecinde Türkiye 1945-1980. İstanbul: Hil Yayınları. pp. 229-230, 274.

Before elaborating on the political environment of the 60s, it is, of course, necessary to discuss the military coup of May 27, 1960, and its aftermath in terms of the history of the nationalist community. Alparslan Türkeş was the one who read the coup declaration on the radio and was one of the influential colonels. He was also appointed as the undersecretary of the prime minister's office and was one of the names close to Cemal Gürsel, the chairman of the National Unity Committee, which formed the coup administration. However, due to internal strife and conflicts within the MBK, and with the influence of İnönü on Gürsel, Türkeş was removed as a member of the MBK and was later retired from the army and exiled to New Delhi as a government advisor. The 14 people who were dismissed and exiled together with Türkeş went down in Turkish political history as the "14s." The 14s were banned from entering the country for two years with a decision taken in November 1960, but with a statement he made in 1961, Cemal Gürsel paved the way for the 14s to return home. It is worth reminding that during this process, Alparslan Türkeş wrote a letter to Gürsel about the execution trials of the DP executives, and in this letter published in the Milli Yol Journal, he clearly stated that he absolutely rejected the executions and that this would only divide the nation. But, as is known, Gürsel did not take this into consideration. Prime Minister Adnan Menderes and two of his ministers were executed. After Gürsel's statement, the 14s, who came together abroad, decided to return home, and this process was completed with the return of Türkeş in February 1963. As soon as he returned home, Türkeş started to establish an association called "The Turkish Peace and Development Association," but this initiative was not possible due to the coup attempt by Talat Aydemir and his friends on May 21, 1963, as Türkeş was one of the names arrested in this context. However, Türkeş had received advance notice of this coup attempt and communicated it to the government. At the court hearing on this issue, he uttered the oft-cited phrase, "*The worst democratic rule is better than the best military rule*." After his release, he also attempted to prevent the execution of Talat Aydemir but was unsuccessful.[17]

---

[17] Öznur, H. (1996). Ibid., pp. 128-140.

After returning home, Türkeş, together with most of the 14s, joined the CKMP in 1965, and Türkeş was appointed as the Party's General Inspector. At the party congress held in July of the same year, Türkeş was elected as the chairman. Türkeş, who formed an administration dominated by his close friends among the 14, nevertheless did not rush to make structural changes in the party. In the same year, he published the text "Dokuz Işık" (*Nine Lights*), which became the main ideological textbook of the party, and this influence continues to this day.[18] In the new program of the party[19] published at the 1965 congress, the understanding of the nation in Article 7 continued the tradition of the 1948 Millet Party program and even used the phrase "accepts everyone who says 'I am a Turk' as a Turk."

While Türkeş was trying to produce policies on current issues in foreign and domestic affairs, the party increased the number of its organizations from 25 provinces to 61 provinces in the period between 1965, when Türkeş became the chairman, and the congress in 1967. Türkeş's "Nine Lights Doctrine" was officially adopted at this congress.[20] The CKMP was now clearly the political representative of nationalism in Türkiye. However, the name and emblem of a party with such great claims and ideals had to be in line with its ideological background. The 1969 congress was held with these discussions.

At the CKMP Congress held in Adana on February 8-9, 1969, the party's name was changed to the Nationalist Movement Party and its emblem to the white three crescent on a red background. In the same congress, the grizzly wolf within the crescent was adopted as a symbol for the youth.[21] As soon as the party was founded, both foreign and domestic media tried to equate it with German Nazism and fascist ideology due to its influence on the youth and its nationalist-socialist ideology. Even in June 1969, Galip Erdem, one of the most important writers of the nationalist movement, wrote about this issue and felt the need to respond to an article published abroad and tried to express

---

[18] Landau, J.M. (2016). Radical Politics in Modern Turkey. London and New York: Routledge. pp. 208-209

19 Müreffeh ve Kuvvetli Türkiye İçin Cumhuriyetçi Köylü Millet Partisi Programı pp. 4, 6, 9.

[20] Bora, T. ve Can, K. (2019). Devlet Ocak Dergah: 12 Eylül'den 1990'lara Ülkücü Hareket. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları. pp. 42-43.

[21] Öznur, H. (1996). Ibid., pp. 156-157

that the allegations were completely false.[22] In the literature, opinions have been expressed that the party stopped using the term "toplumcu" (socialist) for these reasons and instead emphasized the "pro-poor" attitude of the nationalists-idealists.[23] This struggle continued throughout the 70s—and perhaps still continues today—with the MHP always attempting to clarify what it was not, while never having the opportunity to fully articulate what it truly was.

Nationalist Movement Party: Türkeş Period

The period when the Nationalist Movement Party was officially founded marked the beginning of turbulent years in Turkish political life. The bipolar world order that emerged after the Second World War created an environment where countries were divided into liberal/capitalist and socialist/communist blocs. This division was not only between countries but also represented a power struggle between these two ideologies within the countries themselves. Türkiye was one of the nations most affected by the rising leftist movements of the '68 generation, with various leftist political organizations aiming to establish a socialist order in Türkiye and align it with the Soviet bloc. These organizations engaged in armed actions within the country, provoking social and political reactions. The Nationalist Movement Party became the focal point of the opposition to these socialist movements, making it the primary target of their efforts. The conflict generated by this struggle intensified and persisted until the military coup of 1980.

In 1968, Ruhi Kılıçkıran, regarded as the first martyr of the Ulkücü movement and still highly valued by its members, was joined in martyrdom by Süleyman Özmen and Dursun Önkuzu, who lost their lives in 1970 as a result of attacks by leftist organizations. All three of these martyrs were university students, marking a harbinger of the intensifying conflicts at universities.

By 1971, armed conflicts had accelerated, with numerous organizations led by Deniz Gezmiş and Mahir Çayan increasing their acts of violence, including bank robberies. In this environment, the Turkish

---

[22] Erdem, G. (2013). Ülkücünün Çilesi. İstanbul: Ötüken Neşriyat. Pp. 196-198.

[23] Mete, Ö.L. (2003). "Türk Milliyetçiliğine Sivil Bir Bakış". Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce Cilt 4: Milliyetçilik. (Ed. T. Bora, M. Gültekingil). pp. 696-705. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları. pp. 705.

Armed Forces issued the March 12 memorandum. While the March 12 regime targeted leftist organizations, it also dissolved the Union of the Ulku Ocakları and the Turkish Anti-Communist Associations. The Ulku Ocakları, originally established in 1966 at Ankara University's Faculty of Law by nationalist students, began to gain traction with the formation of the Ankara Ulku Ocakları Union in 1969.

During this period, leftist organizations continued their aggressive actions; for instance, they kidnapped and murdered the Consul General of Israel in the same year. Although the March 12 regime adopted a harder stance following this incident, this situation proved to be short-lived, as attacks and clashes began to increase again shortly thereafter. In response to the escalating violence, the Nationalist-Idealist Movement started to regain momentum, culminating in the founding of the Association of Ulku Ocakları in Ankara in 1974. In 1975, the Association of Ulku Ocakları and the MHP building in Erzincan came under attack, resulting in the tragic death of a 13-year-old boy. This incident is just one of hundreds exemplifying the violent climate of the time.[24]

In terms of ideology, the prevailing view in the literature is that the MHP's founding congress was significantly influenced by Islamic values intertwined with Turkism. This shaping of the party in the subsequent years marked a shift toward politics based on Islamic concepts and thought.[25] Notably, Osman Yüksel Serdengeçti, a former deputy of the Justice Party who was well-known in both the nationalist community and the broader public, joined the MHP at this congress. Similarly, Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, a prominent figure admired within Islamist circles, later became a member of the MHP, underscoring the continuity of this ideological trajectory.

In the second half of the 1970s, the influence of Islamic thought within the party continued to strengthen, building upon the rhetoric established at the 1969 congress. Central to this language were slogans such as "We are as Turkish as Mount God and as Muslim as Mount Hira," "Our call is for the resurrection in Islam," and "Victory belongs to Islam even if our blood is shed." As the 1977 elections approached, the MHP notably emphasized slogans like "Faith and Morality First"

---

[24] Öznur, H. (1996). Ibid., pp. 205-223
[25] Öznur, H. (1996). Ibid., pp. 158-159

and "No nation without a religion, no state without law, no govern-ment without MHP."[26]

It is also important to note that during these years, the MHP em-ployed anti-communist rhetoric extensively in its propaganda. The party highlighted the actions of leftist and socialist organizations that contributed to an atmosphere of anarchy, asserting that only a govern-ment led by the MHP could restore order. Some of the most popular slogans during this period included "CHP feeds communism, AP for-gives, MSP watches, MHP crushes" and "MHP crushes the red ban-dit." Consequently, the party vowed to continue its struggle on the streets, leveraging state power to prevent Turkey from aligning with the USSR and establishing a communist-socialist system.

In an environment of violence and thousands of deaths, it is a fact that the party cannot pursue a policy focused solely on getting more votes, as this would not be enough. In the period in question, the MHP is still at the beginning of its transformation into a mass party and needs "a man with a cause" and "members of the movement" more than vot-ers. Therefore, the members of the nationalist movement thought that the movement was a movement that "thought about generations, not elections." They also acted with the belief that those who died for this cause attained martyrdom, the highest rank in Islam.

The second half of the 1970s was a period in which political strug-gles, bloody actions, and conflicts reached their peak, in a sense paving the way for the military coup of September 12, 1980. In 1975 and 1977, during the Nationalist Front Governments, the MHP both reinforced its position as a legitimate and influential figure in Turkish political life and attempted to fight against communist armed groups with state power. These coalition governments, often referred to in the literature as the Nationalist Front Governments, were formed with the support of the National Salvation Party, of which the Justice Party was the main element. However, the Nationalist Movement Party failed to last long in the instability of the period. Nevertheless, it is important for reasons such as the MHP and MSP traditions finding reciprocity and influence in the eyes of the state and preventing Türkiye from joining the USSR through a socialist revolution by restraining the armed actions of so-cialist-communist organizations by the state.

---

[26] Öznur, H. (1996). Ibid., pp. 226-27, 232.

Under the CHP government established in 1978, the days of oppression began for the Nationalist-Idealist Movement. This pressure reached such dimensions that the MHP organized a large march-miting in Tandoğan on April 15, 1978, which holds an important place in the history of the nationalist-idealist movement and is always remembered and recalled as a "legend" by nationalists. In a sense, the government was intimidated as a "march for power."[27]

As the year 1979 was coming to an end, the casualties of the nationalists were also rising with the increasing conflict environment. For example, in Ümraniye, five nationalist workers were tortured and shot by TIKKO militants. This was another example of how the defense of workers' rights by the aforementioned socialist organizations only included workers who believed in and obeyed their organizational structure and the communist order they sought to establish. Hundreds of nationalists lost their lives in the attacks of these organizations.[28]

As a result of the increasing violence, former Minister of Customs and Monopolies Gün Sazak was assassinated by Dev-Sol militants on May 27, 1980. This assassination, which had a profound impact on the MHP community, revealed the level of danger.[29] This danger led to a military coup on September 12, 1980, and the "hard days" began for both Turkish democracy and the nationalists. In fact, the military seized power and stated that it did so on the basis of "making Atatürk's principles and reforms operational again," which was in a sense like "handing over the task to the army again" for the nationalist movement. As in the beginning of the March 12 process, or in the following years, when the clashes were at their most intense, the idealist movement saw the fight against communism as a duty of the state, and the intervention of the army could be perceived positively at the beginning. However, it turned out that this was not the case; the same pressure applied against communist organizations would also be applied to the nationalist-idealist movement; most of the nationalists, especially Alparslan Türkeş, would be arrested, and the "Nationalist Movement Party and Nationalist Organizations Case" would be opened.

---

[27] Öznur, H. (1996). Ibid., pp. 236-37.
[28] Öznur, H. (1996). Ibid., pp.. 241.
[29] Öznur, H. (1996). Ibid., pp.. 263.

After the September 12 military coup, the MHP and Nationalist Organizations Trial was initiated with the indictment prepared, and a large part of the executives and even members of the Nationalist Movement Party, including its leader Alparslan Türkeş, were tried in this context. One of the most striking points about the trial process was the attitude of Türkeş and MHP members during the judicial proceedings. Türkeş wanted his actions, not his ideas, to be put on trial, claiming that putting his ideas on trial would be putting the Turkish nation on trial. This shows how strong the argument is that the ideological system of the nationalist movement is the same as Turkishness and the nation's history and value judgments and can be considered the moral basis of the "reaction" aspect of the nationalists. The reality of this basis is, of course, open to discussion and interpretation, but what is wanted to be emphasized here is the strength of the belief of the representatives of nationalist politics and the ideology of the nationalist movement to identify themselves with the Turkish nation.

In addition to the content of the trial, the junta administration's policy of "mix-and-match" between the communists and the nationalists in the barracks led the nationalists to realize that the state had lumped them in with the groups that wanted to change the regime, and this was an important break. The torture incidents also had the same effect, and hundreds of ülkücü had to experience the trauma of being tortured by members of the army, which they considered to be the most sacred national institution. However, no matter how one thinks about it, the generation that was imprisoned and tortured after the military coup of 1980 was referred to as the "Taşmedreseli" within the nationalist movement, and a discourse was developed that the nationalists transformed the cold prisons into a madrasa for themselves and that they continued to learn many things about the country, politics, struggle, and the cause here. Being from Taşmedreseli became an important adjective in later periods within the nationalist movement. However, it would be useful to remember that this title was institutionalized and associated by those who remained within the MHP as the center of the nationalist movement. In a sense, even if those who left the MHP were imprisoned and tortured, they continued to be respected because of their past, but in a sense, they could no longer use the title of Taşmedreseli. This is the result of the MHP's active use of institutionalization.

The concept has also been institutionalized through associations, and as a value of the nationalist movement, it has been ensured to live on as a value of the central institution.

In the post-coup period, after three years, attempts to transition to democracy began, but this attempt was limited to only three political parties allowed by the coup regime to participate in the elections. These three parties were the Halkçı Party, which was allowed to be established as a continuation of the leftist tradition; the Motherland Party, which was established as a classical liberal party; and the Nationalist Democracy Party, which was supported by the military and headed by General Turgut Sunalp. The order here is deliberately written in this way because there are claims in the literature that the MDP (Nationalist Democracy Party) was founded as a continuation of the right-wing tradition. However, the ideological representation of ANAP, which was seen as a surprise in the period in question, was the classical right, and the military was aware of this. It is a controversial issue how much of a surprise ANAP's winning the elections was for the coup administration.

In the 1983 elections, after the victory of the ANAP under the leadership of Turgut Özal, some of the names who had fought in the ranks of the nationalist movement before the 1980s took part in this party, and these names became known as "movers" within the ANAP. Although they acted with the thesis of creating a new "contemporary right" or claimed that they were trying to continue nationalist politics in other parties, the practical result here is the effort to include the nationalist base in ANAP. Although it is difficult to determine the extent of the support of the nationalist base for ANAP in these elections, opinions on this issue have frequently appeared in the literature. It has been argued that the negative attitude of the coup administration towards the nationalists gave birth to a new understanding of nationalism dominated by more civilian understandings instead of statism, and that this led some of the nationalists to ANAP. It was even argued that this was the result of the transformation of the pre-1980s anticommunist reaction into a civil reaction. At the 1985 ANAP congress, it was argued that nationalists had started to lose their power within the party and were being "tamed" in a sense. By 1987, there were discussions about allowing the reopening of the pre-1980 political parties, and the ANAP,

which was said to be practicing democratic and liberal politics, strongly opposed this and campaigned for a "no" campaign in the referendum. In fact, nationalists within the ANAP were active in the no campaign and "boasted" of the 66.7 percent no vote in Yozgat, one of the provinces where Turkish nationalists had received the highest number of votes before 1980, arguing that Türkeş was finished and that the new place for nationalists was the ANAP. However, the countrywide vote was in favor of "yes," albeit by a small margin, and elections were held the same year. This election can be interpreted as an election in which the debate between the Nationalist Work Party, which emerged as the party of the traditional nationalist base, and the nationalists within the ANAP over "who represents nationalism" reached its peak.[30]

While Türkeş was shaping the Nationalist Work Party as the continuation of the MHP, he brought educated, careerist names to the party showcase in order to open the party to the urban masses at the same time as this ideological emphasis. In this context, names such as Dr. Devlet Bahçeli, an academic at Gazi University's economics department, and Ali Güngör, who was prominent as a magazine and book publisher—names that had also played a role in the pre-'80 struggle— were appointed to important positions in the party. The party was acquiring an "urban and professional" appearance. This made the party more appealing to a wider audience, which was one of Türkeş's most important goals.[31]

In the election manifesto[32] prepared for the elections held shortly after Türkeş took the helm of the party, the title "The historical background to which the MÇP (Nationalist Work Party) is heir" clearly stated that the party was the continuation of the MHP. Beginning with the history of modern Turkish nationalism, the party clearly expressed an understanding that embraced the 1944 Turkism-Turanism trial and the struggle against communism in the 1970s. In the relevant declaration, the MÇP was defined as "the center of the idea of Turkish nationalism".

In the general elections of 1987, the first elections held under the leadership of Türkeş after the military coup, the party received 2.93 percent of the vote and failed to secure a parliamentary seat in any

[30] Erdem, G. (1984). Ibid., pp. 142-156, 169.
[31] Bora & Can. (2019). Ibid., pp. 190, 194
[32] Milliyetçi Çalışma Partisi 1987 Seçim Bildirgesi

electoral district due to the threshold. However, in the local elections held only two years later in 1989, it increased its vote share to 4.14 percent, showing that it would be one of the important elements of Turkish politics again and that it would regain its former momentum.

The Welfare Party (RP), which received 7.16 percent of the votes in the 1987 elections, and the MÇP, which received 2.93 percent of the votes, entered the 1991 general elections under the name of the Welfare Party by allying with the Reformist Democracy Party, of which Aykut Edibali was the chairman, in order to overcome the ten percent national threshold. The essence of the election campaign of the alliance was formed by a nationalist-conservative language. While the Welfare Party members emphasized the slogan "Believers united", the MÇP members on the Welfare Party lists used the slogans "Türkiye, a leader in the Turkish century" and "Votes for Welfare, Natinalist-Idealist to Parliament". In the post-election parliamentary arithmetic, the RP gained a total of 62 deputies, 19 of whom later returned to the MÇP. Afterward, efforts were initiated to form a DYP-SHP coalition government as a compromise government, and MÇP leader Türkeş suggested a vote of confidence in this government on the grounds that the country needed a compromise, especially in the face of the separatist threat. However, Muhsin Yazıcıoğlu and 3 of his friends chose not to participate in the vote, which can be said to be the political beginning of the process of breaking the ties and the departure of these names from the party. In political language, they opposed the vote of confidence, especially citing the presence of HEP deputies within the SHP. However, it is worth remembering that the HEP deputies left the SHP after a short period of time, in addition, the SHP, which was split in September 1992, lost power and the MÇP, which gave the vote of confidence to the coalition, started to gain strength. So much so that some even nicknamed this government as the 3rd Nationalist Front government.[33]

However, Muhsin Yazıcıoğlu and his friends preferred to leave the MÇP due to the reasons discussed above and the current issues of the period and founded the Great Unity Party. This separation was mostly criticized and accused of "betrayal" and "falling into the trick of sects and religious community groups" by the mass that remained

---

[33] Bora & Can, Devlet ve Kuzgun. pp. 21, 27-28.

in the MÇP and later represented the center of the nationalist-idealist movement as the MHP. But, of course, there were various voices and comments.[34] Later, a law was passed regarding the re-establishment of political parties that were closed by the September 12 regime, and attempts were initiated to rename the MÇP as the MHP.

When it came to the 1995 general elections, the MHP reached its highest vote percentage in history with 8.18%, but due to the country's electoral threshold, it couldn't secure any parliamentary seats. Considering the processes leading up to the '95 elections and the election results, one of the key factors contributing to the success of the MHP was undoubtedly the strength of the party's institutional identity and history, along with its influence on the traditional voter base. However, another crucial reason was the acceptance and appreciation of Türkeş's portrayal as a "moderate and responsible leader" during that period. Amidst the escalating PKK terrorism in the 1990s, the rhetoric emphasizing the necessity for a responsible statesman image, and the nationalists' call for abstaining from any violent actions, represent the clearest example of this. The mainstream ideology of Turkish nationalism, which forms the roots of the Idealist movement, has always rejected racism and exclusivism, prioritizing the exaltation of Turkishness rather than belittling other nations, aiming to make the nation prosperous and the state strong. Therefore, the policies of the MHP regarding this issue have generally developed along these lines. However, during periods of rising terrorism, the language of the MHP has also become harsher.

The latter half of the 1990s was marked by discussions surrounding the postmodern coup known in political history as the February 28th process, which occurred during the coalition government formed after the 1995 elections by the Welfare Party (Refah Partisi) and the True Path Party (Doğru Yol Partisi). This period can be summarized as a process where the military evaluated the policies of the Welfare Party as Islamist activities, issued a memorandum, and pressured the government to resign. While the aforementioned period is undoubtedly a separate research topic on its own, the difficulties experienced by women wearing headscarves and the campaigns conducted with

---

[34] Bora & Can, Devlet ve Kuzgun, pp. 68-69.

an understanding that could be characterized as militant secularism encapsulate the essence of the latter half of the 1990s. During this time, the MHP, as a party with Islamic sensitivities, became one of the parties whose stance was most eagerly awaited by society. Throughout this period, the MHP emphasized its unconditional commitment to republican values and Atatürk's principles on every occasion. However, it also attempted to adopt a political discourse that opposed combating the values of conservative individuals under the guise of Kemalism.

Another crucial aspect that must be noted about the end of the 1990s, which holds great significance for nationalists, is the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. This event was important for both world history and Turkish nationalists for two reasons. Firstly, it marked the complete loss of influence of communism in practice, which was one of the defining points and the biggest battleground for the nationalist movement before the 1980s. This led to two debates. The first was the claim that with the end of communism, the main reason for the existence of the nationalist movement had disappeared, and with the addition of Türkeş's passing, it was argued that the MHP would cease to exist. The second was the claim that the MHP's line would now become capitalist like all other ideological structures and at best would turn into a form of liberal nationalism. However, neither of these claims materialized, as the existence of the MHP and the nationalist movement was not contingent upon the end of communism but was instead a struggle within a temporal context against communism.. Moreover, nationalism is a distinct ideological path that diverges from liberalism or socialism not only in Türkiye but also worldwide, and its existence or absence is independent of the presence of these two ideologies.

The second critical importance of the dissolution of the USSR for nationalists is, of course, the attainment of independence by the Turks living within the Soviet Union. The fact that Turks who are not independent, which the MHP has constantly emphasized since its establishment, have now obtained independent states has led to a more pronounced emphasis on the Turan ideal at a higher level and has found even more resonance in newer generations. This has not only strengthened the rhetoric of the Nationalist Movement Party and increased its credibility but has also led other political parties to approach this discourse.

Bahçeli Period

One of the most significant turning points in the political history of the Nationalist Movement Party is undoubtedly the death of its founding leader, Alparslan Türkeş. Moreover, since it was quite challenging to determine who would lead the party after such a leader and remain in that position permanently, a difficult process awaited the MHP following the death of the "başbuğ." The period of Devlet Bahçeli's presidency, who succeeded Türkeş as the party's leader, holds great importance in the political history of the party. Therefore, the events from the 1997 congress to the centenary of the Republic must be discussed and analyzed in order. The period in question and its events are, of course, the subject of a much larger study; however, here we will attempt to provide a brief narrative of the political history and highlight some of the main characteristics of the MHP during the Bahçeli era.

The Congress Process in the MHP and the Party's Rise to Power

The shock of Türkeş's sudden death was mitigated by the necessity for the party to appoint a new chairman, and this process initiated a normalization that intensified over time. Although this may seem contradictory, the congress process can be characterized in this manner because, while the initial shock was eventually overcome, the normalization led to a hardening of the debates regarding who would become the new general chairman.

On May 18, the first dispute between Tuğrul Türkeş (Alparslan Türkeş's son) and the other candidates occurred during the election for the chairmanship of the council. Talip Kaban, supported by the other candidates, won the council chairmanship against Turgut Altınok, who was backed by Tuğrul Türkeş. In the first round of voting at the congress, Tuğrul Türkeş received 412 votes, Devlet Bahçeli 359, Ramiz Ongun 231, Enis Öksüz 104, Muharrem Şemsek 80, and İbrahim Çiftçi 13 votes, leading to a second round of voting for the presidency. Azmi Karamahmutoğlu, then President of the Ülkü Ocakları, took to the podium and declared their support for Tuğrul Türkeş, stating they would not accept any alternative. He claimed this stance "initiated illegality" in his own words, and his instruction to the youth of the Ülkü Ocakları to disperse the congress hall has become a significant

"stain on the image" of the MHP's political history. At this point, it is important to note that the party's ordinary congress was scheduled for November, approximately six months later, meaning that a chairman would effectively be elected for this interim period during the May congress. The postponed congress was held on July 7 under intense security measures. Between May 18 and July 7, there was evidently an intense lobbying process among the candidates. A significant development during this time was the change of mind of Muharrem Şemsek, one of the candidates who had united under the banner of Devlet Bahçeli against Tuğrul Türkeş. Şemsek, who received 80 votes in the first round, announced his support for Tuğrul Türkeş in the second round, leading a large portion of his supporters to vote for Türkeş. The results of the second round reflect the sum of these alliances. In the second congress, Devlet Bahçeli received 697 votes, while Tuğrul Türkeş received 487 votes, resulting in Bahçeli becoming the second president of the MHP. Bahçeli, who would lead the party until the ordinary congress in November, faced significant challenges ahead. Indeed, there were whispers that even Ramiz Ongun, who had previously supported him, was preparing to compete against Bahçeli, rather than Tuğrul Türkeş, in the November congress. This speculation was confirmed in the ordinary congress held on November 23rd, where Tuğrul Türkeş, Devlet Bahçeli, Ramiz Ongun, and Salih Gökçe ran against each other. In the first round of voting, Bahçeli came in first with 579 votes, while Tuğrul Türkeş received 472, Ongun 173, and Gökçe 11 votes. In the second round, some supporters of Ramiz Ongun, who announced he would not withdraw from the race, voted for Bahçeli, resulting in Devlet Bahçeli being re-elected as president with 671 votes, thus concluding the presidential race within the MHP. While various factors contributed to this outcome, the primary reasons for Devlet Bahçeli's election as president of the MHP included his connection to the grassroots of the party, his familiarity with the delegates, his ability to navigate the internal balances within the party, and his status as a respected figure in MHP history, often referred to as a "teacher."[35]

Bahçeli, who emerged victorious from the congress, is a well-known figure in the nationalist movement. Before 1980, he joined the nationalist movement and founded the Ülkü Ocakları at the Ankara Academy

---

[35] Bora & Can. (2004). Ibid., pp. 391- 401.

of Economic and Commercial Sciences, where he later worked as an academic, and ending the dominance of leftist-socialist organizations at the institution. After starting as an assistant at the same faculty, Bahçeli established numerous professional organizations aimed at bringing nationalist academics together. This academy was later transformed into Gazi University's Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences and was known as the "Academy" both in the academic community and in the nationalist movement. The Association of Nationalist Finance and Economists (ÜMİD-BİR) and the Association of Assistants of University Academies and Colleges (ÜNAY) were among the professional organizations Bahçeli founded. In 1987, Bahçeli resigned from his university position upon Türkeş's call and entered active politics as the Secretary General of the Nationalist Work Party. In the aftermath of the coup, Bahçeli played an important role in meeting the needs of imprisoned nationalists, which contributed to his recognition within the nationalist movement.

First, Bahçeli has endeavored to maintain the ideological core of the party both during his candidacy for the congress and throughout his presidency. At this point, he particularly emphasized Alparslan Türkeş's doctrine of the Nine Lights. He consistently highlighted Türkeş's legacy and framed the party's understanding of nationalism in a manner that aligns more closely with cultural and, at times, civilian perspectives, considering the prominent dynamics of the periods in which Turkey found itself. Overall, he continued to define the MHP's identity around the Nine Lights Doctrine.[36]

The party's definition of the nation and its understanding of nationalism have also maintained their classical line. Bahçeli emphasized an approach that explicitly rejects racism and defines nationalism and democracy as "two key concepts of human pluralism and solidarity." He stressed that it is indispensable for democratic life that the constituent elements of the nation live together in peace, regardless of origin, sect, or profession.[37]

---

[36] Opçin Kıdal, A. (2020). Continuity and Change in the Ideology of the Nationalist Action Party (MHP), 1965-2015: From Alparslan Türkeş to Devlet Bahçeli. Bilkent Üniversitesi Siyaset Bilimi ve Kamu Yönetimi Doktora Tezi. pp. 167.
[37] Bahçeli, D. 1997, 2000, "21. Yüzyıl ve 2023 Türkiye Vizyonu MHP Büyük Kurultay Konuşmaları" pp. 39, 60, 94.

In both the 1999 election manifesto[38] and the party program pub-
lished in 2000[39], the party defines the nation as "a social whole that has
the desire and will to live together on the ground offered by a com-
mon history, the feeling of sharing a common destiny in the historical
process, and the belief that it has its own unique characteristics and
identity in the community of nations carrying the ideal of the future."
Nationalism, on the other hand, is defined as "a set of ideas and sensi-
tivities aiming to develop the consciousness of belonging to the social
reality called the nation and accepting its distinctive characteristics as
the basic reference in interpreting the world and events."

With these definitions, it can be said that the MHP's understanding
of nation and nationalism at the beginning of the 21st century reflects
a traditional approach that emphasizes consciousness of belonging,
common history, and distinctive characteristics and identity. Howev-
er, the important difference here is that the uniqueness of the nation
is emphasized more strongly. This is one of the manifestations of an
understanding of nationalism—which can also be called postmodern
nationalism[40], although the theoretical discussion is not the focus of
this text—that has the ability to adapt to the era on the threshold of the
21st century, especially during a period when the emphasis on differ-
ence and diversity of postmodernism has begun to strengthen.

Additionally, it should be considered in the context of the debates
on the content of nationalism that arose as a reflex against the rising
PKK terrorism in the 1990s. Even during this period, the MHP insti-
tutionally distanced itself from an exclusionary and aggressive under-
standing of nationalism. As Opçin Kıdal points out[41], Bahçeli, like his
predecessor, has endeavored to produce politics based not on an ethnic
group or identity, but on opposition to the PKK.

With 17.98 percent of the vote and 129 deputies in the 1999 elec-
tions, the MHP not only achieved the highest vote share and number of
deputies in its history but also became the second party and a partner

---

[38] Lider Türkiye'ye Doğru Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi Seçim Beyannamesi, 18 Nisan
1999, pp. 28.
[39] Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi Parti Programı, 5 Kasım 2000, pp. 8
[40] Çelik, H.B. (2023). Postmodern Milliyetçilik: Millet ve Milliyetçilikten Milletler ve
Milliyetçiliklere. Ankara: Cedit Neşriyat
[41] Opçin Kıdal, A. (2020). Ibid., pp. 184.

in the government for the first time. In fact, after the elections, there were discussions about forming a "right-wing coalition" with Bahçeli as prime minister. However, for several reasons, an alternative scenario emerged. The first of these was that the authority to form a government would first be given to Bülent Ecevit, the leader of the first party, the Democratic Left Party, who could potentially agree with other parties in the parliament. In other words, there was a possibility of an environment in which the MHP could be sidelined. Another reason was the belief that a coalition with the Virtue Party (Fazilet Partisi) would not be long-lasting due to the tense political atmosphere stemming from the February 28th process and the strong military tutelage still in place. The DSP-MHP-ANAP (Motherland Party) coalition government was formed with the belief that a coalition of three parties with different views would contribute to social reconciliation and, above all, fulfill the expectation of the MHP base to be in power.

This government came to an end with the decision to hold early elections in 2002 due to the Marmara Earthquake, one of the most devastating earthquakes in history, followed by the September 11 attacks, pressures on the government in international relations, and the continuation of the chaotic economic environment of the 1990s, which transformed into a crisis. However, it is important to note that this government lasted for approximately 3.5 years, making it the longest coalition government in the history of the Republic. Additionally, Bahçeli's "compatible partner" attitude during both the formation of the coalition and its longevity received occasional support from the media and other party politicians. For example, Cem Karaca, a member of the CHP, wrote a letter[42] expressing his appreciation and respect for Bahçeli's stance. Nevertheless, Bahçeli's approach was criticized, particularly by right-wing opposition parties.

In the November 3, 2002 general elections, all parties that had exceeded the threshold in the previous elections, including those in the coalition government established in 1999, fell below the threshold. The Justice and Development Party, with 34 percent of the vote, won 363 parliamentary seats, while the Republican People's Party, with

---

[42] http://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/2002/03/07/p09.html

19 percent of the vote, secured 178 parliamentary seats. As a result, a two-party parliamentary dynamic emerged, allowing the Justice and Development Party to form a government independently.

The evaluation of the 2002 election results from the MHP's perspective requires a slight departure from this general picture. While the MHP experienced a setback compared to the 1999 elections, this failure did not lead to an expectation of collapse when viewed in relation to the other coalition partners. In the 2002 elections, the MHP received 8.3 percent of the vote—slightly below the threshold—while the DSP received only 1.2 percent and the ANAP garnered 5.1 percent. Consequently, the MHP emerged from the elections with relatively little damage compared to its coalition partners. This is significant because, while the DSP and ANAP transformed into "signboard parties" in the subsequent period, the MHP recovered and has maintained its presence in Parliament in all elections to date.

The period between 2002 and 2007 can be viewed as a phase of recovery for the MHP. Immediately after the 2002 elections, Devlet Bahçeli, the chairman of the MHP, announced his decision to resign, taking full responsibility for the party's failure and stating that he would not run for re-election. However, in response to Bahçeli's announcement, there were intense reactions from the party's grassroots urging him to remain. On October 12, 2003, under this pressure, Bahçeli decided to run for the congress and was re-elected president in the first round with 688 votes. Among the other candidates, Ramiz Ongun received 300 votes, Koray Aydın received 137 votes, and Aytekin Yıldırım received 2 votes. Having renewed his strength within the movement in this way, Bahçeli delivered a pointed speech at the congress in which he strongly criticized the government, conveying the message that he would first restore the party and then transform it into a formidable and effective opposition force.

Bahçeli devoted a significant portion of his congress speech to the rise of globalization trends and the discussion of nationalism and national identities. He stated: "Today, in the face of global domination, the flag of freedom and individuality is waving on the walls of nationalism." He emphasized that the globalist ideological axis aims to establish a colonial empire.

The MHP entered the 2007 general elections with a declaration[43] that adhered to its classical ideological line, remaining uncompromising on issues such as Cyprus, the EU, and the fight against terrorism. It rejected both the militant interpretation of secularism and the misuse of religious arguments concerning the headscarf-secularism debate. In the 2007 elections, the MHP received over 14 percent of the vote, securing 71 parliamentary seats and successfully returning to parliament. This election was significant for the MHP not only because it exceeded the electoral threshold in Central Anatolia and Eastern Anatolia—its classical base—but also in Western provinces such as Aydın and Uşak, where it garnered around 20 percent of the vote. In addition to maintaining its classical base, the MHP began to attract substantial support from more urbanized voters in the Aegean and Mediterranean regions, largely due to its opposition to the Justice and Development Party and its strong stance against the government's policies on issues such as Cyprus and the EU.

The main topic of discussion immediately following the elections was the presidential elections, which was reflected in the media as the "367 crisis" because the Justice and Development Party (AKP) did not reach 367 deputies according to the election results. However, when the MHP announced that it would nominate its own candidate for the presidential elections and participate in parliamentary sessions, the crisis was, in a sense, resolved, and Abdullah Gül, the candidate of the Justice and Development Party, was elected as the 11th President with 339 votes. This was perceived as a move that reinforced the MHP's, and especially Bahçeli's, image as a "responsible statesman" by a segment of the public, while also causing "disappointment," particularly among new Western voters. However, subsequent developments have further strengthened the MHP in these regions, and its role as a pioneer of Turkish democracy is now generally accepted.

After 2007, processes such as "democratization," "the opening-solution process," and "the Ergenekon-Balyoz trials" increased the tension between the opposition and the government incrementally. Moreover, the influence of the Gülen sect, which was deeply embedded within

---

[43] MHP 22 Temmuz 2007 Seçim Beyannamesi Milli Duruş ve Kararlılık Belgesi, pp. 19, 28-29, 117-120.

the state apparatus, began to rise. In 2010, a referendum was held to change the structure of the judiciary. The date of September 12 was selected for this referendum, and the propaganda centered around the notion that military tutelage, particularly from those who executed the military coup of September 12, would be challenged. During this process, the MHP campaigned for a "no" vote alongside the Republican People's Party (CHP), resulting in intense criticism from certain segments of the party's base. The referendum yielded a yes vote of nearly 58 percent, and the post-referendum period ushered in a process characterized by an increasing discourse on combating tutelage and the ascendance of the Fethullahist organization in particular.

Against this backdrop, the 2011 general elections were preceded by the release of videotape footage concerning the private lives of Deniz Baykal, the CHP chairman, and ten senior executives of the MHP. These tape operations, orchestrated by the Gülenist organization as a retaliatory measure against the opposition that criticized its activities, forced Baykal to resign as CHP chairman and compelled MHP executives to leave the party. Furthermore, numerous news reports—particularly from media outlets aligned with the Gülenist structure—were published, asserting that the MHP would fall below the electoral threshold.[44] Ultimately, the 2011 elections represented a scenario in which the MHP was significantly affected by the operations of the Fethullahist organization. Subsequently, it was revealed that the Fethullahist organization was an international terrorist entity attempting to usurp control of the state, a characterization that would later be included in the decisions of the National Security Council (MGK).

In the 2011 elections, the MHP comfortably surpassed the electoral threshold, receiving 13 percent of the vote and securing 53 parliamentary seats. Compared to the 2007 elections, this result reflects a slight nationwide decline; however, when considering the regional distribution of the vote percentages, it can be asserted that the MHP maintained its traditional base. In certain cities in Central Anatolia, there was a 3-4 point decline, but there were also increases in other cities. During this period, as in the 1995 elections, claims emerged that the party experienced both an electoral shift and an ideological transfor-

---

[44] https://www.shaber3.com/gundem/MHP-baraj-altina-gidiyor-CHP/453264/

mation. However, the election results indicate otherwise. The most significant indicator regarding the 2011 election results for the MHP was the party's ability to retain the Western votes it had garnered in the previous election. Furthermore, the party's capacity to sustain its vote share in other traditional constituencies can be interpreted as a reaction to the videotape operations directed against the party.

However, in the 2011 elections, the Justice and Development Party achieved significant success by increasing its vote share to over 49 percent, winning 327 parliamentary seats, and returning to power independently. The ruling party, which emerged from the elections stronger with a record number of votes, placed the resolution process on the national agenda in the subsequent period and formed a "Wise People Committee" to communicate it to the public. While the resolution process was ongoing, in 2013, relations between the Fethullahist organization and the government began to deteriorate, as reflected in public opinion through debates concerning the closure of private educational institutions. Later that year, bribery and corruption operations were launched against four government ministers on December 17 and 25.[45]

The investigations conducted by public officials affiliated with the Gülenist organization marked the official beginning of the "war" between the government and the Gülenist organization, which had established a parallel state structure within the state. One minister involved was dismissed, and three others resigned. However, a parliamentary vote rejected the proposal to refer the ministers to the Supreme Court. In early 2014, the interception and search of National Intelligence Organization (MIT) trucks heading to Syria in Hatay and Adana escalated the conflict, leading to the characterization of the parallel structure as an espionage organization and a network of betrayal.[46] In February of the same year, an audio recording allegedly belonging to the prime minister was posted on the internet, claiming that he had instructed his son to conceal billions of liras at home. The release of various audio recordings on the internet, most of which were related to corruption, continued, resulting in a "tape" era in Turkish politics. However, it is important to note that such secret recordings had previously been used

---

[45] https://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/904362-iste-gozaltina-alinan-isimler
[46] https://www.aljazeera.com.tr/haber/mit-tirlari-boyle-durduruldu

to undermine the CHP and MHP. In 2015, some members of the judiciary associated with the parallel structure were dismissed from their positions due to the theft of exam questions and irregularities committed by this structure, particularly within the judiciary. It should also be noted that some of these individuals were prosecutors in the Ergenekon and Balyoz cases.

After four years marked by significant events, the general elections held in June 2015 were the first elections since 2002 in which the Justice and Development Party (AKP) failed to secure power independently. The MHP, which received 16 percent of the vote—the second highest percentage in its history—and won 80 parliamentary seats, was undoubtedly the "determinant party."

Ahmet Davutoğlu, who took the helm of the Justice and Development Party after Erdoğan's election as president, lost his first election as the party's leader, which caused controversy within the party. On the evening of the elections, Devlet Bahçeli[47], the president of the MHP, stated that a coalition formed by the other parties in the parliament was more likely, considering the ongoing solution process, and that the MHP was ready to assume the role of opposition in this case. However, it should be noted that Bahçeli stated that the MHP would form a coalition if the solution process was ended, the first four articles of the constitution were no longer up for discussion, corruption was tackled and prevented, and the separation of powers was preserved. However, in his later statements, he stated that these were not accepted and that the possibility of a coalition had disappeared.

Ahmet Davutoğlu, who assumed leadership of the Justice and Development Party after Erdoğan's election as president, lost his first election as the party leader, leading to controversy within the party. On the evening of the elections, Devlet Bahçeli, the president of the MHP, indicated that a coalition formed by other parties in parliament was more likely, considering the ongoing solution process, and that the MHP was prepared to assume the role of opposition in this context. However, it is important to note that Bahçeli asserted that the MHP would consider forming a coalition only if the solution process was terminated, the first four articles of the constitution were no longer sub-

---

[47] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LqSWnu1rNNg

ject to discussion, corruption was addressed and prevented, and the separation of powers was maintained.[48] In his subsequent statements, he remarked that these conditions were not accepted and that the possibility of a coalition had vanished.

As a result of the failure to form a coalition government, elections were held again on November 1, 2015, and the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi) won 49.5 percent of the vote, becoming the sole ruling party. It is important to note that between the two elections, the PKK resumed its attacks, and terrorist acts escalated. In these elections, the MHP secured 40 parliamentary seats with 11.9 percent of the vote. While there are various reasons for this result, the two most prominent ones are the label of "maladaptive party" attached to the MHP by public opinion and the concerns of insecurity and instability stemming from the conflict environment.

Following the decline in the MHP's votes, an opposition bloc began to form against the party leadership, which announced that the party would hold an ordinary congress in 2018. Former Iğdır MP Sinan Oğan, former Istanbul MP and former deputy chairperson of the parliamentary group Meral Akşener, former Trabzon MP Koray Aydın, and Ümit Özdağ, who served as deputy chairperson and MP during the election process, called for an extraordinary congress and announced their candidacy for the presidency. The four candidates, who began to act together, started to collect signatures from delegates for a statute convention and then an extraordinary congress, and the process was taken to the judiciary. During this period—recalling the pre-election debates—discussions about the dominance of the parallel state structure in the judiciary and the interference of this structure in the MHP's congress process merged. Different courts issued various rulings, and when the Supreme Court of Appeals decided to hold a congress, the MHP headquarters decided to hold a congress on July 10. However, the opposition argued that the headquarters had no such authority and that the commission formed by the Court of Cassation would take the party to the convention and announced that the convention would be held on June 19. The convention was convened; the headquarters de-

---

[48] https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/iste-mhpnin-koalisyon-icin-4-sarti-29828006

clared that it did not recognize the convention and took the matter to the judiciary. Eventually, the Ankara 3rd Civil Court of First Instance annulled the convention, and the opposition initiated the process of forming a new party. This process culminated in October 2017 with the establishment of the Good Party (İyi Parti), with Meral Akşener as its chairperson, along with the participation of MPs İsmail Ok, Nuri Okutan, and Yusuf Halaçoğlu, who had been expelled from the MHP, as well as opposition presidential candidates Koray Aydın and Ümit Özdağ.

In the aftermath of the November 2015 elections, the struggle between the Fethullahist organization and the government continued to intensify. July 2016 witnessed one of the most critical nights in Turkish history. The Fethullahist organization within the military attempted to take over the government due to a combination of factors, including the Justice and Development Party's electoral victory and the escalating conflict with the Fethullahist structure, the absence of leadership change within the MHP, and Bahçeli's consistent stance toward the organization. On the night of July 15th, Fethullahist soldiers attempted a military coup, which involved the closure of the Bosphorus Bridge, the bombing of the Special Forces Command, the bombing of the Turkish Grand National Assembly, the seizure of TRT, the reading of the coup declaration, and the arrest of the Chief of General Staff. The President of the Republic subsequently called on the public to go to city squares to resist the coup plotters during a midnight television broadcast. Some time before this event, Devlet Bahçeli issued a statement rejecting the coup attempt, affirming support for the government and the national will, and emphasizing the necessity of protecting democracy and national sovereignty.

The coup attempt failed primarily due to the non-Gülenist soldiers in the army not participating in the coup. Although the Chief of General Staff was imprisoned, it did not disrupt the chain of command. The uncompromising rejection of the coup attempt by the President and Devlet Bahçeli, along with their declaration that they would not "bow down," and the fact that the nation took to the streets at the President's call to stand up against the coup plotters and "lay down in front of the tanks" were crucial factors in this failure. However, it was noted that even the following morning, some coup plotters bombed civil-

ians gathered around the presidency to protest against the coup. On the night of the coup attempt, 259 individuals lost their lives while resisting the coup plotters, and thousands were injured. After the failed coup attempt, a meeting was convened in the Parliament, which had been bombed by the coup plotters, resulting in a declaration issued with the signatures of all party groups in the legislature. Notably, Bahçeli was the first leader to make a statement from headquarters, with the lights on throughout the night. He called the Prime Minister, and when he could not reach him, he left a note for his personal staff and issued a statement condemning the coup, all while the fates of the Prime Minister and President remained uncertain. This response was highly regarded by both the nationalist community and the general public. Additionally, it was observed that many of those who took to the streets at the President's call made the Grey Wolf (Bozkurt) sign. A physical solidarity emerged between the two parties and communities against the Fethullahist terrorist organization, which later evolved into a political alliance. July 15th, characterized as an invasion attempt involving physical bombings, ultimately transformed this organization into a terrorist group, now referred to as FETÖ.

The Nationalist Movement Party has contended that a genuine fight against FETÖ and similar structures can only be achieved through a comprehensive reform of Türkiye's governance structure. This reform should involve a change in the "system of government" that enhances the country's democracy and aligns the governance system with contemporary cultural and historical characteristics. In 2017, a constitutional amendment aimed at replacing the parliamentary system with a "presidential government system" was put to a referendum and passed with 51.5 percent of the vote. In April 2018, Bahçeli called for early elections, asserting that Türkiye faced significant internal and external threats both in the struggle against FETÖ and in light of international developments. Consequently, Türkiye went to the polls in June 2018. The Justice and Development Party, the Nationalist Movement Party, and the Grand Union Party (BBP) participated in these elections—the first time the new system was implemented—as the Cumhur İttifakı (People's Alliance). The BBP's chairman ran as a candidate on the Justice and Development Party list, and the MHP secured 49 parliamentary seats with 11 percent of the vote. The People's Alliance achieved

344 parliamentary seats in the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye (TBMM), which qualified it to legislate. Erdoğan, the alliance's presidential candidate, won 52 percent of the vote and was elected president in the first round.

In this process, the Nationalist Movement Party made significant contributions to the formation of the presidential government system without becoming a formal partner in the government. By supporting its alliance partner, the MHP has continued to demonstrate this support at an even higher level, particularly in foreign policy and the fight against terrorism domestically. Following the 2018 elections, the MHP announced that it had no demands for any ministries or other positions.

By supporting the government during the 100th anniversary of the Republic to achieve the goal of "leading country Türkiye," which the party has emphasized for many years, the MHP had the opportunity to clarify to its voters and the public that this support was not merely pragmatic but a national issue. Examples of this include: making Hagia Sophia a mosque and opening it for worship; ending the Armenian occupation of Karabakh while Türkiye plays an active role in this process; increasing investments in the defense industry and becoming one of the most important countries in the world, particularly in the production of unmanned aerial vehicles; continuing the fight against terrorism without compromise and conducting operations in Syria; gaining a foothold on sovereignty in the Mediterranean by signing an exclusive economic zone agreement with Libya; adopting a foreign policy centered on a two-state solution in Cyprus and the recognition of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus by the international community; and preventing discussions about Turkish identity and the nation-state.

At the outset of the centenary of the Republic, two major earthquakes, measuring 7.7 and 7.6 on the Richter scale, centered in Kahramanmaraş and affecting 11 provinces, proved devastating for Türkiye and its citizens. More than 50,000 people lost their lives, and over 33,000 buildings were either destroyed or deemed at risk of destruction, resulting in significant psychological and economic challenges for the country. When the devastating effects of the earthquakes were combined with the other aforementioned factors, the dynamics of the

elections scheduled for the centenary year of the Republic also shifted. The MHP entered the 2023 elections as part of the People's Alliance, securing 10 percent of the votes and 50 parliamentary seats.

One of the most significant aspects of the 2023 elections, both for the MHP and for Turkish political life, is the failure of polling predictions. With the exception of one or two polling firms, nearly all indicated that Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, the candidate of the Millet Alliance, was ahead — most even suggested that he would win in the first round — and projected that the MHP would receive only about half of its actual vote share. In reality, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan garnered 49.5 percent of the votes in the first round, while Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu received 45 percent and Sinan Oğan, the other candidate, obtained 5 percent. Thus, contrary to the polls, Erdoğan narrowly missed winning the election in the first round and finished ahead of Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu. In the second round, he was re-elected as president with 52 percent of the vote.

Conclusion

The Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) can be considered one of the ideological currents aimed at preserving the state during the late Ottoman period, as well as a successor to a third way between the Kemalist-left and liberal-right approaches in the Republican era. In constructing this path, there have certainly been numerous points of rupture, differences in current political discourse, and ideological articulations. However, it is evident that the MHP consistently prioritizes the ideology of Turkish nationalism. The party has pursued politics while preserving this ideological core, striving to keep developments and changes within everyday politics free from it. Although coalitions, alliances, and oppositions have shifted within active politics, the party has worked through its affiliated organizations to ensure that new generations remain closely associated with nationalism, endeavoring to keep this entirely outside the realm of known pragmatic politics. Indeed, one of the most important reasons for the party's survival and its current strength and position in Turkish political life — unlike its contemporaries — is this focus. Beyond being merely a political party, the MHP continues to ideologically represent the nationalist-idealist movement, including its affiliated but independent organizations and masses, thereby ensuring a "classic base" and a significant share of the vote.

To elaborate, Turkish nationalism, which initially aimed to rescue the empire and later sought to establish a modern nation-state on the remaining territory, continues to coexist with the concept of idealism in the Republican era, which incorporates the notions of culture, tradition, and religion. The MHP has maintained its status as an "ideology party," prioritizing the preservation of this representation above all political gains. Indeed, some perspectives suggest that this identity has hindered the party's ability to come to power. However, both leaders in the party's history have endeavored to preserve the ideological core while formulating policies.

At this point, it would be useful to summarize the main theme regarding the articulationist nature or "flexibility" of nationalism, which is frequently emphasized in this text. It should not be overlooked that these expressions, often perceived as having a pejorative connotation in the literature and by nationalist groups, are actually the characteristics of nationalism that enable it to maintain its effectiveness and determinism. In fact, this characteristic elevates nationalism beyond being merely a sentiment or ideology to which people turn in times of crisis. When considered alongside Billig's concept of banal nationalism[49], it becomes evident that nationalism, which permeates every aspect of life and daily existence, owes its persistence in part to this everydayness and flexibility, both collectively and individually. The MHP strives to safeguard the ideological infrastructure and sentiment to strengthen this determinism of nationalism. As nationalism is reinforced, the party consolidates its position and continuity in Turkish political life. However, a political party's engagement in daily politics while preserving its ideological core and articulating its ideology in response to changing circumstances is a distinct process that deserves separate examination.

Another prominent feature of the party is its brand value, which is created through its "icons." Notably, the party's emblem, featuring three crescents, evokes Ottoman history and holds significant value in the historical memory of society. This sentiment is similarly reflected in the use of the bozkurt symbol in the emblem of Ülkü Ocakları, the youth organization of the movement. The bozkurt symbol, which

[49] Billig, M. (2002). Banal Milliyetçilik. İstanbul: Gelenek Yayıncılık.

references ancient Turkish history and embodies the consciousness of Turkish identity by evoking historical heroism, is particularly effective in attracting young people to the MHP.

The party has produced not only institutional symbols but also iconic discourses and symbols—transcending mere syllogism—derived from Turkish history and national traditions, reflecting its ideological background. For instance, the God Mountains, symbolizing the Turkestan region, and the Hira Mountains, which hold significance for the Islamic world, define the Turkish nation as "Turkish as the God Mountains and Muslim as the Hira Mountains." Additionally, the slogan "Guiding Koran, Target Turan" has become iconic and transcends generations. The discourse surrounding "Turkish pride and consciousness, Islamic morality and virtue" has almost become a formula, closely associated with the nationalist-idealist movement, and continues to manifest in the training of the Ülkü Ocaks as well as in the speeches and statements of party officials.

One of the most important features of the party in Turkish political life is its view of the state. It should be noted that the primary aim of the nationalist tradition during the imperial period was to ensure the survival of the state and prevent territorial losses. Furthermore, in the republican period, the concept of state wisdom has gained increasing importance within this tradition. It can be said that the nationalist movement identifies its raison d'être with two key elements: the Turkish nation and the survival of the Turkish state. This notion of "statism" takes on additional significance when compared to other ideologies in the country. Specifically, while the statism of political Islamists came to an end on February 28, and the statism of Kemalism ended with the Justice and Development Party, the nationalists' "loyalty" remained steadfast despite the persecution faced during the September 12 administration.

The party's view of the concept of the nation, much like its view of the state, does not change according to actual developments. In this text, the party's definition of the nation and its approach to nationalism are explained based on both ideological texts and party programs. It is important to note that the party emphasizes protecting existing nationalism, which can be characterized as protectionist nationalism[50], rather

---

[50] Çelik, H.B. (2023). Ibid.

than adopting an exclusionary or aggressive stance. Additionally, its definition of the nation—centered on culture, tradition, and history—is positively received by the public. This positive response is evident in the party's presence and influence over more than half a century. The party has consistently defined its ideology as "a bridge between the Republic and the Ottoman Empire" and "a bridge between Islam and Turkishness."[51]

References

Ağaoğulları, M. A. (1983). *Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*. In *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye Ansiklopedisi* (Vol. 8, pp. 2111-2119). İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.

Ahmad, F. (2010). *Demokrasi sürecinde Türkiye 1945-1980*. İstanbul: Hil Yayınları.

Bahçeli, D. (1997, 2000). *21. yüzyıl ve 2023 Türkiye vizyonu MHP büyük kurultay konuşmaları* (pp. 39, 60, 94).

Billig, M. (2002). *Banal milliyetçilik*. İstanbul: Gelenek Yayıncılık.

Bora, T., & Can, K. (2019). *Devlet Ocak Dergah: 12 Eylül'den 1990'lara Ülkücü hareket*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.

Bora, T., & Can, K. (2004). *Devlet ve kuzgun: 1990'lardan 2000'lere MHP*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.

Bölükbaşı, D. (2005). *Türk siyaseti'nde Anadolu fırtınası: Osman Bölükbaşı*. İstanbul: Doğan Kitap.

Cumhuriyetçi Köylü Millet Partisi Programı. (n.d.). *pp. 7-8*.

Çelik, H. B. (2023). *Postmodern milliyetçilik: Millet ve milliyetçilikten milletler ve milliyetçiliklere*. Ankara: Cedit Neşriyat.

Erdem, G. (2013). *Ülkücünün çilesi*. İstanbul: Ötüken Neşriyat.

Karpat, K. H. (2010). *Türk demokrasi tarihi: Sosyal kültürel ekonomik temeller*. İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları.

Landau, J. M. (2016). *Radical politics in modern Turkey*. London and New York: Routledge.

Lider Türkiye'ye doğru Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi Seçim Beyannamesi. (1999, April 18).

[51] Bahçeli, D. 1997, 21. Yüzyıl ve 2023 Türkiye Vizyonu 1997 Kurultay Konuşması. pp. 12

Mete, Ö. L. (2003). Türk milliyetçiliğine sivil bir bakış. In T. Bora & M. Gültekingil (Eds.), *Modern Türkiye'de siyasi düşünce* (Vol. 4, pp. 696-705). İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.

Millet Meclisi Tutanak Dergisi, D:5, C:12, T:2.

Millet Partisi Parti Programı ve Tüzük. (n.d.). *sf. 40*.

Milliyetçi Çalışma Partisi 1987 Seçim Bildirgesi. (n.d.).

Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi Parti Programı. (2000, November 5). *pp. 8*.

Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi 22 Temmuz 2007 Seçim Beyannamesi Milli Duruş ve Kararlılık Belgesi. (2007). *pp. 19, 28-29, 117-120*.

Müreffeh ve Kuvvetli Türkiye İçin Cumhuriyetçi Köylü Millet Partisi Programı. (n.d.).

Opçin Kıdal, A. (2020). *Continuity and change in the ideology of the Nationalist Action Party (MHP), 1965-2015: From Alparslan Türkeş to Devlet Bahçeli* (Doctoral dissertation, Bilkent University, Department of Political Science and Public Administration). *pp. 167*.

Öznur, H. (1996). *Ülkücü hareket I: 1908-1980*. Asya Kitap Kulübü.

Poulton, H. (1997). *Top hat, grey wolf, crescent*. New York University Press.

Tunaya, T. Z. (1988). *Türkiye'de siyasi partiler* (Vol. 1). İstanbul: Hürriyet Vakfı Yayınları.

Tunaya, T. Z. (1988a). *Türkiye'de siyasi partiler* (Vol. 2). İstanbul: Hürriyet Vakfı Yayınları.

Turan, E. (2022). Milliyetçiliğin eklemlenmeci yapısını Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi üzerinden okumak. In M. Yiğit (Ed.), *Türkiye'de siyasi partiler ve milliyetçilik* (pp. 105-189). Konya: Palet Yayınları.

Yiğit, M. (2022). Türkiye'nin ilk milliyetçi fırkaları: Milli Meşrutiyet Fırkası ve Milli Türk Fırkası. In M. Yiğit (Ed.), *Türkiye'de siyasi partiler ve milliyetçilik* (pp. 63, 71). Konya: Palet Yayınları.

Internet Resources:

https://hayatibice.net/?p=505

http://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/2002/03/07/p09.html

https://www.mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/209/index.html

https://www.shaber3.com/gundem/MHP-baraj-altina-gidiyor-CHP/453264/

https://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/904362-iste-gozaltina-alinan-isimler

https://www.aljazeera.com.tr/haber/mit-tirlari-boyle-durduruldu

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LqSWnu1rNNg

https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/iste-mhpnin-koalisyon-icin-4-sarti-29828006

A COMPARATIVE EVALUATION OF NATIONALISM PERCEPTIONS AND UNDERSTANDINGS: WESTERN NATIONALISMS VS. TURKISH NATIONALISM

Nihat YILMAZ

Dean, Faculty of Political Sciences, Trabzon University

Introduction

Different societies have attributed various interpretations to the concepts of nation and nationalism. The historical experiences of each society during specific periods notably influence their perceptions of nationalism. This study aims to provide a comparative evaluation of Western nationalism and Turkish nationalism. Firstly, the positive aspects of nationalism in the West and its aggressive manifestations are thematically addressed through various thinkers. Following this, the basic principles, intellectual traditions, cultural and historical foundations, and political consequences of Turkish nationalism are elaborated upon. The emergence, evolution, underlying assumptions, and repercussions of both Western and Turkish nationalism are also discussed. There are fundamentally significant distinctions between Western nationalism and Turkish nationalism. This inquiry aims to explore the differences between Western and Turkish interpretations of nationalism, particularly regarding culture and history.

Turkish nationalism, which primarily emphasizes culture, tradition, history, language, and religion, stands out as a distinct form of nationalism with both modern and ancient roots, differentiating it from its Western counterparts in concrete terms. In particular, the ag-

gressive Western nationalisms that emerged after the First World War came to the forefront with their pejorative perceptions and characteristics. Western nationalisms have largely evolved based on racism and discrimination, both in terms of the historical process and the perspectives of thinkers. Ideologically, Western nationalisms associated with fascism diverge from Turkish nationalism in both respects.

In contrast to the nationalism that emerged post-World War I, Turkish nationalism embodies principles dating back to the French Revolution, emphasizing a deeper integration with concepts of democracy and emancipation. However, this situation persists in the modern form of Turkish nationalism. Additionally, Turkish nationalism possesses a national consciousness and sentiment that has existed since the era of the ancient Turks. This text examines the aforementioned consciousness and sentiment in conjunction with its modern form, analyzing this understanding in the context of the differences between the aggressive and racist ideologies that were prevalent between the two world wars, as previously discussed.

Conceptual Framework

The concepts of people, race, nation, and nationalism are closely interconnected and are commonly utilized in everyday language. One of the important concepts is "nation." The term "nation," derived from the Latin word "nasci," which refers to the birth process, denotes a unity arising from common ancestry. However, this common ancestry may not necessarily be biological; it can also be cultural (Patzelt, 2017). The Turkish term for "nation" is "millet," a word of Arabic origin. In Arabic, the term "sect" has been used with various meanings, such as "prostration," while the term "ummah" refers to the path and principle adhered to, denoting the collective sum of the members of a religion (Niyazi, 2000, p. 16). Over time, the concept has undergone a shift in meaning, acquiring its contemporary interpretation. The content of the concept in Europe has been shaped by regional experiences.

The concepts of nation, nationality, and nationalism have been pivotal in shaping European history throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. These concepts began to emerge in Europe in the second half of the 18th century and spread widely among the populace during the

19th century. By the mid-19th century, the concept of the nation had been established as a key source of political legitimacy. Nationalism reached its zenith in 1914 when millions were prepared to die for their nations in World War I. Despite its apparent decline post-World War II, nationalism, in terms of belonging to a nation and national pride, remains significant in many people's lives (Jansen & Borggräfe, 2007, p. 7). The concept of 'nationality,' which is another important phenomenon of the 19th and 20th centuries, derives from the word 'nation' and expresses belonging. The relationship between these two terms is articulated in the "Lügat-ı Naci" dictionary as follows: "Nationality is the sum of conditions and characteristics that distinguish one nation from others" (Niyazi, 2000, p. 17). The culmination of human societal development is embodied in the concepts of "nation" and "state," where the 'nation' represents an organized community with its own independent territory. Nationalism, a potent ideological force throughout the centuries, is derived from these concepts. However, it is observed that the concepts of "people" and "nation" are sometimes confused and used interchangeably. "People" refers to the community at a specific time, while "nation" signifies a consciousness of existence" (Atsız, 2011, p. 113). According to Yusuf Akçura (2016, p. 17), "A nation is a human community where unity has formed in its social conscience due to the essential unity of race and language." Additionally, Alparslan Türkeş (2019, p. 166) defines 'nationalism' in his 'Doctrine of the Nine Lights' as loyalty and love for the Turkish nation, along with loyalty and service to the state of Türkiye. Generally, the conditions and characteristics that distinguish nations from one another have also played a role in shaping their unique understandings of nationalism.

Fundamentally, nationalism can be divided into two categories: "ethnic"-based nationalism and "political" nationalism. Ethnic-based nationalism is a type of nationalism characterized by belonging to the nation and loyalty to innate traits that predominantly emerged in German-speaking countries. In contrast, political nationalism, which evolved in France, emphasizes concepts such as state borders and life within the constitution as decisive criteria. It is stated that these two forms are ideal, and in reality, a mixture of these two forms often emerges. The classification of "good" or "bad" nationalism, characterized by variability between these two types, is also frequently employed.

As a worldview, nationalism organizes the political, cognitive, and emotional content it associates with the nation in various ways (cf. Echternkamp, 2002, p. 8). According to Hans-Ulrich Wehler (2002, p. 205), nationalism represents a system of thought born out of the idea of the nation to justify the existence of the nation, explain its past, and plan its future. The key concepts used to affirm nationalism include "national consciousness," "national sentiment," and "patriotism." Along with social change, the idea of a nation helped introduce these concepts into the literature. Social modernization is a significant starting point that facilitates the formation of the nation. During periods of social upheaval, the concept of the nation, as a new form of collective identity, enabled broad segments of the population to participate in decision-making processes and political power for the first time. Social resources were guaranteed to everyone who complied with the definition of belonging to a nation (Jansen & Borggräfe, 2007, p. 10). The interpretation of belonging to a nation has also led to the emergence of different classifications within the concept of nation. A distinction can be made between the "subjective" and "objective" concepts of a nation. According to the "subjective concept of a nation," a nation is based on the belief that its members belong to each other. This concept, which can also be termed political nationalism, is rooted in the ideas of the French Revolution. For the realization of such a nation, popular sovereignty, the rule of law, and liberal basic and civil rights must be guaranteed. Membership in a subjectively defined nation is predicated on an individual's conscious choice, influenced solely by personal beliefs, thus facilitating easy accession to such a nation. In contrast, the "objective concept of a nation" differs from the "subjective concept" based on criteria that extend beyond individual actions. Depending on the definition of national affiliation, various characteristics are used as membership criteria, including common language, history, tradition, culture, and even common ancestry and kinship. This objective concept of nation corresponds to ethnically based nationalism, which originated in Germany (Jansen & Borggräfe, 2007, pp. 11-13). As can be seen, the historical and cultural experiences of countries also influence their understanding of the nation. In addition to this understanding, societies significantly impact the formation of individuals' personalities. This influence persists from birth to death.

Mehmed Niyazi (2000, p. 13) articulates this situation through the relationship between society and the individual as follows: "Our body structure is equal as biological entities, but our personalities are different. We belong to nature with our body structure, and to society with our personalities. Therefore, society is not a mere mathematical sum of individuals, but a composite of the unique characteristics of the individuals living together. Individuals also derive at least some aspects of their personalities from the society that transcends them. With few exceptions, the personalities of people who grow up in a society are closely related to the level and characteristics of that society." Therefore, the influence of society on the character formation of individuals is extremely important. The culture formed within this society will inevitably influence the personalities of those who govern the state.

Another significant concept that influences personality formation by shaping individuals' thoughts is "ideology." The term "ideology" was coined in 1796 by the French philosopher Destutt de Tracy (1754–1856). Tracy used this concept to express a new "science of ideas (ideology)" aimed at revealing the sources of conscious thoughts and ideas (Heywood, 2017, p. 70). Until the turn of the century, "ideology" referred to the science dealing with the emergence and development of intellectual-historical and philosophical ideas. There are also states that act ideologically. Those in power seek to shape society according to their own ideas and views, often not allowing for alternative perspectives. For instance, in both communism and national socialism, individuals were not free to decide how they wanted to live; the ruling party dictated this, thereby "ideologizing" every aspect of life (Schneider & Toyka-Seid, 2023). Therefore, in both the aggressive nationalism that emerged in the Western world and communism, individuals' lives were entirely under the control of ideology. Individuals could not influence decision-making processes with personal opinions that contradicted the prevailing ideology.

In the social sciences, a political theory is a more or less coherent set of ideas that forms the basis for organized social activity. Its fundamental characteristics include an explanation of existing power relations, a model of a desired future, and a blueprint for how political change can and should occur. Ideologies translate political theory into political practice. In this sense, ideologies are similar to political philos-

ophies, which form a collection of values, theories, and doctrines that constitute a separate worldview. However, in another sense, ideologies transform into broader political movements and are embodied in the activities of political leaders, parties, and groups. Ideologies are by no means isolated or immutable systems of thought. They overlap with each other at many points and sometimes share common interests and literature. Ideologies constantly renew themselves politically and intellectually as they interact with and influence other ideologies and as they adapt to changing historical conditions. The importance of an ideology increases or decreases depending on its capacity to adapt to political, social, and economic conditions and to renew itself theoretically (Heywood, 2017, p. 70).

Nation and Nationalism in the West

This section explains how the West engages with the concepts of nation and nationalism. Here, Western nationalism's approach to and interpretation of these concepts are evaluated from two different perspectives. This section addresses the viewpoints of thinkers in the West who hold positive views on nationalism, as well as the emergence of the aggressive characteristics of Western nationalism. Before discussing nationalism, it is essential to touch upon the concept of Europe, which has become synonymous with the West.

This Europe, born from the exchange of material and spiritual values, the cooperation of races and nations, and the competition of religions, systems, and interests, is a marketplace on a very limited piece of land where ideas, beliefs, and discoveries accumulate. From every corner of the earth, material and spiritual values have begun to flow there. On one hand, the new lands of America, Africa, and the oceans, as well as the ancient empires of the Far East, sent their raw materials; on the other hand, the powerful machine known as awakened Europe, nourished by the knowledge, philosophies, and religions of old Asia, processed the material and spiritual raw materials sent by the East and produced new materials, ideas, and inventions from them. Throughout history, the influences of ancient Greece, Rome, and Christianity have been evident in European thought. Those who have not experienced these three influences cannot be considered European, even if they live in the heart of Europe. Conversely, people who possess a

mindset shaped by these three influences are considered European, regardless of which continent they inhabit. The Renaissance is a culmination of these three influences (Safa, 2013: 114-115). However, although the Renaissance began first in Italy, this country was the last in Europe to realize its social development and formation as a nation. The effort and aspiration to become a nation are clearly evident in the developments of England, France, and Spain, which were the first to achieve this in Europe. The peoples of Europe have made immense sacrifices in their pursuit of nationhood. The continuously forming middle class, aiming to establish a national and centralized state based on the people, first allied with kings to eliminate feudalism and render the nobility harmless. Then, by uniting with various classes and masses, it also eliminated kingdoms in many European countries or preserved them as a unifying element in a symbolic nature (Turhan, 2019: 220-221).

European nationalism emerged as a result of the progress of two opposing forces, sometimes through conflict and sometimes through cooperation, since the Renaissance. One of these forces is spiritual, while the other is materialistic. The first represents Christian spiritualism, while the second signifies large-scale industry based on the foundations of colonialism. These two forces have fiercely competed for two centuries. At times, we see the ideal of Christianity prevail, emerging with high moral values. The movements that reveal the victory of the spiritual front include the Renaissance, the progress of the sciences, the Reformation, as well as the French Revolution and the Romantic movements. The Renaissance opposed religious domination; however, the ideal of humanity during this era encompasses a cosmopolitan view that does not align with nationalism. Nevertheless, the fact that the geniuses who paved the way for the Renaissance—artists such as Dante and Petrarch in Italy, and Shakespeare in England—wrote their works in the national language should be considered a step toward nationalism (Topçu, 2010: 75-76).

During the development of nationalisms in Europe, disasters and defeats suddenly awakened nations that had fallen into a slumber of complacency. All members of the nation gathered around a common ambition, their hearts beating with excitement. Eventually, the national ideal was born from this widespread and sacred fervor. Hungarians, Bulgarians, Serbs, Germans, Italians, and Greeks unified and clung to

these ideals after experiencing disasters of defeat and enslavement, thereby ensuring the survival of their nations. The concepts of nations involve uniting their kin in language, religion, education, spirit, and sentiment and gathering them all within a political boundary to safeguard their interests. Panhellenism, Pan-Germanism, Pan-Slavism, Italian 'Irredentism,' and the significance of Macedonia for Bulgarians illustrate that each nation has formed its own national ideal.

The concept of nationalism first appeared in an article by Herder published in 1774. Later, the use of the term "nationalism" in the field of political language began to solidify. Initially, conceptual and phenomenological inadequacies in discussions about nationalism, along with the early shortcomings of its pioneering thinkers, prevented nationalism from being articulated as clearly and distinctly as its opposing currents, such as liberalism and socialism. Although little attention was paid to nationalism at first, Herder put forward an interpretation that focused on an already ethnically defined nation (Jansen/Borggrafe, 2007:17).

The German philosopher and critic Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744-1803) developed the concept of romantic or organic nationalism, a form of ethnic nationalism where the state derives its political legitimacy from historical, cultural, or hereditary groups. His fundamental assumption was that each ethnicity should be politically distinct from others. Herder expressed his ideas on this subject through the Volksgeist theory (Hamilton, 2011). In addition to the Volksgeist, Johann Gottfried Herder was also interested in the concept of the Zeitgeist. Therefore, Herder is a key figure in the development of two wellknown philosophical-anthropological concepts.

The first of these concepts is Zeitgeist (zeit: time + geist: spirit), meaning "the spirit of the time" or "the spirit of the era," which indicates the cultural, intellectual, ethical, spiritual, and political climate of a period in general. Herder reportedly coined the term in 1769 in a critique of a work by the German philologist Christian Adolph Klotz. The second concept relevant here is Volksgeist, usually translated as "national spirit" or "national character." Volksgeist represents the spirit and manifestation of the people; it invigorates the nation (Hamilton, 2011). Johann Gottfried Herder and subsequent romantic thinkers regarded the diversity of peoples and their languages as anthropological

and cultural richness. The concept of "people" is etymologically defined as "a large community of individuals connected by a common culture, history, and language." According to historian Leopold von Ranke, people were "thoughts of God," and therefore each people was valuable in their own right (Seibt, 2016). Another thinker who made significant contributions to the concept of nationalism after Herder is Johann Gottfried Fichte.

According to Johann Gottfried Fichte (1806:46-47), "It is necessary for a German to openly declare that he relies on his people and has true and rational love solely for the German nation. A person who does not see himself as eternally bound to his nation cannot have general love and, likewise, cannot love a homeland that does not exist for him." Philosopher Fichte views education as the sole means of achieving a morally and rationally founded state. According to him, the individual should be guided both to overcome his own egoism and to see state property as his own property. Fichte speaks of the long-term main goal of these efforts as the creation of a new humanity, a goal no less significant than the formation of the human race itself (Fichte, 2019).

Richard Schröder (1993: 110-111) states: "So then: we, Westerners and Easterners, are Germans because our fatherland, our mother tongue, our history, and our culture bind us together. And that is why it is good and normal that we, united by so much, once again live together in a shared state with equal rights and obligations, and also jointly manage our common affairs. When I say, 'Germany is the country I like best' (even if it's not necessarily the most comfortable one), this is not nationalism of a kind that discriminates against anyone. For every person's country should be able to be his favorite. I am not discriminating against anyone when I say, 'my children are the children I like best.' For I am their only father, and that creates an obligation – sometimes also in an unpleasant way. It is perfectly all right that this country and its problems are more important, more serious, and more immediate to me than those of other countries, just as it is perfectly all right that I am not indifferent to the rest of the world."

The first half of the 19th century was a period in Europe that served as a source of many new ideas and saw nations and groups clashing to bring those ideas into practice. At the beginning of the century, the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Empire had thrown all of Eu-

rope into turmoil. The Germans, Italians, and Spaniards, based on the idea of nationality, prepared and implemented national revolts against the Emperor during the last periods of Napoleonic domination. The Germans, Italians, and Slavs, who worked diligently on the idea of the nation from historical, legal, and literary perspectives, were preparing for separation from Austria through German, Italian, and Slavic unity (Akçura, 2016:21).

It was the scientific movement that facilitated the consciousness of Western nationalism. This consciousness manifested during the Renaissance in geniuses like Leonardo da Vinci, who had a passion for understanding truth in every field. It also brought about a revolution in mindset and method, based on the principle of seeking truth in the light of reason, through the works of Bacon and Descartes. The Reformation, on the other hand, was a transition from the religion of the ummah to the religion of the nation. The translation of the Bible into German was a turning point. The French Revolution established the principles of personal liberty and equality of citizens' rights as the foundation of national sovereignty.

One of the most important outcomes of these movements was the triumph of Romanticism in the West. This movement, which began with artists such as Walter Scott, Schlegel, and Chateaubriand in Western literature, continued until the mid-19th century and was a reaction against the cosmopolitan spirit of classical literature. Romantic poets reflected the beauty of their homelands in their nature poetry. In their national theater plays and stories, they sought to revive national music. Romanticism is the product of a Christian ideal that succeeded not only in art but also in morality, family, religion, and politics. In Germany, Goethe's "Faust" symbolized the ability of the soul in the form of a fist used against the mortality of life and desires. Victor Hugo revealed in *Les Misérables* that salvation can only be achieved through faith, love, and affection. The Romantic movement, which was firmly rooted in the belief in God, became the sincerest nationalist movement seen in the West. It played a crucial role in embedding the concept of nation into the heart and soul. Romantics chose national themes with this sentiment and created nationalist works. They completely abandoned the inclination to address humanistic sentiments within the framework of universal and general topics, as seen in previous centuries (Topçu,

2010:76). In later years, theorists emerged in the West who worked on areas beyond romantic nationalism.

Until the 1980s, studies on nationalism oscillated between two sub-jective and objective concepts of the nation. In his 1908 work *Cosmopol-itanism and the Nation-State*, Friedrich Meinecke distinguished between the "state nation" and the "cultural nation." According to Meinecke (1908), a regional state that already exists in state nations (as in France) adopts nationalist ideas, while cultural nation-building in cultural na-tions (as in Germany) precedes the nation-state. The state nation cor-responds to the subjective concept of the nation, and the cultural na-tion corresponds to the objective concept of the nation. However, this conceptualization is strongly influenced by ideology, as it assumes the superiority of German "culture" over Western "civilization."

In the 1980s, theorists of nationalism such as Benedict Anderson, Ernest Gellner, Eric Hobsbawm, and Rainer Lepsius described the idea of the nation as an "imagined community" with "invented traditions" as the natural or primordial order of social life. According to Smith, however, there can be no completely subjective understanding of the nation, because this cannot explain the nationalists' belief in ethnici-ty. Conversely, the opposing view, which relies entirely on an ethnic basis, is also indefensible. A nation is based not only on the will of its members but also on their "ethnic" origin. According to Smith, it is indisputable that the complex structures of contemporary nations can-not be equated with their pre-modern predecessors, and the relations between these two should be taken into account (Smith 2000: 6-8).

In pre-modern times, there were already forms of communities re-sembling today's nations, which continued their existence through myths, culture, and territories. Ethnicity is not necessarily related to an-cestry; rather, it is related to history and origin myths. He defines nations based on the historical territories occupied by an ethnic group, shared culture, and laws. According to him, a nation includes both ethnic and civic components and is shaped by ethnic myths and symbols passed down through generations (Smith 2000: 63-67). The theorists mentioned here made significant contributions to the study of nationalism.

When examining 20th-century Western nationalism, it is useful to address the concepts of Social Darwinism and race. Historically, the term "Social Darwinism" was first defined in the early 1870s. It is of-

ten described as the application of Darwin's theory of evolution to human societies. In fact, evolutionary theories of social transformation existed even before Charles Darwin (1809-1882). Darwin's rapidly and widely accepted theory of evolution was not the origin of Social Darwinism but rather a catalyst for a development that had begun earlier, with Darwin primarily used as a scientific authority. Social Darwinism reached its peak during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. During these periods, groups conducted studies on Darwin's theory to achieve their goals (Lenzen, 2015).

The theory of evolution, on one hand, legitimized liberal (laissez-faire) economic thought through the concept of natural selection, and on the other, supported the Marxist notion of class struggle by considering conflict as the basis of progress (Doğan, 2006:2). Therefore, it can be concluded that the theory of evolution influenced the intellectual frameworks of both ideologies.

The National Socialists were convinced of their own "theory of race." This "theory of race" divides people into different groups, asserting that there are various "races" of people, each with distinct values. The National Socialists claimed that some "human races" are less valuable and ranked lower in the hierarchy. For instance, they posited that Jews ranked at the bottom and that their lives were less valuable. Children were required to learn this "racial theory" in school, as the National Socialists aimed to influence children at a young age and instill their worldview (BPB, 2022). Through these processes, they sought to create a new superior race, both ethnically and culturally.

The concept of a "people's community" (Volksgemeinschaft), referring to a people that is as homogeneous as possible from an ethnic and cultural perspective, is noteworthy. The term originates from the National Socialist German Workers' Party. Today's neo-Nazis have rediscovered this concept of "people's community" and positioned it as a central pillar of their political goals. So, what does "people's society" (Volksgemeinschaft) mean from their perspective? For them, this concept is based not only on language, culture, and traditions but also on the common origin of its members, aiming to create an ethnically homogeneous community. Connected to this vision was the exclusion of "others," who were considered ethnically and genetically "foreign." The metaphor of the "body of the people" (Volkskörper), frequently used during this period, refers to an authoritarian, hierarchically struc-

tured, and racially homogeneous community. The assumption that peoples and races occupy a position in the natural hierarchy based on their "inherited biological traits" is also a fundamental tenet of Nazism (Lemke, 2012: 27-28).

Representatives of these theories have fueled fears that a people will be "spoiled" by so-called "bad" genes. Many individuals seized this opportunity to call for repressive measures against certain groups deemed "inferior." This movement was termed "eugenics." Francis Galton, Darwin's cousin, is considered one of the fathers of eugenics. Galton argued that people with disabilities or mental illnesses should not be allowed to have children. In the 19th and 20th centuries, eugenics measures were employed in many countries. For instance, in the United States, many individuals were sterilized against their will until 1932 (Studyflix, 2023). Therefore, such practices have been observed not only in Europe but also in various countries, leading us to expand the scope to include the West in general.

Although Social Darwinism became less appealing after World War II, it still persists among certain social groups. For instance, many individuals believe that homeless people are lazy and that their circumstances result from their own failings. Similarly, some people hold negative views about the unemployed, often regarding them as useless and a burden to society. Additionally, there can be overt racism and xenophobia directed towards non-whites. Economic Social Darwinism also exists, where individuals are evaluated based on their economic performance. This perspective implies that the more money a person contributes to society, the more valuable they are perceived to be (Studyflix, 2023). While this mindset emerged in the first half of the 20th century, modern interpretations of it continue to persist today. This situation can also be described as modern Social Darwinism. Some of its characteristics can be listed as follows (Mittelbach, 2020):

- A decrease in the number of supporters after the end of the Second World War.

- The notion that some people are less valuable than others has not entirely disappeared.

- Certain minorities and groups are regarded as less valuable. For example, there is a belief that homeless people (Obdachlose) are lazy and that this laziness is their own responsibility.

- A similar attitude is displayed towards people of immigrant origin or foreigners in general

- Finally, the perception of "if you have less money, you are also less valuable", in which people are evaluated according to their economic performance.

In the formation of xenophobia and negative attitudes towards differences, historical experiences may also be influential. Ernst Moritz Arndt mentions the following in his 1813 work "On the Hatred of the People": "The Germans must now have a burning grudge against the French. (...) I want hatred against the French not only for this war, but for a long time and constantly. Then Germany's borders will be safe even without the need for artificial defenses. Because the people will always become a unified force against them when restless and marauding neighbors attempt to cross this border. May this hatred shine as the religion of the German people, as a holy madness in all hearts, and may it always keep us faithful." By saying this, he reveals the dimensions of hatred against the French.

Paul de Lagarde highlights the aggressive nationalism in the West in his works published in Deutsche Schriften (1878: 58): "It is not appropriate for any nation to have another nation in it. ... It follows from this that Jews, as Jews, are a great nuisance to every European people. The result for Germany is that Jews must either emigrate from Germany or become Germans. The more sharply we develop and shape our character as a nation and the characters of all individuals who can be tolerated among us, the less space there will be for Jews in Germany ... We do not accept the jelly of humanity (Dechalert der Humanität) because it is inedible for us, and at the same time, we reject the spirit of the century." Another intellectual who finds this view narrow and emphasizes the inclusiveness of French nationalism is Heinrich Heine.

According to Heinrich Heine (1836: 35), "French patriotism consists in the warming of the heart and, thanks to this warming, it expands, grows, and thus embraces with love not only its closest relatives but the whole of France, the whole country of civilization. On the other hand, German patriotism includes the narrowing of his heart, contracting like skin exposed to cold, hating foreign things, no longer wanting to be a citizen of the world and a European, but only desiring to be a narrow German." While the inclusiveness of French patriotism is praised here, German patriotism is criticized as a narrow pattern.

This aggressive understanding of nationalism in the West caused antisemitism to be carried to advanced levels. Antisemitism advocates anti-Jewish attitudes and actions with different motivations. These attitudes and actions can be both individual and collective. Antisemitism emerged with the formation of European nation-states in the 19th century, but it was based on a centuries-old Christian tradition of anti-Semitism. In the 19th century, racial ideology gave antisemitism a political character, transforming it into much more than mere hatred toward Jews (Bergemann, 2023). All these notions of racial othering and segregation that occurred during a specific period in the West have significantly influenced literature.

Today, the Western world, particularly under the influence of Americans, often associates nationalism primarily with fascism and Nazism. In reality, nationalism, being a cultural movement, rejects racism; and as a political movement based on the people, it also rejects authoritarian systems of governance. In this regard, evaluating nationalism through the lens of fascism would be starting from an incorrect example (Güngör, 2019: 82). Therefore, when the concept of nationalism is mentioned in the West, the first thing that comes to mind is the negative practices that occurred there. From this, it can be said that ethnocentric prejudices have developed or been fostered against different understandings of nationalism in the West.

Nation and Nationalism in Turks

Although the word "nation" has Arabic origins, Arabs use the term "Sha'b" in a sociological sense; for example, "Sha'bul – Arabi" (Arab Nation) and "Shabu't Turki" (Turkish Nation). The Turkish Language Institution has shown that the word "millet" (nation) is synonymous with "ulus" (peoples). The word "budun" was also used in the same sense in Turkish history. Describing our national existence with this word, which is foreign in origin, may be seen as a contradiction. However, the word "millet" has entered our language by acquiring another meaning and has become a part of our lexicon. All Western nations have used the term "nation" to express the concept of "millet," despite its foreign origins. What matters is using a word that can fully convey the intended meaning (Niyazi, 2000: 17).

The concept of "Turk" has been used in different meanings across various sources. However, it does not contain tribalism and exclusivism in a general sense. The word "Turk" was first assigned to the Oghuz by others at the time of the Tukia state. The Uighurs referred to the Oghuz as "Uluğ Türk" to distinguish them from themselves. The name "Turk" is mentioned as "Türük" in the Orhun Monuments, meaning "the people/subjects who are loyal to their state," or "the strong, powerful nation." According to Mahmud Kashgari, the name "Turk" was given by God himself, signifying health and maturity. "Türk" was not the name of a tribe; rather, it was a title given to those who adopted the customs and religion.

Islam has become an integral part of the Turkic world since the eleventh century. According to Turkish nationalism, people who share the same culture, past, and vision for the future constitute a nation. Having a long history, unity of language, religion, homeland, ancestry, shared victories, and collective suffering make up the Turkish nation. Unlike Western nations, the absence of one of these elements does not damage the sense of belonging or detract from being Turkish. For example, Sokullu Mehmed Pasha is not Turkish in terms of ancestry; however, according to historical accounts, he was Muslim enough to read the Quran every night and Turkish enough not to sleep without reading Turkish history. This implies that one can belong to the Turkish nation and even practice Turkish nationalism without being ethnically Turkish. Atatürk's words, "How happy is the one who says I'm a Turk," and his belonging-based understanding of Turkishness also support this claim. Such nationalism, which is not considered unusual but rather quite normal in Turkish culture, cannot be found in the culture of any European nation or even among Muslim Arabs.

As Toynbee points out, racial characteristics are predominant in European cultures, leading to the exclusion of those who do not share the same roots. Arabs also employed racist policies during the Umayyad period. The citizenship status of Muslim Arabs, non-Arab Muslims (mawla), and non-Muslims was not the same. Non-Arab Muslims were branded on their hands for easy identification and prohibited from marrying Arab women. Unlike Turkish culture, being non-Arab by ancestry rendered other traits insignificant. The preservation and development of a nation can only be achieved by maintaining the char-

acteristics that constitute it. If the Turkish nation loses its qualities of adaptability, tolerance, and high morality, it will become an indistinguishable crowd and face extinction in the long run. Thus, a Turkish nationalist focuses meticulously on these qualities and elements such as language, religion, and homeland that characterize the Turkish nation (Niyazi, 2000: 143-145).

Recent Turkish thinkers have made significant intellectual contributions to Turkish nationalism, helping to develop the theoretical content of the concept. One important concept emphasized and elaborated upon by Turkish thinkers is the concept of "race."

The formation of races is a distinct field of scientific research. Whether explained by "geographical and cosmic influences" as Ibn Khaldun and Lamarck proposed, or by "natural selection" and mutations as Darwin suggested, races always represent a variety. Attempting to view races as if they were separate species based on differences in skin color, skeletal structure, and skull shape, and using this to justify political and social exploitation, leads to the development of a "highly erroneous" theory of humanity that considers humans polygenically. Such abuses are not encountered in the Turkish and Islamic world. The Western world has turned the notion of race into a field of political exploitation. Many intellectuals and politicians from France, England, and Germany developed theories in the name of science to exploit people whose colors and skulls were different from their own. The claims of individuals like Arthur de Gobineau, Vacher de Lapouge, Sir F. Galton, and Otto Ammon are open to criticism not only from a scientific perspective but also from a moral standpoint (Arvasi, 1999: 117-118). From this, we can understand that the perspectives on race in the Western world and the Turkish-Islamic world are generally different.

Races, of course, exist. However, political exploitation based on races and the promotion of theories such as "inferior race" and "superior race," which offend human dignity, should never be allowed. Islam does not deny the "truth of race," but it opposes the abuse of this truth. Scientists and politicians must act with an awareness of this truth and a sense of "reverence for God." According to our exalted and holy book, the Qur'an: "And one of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the diversity of your languages and colors. Surely there are lessons in this for those who know" (Surah Rum, 22).

The form that nationalism takes in each country often conflicts or contrasts with that in other places. For example, while Arab socialism is an important element in Arab nationalism, socialism in Türkiye serves as an antithesis to nationalism (Güngör, 2019: 3). In addition to those who have worked materially and spiritually to establish the nation, there are also significant ideas and thinkers who have intellectually and theoretically nourished Turkish nationalism.

Ziya Gökalp, an important intellectual of Turkish nationalism, wrote in his work titled "The Principles of Turkism" that "race means nation according to the racial Turkists. The word (race) is essentially a term of zoology. Each animal species is divided into a number of groups by appearance. These groups are called races. For example, the horse species has several anatomical races named the Arabian, the English, and the Hungarian." Here, he actually defines race as a term used in classifying horses. Similarly, humans have long been categorized into four groups: white, black, yellow, and red. Although this is a rough classification, it still retains its value. However, Gökalp (2019: 13) also states that there is no fully pure race to justify this classification.

Differences in skin color, facial features, and body shape enable each individual to be "himself/herself" with his/her own distinctive characteristics while also allowing people to relate to each other as separate individuals. In fact, in the 13th verse of Surah Hujurat, the purpose of dividing humanity into different peoples and tribes is explained as a means of ensuring their acquaintance, the natural result of which is the establishment of mutual social relations (Commentary on the Way of the Qur'an, vol. 4, pp. 303-304). Islam acknowledges the phenomenon of "biological race" but rejects "biological racism." People may differ in color and structure, but they all come from one root.

Alparslan Türkeş's advice and admonition to Turkish nationalists regarding race emphasizes the unique features of Turkish nationalism: "Defining a nation based on race, according to biological principles, is very dangerous; as a matter of fact, it is this distorted and morbid state of shifting that polarizes instead of welding together, ignites conflicts instead of embracing, and is evil instead of being compassionate" (Bahceli, 2019). Turkish nationalism discards race-based and biological perspectives with its compassionate, inclusive, and embracing characteristics.

Yusuf Akçura (2022: 100), in his work titled "Three Styles of Politics," criticizes various attitudes regarding the Unity of Turks, Islamic Union, and Ottoman nationality. He mentions that even if "separating Turk from Islam, Islam from Turk, Turk and Islam from Ottomanism, and Ottomanism from Turk and Islam" might come to mind, these concepts will not settle in our minds. As such, he states that these concepts support each other and should not be separated. It is well known that seeking solutions outside the sphere of Turkishness and Islam has led to accelerated disintegration and decay, resulting in tragic losses such as the downfall of an empire. For this reason, if change becomes uncontrolled, if it moves away from the essence, a hybrid and degenerate understanding will emerge instantly. The essential and fundamental challenge is to achieve change without being swept into the vortex of transformation, transitioning into another form or different dimension. Otherwise, change may lead to liquidation, destruction, and annihilation (Bahceli, 2019).

Islam acknowledges the reality of "biological race" but rejects claims of "racial superiority." Turkish nationalism also rejects basing its policy on "biological racism" and instead focuses on the concept of "social race," which plays an important role in the life of nations and is addressed by sociology. "Social race" is a subject of sociology, not biology. It refers to the "consciousness of kinship" among individuals, families, classes, and strata that constitute a nation. This consciousness manifests as a sense of belonging, rooted in kinship and blood ties, which exists as a shared awareness.

In addition to biological inheritance, common culture, shared geography, a collective lifestyle, and joint struggles bring individuals and strata of a nation closer together, both spiritually and physically. As marriages become easier between people who live in the same culture and share the same fate, individuals will start to resemble each other physically over time. In other words, a "social race" is born from social, cultural, economic, and political integration as a sociological necessity. If there are groups within the same social structure that do not intermarry for various reasons or insist on staying within a small "narrow region" as a "small ethnic structure," it becomes difficult for a typical social race to emerge (Arvasi, 1999:119). Therefore, societies that can form around a common culture may become stronger and find it easier to achieve their national ideals.

With the help of modern sociology, Ziya Gökalp systematized ideas that had previously been expressed only in a scattered manner into a coherent doctrine of Turkism. For other aspects of his doctrine, Gökalp closely followed the ideas of his predecessors in Turkish nationalism. He demonstrated the distinction between culture and civilization; while he accepted the adoption of science and technology from the West, he opposed adopting the cultures of other nations, whether Arab, Iranian, or Western. From his point of view, the nation is a "society united by culture." Gökalp advocated for investigating the true cultural values of the pure and untainted layers of the populace. These values were widely present in the literature, art, crafts, morals, and customs of the people (Kushner, 2009:189).

Gökalp (2019:19) states, "The nation is neither a racial, nor a tribal, nor a geographical, nor a political, nor a voluntary group. A nation is a group composed of individuals who share a common language, religion, morality, and art, meaning they have received the same cultural upbringing." The Turkish peasant phrases this with the idiom: "Whose language matches my language; whose religion matches my religion." Indeed, a person prefers to live with those who share the same language and religion rather than those who share the same bloodline because our human identity resides not in our bodies but in our souls. A person may sacrifice their life, if necessary, for the nation in which they were raised and received their upbringing. Whether they come from Albania or Arabia, we should not discriminate against our kin who have grown up with Turkish upbringing and ideals. Those who have made great sacrifices for our nation cannot be told, "You are not Turk."

According to Gökalp (2019:20), race has no effect on social character. However, the concept of race is extremely important in horses regarding lineage and pedigrees. In short, Gökalp asserted, "There is no alternative but to recognize as Turkish every individual who declares themselves to be Turkish, and to punish only those who are found to have betrayed Turkishness." This emphasizes that anyone who feels part of the Turkish nation can belong to this nation. He also frequently uses the concept of culture in his work titled "The Principles of Turkism." Therefore, there is a strong emphasis on a nation based on culture.

In our country, the ease of "intermarrying," due to shared religion and a common awareness of heritage, along with increasing "social

contacts" throughout the nation, facilitated the formation of the "Turkish social race," which has continued to strengthen over time. Essentially, because foreigners in our country did not convert to Islam en masse, "marriages" occurred between Turkish tribes and clans that came together in various ways and bore various names, making cohesion among them easier. Additionally, the distribution of Turkish tribes across the homeland was executed thoughtfully. Instead of having one Turkish tribe settle in a specific region, various Turkish tribes were dispersed or intermingled. This approach helped to ensure cohesion and reinforce the "social race."

Due to these and other reasons, just as distinct characters have developed for the French, English, German, Russian, Chinese, and Japanese, a "Turkish character" has also emerged. This character, like those of other nations, did not form recently; it is the result of a historical accumulation spanning thousands of years (Arvasi, 1999:119). Ziya Gökalp (2019:27) refers to this accumulation as culture. Culture is the harmonious sum of a nation's religious, moral, legal, intellectual, artistic, linguistic, economic, and scientific lives. Within European civilization, distinct and independent French and German cultures exist.

Each nation represents a "typical social race," and this race possesses certain characteristics. In Turkish poems, stories, fairy tales, and epics, charming expressions depict and explore the "Turkish character." Descriptive phrases such as "crescent-browed," "gazelle-eyed," "rosebud-lipped" for Turkish girls, and "bull-chested," "wolf-waisted" for Turkish young men illustrate the characteristics of the "Turkish social race" found in the collective imagination of the Turks. Each "social race" is beautiful in its unique way. A Far-Easterner who is ashamed of the slant of their eyes and undergoes plastic surgery to resemble a European, a black-skinned individual seeking assistance from American and European scientists to whiten their skin, and those striving to alter their aquiline noses are not merely pitiful for themselves. It is crucial to recognize the drama of a nation or race that, overwhelmed by feelings of inadequacy, "becomes alienated from itself" at a fundamental level. "Social race characteristics" are original values that add color to humanity and bestow a unique atmosphere upon cultures and civilizations. A Turkish nationalist embraces and cherishes the Turkish social race while striving to establish their family within this essence.

Cosmopolitanism is viewed unfavorably. However, the "social races" are regarded as a "verse" of Allah (Arvasi, 1999:120-121).

While "biological racism" has a disintegrating and divisive character, "social race" possesses a unifying and integrative trait. No one has the power to determine their biological inheritance. However, the "social race" is a matter of choice. It enhances the consciousness of "blood and lineage unity" among individuals who share the same history, culture, religion, and ideals. In a confined area, "national consciousness" is strengthened by building "marriage bridges" among tribes, strata, and ethnic groups. This method has been attempted numerous times throughout Turkish history to ease conflicts between tribes and principalities and has proven beneficial. The "social race" is seen as a force that strengthens both the nation and the state. Anyone who integrates into the Turkish social race—who has intermarried and joined the Turkish social race for centuries, adopts Turkish history, culture, and ideals, does not long for another nation, and shares a common destiny with the Turkish State and Nation—can be considered Turkish. For this reason, the concept of "social race" belongs to sociology, not biology (Arvasi, 1999:121-122).

A civilized Turk is someone who is aware of their national culture. This person can and should adopt the inventions that belong to all humanity while also embodying the cultural values of their own nation in their spiritual life (Kushner, 2009:11). Through this engagement, a deeper understanding of the nation and the state is ensured.

The theory of pure race is not a concept that can effectively contribute to the formation of a strong sense of nationhood. Across the globe, it is evident that the theory of pure race is widely rejected. There is no pure race left anywhere, but there are nations. For example, it is a significant mistake to claim that the French belong to one race. The French nationality emerged from the unification of various groups, including Germanic, Celtic, Latin, Greek, and others. Similarly, many Slavic elements have been absorbed into the German nationality. Is Switzerland not a nation despite its racial and religious conflicts? (Akçura, 2022:77).

Throughout history, groups from around sixty different races have come and gone in France, with some settling there. Their descendants have come together to form a unified society through shared institutions such as language, upbringing, customs, traditions, and religion,

thus constituting the French nation. The Germans and the English are also not of a pure and self-contained race. Likewise, the Spanish, Italian, Hungarian, Bulgarian, and Greek nations have formed through the coming together of individuals and groups from various races who speak a common language and unite around a shared culture, traditions, and collective identity (Seyfettin, 2020:102-103). In terms of political organization, the most homogeneous and closely-knit unit among the Turks is the tribe. We can assert that the basic principle governing these tribes is merit.

The most homogeneous unit of ancient Turkish society was the "tribe" (boy). In this context, the term "boy" also conveys the meaning of a complete whole. Ancient Turkish society was divided into two strata: the rulers (beys) and the ruled (people). Those in power were referred to as "ak kamag bodun" (people with white bones), while the ruled were called "kara kamag bodun" (people with black bones). There was no rigid class system; the beys (ak kamag bodun) were responsible solely for the administration of society. Positions and titles existed for service rather than for establishing class distinctions. Merit was essential in this society, meaning that lineage, wealth, or title did not create class differences. The path to ascension was always open to those who were intelligent, hardworking, talented, and successful. It was possible for someone from the common people (kara kamag bodun) to rise to administrative and military positions as a bey or commander through their achievements in service (Koca, 2002:8).

In the organization of the ancient Turkish state, the head of state, the legislative assembly (toy), and the government were separate institutions, each fulfilling distinct functions. However, the head of state, who embodied sovereignty, held all the reins of power and was primarily responsible for the people and the country. He appointed prime ministers, convened the legislative assembly (toy), proposed changes to the moral law (töre), and presided over the state court (yargu). This authority was believed to be divinely endowed (kut). The expectation of Turkish communities throughout history to rely on him for sustenance, clothing, growth, and peace stemmed from this concept of "complete authority."

The ancient Turkish administrative mechanism, which meticulously preserved its military character, facilitated the implementation of

this complete authority. However, due to the strict provisions of the moral law (töre), this system never became tyrannical or transformed into a militaristic dictatorship that oppressed local or foreign subjects. Therefore, it is misleading to view the old Turkish "authoritarian state democracy" as an oppressive clamp, and it should not be confused with the ineffective type of "democracy" that disintegrates and disperses the integrity of power through the "separation of powers" (Kafesoğlu, 2018:25).

Another crucial element in strengthening power in Turkish states has been the position of women. Historically, in many nations, and particularly today, women have often been portrayed as sexual objects, serving carnal desires and seducing men through entertainment. Ancient Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Iranians, and Indians considered women to be evil creatures and treated them as property. In contrast, Turks are one of the few nations that give women their true value (Atsız, 2011:150).

In Turkish culture, women are often depicted as beings who radiate light, dazzle with their beauty, and are almost impossible to access. Those who have been humiliated, despised, and oppressed throughout history—treated almost as commodities or slaves—have held a significantly different position in Turkish society. In Turkish communities, women have traditionally been seen as the cornerstone of society, an indispensable element due to their chastity, moral understanding, maternal instincts, loyalty to their husbands, wise and heroic personalities, and their superior skills in administrative, political, and social domains (Koç, Saadettin, 2011:156).

In ancient Turkish societies, women participated alongside their husbands in nearly every field, including political, social, economic, and even wartime situations. Within the Turkish family, women enjoyed equal rights with their husbands, and the principle of mutual respect prevailed. Due to their religious beliefs, the ancient Turks regarded women as possessing sacred power, which elevated their status in society. Historians acknowledge that in ancient Turkish society, women had equal rights with men, participated in wars, and influenced political decisions. For an order to be fulfilled among the ancient Turks, it had to begin with the phrase "Hakan (Khan) and Hatun (Khatun) order that." The Khatun stood alongside the Khan in all assemblies (Tel-

lioğlu, 2012:212). Consequently, in Turkish wisdom, the order of the world stemmed from the harmony between men and women, granting women a special position before the Khan and within the family (Ülger, 2020:59).

In Turkish states, khatuns were the bearers of authority (the Khatun Law). Among them were women who influenced state policies, served as leaders, and governed as regents (e.g., the Sabars, Gokturks, Uighurs, and Oghuz). Gokturk khatuns were present at the receptions of Chinese ambassadors in 585 and 726. Women with separate palaces and "orders" usually attended state assemblies and sometimes received ambassadors. It was essential that the khatuns be the first wives and of noble (i.e., Turkic) descent, as they were expected to be the mothers of future khans. The Turkish equivalent of the word "princess" was "esi" (Kafesoğlu, 2018:259).

In general, Turkish women were not an oppressed group deprived of rights, as was common in other societies of the era. They were free and respected members of society. More importantly, women actively participated in all family activities alongside men. In fact, they rode horses, used guns, hunted, and wrestled just like men. The physical strength difference between men and women that exists today was not as pronounced in the past; this difference is more a result of environmental influences than an innate condition. Especially in ancient times, Turkish women were nearly equal to men in terms of strength, endurance, effort, determination, and courage (Koca, 2002:9). "There is a need for women who say, 'to raise honorable sons and virtuous daughters is my greatest debt to this country'" (Atsız, 2011:151). These ideals resonate in the collective conscience of nations rather than just among a few individuals.

Just as individuals have souls, emotions, and consciences, nations also possess a social soul, emotions, and a conscience. Ideals are born from this collective consciousness. These ideals are never the work of just a few individuals. A nation without an ideal is considered dead; in such a case, individuals do not feel the existence of the nation and are unprepared to sacrifice their lives for it. The ideal of one society can be offensive to another; it cannot merely be a defensive ideal. When the members of a nation are left scattered and miserable, they are deprived of ideals. All kinds of disasters befall that nation. Neighboring

nations may seize their homeland, leading that nation to become captive and servile, losing their autonomy. Victors often attack their religion, customs, and traditions. A captive nation first loses its language, then its religion, and its customs, ultimately erasing its identity from the world (Seyfettin, 2020:99-100; Atsız, 2011:132). Conversely, those who have ideals possess a country, a nation, a flag, and a history for which they are willing to risk everything. Those with ideals embody principled lives, resolute behavior, and virtuous ideas (Bahçeli, 2019). Thus, having an ideal serves as a significant barrier to the disappearance of nations.

Turkist politics is public, much like the politics of Islam. It is not confined to Ottoman borders (Akçura, 2022:82-83). The Turkish ideal of the Red Apple was thoroughly formed and shaped during the glorious ages of the Ottomans, becoming a symbol of Turkish greatness, a vision of elevation, and a divine purpose. Without this profound thought, the one million Turks who arrived in Anatolia in the 11th century could not have established a worldwide state or created a masterpiece of organization and civilization across four continents, even with the help of a few divisions of Christianized remnants of other Turks encountered in the territories of Byzantium in Asia and Europe. The purity and naturalness embodied in the Red Apple signify the ancient roots of the Turkish ideal. The term "Red Apple" illustrates that this ideal was born among the people before intellectuals. An ideal first emerges in the hearts of the populace, deep within their consciousness and dreams, manifesting initially in epics. It later becomes articulated by great leaders, who inspire heroic efforts to realize it. During these endeavors, the people with ideals pursue their heroes with fervent desire. Through these struggles, the nation advances, initially in spirit and eventually in material progress, maturing as it does so. The Turks' ultimate ideal is to achieve abundance and happiness within their realm by establishing a great and superior state at the culmination of their conquests (Atsız, 2011:19).

According to Atsız (2011:33), Turkism is synonymous with Turkish nationalism. The suffix at the end of the word indicates, depending on the context, membership, affection, or support. Turkism is an ideal that emerges from four sources:

1. Nationalism, whose roots are very old and have existed for centuries within the consciousness of the Turkish *urug* (sept);
2. The movement of nationalism following the Tanzimat Era (political reforms initiated in the Ottoman state in 1839), which sought to implement a populist movement in Turkish territory akin to those of nationalists in Europe;
3. The reaction arising from the betrayal of foreign elements within our state;
4. The significant troubles that the Turks have endured for 200 years.

The ideas from these four sources have merged to form present-day Turkism.

The ideals of Islam, such as "Nizam-ı Alem" (the Islamic world order) and "I'lay-ı Kelimetullah" (proselytizing Islam), have been intertwined with the Red Apple-like concepts of "kut" (divine duty) that the Turks have pursued throughout history. Although both "Nizam-ı Alem" and "I'lay-ı Kelimetullah" are fundamentally Islamic concepts, they have resonated within the Islamic world primarily through the mentality and ideal of Turkishness (Coşkun, 2014:36).

The equivalent concepts in statecraft for "Nizam-ı Alem" and "I'lay-ı Kelimetullah" are encapsulated in "Devlet-i Ebed Müddet" (eternal state). This phrase signifies that the lifespan of the state is so enduring that it cannot be constrained by time. "I'lay-ı Kelimetullah" refers to the mission of knowing and spreading the appreciation of the word of Allah, celebrating His glory, and conveying the truths of Islam. In Turkish-Islamic history, this concept has been interpreted as a commitment to announce the name of Allah to all humanity, glorify His majesty, and confront those who deny Him, all within the limits He has set (Erdem, 2014:95).

Nationalism is not merely the product of momentary excitements, a collection of thoughts reacting to external stimuli, or a specific means to fulfill periodic desires. It is not an idea that turns away from democracy, freedom, human rights, or technological inventions and economic developments. According to the late Erol Güngör, nationalism is the movement to transform national culture into a source of civilization itself and to save society from becoming an open marketplace for degenerative changes. In other words, nationalism is also a catalyst for

civilization. At the heart of Turkish nationalism is a unique love and unparalleled commitment to the Turkish nation. There are two primary sources of the Nine Lights: the first is the pride of Turkishness and a conscious Islamic faith; the second is love for humanity (Bahçeli, 2019).

In the earliest centuries of its existence in Central Asia, our nation learned to shorten distances by domesticating the horse, thereby finding the means to control vast regions and achieve the success of establishing a great state. While other nations could only form city-states, the idea of world domination and the pursuit of grand ideals emerged in Turkish states, which encompassed many cities. The Hun, Göktürk, and Ottoman Empires are the results of this grand ideal; only Rome and the Abbasids can be compared to them in the history of the world (Atsız, 2011:95). The ancient Turks held a deep and sincere belief in an omnipotent God, who had bestowed upon them the dominion of the world. Bilge Khan expressed this piety and the divine origin of dominion when he stated: "I sat on the throne and brought the nations near and far into order because God willed it." Just as in the Islamic era, the Turks were devout and faithful during the Shamanistic period as well, finding it fitting to their sense of dominion, justice, and humanity to show respect for foreign religions. Thus, the ideals of Turkish world dominion and global order developed on this foundation and perspective (Turan, 2003: 115).

By harmoniously combining national, Islamic, and humanitarian sentiments, the Turks committed themselves to the cause of a world order, believing that God had entrusted them with global dominion based on these principles. By respecting this trust, they believed they were not only the guardians of a single dynasty, class, or group but also of all the peoples and religions they ruled over. For this reason, disputes and struggles of nationality, religion, and class were not prominent in the Turkish Empires; justice and harmony prevailed. The international nature of Turkish world dominion and order, evolving within Islamic and humanitarian principles, was thus made possible (Turan, 2003: 12).

The ideal of the Turks is not one of blind, rapacious, or oppressive imperialism that neglects the goal of nationalism. The Turkish concept aims to establish a large and powerful "ilkhanate" by uniting the Turkish provinces adjacent to each other in Asia under the shadow of

the Ottoman flag (Seyfettin, 2020:101). Another factor facilitating the Turks' spread in various directions is the soundness of their spirituality. Flowing toward unknown horizons, even out of necessity, being ready to face imminent dangers, and engaging in a relentless struggle for survival is not a behavior considered natural for every nation. This spiritual vitality, clearly observed among the Turks and enabling their continuity as a dynamic community throughout history, was further enhanced by their successes. Every military achievement led to new political objectives, and as territories were conquered, the desire for further conquests was fueled. Over time, this gave rise among the Turks to a philosophy of conquest aimed at bringing peace and tranquility to the world and a global dominion ideal dedicated to implementing the just and egalitarian Turkish code everywhere (Kafesoglu, 2018:55).

According to Hilmi Ziya Ülken (2020:54), "The concept of an ideal is not a realm that can never be attained, one where every attempt fails, nor is it a distant dream that we see only as a mirage throughout our lives. Rather, this concept is the 'Gök Tengri' (Heavenly God) who constantly inspires us to strive further and move closer, and whose beloved face we eagerly behold every time we lift our heads." For this reason, Turkish wisdom is neither fatalistic like Greek wisdom nor reverist like Iranian wisdom; it is truthful and progressive.

At the heart of the Turkish concept of the state and sovereignty is the idea of a universal state that encompasses the entire world. The main goal of the Turkish state is to ensure "Tört bulung," meaning the sacred sovereignty of the Turks over the four corners of the world, and to spread Turkish justice everywhere "from where the sun rises to where it sets." Many also integrate this with the old Turkish belief system. The Turks, loyal to God since the depths of history, believe they are an elite people of God and are under divine protection. Turkish khans believed they were tasked with establishing Allah's rule over the world (Gömeç/Fidan 2020:329).

Some integrate this belief with the ancient Turkish belief system. In other words, *kut* (the power to rule) is granted by God to the Turkish Khan, who possesses sovereignty; however, this power is not absolute and is limited by the *töre*. The legitimacy of political power continues as long as it complies with the *töre*. In Turkish culture, the concept of *töre*

signifies that sovereignty belongs not to an individual but to a system known as *töre*. The idea that "the state may fall, but the *töre* remains" reflects a unique approach to law. In Turkish culture, the provisions of *töre* are not unchangeable molds. With these qualities, *töre* serves as one of the most significant foundations of Turkish state philosophy (Macit, 2022:26-27).

Ömer Seyfettin (2020:100) defines the nation as the assembly (sum) of people who speak one language and are united by a common religion, upbringing, and education. According to him, political boundaries can never separate a nation. To be considered a Turk, it is sufficient for an individual to speak Turkish, be Muslim, and live according to Turkish customs and traditions. In Anatolia, millions of Muslims speak Turkish and identify as Turks. Beyond Anatolia, the vast region extending to Azerbaijan, the Caucasus, Bukhara, Samarkand, Tashkent, Kashgar, Yarkent, Hotan, Aksu, Turfan, Karakorum, and Manchuria is populated by the Turkish nation, all of whom are Muslim and speak Turkish.

Additionally, the Northern Turks are spread along the Volga River as far as Kazan and Ufa. The Tatar dialect increasingly resembles the Istanbul dialect, thanks to the broad influence of Turkish literature. Scholars who have grasped the national spirit, such as Musa Karullah Bigiyef, always write their works in the Turkish spoken in Istanbul. The language used in the *Tercüman* newspaper of Crimea is the same as that of Istanbul. The motto of the late Ismail Gaspıralı Bey, "Unity in language, work, idea,"[1] reflects the ideal of nearly all our brothers and sisters. In Siberia, the foothills of the Altai, and the Pamirs, Turks also live in strong communities, speaking Turkish. Atsız (2011:83) refers to the independence and unification with Türkiye of these kin nations, located in the historical homeland of the Turks and still largely populated by Turks, as Turanism.

Musa Karullah Bigiyef and Ismail Gaspıralı's intellectual contributions to Turkish nationalism are of great importance. They campaigned for the intellectual awakening of Muslim Turks under difficult conditions. Gaspıralı İsmail Bey, through his newspaper *Tercüman*, sought

---

[1] The slogan of the movement started by Crimean Ismail Gaspıralı for the unity of Turks

to elevate the cultural level of the Muslim Turk communities under the domination of Tsarist Russia and to secure their religious and national rights. This endeavor became known as the Jadid movement or Jadidism. One of the ideas that Ismail Gaspıralı, the pioneer of the Usul-ü Jadid (New Method) movement, aimed to spread through the *Tercüman* newspaper was the establishment of a "common literary Turkish language." A common literary language would allow Turkish tribes and clans to understand each other and create a strong cultural and political union. When İsmail Gaspıralı referred to "our language," he meant the "common Turkish language," and when he spoke of "our nation," he was referring to all Turkish tribes and clans. Musa Karullah Bigiyef wholeheartedly believed in the need for all Muslim Turks to act together to attain national interests and political independence. He remained faithfully committed to the core principles of Gaspıralı İsmail Bey's motto of "unity in language" and earnestly adhered to these principles in his works (Temizyurek, 2002:146-147).

One of the significant scholars representing the realist stage in the history of Turkish nationalism is Remzi Oğuz Arık. Some intellectuals, like Arık, who are deeply connected to Türkiye's geography and sacred values, advocate for a nationalist ideal rooted in the concept of the homeland, inseparable from its geography. They drew inspiration from the War of Independence in Anatolia. This realist nationalism movement, based on genuine intuition, is closely linked to the sacred values that have emerged from the genius of the Turkish nation and the Islamic religion in our time. Thus, two forces—material and spiritual, namely homeland and religion—that once played a fundamental role in the establishment of Türkiye, are now working hand in hand to revive our nationalism (Topçu, 2010:79). Another important Turkish thinker who examines the Turkish and Western struggle comparatively through culture is Erol Güngör.

According to Erol Güngör (2019:58), the vitality of a nation is possible only when it has very solid foundations in its culture. As we will see when discussing the distinguishing qualities of the Turkish people, no other culture has developed and disseminated human virtues worthy of being considered universal values as extensively as Turkish culture. Despite engaging in prolonged and arduous struggles with the West, no other nation has demonstrated such steadfast resistance

and continued this struggle as we have. The reason for this resistance should be attributed not to a lack of adaptability in the Turkish nation, but rather to the robustness and deep-rootedness of Turkish culture, which, in terms of human and moral values, may even surpass Western civilization. In summary, the late Erol Güngör defined and documented nationalists as people who contend for establishing and maintaining unity in a country.

In his speech on February 9, 2019, marking the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Nationalist Movement Party, the party's leader, Devlet Bahçeli, provided important insights into the fundamental principles of Turkish nationalism. Within the framework of these principles, there is a clear reaction and stance against those who attempt to divide the nation into classes and groups or categorize it along ethnic and sectarian lines. Turkish nationalism emphasizes that the nation is a cultural union and a historical unity. It is stated that even if one were to search the illustrious pages of Turkish history for racial bigotry or racist obsession, none would be found. Lineage is distinct from race; a lack of nobility is different from racism. Turkishness is an understanding that cannot be discovered through cranial measurements in laboratories and does not involve looking down upon or despising others. Among the members of a nation, both memories and sorrows are shared. The thousand-year law is everlasting. If there is superiority, it lies in piety. If there is a difference, it may be in luck, history, or definition. A nation is a living organism consisting of people who share the same culture, faith, language, past, and future. Therefore, dividing the nation into class compartments is contrary to national heritage and is deemed completely outside the boundaries of nationalist thought and ideology. The understanding of the nation is based on national values, spiritual values, and principles of morality and merit. Thus, any racial distinction, such as "white Turk" versus "black Turk," is considered intentional and flawed. It is emphasized that no one in Türkiye is unequal or insignificant, and that no one is to be regarded as second-class citizens.

Additionally, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk explained the necessity of working hard to ensure that the name of the nation and the homeland, known as "Turk" for a thousand years and destined to remain so for eternity, carries significance. He stated: "Turkishness is fundamental.

It is appropriate to take pride in Turkish civilization. To be worthy of this pride, it is necessary to work very hard." Ziya Gökalp encapsulated the idea of "We are Turkish, Turkist, and lovers of Turan and Türkiye" with the assertion: "The homeland for Turks is neither Türkiye nor Turkestan; the homeland is a vast and eternal country: Turan."

A Brief Evaluation

Previous social theorists often made the mistake of perceiving nationalism as something entirely negative that could be overcome through education and enlightenment, eventually leading to its irrelevance. However, we see that theories predicting the disappearance of nation-states and the elimination of borders due to globalization hold no significance today, as nation-states continue to be the centers of influence in the international arena.

A comparison between Western nationalism and Turkish nationalism leads us to the following conclusion: In Turkish nationalism, the tradition of coexistence prevails, and this tradition has not developed a racist structure. In contrast, the West, regardless of theoretical rhetoric, shows through practical experiences a desire for a homogeneous social structure. These attempts to create a homogeneous society have resulted in significant disasters in the West. Therefore, from a historical context, the nation-building processes in the West and Türkiye have fundamental differences. The most crucial distinction is that while Western nation-building often occurred through bloody conflicts involving religious and national strife, Türkiye's nation-building process was not marked by such bloodshed.

Turkish nationalism also differs from Western nationalism in its inclusiveness and embrace, which are not based on the notion of a pure race. A review of foundational works throughout thousands of years of Turkish history readily reveals that distinctions such as superior and inferior races are absent from these records. It can be observed that Turkish nationalism, with its universal ideals such as Turkish World Dominion, the Red Apple, and İ'layı Kelimetullah (proselytizing Islam), aspires to bring justice and order to the world.

References

Akçura, Yusuf (2022): Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset (Three Styles of Politics), Ötüken Publications, İstanbul.

Akçura, Yusuf (2016): Türkçülüğün Tarihi (History of Turkism), Ötüken Publications, İstanbul.

Almanya Türk Dış Temsilciliği (Turkish Foreign Representation of Germany) (2023): Türkiye'ye sığınan Almanlar (Germans taking refuge in Turkey), https://tuerkei.diplo.de/tr-tr/themen/kultur/-/1797648.

Anne Roerkohl, (2011): Der Nationalsozialismus Ideologie und Menschenbild 1933-1945 (National Socialism ideology and view of humanity 1933-1945) Arndt, Ernst Moritz (1813): Über Volkshass (About popular hatred).

Atsız, Hüseyin Nihal (2011): Türk Ülküsü (Turkish ideal), Ötüken Publications, İstanbul.

Bahçeli, Devlet (2019): Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi'nin Kuruluşunun 50. Yıldönümü Programında Genel Başkan Sayın Devlet Bahçeli'nin Yapmış Oldukları Konuşma, 9 Şubat 2019 (Speech by Chairman Devlet Bahçeli at the 50th Anniversary Program of the Establishment of the Nationalist Movement Party, 9 February 2019.).

Baltacı, Ali Yağız (2023): Osmanlı'nın ve Türkiye'nin Ayrılmaz Parçası olan Sefarad Yahudileri'nin 531 Yıllık Hikayesini Anımsıyoruz (We Remember the 531-Year-Old Story of Sephardic Jews, Who Are Inseparable Parts of the Ottoman Empire and Turkey), https://onedio.com/haber/osmanli-nin-ve-turkiye-nin-ayrilmaz-parcasi-olan-sefarad-yahudileri-nin-531-yillik-hikayesini-animsiyoruz-1164559.

BPB (2022): Die Nationalsozialisten und ihre Weltanschauung (The National Socialists and their worldview), https://www.bpb.de/themen/politisches-system/politik-einfach-fuer-alle/508006/die-nationalsozialisten-und-ihre-weltanschauung/

Bergemann, Robert (2023) : Antisemitismus (Antisemitism), https://www.schule-ohne-rassismus.org/themen/antisemitismus/.

Coşkun, Recai (2014): Kızılelma'dan Türk İslam Ülküsüne: Türklerin Küresel Düşleri (From Red Apple to Turkish Islamic Ideal: Turks' Global Dreams), Düşünce Dünyasında Türkiz Siyaset Ve Kültür Dergisi, Ankara.

Doğan, Atilla (2006): Osmanlı Aydınları ve Sosyal Darwinizm (Ottoman Intellectuals and Social Darwinism), İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, İstanbul.

Echternkamp, Jörg (2002): Perspektiven einer politik- und kulturgeschichtlichen Nationalismusforschung (Perspectives on political and cultural history research on nationalism). In: Echternkamp, Jörg/Müller, Sven Oliver (Hrsg.): Die Politik der Nation. Deutscher Nationalismus in Krieg und Krisen (The politics of the nation. German nationalism in war and crises). München: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag

Erdem, Mustafa (2019): Türklerde İ'la-yı Kelimetullah Anlayışı (The Understanding of I'la-yi Kalimatullah in the Turks), Düşünce Dünyasında Türkiz Siyaset Ve Kültür Dergisi, Ankara.

Fichte, Johann Gottlieb (1978), Reden an die deutsche Nation (1808) (Speeches to the German Nation (1808)), in Philosophische Bibliothek, Bd. 204, 5. Auflage, Hamburg: Meiner.

Gerd Schneider Christiane Toyka-Seid: Ideologie (Ideology), https://www.

bpb.de/kurz-knapp/lexika/das-junge-politik-lexikon/320506/ideologie/,
    10.09.2023.

Gökalp, Ziya (2019): Türkçülüğün Esasları (Principles of Turkism), T.C. Anadolu
    Üniversitesi Yayını, Eskişehir.

GRA (2019): Was ist Antisemitismus? (What is Anti-Semitism?), https://www.
    gra.ch/antisemitismus/was-ist-antisemitismus/.

Hamilton, Andrew (2011), Herder's Theory of the Volksgeist, https://www.
    counter-currents.com/2011/05/herders-theory-of-the-volksgeist/

Heine, :Heinrich (1836): Die romantische Schule (The romantic school).

Heywood, Andrew (2017): Siyaset (Politics), Adres Yayınları, Ankara.

Jansen, Christian/Borggräfe, Henning (2007): Nation, Nationalität, Nationalismus
    (Nation, nationality, nationalism). Frankfurt/ New York: Campus Verlag.

Johann Gottfried Fichte (1806): Reden an die deutsche Nation (Speeches to the
    German nation).

Kafesoğlu, İbrahim (2018): Türk Milli Kültürü (Turkish National Culture), Ötüken
    Yayınları.

Koca, Salim (2002): Eski Türklerde Sosyal ve Ekonomik Hayat (Social and Eco-
    nomic Life in Ancient Turks), Yeni Türkiye Yayınları.

Koç, Saadettin (2011): Türklerde Kadın ve Hüseyin Nihal Atsız'ın Tarihî Ro-
    manlarında Kadın Motifi (Women in Turks and the Female Motif in Hüseyin
    Nihal Atsız's Historical Novels), Erdem: İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Dergisi, s.
    155-186.

Kur'an Yolu TÜRKÇE MEÂL ve TEFSİR IV (Quran Path Turkish Meal and Com-
    mentary IV) (2020): Rum Suresi 22. Ayet, Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı Yayınları,
    Ankara.

Kushner, David (2009): Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Doğuşu (186-1908) (The Birth of
    Turkish Nationalism (186-1908)), Kesit Yayınları, İstanbul.

Lenzen, 2015: https://www.bpb.de/themen/rechtsextremismus/dossier-recht-
    sextremismus/214188/was-ist-sozialdarwinismus/, 01.09.2023.

Lexikon, 2023: http://www.jugend19181945.de/lexikon.aspx?s=3210&lex-
    ikon=true&iframe=

true&width= 500&height=500 (Accessed: 10.09.2023)

Lexikon, 2023: İdeologie, https://www.philomag.de/lexikon/ideologie,
    15.09.2023.

Macit, M. Hanifi (2022): Tarihsel Akıl Çerçevesinde Türk Devlet Felsefesi (Turkish
    State Philosophy within the Framework of Historical Reason), TASAV Yayın-
    ları, Ankara.

MEB, 2023: Almanya Milli Marşı (German National Anthem), https://www.meb.
    gov.tr/istiklalmarsi/home/DevletMarslari.

Mittelbach, Annika (2020): Sozialdarwinismus - Definition und einfach erklärt
    (Social Darwinism - definition and simply explained), https://praxistipps.fo-
    cus.de/sozialdarwinismus-definition-und-einfach-erklaert_143024, 05.09.2023.

Niyazi, Mehmed (2000): Millet ve Türk Milliyetçiliği (Nation and Turkish Nation-
    alism), Ötüken Yayınları.

Patzelt: Was ist ein Volk? (What is a people?), https://wjpatzelt.de/2017/01/10/
    was-ist-ein-volk/, 10 Ocak 2017.

Paul de Legarde (1878): Deutsche Schriften (German writings).

Republik Österreich Parlament (2023): Was ist Antisemitismus? (What is An-

ti-Semitism?),
https://www.demokratiewebstatt.at/thema/thema-antisemitismus/
was-ist-antisemitismus.

Safa, Peyami (2013): Türk İnkilabına Bakışlar (Perspectives on the Turkish Revolution), Ötüken Yayınları, İstanbul.

Schröder, Richard (1993): Deutschland schwierig Vaterland (Germany difficult fatherland).

Seibt, Gustav (2016), Was das Volk von der Nation unterscheidet (What distinguishes the people from the nation), https://www.sueddeutsche.de/kultur/nationalismus-was-das-volk-von-der-nation-unterscheidet-1.3159821

Smith, Anthony (2000): The Nation in History: Historiographical Debates about Ethnicity and Nationalism. Hanover: University Press of New England

Studyflix: Sozialdarwinismus (Social Darwinism,), https://studyflix.de/geschichte/sozialdarwinismus-4129, 5.09.2023.

Tellioğlu, İbrahim (2012). İslam öncesi Türk toplumunda kadının konumu üzerine (On the position of women in pre-Islamic Turkish society). Atatürk Üniversitesi Türkiyat Araştırmaları Enstitüsü Dergisi. (55).

Temizyürek, Elif Su (2002): Ölümünün 50. Yıldönümünde Musa Carullah Bigiyef (185-1949) (Musa Carullah Bigiyef on the 50th Anniversary of his Death (185-1949)), Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, Ankara.

Topçu, Nurettin (2010): Bütün Eserleri 17: Sosyoloji (Sociology), Dergah Yayınları, İstanbul.

Turan, Osman (2003): Türk Cihan Hakimiyeti Mefkuresi Tarihi: Türk Dünya Nizamının Milli, islami ve insani Esasları (History of the Turkish Idea of World Domination: National, Islamic and Humanitarian Principles of the Turkish World Order), Ötüken Yayınları, İstanbul.

Turhan, Mümtaz (2019): Mümtaz Turhan Bütün Eserleri (Mümtaz Turhan Complete Works), Altınordu Yayınları, Ankara.

Türkeş, Alparslan (2019): Alparslan Türkeş ve Dokuz Işık (Nine Light Doctrines of Alparslan Türkeş), Bilgeoğuz Yayınları, İstanbul.

Ülger, Hilmi Ziya (2020): Türk Tefekkürü Tarihi (History of Turkish Thought), Yapı Kredi Yayınları, İstanbul.

Wehler, Hans-Ulrich (2002): Radikalnationalismus und Nationalsozialismus (Radical nationalism and National Socialism). In: Echternkamp, Jörg/Müller, Sven Oliver (Hrsg.): Die Politik der Nation. Deutscher Nationalismus in Krieg und Krisen (The politics of the nation. German nationalism in war and crises). München: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag

Yalazı, Esra (2020): Panhellenizmin Kölelik Boyutu (The Slavery Dimension of Panhellenism), Akademik Tarih ve Düşünce Dergisi, 289-327.

ONTOLOGICAL SECURITY APPROACH IN TURKISH NATIONALISM: NATIONALIST MOVEMENT PARTY

Gökberk YÜCEL

Assoc. Prof. Dr., Amasya University,
Department of Poitical Science and Public Administration

Introduction

In contrast to traditional security approaches, the 21st century necessitates a reevaluation of the concept of security to broaden and deepen its scope. The political, economic, and cultural aspects of globalization have transformed the institutional structures and responses of 20th-century nation-states, aiming to dismantle barriers to inter-societal communication and transportation. This evolution has diversified societal demands, interests, and expectations in domestic politics, thereby placing identity debates at the forefront of political discourse.

The globalization-induced shift in global politics and nation-state structures has broadened the spectrum of security threats and led to diverse perspectives on understanding and addressing these threats, as well as offering various political solutions. Issues such as international migration, global climate crises, environmental challenges, the rise of ethnic conflicts, and the globalization of terrorism underscore that national security is not solely reliant on political borders and cannot be effectively maintained through military means alone. This shift has prompted theoretical debates on nationalism, introducing concepts

such as "green nationalism," which integrates ecological concerns and moves away from the industrialization-focused political and social dynamics of the 20th century; "banal nationalism," which permeates everyday life; and the interplay between gender and nationalism.

Turkish nationalism, enriched by a century of the Republic's experiences and memories, may propose a novel approach for the 21st century and the future vision of the Republic within the context of ontological security. The central question of this study is whether Turkish nationalism, through the lens of ontological security, can offer a fresh perspective for the Republic's future. This study serves as an introduction to the ontological security approach of Turkish nationalism, aiming to open a new agenda in the literature and reveal the Republic's 21st-century perspective, particularly through the lens of the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP).

However, Turkish nationalism, reflecting the ideological and institutional achievements of the Republic, must equip itself with the necessary tools and frameworks to prepare the Republic for its new century. It is critical to rationalize and refocus our century-old Republic memory, which has been impaired, suppressed, and sidelined in the realms of politics, economics, law, and diplomacy under the banner of rationalized idealism. This rationalized idealism in Turkish nationalism should guide the interpretation and application of the Republic's principles in its second century.

At this juncture, the ontological security perspective serves as a set of concepts and a methodology proposed by Turkish nationalism for understanding both the global context and Türkiye's specific situation. The MHP emerges as a key entity representing and advancing the concept of Turkish nationalism in the political sphere. This study initially introduces the concept of ontological security and then delves into the ontological security approach of Turkish nationalism within the frameworks of the Republic's regime, national sovereignty, Turkish national identity principles, and the geopolitics of the Turkish world.

Ontological Security Approach

The formation of unique identities, shaped by the collective memory and cultural history of each society, plays a crucial role in imbuing a place with personality and character. This process is framed within

the context of one's original perception of and relationship to the environment. It forges a link between space and the individual concerning belonging, encompassing the concepts of "being here" and "being there." This connection reflects the state of being inside or outside a place, along with the elements it contains and sustains. However, defining one's living space introduces a problematic aspect regarding one's position—where one is and isn't. This leads to an exploration of the authentic self and the "other" through the dichotomy of "insideness" and "outsideness."

The concepts of "insideness" and "outsideness," as defined by Relph, are pivotal in understanding a place's identity. They relate to whether one feels inside or outside a structure. When a person feels inside a space, they experience "insideness": they are here, not there; secure, not in danger; strong, not weak; and they experience peace, tranquility, and belonging, as opposed to the threats, fear, and exclusion associated with "outsideness." "Insideness" is considered in an existential context, representing a profound and conscious connection—a sense of belonging that originates from one's community and region concerning space. It lends ontological significance to the concepts of security, peace, strength, and belonging. Conversely, feelings of alienation and strangeness are embodied in the concept of "outsideness," representing an ontological otherness set against a backdrop of experiential connection and memory.[1]

The concepts of "insideness" and "outsideness" construct distance both cognitively and emotionally, as well as ontologically. Distance involves the exploration and interpretation of proximity and remoteness between two focal points or positions within the framework of experiences and accumulated knowledge.[2] This concept plays a pivotal role in the identity equation, particularly in shaping the sense of belonging. Factors determining these spatial perceptions are deeply intertwined with the vibrancy and transmission of lived experiences within the context of cultural dynamism.

[1] David Seamon and Jacob Sowers, "Place and Placelessness, Edward Relph", Ed. P. Hubbard, R. Kitchen, G. Vallentine, Human Geography. London: Sage, 2008, pp. 44-46.
[2] Martin Heiddeger, Varlık ve Zaman (İkinci Baskı). Çev. (Kaan H. Ökten). İstanbul: Agora Kitaplığı, p. 107.

In everyday life, spaces where the tools of cultural dynamism are actively engaged are often perceived as "close" spaces, characterized by immediate and tangible cultural interactions. In contrast, "distant" spaces are typically anchored in specific timeframes, often associated with the origins of cultural elements, rich in myths, symbols, and mythological sources. These spaces are perceived as milestones or foundational points in the collective consciousness of a community. The distinctiveness of these places emerges from the intricate interplay and integration of social relationships, experiences, and historical accumulations over time. This dynamic occurs in both distant and close spaces, shaping how individuals and groups interact and form connections.[3] Therefore, belonging to a place manifests the subject within that space or the possession of a physical presence.[4] This principle involves understanding space, an ontological counterpart to existence, encompassing processes such as transforming, familiarizing, and ultimately taking ownership of it. In the transformation of space into a sense of place, the concept of "havali" simultaneously involves being inside a place (in, inna), being its inhabitant (habitare), and being its owner (ich bin).[5]

The concept of belonging in relation to space significantly influences the biographical narratives of societies over time. Such narratives provide a coherent, stable, and complementary sense of belonging, shaped either directly or indirectly by memory.[6] This sense of belonging is rooted in the interplay between the actor and their actions within a given space.

This perspective has shifted the focus in security studies to examine the biographical narratives of societies and the relationships between actors and their actions, leading to comprehensive inquiries about whose security is being considered. In this framework, the emphasis is not solely on identifying the subject but also on providing meaningful

---

[3] Colin Flint and Peter J. Taylor, Siyasî Coğrafya, Dünya Ekonomisi, Ulus Devlet ve Yerellik (6. Baskı), Çev. F. Ereker, Ankara: Nobel Yayıncılık, 2014, p. 271.
[4] Heiddeger, ibid., p. 113.
[5] William Mcneill, "Yurdun ve Yurtsuzluğun Anlamı", (Çev. A. Aydoğan). Ed. M. Heidegger, W. Mcneill ve K. Hammermeister, Düşünceye Çağıran Yurt Müdafaası. İstanbul: Say Yayınları, 2010, pp. 55-56.
[6] Anthony Giddens, Modernite ve bireysel kimlik geç modern çağda benlik ve toplum (2nd ed., Ü. Tatlıcan, Trans.), İstanbul: Say Yayınları, 2014, p. 75.

and coherent explanations of how, why, and by what means security should be maintained. These explanations in the biographical narrative are not merely based on a fixed set of factual information regarding the subject's actions; rather, they create a dynamic framework that can be adapted and reshaped, projecting from past experiences to future possibilities.

Defining "whose security" is crucial for identifying the "other" – the entity for whom security is being established – and for determining the security of a specific "space/geography." This process is instrumental in addressing and healing the anxious responses triggered by damaged or fragmented memory within societal consciousness. It aims to resolve divided or fragmented identities and offers a strategy for establishing a sustainable and predictable actor-action relationship, all within the realm of the ontological security concept.[7]

The concept, as articulated by Anthony Giddens, centers on the individual's search for identity and self, with biographical narratives emerging from these pursuits. These narratives are shaped by a quest for coherence within memory, forming a trajectory of action oriented toward the future.[8] In cases where the actor-action relationship is clearly defined and resolved, explicit answers are provided to key elements of ontological security, such as whose security is being ensured, why it is necessary, and how it is established. These responses are not grounded in fixed or temporal constants; rather, they are fluid, adaptable, and continuously shaped by a dynamic interplay of identity, threat, and reflex.[9]

The concept of ontological security institutionalizes the biographical narrative formed within the identity-space-memory framework into the state's institutional memory and actions. The state constructs its biographical narrative based on its historical imagination, geographical perception, and ideological or doctrinal foundations.[10] In turn, it establishes a national identity, political structure, and objectives that

---

[7] Catarina Kinnvall, "Globalization and religious nationalism: self, identity, and the search for ontological security", Political Psychology. 25 (5), 2004, p. 746.

[8] Giddens, ibid., p. 75.

[9] Kinnvall, ibid., p. 745.

[10] Ayşe Zarakol, "States and ontological security: A historical rethinking", Cooperation and Conflict. 52 (1), 2016, pp. 2-3.

align with this narrative. However, in the decision-making processes of security policies, the broader components of ontological security — which reinforce national morale and legitimize state actions through historical and societal tools — highlight the intersection between ontological security and nationalism. Nationalism serves as the conceptual foundation that enriches the state's approach to ontological security. It underpins national interests and ideals, facilitating their acceptance within society. Furthermore, nationalism acts as a powerful tool for mass mobilization. By systematically conveying information about the "other" to society and addressing perceived threats from this "other," the frameworks of nationalism align ontological security policies with the state's future outlook. Thus, nationalism becomes central to the state's ideological framework, influencing everything from institutional structures to policy formulation and decision-making, either overtly or implicitly.

Nationalism operates across a broad spectrum, manifesting in various nuances and degrees, from the design of institutional structures to policy formulation and decision-making. It interacts with all facets of ontological security, acting as the protector of the political regime, the sustainer of institutional frameworks, the guardian of national interests, and the architect of national identity and purpose. Nationalism ensures the dissemination and reinforcement of these elements within the societal base, anchoring the state's legitimacy and continuity.[11]

Principles of Turkish Ontological Security:
Republican Achievements and the Eternal State
The foundational principle of the Turkish ontological security approach is rooted in the Republican regime. This regime, emerging as a culmination of modern statehood and solidified by the 1908 Constitutional Revolution, serves as the cornerstone of modern Türkiye. It embodies the national consciousness of a people who express common values through national sovereignty, where sovereign rights are vest-

---

[11] Mustafa Onur Tetik, "Zeytindalı operasyonu ve ontolojik güvenlik", Ed. M. Akif Okur, Güvenlik, kargaşa ve belirsizlik çağında nereye? İstanbul: Kocav Yayınları, 2018; Jelena Subotic, "Narrative, ontological security, and foreign policy change", Foreign Policy Analysis. 12 (4), 2016.

ed in the nation's citizens. National sovereignty, in turn, strengthens the sense of belonging to a shared destiny, common geography, and the pursuit of collective ideals and aspirations. Thus, the exercise of sovereignty by the nation's people reflects a will that disseminates the national narrative to the societal base, reinforcing ties of belonging to the state and nurturing a sense of participation in governance.

Due to its geographical position, Türkiye stands at a crossroads, deeply influenced by political and social changes in its region. Consequently, both Eastern and Western political cultures have left an indelible mark on Turkish thought and politics, reflecting various ideological orientations. This dynamic has triggered cultural and value-centric fault lines, leading to political disturbances that often revolve around regime and system debates. From the early years of the Republic, with events such as the Şeyh Sait Rebellion (1925), the Menemen Incident (1930), and the Tunceli Rebellion (1937), to the rise of Third World socialist organizations between the 1960s and 1980s, and the emergence of ethnic, fundamentalist, and religiously or culturally motivated terrorist organizations (such as the PKK/PYD/YPG, ISIS, FETÖ) in the following decades, these developments have been perceived as threats to the Republican regime and the nation-state framework it established. Additionally, military coups that disrupted democratic and civil politics while limiting the space for civil society have functioned as mechanisms of guardianship, further fueling debates over the regime and system. These issues have contributed to discussions that undermine the institutions and achievements of the Republic.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the rise of left-liberal and Second Republican ideologies, which emphasized collective rights based on ethnicity and sect rather than individual freedoms, confronted the established order of the Republic with demands for multiculturalism and political autonomy. This challenged Türkiye's national sovereignty, which is integral to the Republic's regime, and led to a fragmentation of the actor-action relationship, separating the nation's people from their collective will. As a result, this environment produced schizophrenic identities, disconnecting the nation's subjects from their sovereign will. In this climate, the political goals of pragmatic/liberal Islamists, seeking integration into the capitalist system, aligned with left-liberal currents.

For over half a century, the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) has represented nationalism in the political arena. The MHP's mission of nationalism reflects the principles of republicanism and national sovereignty, which are fundamental to Turkish ontological security. In this regard, the MHP adopts a political approach that maintains and strengthens the strong bond between the people and national sovereignty, placing the preservation, internalization, and transmission of Turkish national identity to future generations at the center of its politics. Therefore, the concept of Turkishness is a foundational element in the MHP's ontological security approach, sustaining the Republic and its national sovereignty.

The primary question that arises here is how the MHP defines Turkish identity. Since the founding of the Republic of Türkiye, Turkishness has been conceptualized on a voluntary basis, rather than being defined by innate characteristics. This framework forms the ontological foundation of national sovereignty within the context of a nation-state and a unitary structure. The voluntary aspect of Turkishness is legally and politically inclusive, as articulated in Article 88 of the 1924 Constitution, which states, "*All inhabitants of Türkiye, regardless of religion and race, are considered Turkish in terms of citizenship,*" and further reinforced by Article 53 of the 1960 Constitution and Article 66 of the 1982 Constitution, which declare, "*Everyone bound to the Turkish state through the bond of citizenship is a Turk.*"[12]

The sociological framework of Turkish identity, as defined through citizenship, is further enriched by language and culture. The MHP, while adhering to the state's official definition of identity, promotes an inclusive and unifying interpretation of Turkishness, rooted in historical and cultural memory rather than ethnicity. In keeping with the spirit and legal structure of the Republic, the nation is not defined by lineage or ethnic origin, but rather by individuals who, regardless of their ethnic background, align themselves with the Turkish state, culture, and values. These individuals, having developed a shared memory and a common sense of destiny, are recognized as part of a collective solidarity.

---

[12] Kili ve Gözübüyük, Türk Anayasa Metinler: Sened-i İttifak'tan Günümüze. İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, 1985, ss. 128, 186.

In essence, consistent with the nation-state ideology, anyone who does not harbor allegiance to another nation and who identifies as Turkish, speaking and thinking in Turkish, is considered Turkish.[13] Thus, the MHP's definition of Turkishness rejects sectarianism, racism, and regionalism, favoring instead a national consciousness and cultural unity.[14] However, Ideological systems that promote competition among social classes are viewed as separatist and divisive, as they are believed to threaten the integrity of the nation.[15] MHP Chairman Dr. Devlet Bahçeli encapsulates this inclusive vision of Turkish national identity, which incorporates the voluntary framework of citizenship and the sociological foundations of Turkishness, stating: "*The Turkish nation is a magnificent human entity that shares a common history, language, religion, tradition, and customs, having reached a consensus over centuries, coming together in both joy and sorrow.*"[16]

In the context of defining Turkish identity, the second critical issue is the preservation of this identity in line with the national biographical narrative. The MHP, while avoiding exclusionary and divisive rhetoric in conceptualizing national identity, seeks to identify key milestones in the Turkish biographical narrative to construct and sustain the Turkish existence. Chairman Dr. Devlet Bahçeli's statement, "*In the precious existence of our nation, the values of nationality, ethics, and civilization are exactly as our ancestors planted them, evident even in the Orkhon Inscriptions located right in front of our party*," encapsulates the essence of the MHP's approach to Turkish ontological security.[17]

This approach is rooted in identifying the key memory stations of Turkish existence, drawing from a historical perspective that spans the entirety of Turkish history and is driven by the ambition to shape Türkiye's future. Fragmenting Turkish history into distinct periods and dividing national memory accordingly risks the emergence of multi-

---

[13] Alparslan Türkeş, 9 Işık. İstanbul: Kamer Yayınları, 1997, s. 108.

[14] Alparslan Türkeş, Gönül Seferberliğine. İstanbul: Hamle Yayınları, 1996, s. 82.

[15] Türkeş, 9 Işık, ss. 92-93.

[16] Devlet Bahçeli, Siyaset ve Liderlik Okulu 10. Dönem Sertifika/Mezuniyet Töreni, https://www.mhp.org.tr/usr_img/mhpweb/kitaplar/siyasetveliderlik_okulu_genelbaskankonusmalari_opt.pdf, (Accessed on 28.09.2023)

[17] Devlet Bahçeli, Siyaset ve Liderlik Okulu 10. Dönem Sertifika/Mezuniyet Töreni, https://www.mhp.org.tr/usr img/mhpweb/kitaplar/siyasetveliderlik_okulu_genelbaskankonusmalari_opt.pdf, (Accessed on 28.09.2023)

ple identities from the same biographical narrative. Such segmentation could result in the development of schizophrenic identities within the Turkish collective memory, posing a threat to Turkish social cohesion and the continuity of national identity. MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli opposes this fragmentation of identity and the artificial competition imposed by recent historical figures, advocating instead for an inclusive and comprehensive biographical memory. His declaration, "*The Ottoman Empire is ours, the Republic of Türkiye is ours,*" reflects his stance against these divisive tendencies.[18] Additionally, Dr. Bahçeli addresses the threat of fragmentation in Turkish collective memory by acknowledging the importance of key historical figures. He states:

> ""*With respect and remembrance, Sultan Abdülhamid Khan, whom we remember with mercy, is ours; Talat Pasha is ours; Enver Pasha is ours; Mustafa Kemal Pasha is ours. It is shameless, ignorant, and hypocritical for those who do not belong to our history to come forward today and claim expertise on so-called genocide.*"[19]

The preservation of Turkish existence is realized within the framework of Turkishness, national sovereignty, and the Republic, all of which are framed within the context of the state entity. Consequently, in the political discourse of the MHP, the concepts of "the eternal state" and "the Republic forever" have become intertwined and inseparable. From this perspective, threats to national sovereignty are interpreted as threats to the republican regime, and threats to the republic are regarded as threats to the state itself. Devlet Bahçeli succinctly articulated this viewpoint by stating, "*The political history of Türkiye, from its very inception, is a history marked by rebellions and uprisings against the Republic; and since the advent of multi-party politics, it has been a history of impositions, inducements, and pressures against our democracy.*"[20]

---

[18] Devlet Bahçeli, Cumhuriyet, Demokrasi ve İstikrar Cilt 2, https://www.mhp.org.tr/usr_img/mhpweb/kitaplar/ cumhuriyet_demokrasi_ve-istikrar_cilt2.pdf, (Accessed on 04.10.2023).

[19] Devlet Bahçeli, Cumhuriyet, Demokrasi ve İstikrar Cilt 2, https://www.mhp.org.tr/usr_img/mhpweb/kitaplar/ cumhuriyet_demokrasi_ve-istikrar_cilt2.pdf, (Accessed on 04.10.2023).

[20] Devlet Bahçeli, Cumhuriyet, Demokrasi ve İstikrar Cilt 1, https://www.mhp.org.tr/usr_img/mhpweb/kitaplar/ cumhuriyet_demokrasi_veistikrar_cilt1.pdf, (Accessed on 28.09.2023).

The foundation of Turkish nationalism's ontological security, rooted in the principles of identity, republic, and sovereignty, also necessitates democracy within the MHP's political philosophy. *Democracy* encompasses the entirety of the will that institutionalizes itself alongside national sovereignty, emphasizing human rights and freedoms. In this context, MHP Chairman Dr. Devlet Bahçeli's formula—"the subject is the individual, the object is the state, the predicate is democracy, and the sentence is the nation"—provides a forward-looking perspective on the future of Turkey and clearly defines the essence of Turkish ontological security as follows:

> *"We, by placing the individual at the center, have embarked on a journey for the sake of the individual, viewing the state as one with the nation, aiming to establish human-nation, human-state, and nation-state relations through democracy, and believing that all of these will only find meaning within the nation. We are a political movement that stands firmly by the side of its nation against those who threaten it, harm individuals and society, and subject our national and spiritual values to debate. The MHP, in the face of the impositions of those who consider themselves above the nation, has always taken its place firmly by the side of its people. When dangers arose against the integrity of the state and its fundamental values, it demonstrated to both friends and foes how the Republic should be protected."[21]*

This principle also signifies the projection of a political approach that reconciles the often-perceived contradictions between tradition and modernity, past and future, and the individual and the state, harmonizing them instead.[22] Consequently, today's achievements of the Republic are regarded as the complete and true embodiment of the collective memory of Turkish society. The preservation of the republican regime is viewed as a formidable bastion in the cultural and civilizational struggle of Turkish society.

---

[21] Devlet Bahçeli, Cumhuriyet, Demokrasi ve İstikrar Cilt 1, https://www.mhp.org.tr/usr_img/mhpweb/kitaplar/ cumhuriyet_demokrasi_veistikrar_cilt1.pdf, (Accessed on 28.09.2023)

[22] Devlet Bahçeli, 21. Yüzyıl ve 2023 Türkiye Vizyonu https://www.mhp.org.tr/usr_img/_mhp2007 /kitaplar/21yy2023turkiyevizyonu.pdf, (Accessed on 28.09.2023)

> *"The Nationalist Movement is the epitome of a significant political and intellectual movement that transforms the fundamental values and historical achievements of the Turkish Nation into the driving force for new breakthroughs, ensuring its perpetual existence. This name and this mission will endure as long as the world exists."*[23]

This ideology draws from the historical connection and continuity between Bilge Kağan's declaration, "*Until the blue sky above collapses and the black earth below splits, O Turkish Nation, who can destroy your traditions and rituals?*"[24] and Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's statement, "*My mortal body will one day turn to dust. However, the Republic of Türkiye will stand eternal.*" n this context, the existence of a state—rooted in geographical and historical experience—is an indispensable condition for the Turkish nation to thrive in an organized, structured, and secure manner. The republic, established through democracy and national sovereignty, has become the assurance of the future. Therefore, maintaining vigilance against both internal and external threats to the Turkish state and taking appropriate measures to address these threats is considered a matter of paramount importance.[25]

The Boundaries of Turkish Ontological Security:
Turkish Geopolitics and the Worldwide Turkic Community

The core and tangible manifestation of the ontological security approach in Turkish nationalism is embodied in the concept of Turkish Unity. During the Cold War, the application of the "self-determination" principle for Turks under Soviet rule underscored the importance of Turkistanis determining their own political fate. The liberation of the Turkistan region, deemed vital for Turkish survival and unity, became a central tenet of Turkish nationalism. Consequently, the ideology of Turanism, which had previously been perceived as a criminal and detrimental notion in Turkish public opinion, gained acceptance within the MHP. This shift in perception was attributed to the influ-

---

[23] Devlet Bahçeli, Siyaset ve Liderlik Okulu 10. Dönem Sertifika/Mezuniyet Töreni, https://www.mhp.org.tr/usr img/mhpweb/kitaplar/siyasetveliderlik_okulu_genelbaskankonusmalari_opt.pdf, (Accessed on 28.09.2023).
[24] Muharrem Ergin, Orhun Abideleri (Kırkdokuzuncu Baskı), İstanbul: Boğaziçi Yayınları, 2003.
[25] Dündar Taşer, Mesele, Ankara: Töre-Devlet Yayınları, 1975, s. 330.

ence of communist ideologies, which were seen as the primary sources of the negative views on Turanism.[26] Alparslan Türkeş, the founding leader (Başbuğ) of the MHP, articulated this perspective:

> *"What Enosis signifies for the Greeks, Pan-Slavism for the Russians, German Unity for the Germans, and Arab Unity for the Arabs, Turanism embodies for the Turks. Why is the concept of unifying people of the same nation — an idea that is neither deemed guilty nor flawed for the Russians, Germans, and Arabs in their quest to liberate themselves from subjugation and establish a cohesive entity within a framework of close cultural and cooperative unity — portrayed negatively? Why is it represented to the Turkish public as if it constitutes a criminal act? The instigators of this misrepresentation are the propaganda agents of foreign oppressive regimes that have infiltrated our ranks, with communists leading the charge."[27]*

Alparslan Türkeş regarded the fate of Turks living outside Türkiye as an integral component of the nation's destiny and defined Turkish Unity as the unification of all Turks worldwide into a single nation and state under one flag.[28] In his vision for achieving Turkish Unity, he emphasized the importance of protecting the rights of Turks under Soviet hegemony, who were deprived of basic human rights, through widespread dissemination of information and propaganda. He advocated for the use of diplomatic means to provide assistance to these oppressed Turks. Türkeş also underscored the necessity of establishing cultural connections with the Turkic world to strengthen ties and relationships swiftly. Furthermore, he highlighted the importance of addressing the needs of refugees and migrants from these captive Turkish regions, ensuring that their requirements are comprehensively met.[29]

In the declaration titled "21st Century and the 2023 Vision of Türkiye," MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli underscored the historical responsibility and political mission of the MHP, asserting, "*MHP is the hope of the world Turks, the future of the Turkish-Islamic world.*"[30] In this decla-

---

[26] Türkeş, 9 Işık, s. 106.

[27] Türkeş, 9 Işık, s. 107.

[28] Türkeş, Gönül Seferberliğine, s. 20.

[29] Türkeş, Gönül Seferberliğine, s. 21.

[30] Devlet Bahçeli, 21. Yüzyıl ve 2023 Türkiye Vizyonu https://www.mhp.org.tr/usr_img/_mhp2007/kitaplar/21yy2023turkiyevizyonu.pdf, (Accessed on 28.09.2023).

ration, he positioned Türkiye at the forefront of global politics. During a speech on November 23, 1997, Dr. Bahçeli elaborated on Türkiye's vision for 2023, emphasizing its goal of becoming a regional leader and integrating with the Turkic world:

> *"Why shouldn't Türkiye enter the year 2023, the centennial of our Republic's establishment, as a leading country, and the year 2053, marking the 600th anniversary of Istanbul's conquest by Fatih Sultan Mehmet, as a 'superpower'? Why shouldn't Türkiye assume a leading role in economic, political, and military organizations that it will establish with the Turkic Republics, in addition to the Black Sea Economic Cooperation?"*[31]

The vision articulated in 1997 delineated the contours of Turkish ontological security for the centennial of the Republic, with a particular focus on Turkish geopolitics. This vision was further institutionalized with the establishment of the "Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States" in 1992, following the Cold War, and the signing of the Nahçıvan Agreement on October 3, 2009. The 8th Summit in Istanbul on November 12, 2021, marked a significant milestone, as the Turkic Council was rebranded as the "Organization of Turkic States." Uzbekistan joined as a full member during the 7th Summit in Baku in October 2019, while Hungary attained observer status at the 6th Summit in Cholpon-Ata, Kyrgyzstan, in September 2018. Turkmenistan followed suit during the 8th Summit in Istanbul in November 2021, and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus joined at the 9th Summit in Samarkand.[32]

The Organization of Turkic States has opened a gateway to the Turkic world in the new century, acting as a political and institutional manifestation of Turkish geopolitics. In addition to its singular, Western-centric foreign policy perspective, Türkiye's interpretation of regional and Turkic world events through a Turkish lens and in the Turkish language solidifies the foundation of the memory-place-identity composition within the Turkish biographical narrative. These developments undeniably reflect the MHP's political coordinates concerning Türkiye and the Turkic world.

---

[31] Devlet Bahçeli, 21. Yüzyıl ve 2023 Türkiye Vizyonu https://www.mhp.org.tr/usr_img/_mhp2007 /kitaplar/21yy2023turkiyevizyonu.pdf, (Accessed on 28.09.2023).

[32] https://www.turkicstates.org/tr/turk-konseyi-hakkinda, (Accessed: 28.09.2023).

MHP Leader Dr. Devlet Bahçeli (2009: 14) has made it clear that "*the salvation recipes offered by other capitals will not advance the Turkish nation even a step further. The only solution lies in viewing the world from a Türkiye-centric perspective and reading the future and globalization in Turkish.*"[33] In this assertion, he outlines the principles of Turkish geopolitics and defines its scope as follows:

> "*For centuries, this consciousness has been embedded in the minds of teachers, mentors, and scholars, forming the core of the world state. If we aim to seek salvation for humanity, propose a pathway for the Turkish nation and oppressed communities across various fields — such as politics, culture, economy, technology, art, and sports — essentially, in all aspects vital for civilization — and represent solutions in each area, it will be possible only through the preservation of conscious Idealism and the nurturing of conscious Idealists. This political understanding represents a new approach that aims to rescue not only Türkiye but also our kin, our brothers in faith, and the oppressed nations awaiting assistance.*"[34]

In the ontological security framework of Turkish nationalism, Türkiye is positioned as the central and leading nation, formulating a Turkish geopolitics that encompasses its immediate vicinity, including the Balkans, Turkmeneli, Cyprus, Crimea, Azerbaijan, and other Turkic States. This geopolitical approach is underpinned by a global vision. Indeed, the boundaries of Turkish ontological security are derived from the Turkish biographical narrative, which spans from nearby geographies to distant regions. This vision was articulated by MHP Leader Dr. Devlet Bahçeli in the following manner:

> "*From Karabakh to Crimea, from Kashgar to Kirkuk, from Cyprus to Jerusalem, from Kashmir to all Turkish and Islamic lands, there are memories of the three crescents, footprints, lingering pains, an indelible name and fame... Therefore, the streams will merge with*

---

[33] Devlet Bahçeli, Siyaset ve Liderlik Okulu 10. Dönem Sertifika/Mezuniyet Töreni, https://www.mhp.org.tr/usr img/mhpweb/kitaplar/siyasetveliderlik_okulu_genelbaskankonusmalari_opt.pdf, (Accessed on 28.09.2023).

[34] Devlet Bahçeli, Siyaset ve Liderlik Okulu 10. Dönem Sertifika/Mezuniyet Töreni, https://www.mhp.org.tr/usr img/mhpweb/kitaplar/siyasetveliderlik_okulu_genelbaskankonusmalari_opt.pdf, (Accessed on 28.09.2023); Devlet Bahçeli, Ülkü ve Şuur,https://www.mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/medya/mhp_yayinlari/mhp/yayinlar.html, (Accessed on 28.09.2023).

> *rivers, the rivers will meet with seas, and finally, the waters of the Orhun River will merge with the Turkish ocean. The noble members of our nation living in different geographies will, with the memories of Lake Issyk, the inspiration of Ergenekon, and the historical memories of Turkistan, bring stability, peace, prosperity, and justice to the rest of the world, serving as a role model in terms of welfare and justice.*"[35]

The MHP's stance on Turkish geopolitics and its ties with the Turkic world is grounded in a balanced and realistic political framework, avoiding irredentist or revisionist ambitions. Within the ontological security paradigm, this approach seeks to bridge the gaps in the Turkish biographical narrative and establish a solid foundation for future projections. This reflects a desire to enhance political, diplomatic, and military capabilities based on that foundation. A prime example is Azerbaijan's military success in the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War, which was supported by Türkiye's military, technical, and diplomatic assistance, without compromising the international obligations of the member states.

This strategy extends beyond intergovernmental interactions, fostering deeper connections among Turkic peoples and potentially elevating public diplomacy to a powerful tool among Turkic nations. The pragmatic essence of Turkish geopolitics is further elucidated by MHP Leader Dr. Devlet Bahçeli, who reflects on the 2040 vision of the Turkic States Organization as follows:

> *"The vision based on four main principles promises to strengthen each member state on a national basis and as a group without violating their existing international commitments."*[36]

This principle fundamentally underpins a paradigm centered on the Turkish axis in Turkish foreign policy. However, the projection of Turkish geopolitics in foreign policy is oriented toward a Turkish axis that encompasses the Turkic world. Thus, integrating the principle of "unity in will"[37] with the existing motto of "unity in language, unity in

---

[35] Devlet Bahçeli, Cumhuriyet, Demokrasi ve İstikrar Cilt 1., https://www.mhp.org.tr/usr_img/mhpweb/kitaplar/ cumhuriyet_demokrasi_veistikrar_cilt1.pdf, Accessed: 28.09.2023).

[36] Devlet Bahçeli, Adım Adım 2023, https://www.mhp.org.tr/usr_img/mhpweb/kitaplar/adim_adim_2023.pdf, (Accessed on 04.10.2023).

[37] Devlet Bahçeli, Adım Adım 2023, https://www.mhp.org.tr/usr_img/mhpweb/kitaplar/adim_adim_2023.pdf, (Accessed on 04.10.2023).

action, and unity in thought" within Turkish geopolitics will establish coherence and harmony in the actor/action dynamic of the Turkish biographical narrative. This approach aims to bridge memory gaps among Turkish peoples and align their thoughts and wills.

In the ontological security perspective of Turkish nationalism, the concept of the "other" is defined by a dichotomy of "secure other" versus "insecure other." In this framework, Türkiye's sovereignty rights serve as the fundamental reference point. Consequently, the political stance of the United States and Western countries — particularly regarding terrorist organizations (DAESH, FETÖ, PKK/PYD/YPG,) that threaten both Türkiye's territorial integrity and regime security, as well as the claims of rights and territory made by Armenian and Greek diasporas — will be crucial in determining whether the "other" is perceived as secure or insecure. MHP Leader Dr. Devlet Bahçeli encapsulated this viewpoint, stating, "*If there is an honorable membership based on respect for sovereignty rights and mutual interests, that's great. If not, the world is not limited to the EU or the US.*"[38]

Conclusion

The Republic of Türkiye is esteemed as a national state, symbolizing the modern incarnation of the exalted state spirit. This embodiment marks the hallmark of the 20th century and serves as a legacy for the 21st century, arising from the nationalist will that established the Republic. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's conception of Turkishness, alongside his historical and geographical vision, was founded on principles that resonated with the realities of his era while also charting a course for the future of the Turkish nation. In this context, the MHP serves as both the bearer and follower of these principles in the Republic's second century, infusing Turkish politics with an ontological security perspective. The nationalist flame burning within our political landscape will undoubtedly illuminate our historical and cultural geography through this vision.

Surpassing the static and stagnant debates prevalent in Turkish politics, the key to interpreting regional and global dynamics lies in the innovative proposal encapsulating the ontological security approach

---

[38] Devlet Bahçeli, Adım Adım 2023, https://www.mhp.org.tr/usr_img/mhpweb/kitaplar/adim_adim_2023.pdf, (Accessed on 04.10.2023).

of Turkish nationalism. In this framework, the republican regime and its achievements are fundamental to Turkish ontological security, fostering a vision of a robust and cohesive society. The republican model, shaped by its unique historical and sociological dynamics, is poised to inspire not only neighboring countries but also the Turkic Republics of Turkistan. Within this model, emerging democracy, national sovereignty, and institutional memory serve as the most potent tools for forging close ties between Turkic states and peoples, as well as for establishing a shared destiny and will.

To achieve a position where Turkishness can once again guide, shape, and influence global politics, the MHP's political vision is founded on a model that transcends national or regional confines, embracing a global perspective. The first element of this vision involves fostering a strong and prosperous Türkiye, committed to democratic politics and culture while steadfastly upholding the principle of national sovereignty. The second element emphasizes Turkish Unity, which entails the political, economic, social, legal, military, and cultural amalgamation of independent Turkic states, thereby crafting a Turkish geopolitics capable of interpreting and influencing global politics. The third element focuses on establishing a strong integration with the Turkic world and a political commitment to promoting justice and peace in global affairs, particularly in Islamic countries and other regions.

The ontological security approach of Turkish nationalism introduces a fresh perspective regarding the internal and external dimensions of national identity. This perspective leans toward "*idealism realized through realism,*" marking a transition from intention to will and from thought to action. Consequently, it is anticipated that the concepts of nationalism and ontological security will evolve and deepen in the future, thereby enriching the discourse on Turkish nationalism.

References

Bahçeli, D. (1997). *21. Yüzyıl ve 2023 Türkiye Vizyonu* https://www.mhp.org.tr/usr_img/_mhp2007/kitaplar/21yy2023turkiyevizyonu.pdf, (Accessed: 28.09.2023).

Bahçeli, D. (2009). *Siyaset ve Liderlik Okulu 1. Dönem Sertifika/Mezuniyet Töreni*, https://www.mhp.org.tr/usr_img/mhpweb/kitaplar/siyasetveliderlik_okulu_genelbaskankonusmalari_opt.pdf, (Accessed: 28.09.2023)

Bahçeli, D. (2010). *Ülkü ve Şuur,* https://www.mhp.org.tr/_htmldocs/medya/mhp_yayinlari/mhp/yayinlar.html, (Accessed: 28.09.2023).

Bahçeli, D. (2014). *Siyaset ve Liderlik Okulu 10. Dönem Sertifika/Mezuniyet Töreni*, https://www.mhp.org.tr/usr_img/mhpweb/kitaplar/siyasetveliderlik_okulu_genelbaskankonusmalari_opt.pdf, (Accessed: 28.09.2023).

Bahçeli, D. (2021). *Adım Adım 2023*, https://www.mhp.org.tr/usri mg/mhpweb/kitaplar/adi m_adim_2023.pdf, (Accessed: 04.10.2023).

Bahçeli, D. (2022). *Cumhuriyet, Demokrasi ve İstikrar Cilt 1.*, https://www.mhp.org.tr/usr_img/mhpweb/kitaplar/cumhuriyet_demokrasi_veistikrar_cilt1.pdf, (Accessed: 28.09.2023).

Bahçeli, D. (2022) *Cumhuriyet, Demokrasi ve İstikrar Cilt 2*, https://www.mhp.org.tr/usr_img/mhpweb/kitaplar/cumhuriyet_demokrasi_veistikrar_cilt2.pdf, (Accessed: 04.10.2023).

Demir, H. (2017). "Başbuğ ve Maneviyata Dönüş. Der. Y. Sarıkaya ve İ. F. Aksu, *Lider Türkiye İçin Alparslan Türkeş Vizyonu,* Ankara: Tasav Yayınları, ss. 219-226.

Ergin, M. (2003). *Orhun Abideleri* (Kırkdokuzuncu Baskı), İstanbul: Boğaziçi Yayınları.

Flint C. ve Taylor P. J. (2014). *Siyasî Coğrafya, Dünya Ekonomisi, Ulus Devlet ve Yerellik* (6. Baskı), Çev. F. Ereker, Ankara: Nobel Yayıncılık.

Giddens, A. (2014). *Modernite ve bireysel kimlik geç modern çağda benlik ve toplum* (2. Baskı), Çev.Ü. Tatlıcan, İstanbul: Say Yayınları.

Heidegger, M. (2011). *Varlık ve Zaman* (İkinci Baskı). Çev. (Kaan H. Ökten). İstanbul: Agora Kitaplığı.

Kili, S. ve Gözübüyük, A. Ş. (1985). *Türk Anayasa Metinler: Sened-i İttifak'tan Günümüze.* İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları.

Kinnvall, C. (2004). "Globalization and religious nationalism: self, identity, and the search for ontological security", *Political Psychology*. 25 (5), 741-767.

McNeill, W. (2010). "Yurdun ve Yurtsuzluğun Anlamı", (Çev. A. Aydoğan). Ed. M. Heidegger, W. Mcneill ve K. Hammermeister, *Düşünceye Çağıran Yurt Müdafaası.* İstanbul: Say Yayınları, 53-100.

Seamon, D. and Sowers, J. (2008). "Place and Placelessness, Edward Relph", Eds. P. Hubbard, R. Kitchen, G. Vallentine, *Human Geography.* London: Sage.

Subotic, J. (2016). "Narrative, ontological security, and foreign policy change", *Foreign Policy Analysis*. 12 (4), 610-627.

Taşer, D. (1975). *Mesele*, Ankara: Töre Devlet Yayınları.

Tetik, M. O. (2018). Zeytindalı operasyonu ve ontolojik güvenlik, ed. M. Akif Okur, *Güvenlik, kargaşa ve belirsizlik çağında nereye?,* İstanbul: Kocav Yayınları, 105-118.

Türkeş, A. (1996). *Gönül Seferberliğine*, İstanbul: Hamle Yayınları.

Türkeş, A. (2007). *9 Işık*, İstanbul: Kamer Yayınları.

Zarakol A. (2016). "States and ontological security: A historical rethinking", *Cooperation and Conflict.* 52 (1), 1-21.

TÜRK AKADEMİSİ
Siyasi Sosyal Stratejik Araştırmalar Vakfı

ANALYZING THE "LEADER COUNTRY" VISION OF THE NATIONALIST MOVEMENT PARTY IN THE CONTEXT OF TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY

Yalçın SARIKAYA

Professor, Giresun University, Department of International Relations

"Türkiye's magnificent position and spiritual accumulations make it possible for Türkiye to turn its face neither only to the East nor only to the West. Türkiye must center itself and face both the West and the East. This is the strategic vision inherited from the double-headed eagle on the flag of the Seljuk state looking in two directions to the Ottoman Empire and then to the Republic... However, this should not mean an imperialist aggression, but an attractive and respected understanding that seeks tranquility and justice, peace and equity. Our nationalism is not a primitive understanding that treats other nations with contempt and disdain. The infallible pendulum of repeating history may have swung away from us today. However, the eternal law will surely manifest and turn in our favor." (MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli) [1]

Introduction: MHP and Turkish Foreign Policy

As of 2024, there are 193 member states of the United Nations. Within this framework, it is evident that some island states with populations in the hundreds, along with China and India, are recognized as legally sovereign equals. However, the international system is not solely

---

[1] MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's Speech on the 40th Anniversary of the Founding of the MHP, 9 February 2009, https://www.mhp.org.tr/usr_img/_mhp2007/kitaplar/40yilkitabi.pdf, p.53-54.

governed by norms; in many instances, legal frameworks are notably weak in the face of the principal determinants of the system. Indeed, the territorial size, demographic characteristics, and historical contexts of these states differ significantly, rendering direct comparisons problematic. The Turkish nation is dispersed across a vast geographical area and currently comprises seven independent states, alongside numerous autonomous republics, regions, and communities that may be categorized as distinct entities. Türkiye is viewed as a beacon of hope and inspiration for Turks worldwide in terms of all elements of national power. Beyond the states it has inherited, its cultural and historical wealth, combined with its unique geographical position, contributes to its distinctive identity, thereby complicating its international engagements. Nevertheless, to comprehend Türkiye's current position within the international system, it is essential to briefly revisit the Republican era, particularly regarding foreign policy.

The foreign policy of the Republic of Türkiye was shaped within the context of the political and economic conditions of its founding years, and its principles and priorities were established accordingly. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the Commander-in-Chief of the Turkish War of Independence and the founder of the Republic, governed during a period referred to in the literature as the "interwar period." During this time, the principles of establishing bilateral relations with global states based on sovereign equality and mutual respect, as well as a commitment to full independence, regional cooperation, and a "peaceful foreign policy," were prominently articulated. This era was not characterized by unprincipled and aimless pacifism; rather, it was a time when Türkiye asserted its status as a member of the international community, adhering to its national laws. Within the framework of the political conditions of this period, the annexation of Hatay to Türkiye and the Montreux Convention's provisions should be regarded as significant achievements in foreign policy. The foreign policy pursued under İsmet İnönü, following Atatürk's death, was shaped amid the heightened tensions and substantial risks of the Second World War. Notably, Türkiye's prolonged neutrality in the war, despite considerable external pressures, is also recognized as a success of this period.

In the bipolar era, Türkiye became part of the Western Bloc at a stage considered the beginning of this period. Consequently, the determinism of the Cold War years in the foreign policies of global states

was also applicable to Türkiye. Until the 1990s, Türkiye experienced fluctuations due to tensions between the poles and was influenced by perceived threats from the Soviet Bloc, as well as global tensions such as the Missile Crisis and regional developments related to the Cyprus and Turkish-Greek issues.

Atatürk's foreign policy, which included bilateral relations with the Soviet Union, Afghanistan, and Iran, clearly demonstrated his awareness and concern for the Turks living in these countries. This policy was characterized by the conjunctural opportunities presented in the 1920s and 1930s and the power capacity of the new republic. However, Türkiye's foreign political agenda did not focus on the Turkish presence outside of Türkiye until nearly 1990. It is important to note that this issue did not rank highly among various foreign policy topics. Developments related to the Cyprus issue from the 1960s to the 1980s and the response to the oppression of Bulgarian Turks during the 1980s can be considered notable exceptions.

Since the 1990s, as in the rest of the world, there have been fundamental changes in the environment of Turkish foreign policy. Türkiye has been one of the states most closely associated with this new situation due to its physical and cultural proximity to the Caucasus and Central Asian regions, which became new arenas of struggle following the independence of the former Soviet Republics.

The Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) and the broader Nationalist Movement are based on idealistic foundations. In its most basic definition, the MHP is the political organization of the Turkish nationalists. There is a strong correlation between nationalism and foreign policy, as international relations are characterized by an ongoing struggle between nations for power and interests. Nationalists do not perceive their nation as "ordinary." They aspire for national goals to be embraced by the broader society. However, they strive to achieve this through rational means rather than sentimentality. The MHP has never excluded "power approaches," which are the determining factors in international relations, and acknowledges the "necessity of a correspondence between power and goals." In this context, it seeks to make sense of internal integrity, growth, development, and power projection within the immediate environment and national cultural geography based on realistic principles for future objectives.

Regardless of the specific context and interpretation of nationalism, it is evident that, in the modern world, nationalism plays a decisive role in the emergence and survival of states, which are fundamental components of the international system and the primary actors in international relations. It can be asserted that the MHP adopts a rational perspective, a view initially established by its founding leader, Alparslan Türkeş, and reflected in the policies of its current Chairman, Devlet Bahçeli. This perspective asserts that the age of nations—and thus the age of nation-states—is upon us, and there will be no fundamental change in this regard in the foreseeable future.

Upon careful analysis, it becomes apparent that the MHP's foreign policy agenda consistently precedes its domestic policy agenda. Often, Türkiye's political position and prestige on the global stage appear to take precedence over the domestic political interests of the MHP as a party. Issues such as Cyprus, relations with Greece, minority rights, Western Thrace, the Caucasus, Turkestan, the Arab-Israeli conflict, border security, terrorism, relations with the EU and the USA, and the interests of Turkish and related communities outside Türkiye, which are central to Turkish foreign policy, have always been integral to the MHP's agenda.

Since the Turanian ideal, embedded in the phenomenon of the Turkic world, represents the main goal of the Nationalist-Idealist (Milliyetçi/Ülkücü) Movement, issues related to the Turkic world have evoked the MHP and the Grey Wolves' Hearths not only in Türkiye but also globally. Even when the MHP was outside the government and the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye (GNAT), it was regarded as a fundamental point of reference for various states and communities within the Turkic world, serving as a last fortress to which they could resort in difficult times.

The "Principle of Nationalism," which is the first principle in the Nine Lights concept proposed as a political doctrine by Alparslan Türkeş, the founding leader and "Grandfather" of the MHP, encompasses all dimensions of the concept of nation and outlines the means to exist and succeed as a "nation" in the international struggle. Türkeş articulates his perspective on nationalism as follows: "*It is not possible for a society devoid of a sense of nationalism to exhibit the characteristics of a nation. It is not possible for a community lacking a sense of nationalism and*

national consciousness to coexist. We observe that communities deprived of such feelings and consciousness cannot protect themselves against the slightest influence of external events; moreover, even without these external influences, they disintegrate autonomously and cease to exist as a community with distinct characteristics and goals." The phrases "unable to protect themselves against the slightest influence of external events" and "becoming a community with goals" are critically important in this context. It should not be regarded as natural for the members of a nation or the political and/or social groups representing them to agree on only limited issues; instead, they should strive to become a cohesive community with comprehensive goals. In this regard, the MHP and nationalist organizations have consistently emphasized the importance of education. Through both general and specialized educational activities, they have sought to ensure that the goals of the Turkish nation on a global scale are embraced by the entire nation, particularly by the youth.[2]

Alparslan Türkeş asserted that "*the goal of neo-colonialism is to push nations to despise themselves under the veil of realism.*"[3] He emphasized the spiritual dimension in the rise of nations, stating: "*The rise of a nation requires, first and foremost, the possession of high spiritual beliefs based on the love of humanity, being useful to people, and respecting human existence. Thinking of greatness and aspiring to greatness is an honorable path that will lead individuals and societies to happiness. The essence of greatness is spiritual greatness, a greatness of faith and love, as well as respect for facts and knowledge,*"[4] he warned.

During the Cold War years, the overt and covert cooperation of the organized and armed left, both globally and in Türkiye, with states such as the USSR, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and the People's Republic of China (PRC) led to efforts by their representatives in the academic and media spheres to portray the MHP and the Idealist Movement as being subject to foreign support. In an attempt to denigrate and discredit the struggle of the effective will against them, they resorted to the calumny of associating the Nationalist Movement with the USA and NATO.

---

[2] Alparslan Türkeş, 9 Işık, Ül-Kor Publications, İstanbul, 1987, p.88-95.
[3] Alparslan Türkeş, Temel Görüşler, Dergâh Publications, (Çağdaş Türk Siyasi Düşüncesi Serisi), İstanbul, 1975, p.10.
[4] Alparslan Türkeş, Temel Görüşler, Dergâh Publications, (Çağdaş Türk Siyasi Düşüncesi Serisi), İstanbul, 1975, p.9.

However, Alparslan Türkeş's assertion that "there is no need to copy Slavic Marxism or to embrace cold Anglo-Saxon capitalism"[5] countered this narrative. Although Türkeş acknowledged that Türkiye's NATO membership was appropriate under the prevailing conditions of the day, he criticized the erroneous and incomplete evaluations of NATO membership made by foreign policymakers. He stated, "The most important issue in all alliances is to harmonize the mutual interests of the member states and to ensure good coordination and sincere cooperation. Strong states in alliances always try to drag their weaker allies in their own direction. In alliances, it is crucial that member states mutually trust each other and maintain this trust. To achieve this, responsibilities should be divided according to the means and capabilities of the members, and political powers should be distributed based on equality. In the military domain, powers should be assigned according to geographical regions. From the very inception of the NATO alliance, responsibilities have been assigned disproportionately, whereas political powers have been allocated according to the big state-small state paradigm."[6] His words illustrate the realism in his perspective on this alliance. In this regard, we can conclude that the MHP maintained a rather pragmatic and technical approach to Türkiye's relations with NATO during the Cold War.

Although there are certain historical principles and tendencies specific to Türkiye's foreign policy, there have been interruptions, sometimes resulting from errors and at other times from the necessity to adapt to changes in the overarching characteristics of world politics. While the foreign policy pursued until the bipolar period was characterized by the consolidation of regional power, pioneering regional cooperation, and a commitment to full independence and stability, the bipolar period revealed a trajectory that largely overlapped with the dominant parameters of that era. This was a period of relative inactivity, a characteristic not unique to Türkiye.

Following the 1990s, Türkiye's pursuit of a multifaceted foreign policy became evident as it sought to enhance its influence and con-

[5] Alparslan Türkeş, Temel Görüşler, Dergâh Publications, (Çağdaş Türk Siyasi Düşüncesi Serisi), İstanbul, 1975, p.35-36.
[6] Alparslan Türkeş, Temel Görüşler, Dergâh Publications, (Çağdaş Türk Siyasi Düşüncesi Serisi), İstanbul, 1975, p. 285-286.

trol in the new era within the limits of its capabilities. Factors such as the risks arising from its geopolitical location and its proximity to the convergence and breaking points of various civilizational basins and/or geopolitical axes have resulted in minimal change in the fundamental security-based character of Turkish foreign policy. While allocating attention and resources to the ethnic and territorial conflicts in its immediate vicinity, Türkiye has also faced a significant domestic counterterrorism agenda, which has complicated the conduct of its foreign policy.

As an indication of the MHP's (and, for a time, the MÇP, which represented the same political line in Turkish politics) perspective on Turkish foreign policy, the following principles—emphasized by Alparslan Türkeş in both his writings and speeches—should be considered:

- Protection of independence and territorial integrity,
- Separation of mainstream politics from day-to-day politics,
- Concealment of overarching political objectives, with daily politics serving these objectives[7]

The late Alparslan Türkeş was the leader who drew significant attention to the events in Cyprus, one of the primary issues in Turkish foreign policy that had not received adequate focus within Türkiye. He highlighted the inappropriateness of timidity regarding this matter and foreign policy in general, maintaining the option of intervention to safeguard the rights and status arising from the London and Zurich Treaties.[8] When the MHP entered the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye (GNAT) during the 1991 General Elections in alliance with the Welfare Party and the Reformist Democracy Party, the dissolution of the Soviet Union was underway. Throughout his 19th term as a Member of Parliament, Türkeş closely monitored foreign policy developments, addressing the General Assembly and warning Turkish foreign policy decision-makers, MPs, Turkish public opinion, and

---

[7] "Günlük Politika Ana Politikayı Unutturamaz", 18 MaY 1974, Speech at the Youth Conference in Ankara, Metin Turhan, Başbuğ Türkeş: Türklük-İslâmiyet-Bölücülük ve Diğer Konular Hakkında Konuşma, Mülâkat ve Sözleri, Kripto Publications, Ankara 2017, p.219.

[8] See. 30th Meeting of 29.12.1965, 12th Meeting of 4.12.1967, Rasim Koç for the 35th meeting of 23.1.1969, Meclisteki Türkeş, Doğu Kütüphanesi, İstanbul 2007, p. 51-123.

the international community on numerous occasions. A review of his addresses from that period reveals that he frequently emphasized the Turkic World, the process of Soviet dissolution, the opportunities and responsibilities that arose for Türkiye, and the importance of the Turkish language.[9]

A dimension that should not be overlooked in the context of the MHP's principles and approach to foreign policy is its realism, which is not externally attributed to it. By this realism, we refer to rationality in political practice rather than political realism as a theory of international relations. The idealistic aspect of Turkish nationalism and the Nationalist Movement has often led to accusations of "sentimentalism," "hamaset," and "utopianism" from circles and political rivals who were unaware of the political activities and stance of the MÇP-MHP line. However, in practice, as a political party that nurtures idealism and strives for the adoption of national ideals, the MHP reflects these principles in its slogans and symbols. It follows a course that evaluates available data, aligns its power with its goals, and supports governments unconditionally in their actions on national issues. In this vein, the MHP has also been the party that most sharply criticizes insensitivities and mistakes regarding national issues and has warned the authorities.

Foreign Policy Perspective of MHP under the Leadership of Devlet Bahçeli

Alparslan Türkeş, the Grandfather of the Turkish World and one of the most significant leaders of Turkish political life in the 20th century, passed away on April 4, 1997. Following the 5th Extraordinary Congress on July 6, 1997, Devlet Bahçeli, who had served at various times as Secretary General, Deputy Chairman, Central Executive Committee Member, Central Decision-Making Committee Member, and Chief Advisor to the Chairman, became the leader of the MHP.

Foreign policy has been of vital importance in Devlet Bahçeli's political philosophy. His nearly identical phrase, "*First my country and my nation, then my party and me,*" clearly indicates that Türkiye's place and status within the family of nations and the Turkish nation's standing in the global community are prioritized above all else.

---

[9] Rasim Koç, Meclisteki Türkeş, Doğu Kütüphanesi, İstanbul 2007, p. 242.

MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli has defined two very important and completely unique symbolic goals concerning foreign policy since he assumed the chairmancy. One of these two interconnected symbols is 2023 and the other is "Leading Türkiye". "Leading country" was pronounced by Devlet Bahçeli on the second anniversary of the death of the late Alparslan Türkeş.[10] In a statement dated May 1, 1999, Devlet Bahçeli, in response to comments on whether the MHP had changed or not, stated that *"our goal of becoming an effective and respected country in the world has not changed"*, thus pointing to the importance of Turkish Foreign Policy and the ideal of "Leader Türkiye" for the MHP.[11]

Devlet Bahçeli's understanding of foreign policy is also rational, cool-headed and skeptical, rather than the "hamasas" and "excitement" that have long characterized the MHP and the Nationalist Movement in the media and significant segments of the public. According to Devlet Bahçeli, "*International relations are not the realm of excessive optimism or pessimism, contrary to the air pumped into public opinion by insensitive circles. Exaggerating and expressing positive or negative views in a negotiation process will not result in anything other than weakness. Any kind of projectionism that does not take into account both the experiences of the Turkish nation and the whole of humanity, as well as the dynamics of the age and the coordinates of international strategy, will be nothing more than "wishful thinking". Therefore, it will hinder, not support, Türkiye's development dynamism.*"[12]

In evaluating the formation of the 57th government, established following the general elections held on April 18, 1999, Devlet Bahçeli identified foreign policy as the foremost of the MHP's three primary perspectives, with the economy as the second and political preferences and social expectations as the third. Regarding foreign policy, which was emphasized by the Chairman and presented as the first priority,

---

[10] MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's Commemoration Speech of Başbuğ Alparslan Türkeş on April 4, 1999, http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/971/index.html

[11] MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's Speech at the Meeting of the Central Committee, Central Executive Committee and Members of Parliament on May 1, 1999 http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/962/index.html

[12] MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's press statement dated March 5, 2002, http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/223/index.html

the increasing significance of Eurasian geopolitics, particularly the recent developments surrounding Türkiye, was highlighted.[13]

As Deputy Prime Minister in the 57th Government, Devlet Bahçeli shared the responsibility for addressing chronic economic and social problems. This relevant period begins with the last year of the 20th century, signifying a shared responsibility for a government that guided Türkiye into the 21st century. The late 1990s and early 2000s were characterized by a global discourse in which any article in the social sciences would typically commence with the term "globalization." The prevailing set of values viewed globalization as an inevitable phenomenon, treating politics as a process that must adhere to its established rules, which were presumed to exist. This perspective suggested the evaporation of borders, proclaimed the contempt for, and even the dissolution of, nation-states, and posited that regional economic integrations and the acceptance of the political dominance of multinational corporations were not only beneficial but also obligatory.

MHP leader Devlet Bahçeli, while fulfilling his responsibilities in governing the country, has also sought to address and explain the debates surrounding globalization in a more rational manner. His following words are quite clear in this regard: "*We regret to see that some pencil-wielders, who have failed to be objective, are criticizing the MHP's position in this process, using the recent economic difficulties as an excuse. These individuals, who cannot accurately interpret globalization and believe that everything national and domestic will be abandoned in its wake, unfortunately do not understand the realities of this country and the world. It should not be forgotten that the competition between nations and states does not disappear with globalization; rather, globalization has altered the axis and content of this competition*."[14]

Conflicts and inequalities around the world play a fundamental role in MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's view of the globalization process. As we entered the 21st century, in a speech where he expressed the

---

[13] MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's GNAT Group speech on June 8, 1999, http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/972/index.html

[14] MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's Speech at the Kocayayla Turkmen Assembly on July 22, 2001, http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/299/index.html

general economic and political situation in the world, he stated the following: "*On the one hand, there is the dizzying pace of technological development and economic enrichment, and on the other, the reality of increasing misery, turmoil and ethnic strife. In addition, the middle classes, the social guarantors of democratic stability, are shrinking all over the world, inequalities are becoming more pronounced, and ecological disasters are reaching unlimited dimensions. In other words, our world is becoming a troubled sphere of conflicts and antagonisms rather than a stage for the spread of prosperity and happiness. One part of the world is condemned to a position of producing and marketing technology, culture and value, and therefore of governing, while the other large part is constantly receiving and being governed.*"[15]

Yet, it is evident that there are some differences in approach with the other partners of the coalition of which it is a member. In a 2002 report prepared for the US Congress, the 57th Government in Türkiye was described as follows: "*The government's demanding workload has exposed sharp differences between the ideologically incompatible coalition partners. The DSP is traditionally statist but probably no longer; it is now nationalist. The MHP is a party on the right and fiercely nationalist, while the ANAP is centrist, market-oriented, and notoriously corrupt. Bahçeli and Yılmaz are diametrically opposed regarding the changes related to EU accession. Bahçeli is skeptical about the impact on national sovereignty, while Yılmaz advocates for swift action.*"[16] This report to the US Congress, intended as a briefing note for administrators, seems to have aimed to be succinct and to the point.

The approach to some of the main issues of Turkish foreign policy in the 2000s is rich with examples demonstrating that Devlet Bahçeli and the MHP acted on principles and prioritized Türkiye. The first of these issues is relations with the EU, which was presented as the foundational framework of Turkish foreign policy at the beginning of this period.

The MHP is the party of a political movement—the Nationalist-Idealist Movement—rooted in the ideas of unity and solidarity of the Turk-

---

[15] Speech by MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli at the Opening Ceremony of the Academic Year of Gazi University on October 5, 1999, http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/969/index.html

[16] Carol Migdalovitz, "Turkey: Issues for U.S. Policy", Report for Congress, 22.05.2002, https://www.everycrsreport.com/reports/RL31429.html

ish nation, the Turkish world, and the elevation of the Turkish nation in this regard. In this respect, full membership in the EU has not been a priority or indispensable for the MHP. However, the transformation of the EU full membership perspective into a state policy with general consensus among the foreign policy, security, and economic institutions of the state affects all political parties and segments of society.

Amid concerns about the internal and external manipulation of the full membership process, as well as the adoption and implementation of developments detrimental to Türkiye within this context, the MHP can be seen as having a cautiously positive attitude toward EU policy, especially during the period when it was in government. However, particularly since 2003, the EU's approach to Türkiye—especially regarding the Cyprus Problem, minorities, local languages, and local governments—has been perceived as a means of "political transformation" of Türkiye. This led the MHP to articulate appropriate responses on behalf of the nation and to closely monitor the issue, akin to a shadow cabinet.

In retrospect, we can assert that the MHP was almost the only critical voice in the political arena between 2004 and 2010 and perhaps the only center that seriously addressed these issues. This period was highly turbulent in terms of Europe and Türkiye-EU relations, marked by numerous haphazard steps. During this time, the political landscape was accompanied by debates on identity that do not exist in Türkiye, peculiar attempts to define "Turkishness," an intensifying wave of insults and attacks against Islam and Turkishness in Europe, and extensive conspiracy cases against the institutions of the Turkish state. The MHP maintained its position and stance on these debates and issues without deviation and reacted whenever necessary.[17]

---

[17] See, among other examples, MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's Written Press Statement Evaluating the Recent Political and Social Developments in Our Country, which includes issues regarding the black propaganda and campaign launched against institutions and state organs on the pretext of the events in Şemdinli, 19 March 2006, http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/99/index.html,; Written Press Statement by Devlet Bahçeli on the provocations and mass actions that have gained momentum in our country in recent days, in addition to the issues related to the provocations and uprising rehearsals in Nowruz and the "Turkishness" debate, http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/97/index.html

During the period when it was a partner in government, the MHP frequently discussed the EU issue in its various committees and units, and this topic was included in many party texts and speeches by the Chairman. The following points are noteworthy in the MHP's approach to the EU during this period:

- MHP does not reject Türkiye's EU membership in principle.
- He draws attention to the fact that Türkiye's full membership in the EU is increasingly becoming a state policy.
- He evaluates that EU membership is ultimately in the hands and authority of the EU, and therefore indexing everything to it carries significant risks.
- He is cautious about the harmonization laws, etc. expected from Türkiye in the process of full membership.
- It has openly rejected the EU's approach to terrorist organizations and their activities and Türkiye's approach to the fight against terrorism and has tried to make the EU side empathize with Türkiye on this issue.
- In its relations with the EU, Türkiye has demonstrated that Türkiye has certain vested rights and opportunities from the EU and that these should be pursued for the benefit of the country.
- He emphasized that Türkiye's EU membership is not/can not be like the EU membership of any other state and that the EU side is well aware of this fact.[18]

On November 8, 2000, the MHP harshly criticized and warned against the Accession Partnership Document. On November 15, 2000, the EU Parliament discussed and approved the report on Türkiye. Devlet Bahçeli described both documents as "legitimizing ethnic discrimi-

---

[18] See on this subject Dr. Devlet Bahçeli, "Türkiye-AB İlişkilerinde Hayal ve Gerçek", Türkiye ve Siyaset Dergisi Vol.9-10, July-October 2002, p.5-12. Dr. Esat Öz, "Türkiye'nin AB Üyeliği, Perspektif Zaafları ve Tartışma Ahlakı", Türkiye ve Siyaset Dergisi Vol.9-10, July-October 2002, p.13-18. MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's 6th Ordinary Grand Congress Speech on November 5, 2000, http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/322/index.html, Dr. Devlet Bahçeli, "Türkiye-AB İlişkilerinde Kırılma Noktaları", Türkiye ve Siyaset Dergisi Vol.7, March-April 2002, p.5-12 Doç. Dr. Kürşat Eser (MHP Aksaray MP. Turkey-EU PABSEC Co-Chair) "Kıbrıs Meselesi ve Türkiye-AB İlişkileri", Türkiye ve Siyaset Dergisi Vol.7, March-April 2002, p.19-23. Devlet Bahçeli, Türkiye'nin AB Üyeliği ve MHP, Ankara 2002, https://www.mhp.org.tr/usr_img/_mhp2007/kitaplar/turkiyeab.pdf

nation, prejudiced, horizonless, and meaningless." The MHP assessed that the spring mood the EU had created in relations with Türkiye in 1999 was being deliberately set back in a negative direction in 2000.

On November 21, 2000, in a press statement made by Chairman Devlet Bahçeli after the formation of the new council of the MHP, he stated that "...*a European Parliament that only yesterday rejected the so-called Armenian genocide allegations suddenly changed its mind and attempted to hold the Turkish nation and state to account. As a very interesting 'coincidence,' this approach of the European Parliament has also been accepted by the parliaments of the member states of the Union. This is one of the irresponsible and prejudiced approaches that has no logical explanation whatsoever.*"[19] These statements highlight the rejection of the EU's famous 'double standard.'

One of the items on the foreign policy agenda in the early 2000s was the EU's efforts to utilize NATO capabilities. This issue, which was based on the construction of a Common European Security and Defense Policy and the project of an Emergency Response Force to carry out the Petersberg missions dating back to 1992, entered a new phase with the 1999 Helsinki Summit. Since then, EU-NATO contacts have increased, and 11 EU member states, which are also NATO allies, have requested the use of NATO capabilities in the operations of the Emergency Response Force. This situation is detrimental to NATO and non-EU member states such as Türkiye. The problem lies in Türkiye's contribution to a force in which it is not involved in the decision-making mechanism.[20] This issue, which has technical dimensions and is critically important for Turkish foreign policy, did not escape the attention of the MHP and was brought to the agenda by Devlet Bahçeli in June 2001.[21]

E Even after November 3, 2002, when it was in opposition, the MHP attempted to evaluate the criticisms originating from Europe, consider-

---

[19] MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's Press Statement after the Organization of the New Council November 21, 2000, http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/317/index.html

[20] Burak Tangör, Avrupa Birliği Güvenlik ve Savunma Politikasının Gelişimi, Seçkin Publication, Ankara 2009, p.140-149.

[21] MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's Speech at the MHP 6th Regional Consultation Meeting in Kayseri on June 9, 2001, http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/290/index.html

ing both their justified and unjustified aspects. However, it was never satisfied with the way its government was cornered by European states or the EU as an institution. The MHP made it clear in advance that it would position itself on the side of the state against such actions to the extent possible. One of the most striking recent examples of this was the hostile attitude towards Turkish politicians and statesmen in the Netherlands and some other EU member states in 2017. Following the Dutch response to Fatma Betül Sayan Kaya, the Turkish Minister of Family and Social Policies, and the cancellation of Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu's visit, the MHP displayed national solidarity with the government. It met with Cemal Çetin, the Chairman of the European Turkish Federation, the umbrella organization of Nationalist-Idealist Europeans Turks, secured the support of its members in Europe, and even announced in a press release that they had decided to stage a sit-in. Additionally, it addressed the issue in another press statement dated March 12, titled "Towards the Netherlands' Abusive Attitudes and Policies," in which it criticized the Netherlands in strong terms.[22]

On the other hand, when the Final Declaration of the European Council Summit held in Brussels on December 16-17, 2004, included the statement that negotiations with Türkiye would start on October 3, 2005, there was a great sense of triumph and celebration in Türkiye. However, MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli declared that "this date was an empty date, used as a tool to pave the way for new unfair demands from Türkiye, and that in reality, there was no serious positive development."[23] Subsequent events have shown how correct he was.

In 2005, 2006, and 2007, the Cyprus issue emerged as a key determinant of Türkiye-EU relations, as the Greek Cypriot Administration of Southern Cyprus (GASC) became a full member of the EU in 2004 under the name of Cyprus, in violation of EU law. In this respect, the MHP's stance on EU issues primarily focused on the Cyprus issue. However, regarding Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code, which was

---

[22] MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's Press Statement on the Netherlands' Offensive Attitudes and Policies, http://www.mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/4230/index.html

[23] Text of the Press Conference of MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli on the Results of the EU Brussels Summit December 21, 2004, http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/172/index.html

subjected to intense and deliberate discussion in 2008 due to pressures and demands from the EU, as well as issues related to Turkish-Greek relations, the Patriarchate and the Seminary, the exclusion of community foundations from legal control, and many other topics, the MHP frequently warned or criticized the government with detailed explanations in dozens of group speeches.[24]

To demonstrate the foreign policy approach of the MHP under the leadership of Devlet Bahçeli, it is essential to examine the phenomenon of the Turkic World, which holds a special place in the intellectual foundations and goals of this party and movement. As the successor leader of the MHP, the most significant legacy of Alparslan Türkeş, Devlet Bahçeli has dedicated attention and resources to the ideal of unity among the Turkic World, cooperation among Turkic states, and addressing the social, political, and economic situations of Turkic communities, as well as human rights violations and freedoms affecting related communities with a shared perspective and sensitivity. He has acted in accordance with the changing international conditions compared to the Cold War period, aiming to ensure that the issues of the Turkic World occupy a rightful place in Türkiye's foreign policy priorities. He closely monitored developments in the North Caucasus and the Balkans, which flared up again at the end of the 1990s, before he became a government partner, and endeavored to keep these issues on the agenda through public statements.

The Turkic World has been an exclusive topic in all election manifestos of the MHP since 1999.[25] Each manifesto includes commitments to establish organizations such as the "Turkic World Science and Technology Database," the "Turkic World Scientific and Technological Co-

---

[24] MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's Speech at the GNAT Group Meeting, 29 January 2018, http://www.mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/426/index.html, MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's Speech at the GNAT Group Meeting, 19 February 2018, http://www.mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/431/index.html

[25] See. Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, Seçim Beyannamesi: Lider Türkiye'ye Doğru, Ankara, 1999, Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, Seçim Beyannamesi: Türkiye'nin Onurlu Geleceği, Ankara, 2002, MHP 22 Temmuz 2007 Seçim Beyannamesi, Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, Seçim Beyannamesi: 2023'e Doğru Yükselen Ülke Türkiye Sözleşmesi, Ankara, 2011, Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, Seçim Beyannamesi: Toplumsal Onarım ve Huzurlu Gelecek, Ankara, Haziran 2015, Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, Seçim Beyannamesi: Huzurlu ve Güvenli Gelecek, Ankara, Kasım 2015.

operation Center," and the "Turkic World General Council." Likewise, the establishment of a "Ministry of the Turkic World" has been prioritized among the MHP's commitments and goals. These initiatives reflect the MHP's desire to institutionalize the Turkic World as extensively as possible, including in other Turkic states and even among non-independent communities.

The MHP has also been very sensitive to the developments in the Balkan lands, which the Ottoman Empire took under its control before a significant part of Anatolia. Issues related to the Turkish presence in Bulgaria and Greece, and the struggles in Bosnia and Kosovo were the main items on the MHP agenda in the 1990s. In this context, the Kosovo War, which lasted from February 1998 to June 1999, was also an important issue on Devlet Bahçeli's agenda. While the elections of April 18, 1999, had not yet taken place and the MHP was not yet in the 57th government, Devlet Bahçeli pointed out the increasingly tense dimension of the Kosovo conflict with the following words: "*Another important agenda item of recent times in the field of foreign policy is the Kosovo problem. This issue, which actually has a long history, has come to the forefront after the resolution of the Bosnia and Herzegovina problem, albeit to a certain extent. Serbian forces continue to show their ugly face at every opportunity they get. The attitude of Western countries towards this protection has not been sincere and moral enough.*" [26]

The MHP supported Türkiye's participation as a route for the Caspian Basin energy resources to reach the world, Turkish state and private sector companies' initiatives in priority sectors such as energy and construction in the states of this region, and within this framework, it supported Türkiye to pursue a more active policy in the race for energy transmission lines. What is different is that the MHP perceives this issue not only from the perspective of economic gains but also with the goal of Turkish unity. Moreover, it read the geopolitical developments in the region within the framework of reducing the dependence of these states on Moscow and/or other centers and strengthening their sovereignty. This was deemed necessary for the rapprochement and integration of the Caucasus and Turkestan with Türkiye The Baku-Ceyhan

---

[26] MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's press statement dated February 8, 1999, http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/971/index.html

Oil Pipeline, which was put on the agenda in 1993 during the reign of Ebulfez Elchibey and concretized with the "Treaty of the Century" signed in 1994 during the reign of Heydar Aliyev, after remaining on paper for many years, started to be realized as the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Oil Pipeline with the support of US President Bill Clinton at the OSCE Summit in Istanbul in November 1999.[27] The foundation of the line was laid on September 17, 2002, in the Sangjal region of Azerbaijan by then Presidents Ahmet Necdet Sezer, Eduard Shevardnadze and Heydar Aliyev, and it was inaugurated in May 2005. [28] Recognizing that Türkiye should give a special place to Azerbaijan and TANAP in its energy policy, MHP included the "Turkish Energy Trade Union" project, which it attributes an important function in the production and transfer of Caspian energy resources, in its manifesto for the 2015 General Elections.[29]

The MHP is in favor of "institutional integration" in the cooperation among Turkic states and communities and this is based on the intellectual foundations of the party. It is strongly opposed to the idea of the integration of Turkic states and communities being considered as hamasic, unrealistic, irrational or too difficult. Devlet Bahçeli criticized such approaches with the following words: *"We find it difficult to understand those who approve of Europe's efforts to achieve great integration in every aspect, despite the existence of very different cultural and social conditions and serious historical problems between them, and who belittle the cooperation and solidarity efforts of the Turkic World."*[30]

Following his visit to Kazakhstan on March 18-22, 2002 in his capacity as Deputy Prime Minister, MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli shared some of his contacts and observations in the Parliamentary Group of his party. In this context, he emphasized the importance of Kazakhstan for Türkiye with the following words: *"Taking into account the geopolitical and geostrategic advantages of both Türkiye and Kazakhstan shows what*

[27] Shahana Sariyeva, Azerbaijan-Turkish Relations (1992-2012): Common Interests and Solidarity, Unpublished Master Thesis, International Helenic University, 2012, p.10

[28] http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/sezer-inaugurates-btc-pipeline-38733072

[29] 7 Haziran 2015 Seçim Beyannamesi: Toplumsal Onarım ve Huzurlu Gelecek, https://www.mhp.org.tr/usr_img/mhpweb/MHP_Secim_Beyannamesi_2015_tam.pdf

[30] MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's speech to the GNAT on March 28, 2000, http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/346/index.html

a broad horizon there is for us. The development of an integrated cooperation system in investment, production and marketing processes between Türkiye, a natural and historical bridge between East and West, and Kazakhstan, one of the most important countries of Asia, is of great importance and value for the prosperity and stability of both our countries and Eurasia. For all these reasons, an important point that I have emphasized both in bilateral meetings and in the presence of our businessmen and sector representatives is that, despite these facts and developments, we consider the distance that our country has taken in its relations with Kazakhstan as positive, but insufficient. As a matter of fact, during our meeting with the esteemed President of Kazakhstan, Mr. Nursultan Nazarbayev, this issue was also emphasized sensitively. Mr. Nazarbayev agreed with us that trade and economic relations between the two countries can be further developed."[31] Indeed, as an experienced and realistic Turkestan leader, Nazarbayev's success in making his country the host of the solution to important international crises/problems (Türkiye-Russia Crisis, Astana process in the Syrian problem, solution of the Caspian Status problem, etc.), his activity in the Turkic Council and its affiliated organizations coincided with Devlet Bahçeli's observations about Kazakhstan.

It should be noted that Azerbaijan has an important and privileged place for the MHP. The MHP and the Nationalist Movement have a special place for the people living in this country and geography, where the closest relations can be developed at the state and society level in the post-Soviet independent Turkic World. The historical contributions of Azerbaijani intellectuals such as Ahmed Agaoglu and Ali Bey Huseynzade to the development of Turkish nationalism, from Ziya Gokalp's idea of Oghuz Unity, play a major role in this. In addition, Azerbaijan's geopolitically valuable position between Türkiye and the Turkic World is also among the factors. In this respect, the legacy of Türkeş's ideas and ideals on Azerbaijan has been continued by Devlet Bahçeli. In general, the fact that Türkiye-Azerbaijan relations have turned into a state policy has created smooth and high-momentum relations in every field until the great crisis in 2009. However, with the plans, pressures and demands of the EU and the US, as the nor-

---

[31] MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's GNAT Group speech on March 26, 2002, http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/228/index.html

malization of Türkiye-Armenia relations and the policy of opening the borders approached, the damage that the Armenian diaspora and the Dashnaksütyun party could not have caused if they had worked together for a hundred years began to be created between the two brotherly states. Five years before the signing of the Zurich Protocols in 2009, which stipulated the opening of diplomatic missions and the opening of border gates between Türkiye and Armenia, MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli pointed out in 2004 that the government of the time was *"rehearsing the opening of border gates rather than making efforts to liberate the occupied Azerbaijani territories."*[32] In September 2009, he commented on the preparations of then President Abdullah Gül to visit Armenia as part of the attempts to bring Ankara and Yerevan closer through a bizarre process called "football diplomacy" and stated that *"it is understood that the preparations for the President's visit to Yerevan on the pretext of a national match have reached an advanced stage"* and noted that *"the biggest obstacle to the normalization of relations between Türkiye and Armenia is Armenian policies based on hostility towards Türkiye."*[33]

On October 10, 2009, when the Zurich protocols were signed, the MHP expressed the clearest reaction and evaluated the protocols in the context of international law and Türkiye's interests. MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli, stating that *"the protocols register the submission to unlawful Armenian demands", draws attention to the following points: "The establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries depends on the mutual recognition of borders and territorial integrity, and the determination of the principles that will guide the relations as concrete obligations, not in a general and abstract plan. Armenia's military occupation of about one-fifth of the territory of friendly and brotherly Azerbaijan still continues. The process is contrary to Türkiye's national interests and lacks legal and political legitimacy due to these defects. MHP will defend to the end that diplomatic relations cannot be established unless Armenia changes its hostile policies and practices that question Türkiye's territorial integrity and that the border will not be opened until the occupation of Azerbaijani lands ends."*[34]

---

[32] Text of the Press Conference of MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli, 9 June 2004 http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/159/index.html
[33] https://www.haberler.com/bahceli-den-gul-un-ermenistan-ziyaretine-tepki-haberi/
[34] MHP Chairman Mr. Devlet Bahçeli's written press statement on relations with Armenia, 3 September 2009, http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/719/index.html

Following the clashes in Karabakh in April 2016, Devlet Bahçeli devoted a significant part of his group speech on April 5, 2016, to Azerbaijan, stating that *"MHP strongly stands by its Azerbaijani compatriots, no matter where they end up"* and exclaimed that "Karabakh is as Turkish as Kars and is the homeland of the Turk!".[35] On February 28, 2017, in his Group Meeting speech, Devlet Bahçeli reassessed the tensions in the region and the clashes of April 2016 and called on Armenia to leave Azerbaijani territories without any conditions.[36]

The MHP's interest in the Middle East, especially in Iraq and Syria, two of Türkiye's most important neighbors, is well known to the public. It can be said that without the MHP and Turkish nationalists, the Turkish presence in these two Middle Eastern countries, and in the entire Middle East, would have become a community that would have disappeared, unknown to Türkiye. The MHP has always closely followed the developments in the region through its deputies from provinces such as Mersin, Hatay, Kilis, Gaziantep and Şanlıurfa, as well as its provincial and district organizations in these provinces. The MHP has endeavored not to leave the existence and future of the Turkmens of the Bayır and Bucak regions in Syria, and the Turkmens living in the line stretching from Tal Afar to Kifri and Mendeli in Iraq, at the mercy of third powers, and Devlet Bahçeli himself has repeatedly received Turkmen representatives in his office, listened to their problems and expectations and tried to ensure that the necessary actions were taken.

MHP, which carefully followed the developments after the second US intervention in Iraq in 2003, stated that *"The Iraqi Provisional Administrative Law, which was adopted for the future political structure of Iraq, determined the basic principles on which the new constitution to be prepared after the transfer of the administration to civilians would be based, and with this law, it was decided to establish a loose federation based on the ethnic basis in Iraq, and the geographical division of the federation to be composed of three regions, He warned that the borders of the Kurdish Federated Region were drawn in a way to include Turkmens and that with this arrangement, the political and legal infrastructure for the establishment of an independent*

---

[35] MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's GNAT Group speech on April 5, 2016, http://www.mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/4052/index.html
[36] MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's GNAT Group speech on February 28, 2017, http://www.mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/4219/index.html

Kurdish state in the future was completed, while Turkmens were reduced to the status of a marginal minority."[37]

The Turkmen city of Tal Afar, which had been ousted by the US military operations against Tal Afar in early September 2004, was brought to the political agenda for the first time by MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli. Bahçeli warned the government by drawing attention to Barzani's statement "We are ready to fight to protect Kirkuk's Kurdish identity". After the MHP drew attention to the issue, Abdullah Gül, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, held a meeting with Colin Powell and "conveyed Türkiye's concerns about the harm to the civilian population".[38] Of course, although some attempts have been made to mitigate the situation, the wrong policies pursued in the aforementioned period will continue after the "Arab Spring" process, and the Turkmen population's presence, security of life, welfare and peace will be completely harmed.

In January 2005, in a comprehensive press statement on the elections held in Iraq, attention was drawn to issues such as the transfer of population to Kirkuk from outside, the Peshmerga elements' de facto control over Turkmen settlements, the PKK's alliance with Barzani and Talabani, and the US's patronage of all these, and it was determined that the government left these issues to their own devices. It was also declared that Anatolian Turks would never allow the destruction of Iraqi Turkmens.[39]

The Cyprus issue is also seen as a "National Cause" for the MHP. The MHP's sensitivity towards Cyprus dates back to the CKMP period. As a person who was born in Cyprus, Alparslan Türkeş took the issues of the Turkish Cypriots very seriously and this issue was included in all foreign policy documents and declarations of the MHP. It is clear that the Cyprus issue has a "responsibility" aspect for the MHP in terms of the continuation of Alparslan Türkeş's political legacy. For this reason,

---

37 Text of MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's Speech at the FMC Meeting (Kızılcahamam- Patalya Hotel Facilities) May 8, 2004, http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/156/index.html

38 Türkmen Uyarısı, Sabah, 11 September 2004, http://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/2004/09/11/gnd101.html

39 Press Statement by Devlet Bahçeli on the Elections in Iraq, 28 January 2005, http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/144/index.html

it is not overlooked that the issue was brought up at every opportunity in the MHP's TBMM group. During Devlet Bahçeli's chairmancy, this sensitivity was meticulously maintained. This was due to the fact that Cyprus was always one of the topics on the agenda of the 1997 and 1999 EU Summits when Türkiye's candidacy was on the agenda. Regarding the Cyprus problem, in 1999, when he was a partner in the government and the late Denktaş was in indirect talks in New York, MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli made a very critical observation and exclaimed that "*in some parts of the world, a policy of forced separation and fragmentation was being pursued, while in other parts, a policy of insistent unification was being pursued, that the Western World had been insisting on its policy of not recognizing Northern Cyprus for a quarter of a century, that Denktaş's attitude was honorable and correct, and his theses were the theses of the great Turkish nation.*"

According to MHP, it is clear that denying the existing bi-communal, bi-state structure in Cyprus and accepting one side as the sole interlocutor will not serve peace and stability. There is no doubt that it is the representatives of the Turkish Cypriot people who have demonstrated goodwill in the indirect Cyprus talks held so far and who desire a just and lasting solution to the problem. However, despite this, it has always been the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus that has been blamed for the conflict and cornered.

The MHP has always maintained that the path to lasting peace and stability in Cyprus lies through a just and honorable settlement and that an approach that ignores the bi-communal and bi-state structure is tantamount to an approach that does not want a lasting and just solution. It is also the MHP that has frequently expressed that the EU administration should envision a lasting peace based on the consent of the two communities, as required by the glorified European values, and that it is not possible to stand by and watch policies and approaches that could return the Turkish Cypriot people to the painful and dark period of pre-1974.[40]

40 See as an example. MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's Speech at the MHP 6th Regional Consultation Meeting in Kayseri on June 9, 2001, http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/290/index.html, MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's Speech at the 12th Erciyes Victory Congress on August 4, 2001, http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/301/index.html

The MHP has continued to address the Cyprus issue with a national responsibility and determination to fight even in its most difficult days. It is known that MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli made a press statement exclusively on Cyprus even immediately after the November 3, 2002 elections, when he remained below the 10% threshold and outside the Parliament. In this statement, it was stated that the MHP, whose determination and resolve to defend Türkiye's interests under all circumstances was not affected in any way even though it remained outside the Parliament, would fulfill the requirements of this responsibility in the future as well. On January 22, 2003, MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli paid a visit to the TRNC and held consultations with the late President Rauf Denktaş and gave the message that the MHP would stand by him and the people of the TRNC. During the process of the GCASC's accession to the EU on behalf of the whole of Cyprus, the MHP warned the government of the time and criticized the EU for this mistake at the expense of violating its own law.[41]

One of the most important contributions of the MHP to prevent the violation of Türkiye's and the Turkish side's rights in the Cyprus problem was the famous "additional protocol" signed between Türkiye and the EU Commission on July 29, 2005 during the British EU Presidency. In particular, it was only thanks to the MHP's warnings and objections that this protocol, which allowed the GCASC to benefit from Turkish ports, prevented Türkiye from recognizing the GCASC as the state representing the whole of Cyprus. The declaration text issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs together with this additional protocol, although not satisfactory for the MHP, was meaningful in terms of preventing future steps to be taken on this issue.

It should also be noted that the MHP has never hesitated to show open and decisive support to those in power, regardless of their political identities, in the face of planned steps such as attacks, humiliation, agitation, etc. directed against Türkiye by other actors in the international system. Alparslan Türkeş's stance during the MSP-CHP, DYP,

---

[41] Press Conference by Devlet Bahçeli on the EU's Double Standard on Iraq and Cyprus, 16 April 2003 http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/191/index.html. At this meeting, the AKP Government was also warned that "the attitude that should have been shown at the Copenhagen Summit on December 12, 2002 should at least now be shown by not attending the meeting in Athens".

ANAP governments or Erbakan-Ecevit, Demirel, Özal eras and Devlet Bahçeli's foreign policy stance during the AK Party governments represent the same national sensitivity. We can recall the Cyprus Peace Operation and the persecution of Bulgarian Turks from the past. Devlet Bahçeli took a similar stance during a period of fierce and bitter political rivalry between the AK Party and the MHP. Regarding the incident that took place in Davos on January 29, 2009 and entered our foreign policy literature as the "One Minute" [42] crisis, the MHP Chairman stated that *"The style and approach of the session leader and the President of Israel towards the Prime Minister, who was representing the Republic of Türkiye, was an example of arrogance that our beloved nation could never accept"* and that *"Prime Minister Erdoğan's reactions, which we believe he showed on behalf of our beloved nation, were justified, legitimate and appropriate, even if the methods were debatable"*. *Bahçeli also shared with the public his hope that "his stance in defense of the rights of the oppressed Palestinians, his words that he will continue to stand upright and his subsequent reference to Atatürk's struggle are an optimistic sign that the Prime Minister is going through a positive process of change and transformation."* [43]

Another example of this attitude was demonstrated in the crisis that started with the downing of the Russian jet. On November 24, 2015, Türkiye and Russia experienced one of the most important crises of our recent history when the Russian Federation's SU-24 fighter jet was shot down after violating Turkish airspace in the Yayladağ region of Hatay. The mutual understanding and cooperation between the two countries in the fields of economy, energy, Black Sea and security, which had not lost its momentum despite many tensions since the 1990s, entered a serious crisis. It is known that Türkiye and Russia had been on completely different sides in their Syria policies until that day and that they were, roughly speaking, two separate states behind the warring sides in terms of elements on the ground. Despite this, until the afore-

---

[42] Recep Erdogan storms out of Davos after clash with Israeli president over Gaza, The Guardian, 30 January 2009, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/jan/30/turkish-prime-minister-gaza-davos Erdoğan'dan Davos'ta One Minute Çıkışı, https://www.dunyabulteni.net/tarihte-bugun/tarihte-bugun-erdogan-dan-davosta-one-minute-cikisi-h194810.html

[43] MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's written press statement on "The controversy in Davos and the attitude of the Prime Minister", 31 January 2009, http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/563/index.html

mentioned incident, there had never been a direct confrontation between the two states. This incident was interpreted as a military blow to Moscow in the post-Cold War era, and the first military response of a NATO member to the Russian armed forces. In addition to harsh words and threats from Russia against Türkiye, a number of sanctions that were put into practice in a short period of time, Türkiye's response was also in question.[44] In this case, the MHP declared that it would *"support the AKP government, reserving all rights of criticism"*.[45] In a written press statement on the issue, Devlet Bahçeli stated that *"the growing cycle of hostility and crisis between Türkiye and the Russian Federation, which has spread to different areas and circles, will not benefit anyone, that the issue is a supra-party issue, that it would be a futile effort to intimidate Türkiye, to force it to make concessions, to make it shrink and to break away from its legitimate line."*[46]

Principles of Devlet Bahçeli's "Leader Country" Vision

First of all, it is necessary to look at the copyright issue of the phrases "2023" and "Leading Country/Türkiye", which are frequently uttered by various political figures in Turkish politics today. Of course, 2023 as a number refers to the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Republic of Türkiye. However, Devlet Bahçeli was the first in Turkish political life to approach the 100th anniversary of the Republic as a national interim goal.

First, in 1995, Devlet Bahçeli, in his article "National Goals and Priorities for the 100th Anniversary of the Founding of the Republic of Türkiye" in the Milliyetçi Çizgi newspaper, made some assessments 28 years in advance on what needed to be done for Türkiye to become a leader in its region and enter the second century prosperous and strong.[47]

---

[44] Türkiye-Rusya Uçak Krizi 10 Günde Neler Yaşandı, 4 December 2015, https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler/2015/12/151204_rusya_krizin_10_gunu

[45] Devlet Bahçeli'den Düşürülen Rus Uçağına İlişkin Açıklama, 26 November 2015, https://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/devletbahceliden-dusurulen-rus-ucagina-iliskin-aciklama,jHI8shRo4ECOzEhv1tX7qQ

[46] MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's written press statement on the "Downing of the SU-24 Fighter Jet of the Russian Federation and the Developments", 26 November 2015,

[47] Devlet Bahçeli, "Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin 100. Kuruluş Yıldönümü İçin Millî Hedef ve Öncelikler", Milliyetçi Çizgi, 11 January1995.

Then, in 1997, Devlet Bahçeli made the following statements in his speech at the opening of the MHP's 5th Ordinary Grand Assembly:

"Dear Fellow Countrymen: As you are well aware, the principles and goals of the Nationalist Movement regarding long-term strategies are clear. We are people who already feel the excitement of becoming a "leading country" in the medium term and a "superpower" in the long term, and believe wholeheartedly that this is possible. Why should Türkiye not enter the year 2023, when we will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the founding of our Republic, as a "leading country" and 2053, when we will celebrate the 600th anniversary of the conquest of Istanbul by Mehmet the Conqueror, as a "superpower"? Why shouldn't Türkiye lead the Black Sea Economic Cooperation as well as the economic, political and military organizations to be established with the Turkic Republics?"[48]

Subsequently, in 1998, he wrote an article for the 21st Century Special Issue of Yeni Türkiye magazine titled "Leading Country Strategy for a Strong Türkiye of the 21st Century: Its Importance and Outlines" in 1998. Likewise, in this article, he pointed out the keys to be ready for 2023 and to become a leading power in the 21st century In 2000, he is also known to have pointed to the goal of a "Leader Country" in his speeches at various MHP Group Meetings. For example, in one of these speeches, he said: *"It is inevitable that a Türkiye that revises and renews its education and justice system, utilizes public resources appropriately and starts to improve the quality of public services will reach the level the country deserves. Thus, a leading economy, a leading state, a leading society, in short, a leading country will cease to be a goal in the near future and will become a beautiful reality. Türkiye, located at the heart of Eurasia, will then become the pole star of this geography and humanity."*[49] In his 6th MHP Congress Opening Speech dated November 5, 2000, which was also published in English translation, Bahçeli stated that no power could stop Turkish

---

[48] Devlet Bahçeli, 21. Yüzyıl ve 2023 Türkiye Vizyonu, In Expanded 2nd Edition, "MHP 5. Olağan Büyük Kurultay Açılış Konuşması, 23 November 1997, https://www.mhp.org.tr/usr_img/_mhp2007/kitaplar/21yy2023turkiyevizyonu.pdf, p.26
[49] Devlet Bahçeli, Hoşgörü ve Uzlaşma İkliminde Türkiye, içinde "Speech on April 18, 2000 at the MHP Group Meeting in the GNAT", p.152. https://www.mhp.org.tr/usr_img/_mhp2007/kitaplar/hosgoruikliminde.pdf

nationalists from marching towards the goal of "leading country" by growing bigger and more united every day.[50]

According to Devlet Bahçeli, foreign policy has some fundamental constants. There cannot be a foreign policy approach based solely on "worrying about one's own shortcomings" and being in a constant state of "defense". Likewise, our foreign policy cannot be realized on a ground that will constantly provide other foreign policy actors with influence. State seriousness and the protection of national interests are the main priorities of foreign policy. The first thing that everyone should understand is that foreign policy cannot be conducted solely from a position of "accountability" and "defense", and the main way to prevent this is not to set any limits on the areas of national interest and influence. Narrowing the borders of these spheres does not make it easier to define medium and long-term foreign policy strategies and goals; on the contrary, it makes it difficult and impossible for Türkiye to properly utilize the opportunities and effective strategic trump cards that come its way.[51]

In its accounting of the period when it was a partner in the 57th government, the MHP, while describing the search for recovery by sitting down with the IMF in the difficult economic conditions the country was in as a "necessity", underlined that the issue was that it should not be perceived as a condemnation. In a 2003 party publication with a foreword by Devlet Bahçeli, it is stated that "*the MHP has never allowed the coercion and impositions of globalization on Türkiye to turn into condemnation, even under coalition conditions.*"[52]

Under the leadership of Devlet Bahçeli, the MHP has repeatedly pointed out that the 21st century should be an age of humanity, not a new age of barbarism, and has explained the risk of this age of barbarism in terms of income inequalities, inequalities of opportunity, terrorist incidents, and global environmental and health problems.[53]

---

[50] Devlet Bahçeli, "A Look At The New Age: Observations, Critiques, and Suggestions", Ankara, 2000, https://www.mhp.org.tr/usr_img/_mhp2007/kitaplar/alookatthenewage.pdf, p.72, 79.

[51] MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's GNAT Group speech on April 16, 2002, http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/233/index.html

[52] Yeni Bir Dünya Yeni Bir Türkiye İçin Büyük Buluşma, Ankara 2003, MHP Publicatıons, p.58.

[53] MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's Speech at the Congress organized by the Austrian Turkish Federation on May 19, 2002, http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/239/index.html

According to Bahçeli, "*...no political power, regardless of the duration of its term in office, has the luxury of making mistakes in the field of foreign policy, especially with regard to our national sensitivities and national causes. Again, no one has the right and privilege to use foreign policy for party interests in domestic politics or to sacrifice it to political vendettas.*"[54]

In one of his addresses in 2003, Devlet Bahçeli stated that he could not tolerate seeing Türkiye as an actor in the orbit of other states and that he was uncomfortable with the current international order: "Today, the Turkish nation is faced with one of the most important decisions of its history. Those who are seeking a path in the orbit of the US or the EU, detached from Türkiye's own history and identity, are those who see Türkiye's existence on these lands as unnecessary and have allied themselves with other projects. In the face of these, Türkiye has the obligation to realize a new breakthrough in these lands with a new civilization and a new understanding of morality, both by comprehending the developments in the world and by evaluating the crises that we say lie at the depths of Western civilization."[55]

Before the 2007 elections, in his speech at the meeting where the MHP's election manifesto was introduced, Devlet Bahçeli stated his party's goals:

"*A policy is being implemented to ensure that our country becomes a credible power in its region and a global leader in 2023...*", "*... Our vision is to make our country a leading country in 2023 by ensuring its economic, social, cultural and technological development with the understanding of a new civilization and a new world order centered on Türkiye. ...*", "*... Our aim is to raise our country to the position of a leading country that produces at world standards, shares its income fairly, secures human rights and freedoms, ensures transformation into an information society, improves the quality of life of the society, is globally influential and is one of the top 10 countries in the world in economy.*"[56]

---

[54] MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's Speech at the FMC Meeting, 4 January 2003, http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/175/index.html

[55] Yeni Bir Dünya Yeni Bir Türkiye İçin Büyük Buluşma, Ankara 2003, MHP Publicatiıons, p.61.

[56] Devlet Bahçeli, Tek Başına MHP: 22 Temmuz 2007 Seçim Beyannamesi Tanıtım Toplantısı, p.13-14. https://www.mhp.org.tr/usr_img/_mhp2007/kitaplar/2007secbeytantopkonusma.pdf

From this point of view, it is necessary to see that Bahçeli's goal of "Leading Country Türkiye" is also based on a vision of civilization and includes principles and aspirations such as justice, freedom, prosperity and quality production.

The Nationalist Movement Party's party program titled "Towards the Future", which was announced on November 8, 2009, includes the following assessments of Türkiye's geopolitics:

"...In order to be among the leading countries, an effective foreign policy that takes into account the geographical, strategic and geopolitical position of our country, including contributions to regional and international peace, will be pursued... Our Party, which will act with state seriousness, style and understanding in foreign policy, will ensure that Türkiye, which is located at the center of Eurasian geopolitics, which is the strategic focus of the 21st century, will be a strong, respected, influential country in world politics and international relations, whose friendship is sought and whose friendship is trusted... Türkiye will make use of the opportunities offered by being at the center of Eurasian geopolitics with a strategic vision and will implement economic cooperation projects in order to ensure and maintain peace and stability in the countries of the region. The cognate and related communities outside Türkiye will be dealt with closely within the framework of international law and the principles guiding inter-state relations, and the necessary institutional cooperation structures will be established first..."

"...With the sensitivity and participation to be created with the consciousness of Greater and Leader Türkiye, first of all, it will realize a paradigm shift by enabling the creation of a new intellectual environment in the face of the decaying and decaying Western civilization... The second important step of the strategy to be followed should be to base the intellectual and cultural dialogue on a solid ground and to develop the political and economic cooperation opportunities of this civil dynamism in this great region by organizing a large organization in Eurasia, especially among non-governmental organizations. Politics constitutes the third link of the strategy that will prepare the rise of a new civilization understanding with the goal of an equitable global order and the structure of intellectual,

> *cultural and organic civil organizations to be formed around the Türkiye-centered Eurasian perspective."*[57]

In fact, the ideal of Leader Türkiye put forward by the MHP under the leadership of Devlet Bahçeli is closely linked to the search for an order that would mobilize for the elimination of turmoil, war, destruction, hunger and injustice in various geographies of the world, that would not act with double standards and that would aim to establish peace. This can be seen in all of Devlet Bahçeli's comments on the globalization debates that became widespread in the late 1990s and early 2000s. For instance, in his statements at the OSCE Summit held in Istanbul in November 1999, the last major international summit of the 20th century, he declared that *"serious steps should be taken to minimize the consequences of the globalization process to the detriment of poor and developing countries"*.[58] At the beginning of the 21st century, the MHP sees the dominant hegemony in the international system as an order that needs to change and considers Türkiye as a power that can be the leader/leading country of this change. As a matter of fact, Bahçeli made the following assessment for Milliyet newspaper in 2000:

> *"The current global balance of power exhibits a sensitivity limited to its interests, especially in the face of massacres in the Turkish-Islamic geography. All this shows us the inadequacy of the existing global and regional alliance structures and therefore the need for a new global solidarity and cooperation effort. It should be kept in mind that global stability and peace in this great region stretching from the Balkans to the Caucasus, from the Middle East to Central Asia can only be built with a solid cooperation and solidarity effort of the Turkish-Islamic geography."*[59]

In 2001, Devlet Bahçeli, again setting off one of the first flares of the questioning of globalization that would later become widespread, said the following: *"The most obvious indication of the possibility of global polarization was the traditional 'World Economic Forum' held in Davos*

---

[57] Yeni Bir Dünya Yeni Bir Türkiye İçin Büyük Buluşma, Ankara 2003, MHP Publications, p.80.

[58] MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's GNAT Group speech on November 16, 1999, http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/976/index.html

[59] Devlet Bahçeli, "Bir Dönüm Noktasında Geleceğe Bakmak", Milliyet, 2000. https://www.mhp.org.tr/usr_img/_mhp2007/kitaplar/yenicaginesiginde.pdf s.59

and the 'World Social Forum' held in Porto Alegre, Brazil on the same dates. These two platforms are of great symbolic importance, even if they do not have serious social and political repercussions. As a result, a common opinion emerged that globalization is an inevitable process, but that it leads to new inequalities and injustices, the effects of which are becoming increasingly visible. The general conclusion that we, as Türkiye, should draw from this is that in order not to get lost in the labyrinths of the globalization process, we should grasp the basic dynamics of the new era and prevent it from leading to social destruction. To this end, it is essential to contribute to the development of a new awareness and effort of international responsibility."[60]

Bahçeli, who also holds a PhD in Economics, made the following remarks on global injustice in a speech in the Netherlands: "*The frightening imbalance in the world income distribution causes antipathy and sometimes even hatred towards developed countries in a significant part of the world. It seems essential for the future of humanity that the developed countries of the world join hands and find solutions to eliminate global injustice. Because, unfortunately, it is not possible to say that humanity is happy and peaceful enough in this process in which it accesses and consumes more information more quickly, benefits more from technological opportunities and lives a more comfortable life compared to the past. Today, at the point where humanity has arrived, there is an obligation to address global problems and dilemmas with a new understanding and approach, especially in developed Western countries.*"[61]

Although the MHP has a questioning approach to globalization, it has not remained insensitive to problems of a global nature; on the contrary, it has played a pioneering role in their pursuit. MHP leader Devlet Bahçeli has drawn attention to such issues as the Far East Asian crises shaking the world economy, the ozone depletion threatening the entire ecosystem, and the realization that terrorism has the potential to take on a global character. MHP leader Devlet Bahçeli has also declared that all countries must unite around "global commons" and strengthen the grounds for solidarity and dialogue in this regard, in addition to

---

[60] MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's speech to the GNAT on February 13, 2001, http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/270/index.html
[61] MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's Speech at the 4th Grand Assembly of the Dutch Turkish Federation January 5, 2002, http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/214/index.html

their own "national goals and interests". In this context, he underlined that global poverty, stability, ecological balance and terrorism are the four main issues and problem areas of importance in this respect. [62] In a speech he delivered at the European Turkish Federation, Devlet Bahçeli stated that "*the line of development that Western civilization has reached today has not eliminated the need for human solidarity and moral norms, on the contrary, it has increased it, and that the hypocritical attitudes towards the 2003 Iraq War have clearly demonstrated this, and that the common values and future of humanity should not be sacrificed to new sharing fights.*"[63]

The MHP did not believe that democracy, human rights and interdependence, which were the dominant discourses in global politics at the beginning of the 21st century, were universal principles or a set of principles that the great powers sincerely practiced/wanted to be practiced, and therefore, that conflicts contrary to this flow would disappear in the near future. Instead, he pointed to the importance and validity of these phenomena on the one hand, but on the other hand, he found that conflicts of interest and alliances, which constitute the basic dynamic of international relations, remain important and that there is no serious evidence that this structure will disappear.[64]

The second US-led military intervention and invasion of Iraq in 2003 was a phase in which critical issues such as international law, weapons of mass destruction and legitimacy were debated. In fact, it caused a serious difference of opinion both within the US and among the US allies, especially the French-German duo and some other EU states. It was in this environment, while the US intervention in Iraq was still in progress and the full inflammation of the crime and act of occupation had not yet been revealed, MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli sent a very clear message to the world with the following words: "*It must not be forgotten that a 'globalization model' in which developed countries and big*

---

[62] MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's GNAT Group speech on January 15, 2001 http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/216/index.html
[63] MHP c Devlet Bahçeli's Speech at the European Turkish Federation Congress on April 12, 2003, http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/190/index.html
[64] MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's GNAT Group speech on November 23, 1999, http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/977/index.html

powers set the rules and other states and nations have no say has no chance of success. The lure of tactical victories and attempts at relative enrichment must not lead us to ignore the common values and interests of humanity. Today, the primary task of all humanity, especially the countries that make up the "coalition of war", is to quickly heal the wounds of the Iraqi people on the one hand, and to prevent the Middle East from becoming a stage for new conflicts and polarizations on the other. In this context, the turmoil and chaos in Iraq must end as soon as possible."[65]

In 2011, during the election process amid the turmoil of FETÖ plots, the MHP prepared an election manifesto of approximately 200 pages and shared it with the Turkish nation and the world public opinion. The statements in this declaration draw attention to the shortcomings and intentions of the dominant trend in the world and the damage it has caused and could cause, especially on nation-states. In this respect, the following paragraph in the introduction is quite striking:

"Acting with the superiority provided by technological and economic dominance, global powers have tended to threaten the national state structure by scratching ethnic identities and weakening national identity. In the face of the global attack, societies whose minimum commonalities have weakened, who cannot form a harmonious social cohesion ground, and who cannot produce common decisions and solutions have faced the loss of their national resistance fortresses one by one. Especially in regions where ethnic and religious fragility is dominant, tyranny in the name of democracy, injustice and murder in the name of the rule of law, torture and cruel behavior in the name of human rights have been seen to prevail; the formation of fragmented structures with multiple identities, multiple cultures, multiple languages and multiple laws has been triggered and fueled by creating a chaotic and confrontational environment by disrupting public order in the target countries."[66]

---

[65] MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's Speech at the European Turkish Federation Congress on April 12, 2003, http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/190/index.html

[66] Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi 2011 Seçim Beyannamesi: 2023'e Doğru Yükselen Ülke Türkiye Sözleşmesi, Ankara 2011, https://www.mhp.org.tr/usr_img/_mhp2007/kitaplar/MHP_2011_SecimBeyannamesi.pdf

"Leader Türkiye" as a Power to Change the Global Order

As can be seen from the above examples, MHP Leader Devlet Bahçeli does not use the expression and ideal of "Leader Türkiye" randomly in order to incite his own base and the general public to enthusiasm and fervor, but refers to this concept persistently and within a plan. Moreover, it is understood that he does not see this ideal as a final destination, but rather as an intermediate goal, such as Türkiye becoming a regional leader/regional power in 2023.

Most of the experts who follow Turkish foreign policy from inside and outside categorize Türkiye as a "Medium-Sized State", "Pivot State", "Emerging Power", "Regional Power" and so on. However, few would argue that it is a regional leader. What does "leadership" entail as a foreign policy role? This question can be answered by looking at two key concepts in the definition of power in international politics: "influence" and "control". If "leading country" refers to being a regional power, Türkiye has until recently been less ambitious in terms of controlling and/or influencing the decisions of actors other than itself. Deterrence over its neighbors is something different. This kind of deterrence can at times be the case even for non-powerful states. However, the ability to utilize both the soft and hard elements of power and thus influence the opinions or decisions of other actors has become more visible in the last 5-6 years of Turkish foreign policy. Developments in the Eastern Mediterranean, the South Caucasus, the Black Sea basin, the Balkans and Turkestan are significant in this regard. So, what is the relationship between this point and the slogan of the MHP and its Chairman Devlet Bahçeli, "Leader Türkiye"? What changes will a region led by Türkiye bring about in world politics? What is the goal of the MHP and Devlet Bahçeli for the world after 2023?

An examination of the MHP's printed publications and the texts of Devlet Bahçeli's speeches on various occasions reveals the answers to these questions. First of all, the issue of how to achieve the ideal of Leader Türkiye has always been on the MHP's agenda. For example, in his historic speech at the MHP's 9th Ordinary Grand Assembly, which was held with great enthusiasm, Devlet Bahçeli, in the following words, points out the path to the goal of a "leader country", and indicates the stages he has categorized in his mind for Türkiye and its spiritual foundations:

"It will pass through a depth of vision that can correctly read the developments in the world, a spiritual maturity that analyzes the moral and value crisis experienced by humanity, a questioning perspective that sees how the labor, values and resources of oppressed societies are exploited, a sense of justice that interprets humanity not as a competitor but as a means of blessed sharing of God's trust, and the sprouting among us of a composition that will consist of reason, patience, vision, knowledge, attention and love. The path to be set out with these principles will first lead us to Türkiye as a Leader Country in 2023, the 100th anniversary of our Republic. That is our belief. Then, it will lead us to Super Power Türkiye in 2053, the 600th anniversary of the Conquest of Istanbul, which opened an era. This is our ideal."[67]

As can be seen from the above statements, the MHP sees humanity as a whole that deserves equitable sharing and believes that this can be realized under Türkiye's leadership. Pointing to the 100th anniversary of the Republic means that this goal will be pursued within the framework of the principles and principles of the Republic and that democracy will not be compromised. In this respect, it is hoped that Türkiye will be an example for both the Eastern and Western worlds. The reference to the Conquest of Istanbul and the 600th anniversary of the Conquest is a reference to the global approach of Turkish states throughout history. Thus, it points to the fact that Türkiye, having attained the status of a superpower, is essential for the liberation of oppressed nations and the construction of a more equitable international system. So, what does this power projection, in other words, a world led by Türkiye and the Turkish nation, promise to humanity? The following statements in Devlet Bahçeli's thank you a message to the book "Peace of Humanity", which was edited by Prof. Dr. Ahmed Güner Sayar and includes chapters by expert academics from various fields, reveal that the MHP considers the destruction of "human beings" by the complex problems the world is facing as an important issue that needs to be solved:

---

[67] Sonsuza Kadar Var Ol Türkiye! Text of MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's Speech at the Opening of MHP's 9th Ordinary Grand Congress, p.62. https://www.mhp.org.tr/usr_img/_mhp2007/kitaplar/sonsuzakadar_varolturkiye_9kurultay.pdf

"...Personally, I have always seen human well-being as the foun-
dation of intellectual and political work. I sincerely believed that
Turkish nationalism and Turkish nationalists have such a historical
and humanitarian responsibility."[68]

In its manifesto prepared for the June 7, 2015 elections, the MHP once again shared its vision of a "Leader Country" with the public. These elections took place at a time when the Presidential Government System and the People's Alliance did not yet exist. Until then, the MHP had declared that the government had not done what it needed to do to reach Türkiye's 2023 targets and that there had been a serious waste of time, and that it was approaching the issue with an 8-year plan. The declaration stated that "Following the 'Repair, Integration and Breakthrough' period between 2015-2019, Türkiye will become a regional power and a global actor in 2023, and an effective power and a leading country on a global scale in economic, social, political, technological and strategic fields in 2053, and will make this sustainable"[69] the developments following the July 15 betrayal and the Turkish nation's strong response showed that the MHP acted with patience and prudence to compensate for these lost years. Indeed, some decisive foreign policy steps taken in 2016 and especially in 2018 have contributed greatly to making up for lost time.

Devlet Bahçeli does not see Türkiye's problems as confined to Türkiye and, aware that politics is a whole, he frequently reveals the global connections of domestic troubles in his publications and addresses. As a matter of fact, he affirms that the MHP considers the construction of a new civilization as a necessity in the following sentences: "*Launching a civilization movement is first and foremost about achieving a change in mentality. Since it is understood that there is nowhere to be achieved with the current civilization, it is necessary for the cadres who will make this change to come together first, and for a new human-centered enlightenment based on justice and solidarity. The first strategic orientation of this approach, which will raise a new 'age of consciousness' that rejects ethnocentrism, western ex-*

---

[68] Ahmed Güner Sayar, İnsanlığın Huzuru, (ed.) İlyas Topsakal and Özgün Burak Kaymakçı, Ötüken Publications, İstanbul 2021, p.8

[69] Toplumsal Onarım ve Huzurlu Gelecek: Bizimle Yürü Türkiye, Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi 7 Haziran 2015 Seçim Beyannamesi, p.32, https://www.mhp.org.tr/usr_img/mhpweb/secimbeyannamesi2015/MHP_Secim_Beyannamesi_2015_tam.pdf

pansionism and imperialism, and proposes an ethic of coexistence and respect for all national cultures and beings, is to bring together those who will develop this understanding on a common ground."[70]

The current injustices in the established UN system, which President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has questioned in recent years with the phrase "The World is Bigger than Five" and which he wishes to be questioned, were expressed by Devlet Bahçeli as early as 2006. In his 2006 speech at the MHP Ankara Provincial Congress, he said: "*The United Nations has lost its character as a global institution, has become insufficient in terms of peace and security, and issues so-called peace resolutions to the world with a security council under the guidance of America. The United Nations has lost its quality. It has lost its quality of being a global institution. It is not sufficient for peace and security. Either the United Nations must have these characteristics, or it must erase its place and position and the nations of the world must be formed under the leadership of a new institution in line with the realities of the 21st century. It should not think about the future of world peace under the guidance of another nation.*" Bahçeli makes an important observation and criticism of the global political situation.[71]

Published in 2022 as a publication of the MHP, "The Turkish Belt: Türkiye's Grand Strategy", which was published in 2022 as a publication of the MHP, Devlet Bahçeli writes: "*At a time when humanity thirsts for peace and tranquility, and longs for stability and security, the strategic region described and defined as the Turkish Belt is of a quality that will support the just, humanitarian and conscientious developments that humanity hopes for and even seeks with a candle, and is of a scale that will stand out as an attraction... Turkishness is the manifestation and monumentalization of an ore of civilization, a wealth of history and culture in the existence of the nation, and its encompassing with common sense and morality*" is stated.[72] This work is an MHP-centered strategic plan that aims to ensure Türkiye's position among global actors in the 21st century, centered on the Turkic World, and to ensure that the region called the Turkic Belt is kept

---

[70] Yeni Bir Dünya Yeni Bir Türkiye İçin Büyük Buluşma, Ankara 2003, MHP Publications, p.80.
[71] MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's Speech at the MHP Ankara Provincial Congress July 16, 2006, http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/83/index.html
[72] İzzet Ulvi Yönter, İlyas Topsakal, Türk Kuşağı: Türkiye'nin Büyük Stratejisi, Ötüken Publications, İstanbul 2022, p.7-8.

away from the influences and interventions of other actors, and that it is whole and strong.

In the MHP's Declaration for the May 14, 2023 Parliamentary General Elections, the expression "Leading Country" appears in 37 different places. Since the year 2023, where the bar had been set in previous years, has been reached, the year 2033, as the next stage of this goal, is also included in this text for the first time. Accordingly, the MHP's goal is "*to perceive and interpret the era in Turkish with a vision that is aware of the dynamics of Türkiye and the world, and to build Türkiye, the global power of the future. In this framework, our "2033 Vision", which sets out our medium-term goals, envisages that Türkiye will be a political, military and economic power that establishes order and stability in its region in 2033. Our long-term strategic goal is to ensure that Türkiye, which will stand out as one of the most effective actors in the global system, will be recognized as a 'Leader Country and Super Power' by the whole world in 2053.*"

Conclusion: Transformation of Turkish Foreign Policy in the Direction of "Leader Country": 2016 - 2023

Those who closely monitor Turkish foreign policy have observed significant changes in Türkiye's main foreign policy issues, particularly after 2016. While Devlet Bahçeli has consistently provided unwavering national support to the incumbent governments when Türkiye is targeted by actors in the international system, he has sharply criticized the foreign policy pursued until 2015-2016. Numerous examples, such as the Cyprus issue, the Annan Plan, negotiations with the EU, the Zurich protocols regarding the opening of borders with Armenia, policies towards Iraq and Syria, and the fight against international terrorism, highlight this shift. During the periods when these issues were prominent, Bahçeli frequently stated that achieving the goal of "Leading Country Türkiye," which he has advocated since the 1990s, was becoming increasingly difficult and that time was being wasted. In this context, as 2023 reached, a new era began along the axis of consensus formed within the framework of democracy and national will following the July 15 FETO coup attempt.

To illustrate concrete examples, it is appropriate to begin with Syria. In this country, the most pressing issue of the period, a policy that prioritized the overthrow of the Damascus regime was replaced by one

focusing on urgent border security and the destruction of the terrorist corridor. Operation Euphrates Shield, launched on August 24, 2016, marked the first significant indicator of this change in the Syrian arena. The operation lasted until March 2017 (approximately seven months), during which the area between the Syrian cities of Azaz and Jarabulus was cleared of both the PYD terrorist organization and ISIS. At a time when the Turkish Armed Forces were still reeling from a coup attempt and hostile actors were active against Türkiye, this operation established control over an area as deep as the city of Manbij. The target of the operation, Manbij, has been protected from Türkiye's intervention both by the United States and the terrorist elements under its protection, as well as by Russia, which entered the field to support the Assad regime. Nevertheless, this new and relatively safe area represented the first successful attempt to sever the PYD terrorist corridor west of the Euphrates. In December 2016, through a joint proposal from Russia and Türkiye, Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan, was identified as a new venue for international talks aimed at resolving the Syrian conflict. These talks, which included the Syrian opposition and the Syrian state while excluding the PYD and SDF, commenced shortly thereafter and yielded significant results. Consequently, Turkish military checkpoints were established in Idlib starting in October 2017, with Turkish troops deployed there. On January 20, 2018, Operation Olive Branch targeted Afrin and its surroundings, occupied by the PYD terrorist organization seeking access to the Mediterranean, and full control was achieved in just two months. Türkiye also laid the groundwork to provide social services, such as basic health care, transportation, and communication, in a short timeframe. In October 2019, Operation Peace Spring was initiated in the western part of the area east of the Euphrates River, which had been under the control of the terrorist organization until then. The primary objective of the operation was once again to eliminate the project of encircling Türkiye. As a result, the area south of the Ceylanpınar-Akçakale line, encompassing the provinces of Rasulayn and Tel Abyad and the area between them, came under the control of Türkiye and its allied forces. It is important to note that all these operations occurred despite criticism and diplomatic counterattacks from numerous regional and extra-regional actors, including the United States, Iraq, Iran, France, and Saudi Arabia. With Operation Peace Spring, control

was established over approximately 600 settlements and a total area of 4,800 square kilometers, effectively preventing the ethnic cleansing operations that the terrorist organization attempted in that region.

Examining developments regarding Iraq further highlights the shift in foreign policy. The Turkish Armed Forces have conducted effective operations deep within northern Iraq, reminiscent of operations from the 1990s, the last of which was Operation Sun in 2008. A military presence was demonstrated both in areas under the responsibility of the Iraqi central government and in regions controlled by the KRG. However, the most significant event at this juncture was the independence referendum announced by the KRG for September 25, 2017. Türkiye, including President Erdoğan, issued stern warnings at the highest levels against this referendum initiative, which the leader of the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) had previously cautioned against, issuing historic warnings months earlier. Although Ankara urged Barzani and the KRG administration to abandon the referendum decision, the holding of the referendum and the announcement of its results compelled Türkiye to adopt a more explicit counter-policy. On September 25, the Iraqi Parliament decided that "the government should deploy a military force to protect the security of citizens in Kirkuk and other disputed areas." Consequently, preparations were made for an operation toward Kirkuk, which Türkiye supported. On October 15, 2017, military forces loyal to the Baghdad government took control of Kirkuk Airport, K1 Military Base, and the Kirkuk Governorate, removing the KRG flag in Kirkuk. In response, the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement affirming that it "carefully followed the operation of the Iraqi army forces of the Iraqi central government to restore constitutional sovereignty in Kirkuk, which has been the homeland of Turkmens for centuries after the illegal KRG referendum" and welcomed the Iraqi government's declaration that elements of the PKK terrorist organization would not be tolerated in Kirkuk and that their mobilization would be considered a declaration of war. Following these developments, from 2018 to 2023, the Turkish army's operations against the PKK terrorist organization within Iraq became more effective, deeper, and more permanent.

The situation in Libya and the Eastern Mediterranean, which had not been a primary focus until recently but has become a central topic

of Turkish foreign policy since 2020, further exemplifies this transformation. Following the overthrow of the Gaddafi administration in Libya during the Arab Spring, the country descended into civil war. In this large North African nation, whose oil resources attract foreign actors, the risk of de facto division into four or five regions emerged. Türkiye recognized the Government of National Accord, the UN-recognized legitimate government at the center of the power struggle, and swiftly moved to contribute to establishing peace and stability in Libya. In this context, at the invitation of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the President of the Libyan Presidential Council, Fayyaz Sarraj, along with Foreign Minister Siyala and Interior Minister Fethi Bashagha, paid an official visit to Türkiye from November 26 to 28, 2019. During the talks in Istanbul, discussions focused on finding a solution to the crisis in Libya and enhancing bilateral relations. During the visit, the "Memorandum of Understanding on Security and Military Cooperation" was signed to establish a legal basis for security and military cooperation between the two countries, as well as the "Memorandum of Understanding on the Delimitation of Maritime Jurisdiction Areas" aimed at protecting the rights of both countries arising from international law. The "Memorandum of Understanding on the Delimitation of Maritime Jurisdiction" was ratified by the GNAT on December 5, 2019, and the "Memorandum of Understanding on Security and Military Cooperation" on December 21, 2019. Through this Memorandum of Understanding, Türkiye provided a robust legal and political response to policies of exclusion and isolation in the Mediterranean.

With the agreement signed with Libya, Türkiye established a continental shelf/maritime boundary agreement with a Mediterranean littoral country for the first time, apart from the TRNC. This agreement effectively countered political and economic initiatives aimed at isolating and encircling Türkiye in the Eastern Mediterranean. A legal and legitimate basis for their rights in the Mediterranean was established for both countries. The MoU clarified the western borders of Türkiye's maritime jurisdiction in the Eastern Mediterranean. With this agreement, Türkiye demonstrated its intent to prevent any fait accompli in the region. Furthermore, the Memorandum preempted possible Greek-Egyptian and Greek-GCASC agreements that would infringe on the rights of both countries. Such agreements would have

reduced Türkiye's maritime jurisdiction from 186,000 square kilometers to 41,000 square kilometers. Türkiye has rejected maximalist and uncompromising Greek-Greek claims attempting to assign a maritime jurisdiction area to a small island like Meis that is 4,000 times its actual surface area. This agreement may prompt other countries in the region to reassess their agreements with the SCGA and revise their legal arguments accordingly. Türkiye renewed its call for dialogue with all littoral states except the SCGA, demonstrating to the international community that it acts in accordance with international law, maritime law, and diplomacy.

Another significant indicator of the transformation in foreign policy is the transition from the Turkic Council to the Organization of Turkic States. Although Türkiye and the Turkic states have been collaborating for possible grounds for 30 years, the Turkic Council, or the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States, founded during the summit held in Ankara in 1992 and officially established in 2009 with the Nakhchivan Treaty, has significantly contributed to advancing relations. While Türkiye, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan were founding members, the number of full members increased to five with Uzbekistan's accession in 2019, and Hungary gained observer status. The Turkic Council was officially renamed the Organization of Turkic States (OTS) at the 8th Summit in November 2021. The 2021 summit declaration marked the organization's evolution into a more functional and effective regional entity. The Council of Heads of State of the Organization of Turkic States convened in Istanbul on November 12, 2021, under the theme "Green Technologies and Smart Cities in the Digital Age." At this summit, which attracted significant attention from international media, the name of the Council of Turkic Speaking States was officially changed to the Organization of Turkic States. Consequently, there is now no issue in using the term "Turkic state" for these nations, both at the academic and political levels. This summit produced a comprehensive 121-point final declaration.

Additionally, a document titled "Vision of the Turkic World 2040" was adopted by the participating states. In the first subheading of the Declaration concerning foreign policy and security issues, the members affirmed their solidarity with the Turkish Cypriot people and supported their participation in CIS activities. They also endorsed the

constitutional amendments in Kyrgyzstan and the peaceful resolution of issues along the Kyrgyz-Tajik border. The declaration advocated for an inclusive and representative political system in Afghanistan that safeguards fundamental human rights, provided economic assistance to Afghanistan, and promoted cooperation in combating terrorism, extremism, discrimination, xenophobia, and Islamophobia.

In the section on Economic and Sectoral Cooperation, it was stated that the relevant ministries of member states would expedite the establishment of the Turkish Investment Fund and eliminate quantitative restrictions and non-tariff measures among the member states. Furthermore, the members welcomed Kazakhstan's invitation to join the "TURANSEZ" special economic zone to be established in Turkestan, aiming to enhance economic cooperation and connectivity among Turkic states, including the Caspian Trans-Caspian International East-West Central Corridor. Notably, this marks the first instance of the term "Turan" appearing in an international cooperation document. New issues such as food supply and security, renewable energy, and interconnectivity in energy projects were also highlighted in this chapter. The "Caspian Trans-Caspian International East-West Central Corridor" is referenced seven times within the declaration.

In conclusion, the meetings of the heads of state and government of Turkic states in the 1990s, characterized as cultural celebrations, underwent a significant transformation with the establishment and operationalization of the Turkic Council (TCC) and its evolution into the Organization of Turkic States. Substantial progress has been achieved in the Turkic world regarding institutionalization, inter-state cooperation, and the creation of mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation processes.

As Turkey approaches the 100th anniversary of the Republic, one of the most notable and globally recognized achievements of its foreign policy has occurred in the South Caucasus. The occupation of Karabakh by Armenia, ongoing since 1992, was largely resolved in 44 days due to the operation launched by Azerbaijan in September 2020. Azerbaijan, which restored the integrity of its territory at the cost of nearly 3,000 martyrs, received explicit and robust support from Türkiye during this process. At the outset of the conflict, Türkiye declared its readiness to intervene should a third party become involved, supplied UAVs and

UCAVs to Azerbaijan, and asserted its preparedness to provide any requested support at all levels, including from the President, Foreign Minister, and Minister of National Defense.

With the ceasefire declaration signed on November 9-10, 2020, under Russian mediation, the war concluded, and Azerbaijan regained control over settlements such as Shusha, Lachin, Kalbajar, Aghdam, Fuzuli, Zangilan, Jabrayil, and Hadrut. It was agreed that Russian peacekeepers would be stationed in the region for five years, and Turkish military units would conduct a monitoring mission there. Azerbaijan subsequently initiated rapid demining, construction, and reconstruction efforts in the liberated regions. Although Armenia endeavored to meet the requirements of the ceasefire declaration by opening all lines of communication and transportation, it struggled to accept the defeat, evaded responsibilities outlined in the agreement, and continued provocations along the border and contact lines. Consequently, in September 2023, Azerbaijan conducted an operation in the region under the oversight of Russian peacekeepers, successfully securing independence in all of its territories, including Khankendi, Khojaly, and Khojavend.

Azerbaijan, as a key player in the Turkic world, serves as Türkiye's gateway to Central Asian Turkism. The conclusion of the nearly 30-year Armenian occupation of Karabakh, supported by Türkiye and bolstered by the exceptional success of the Azerbaijani military, suggests a promising future for the Turkic world. The liberation of Azerbaijani lands has facilitated the unification of the Turkic world, which shares a common vision and purpose, both ideologically and physically. The establishment of a de facto connection to Nakhchivan through the Zangezur Corridor, a result of Azerbaijan's victory in the Second Karabakh War, represents a significant link between Türkiye and the Turkic world. This historical opportunity and strategic achievement will play a crucial role in shaping Türkiye's objectives and policies towards the Turkic world.

Considering the progress made in the fight against terrorism, the successful mediation efforts, and the establishment of the "grain corridor" during the Russia-Ukraine War, alongside the removal of the Eastmed project from the Eastern Mediterranean agenda and Türkiye's normalization processes with various actors, it is evident that foreign

policy has gained substantial momentum and direction compared to the pre-2016 period. In these developments, the role of Devlet Bahçeli and the MHP in supporting the President and the government of the Republic of Türkiye, based on the principle of "we love this country for nothing," is significant. From this perspective, it becomes apparent that Türkiye has successfully navigated 2023 and is acting in national consensus towards its objectives for 2053 and 2071.

References

Ahmed Güner Sayar, İnsanlığın *Huzuru*, (ed.) İlyas Topsakal and Özgün Burak Kaymakçı, Ötüken Publications, İstanbul 2021.

Alparslan Türkeş, *9 Işık*, Ül-Kor Publications, İstanbul, 1987.

Alparslan Türkeş, *Temel Görüşler*, Dergâh Publications, (Çağdaş Türk Siyasi Düşüncesi Serisi), İstanbul, 1975.

Burak Tangör, *Avrupa Birliği* Güvenlik ve *Savunma Politikasının Gelişimi*, Seçkin Publications, Ankara 2009.

Carol Migdalovitz, "Turkey: Issues for U.S. Policy", Report for Congress, 22.05.2002, https://www.everycrsreport.com/reports/RL31429.html

Devlet Bahçeli, "21. Yüzyılın Güçlü Türkiye'si İçin Lider Ülke Stratejisi: Önemi ve Ana Hatları", *Yeni Türkiye*, January-February 1998.

Devlet Bahçeli, "A Look At The New Age: Observations, Critiques, and Suggestions", Ankara, 2000, https://www.mhp.org.tr/usr_img/_mhp2007/kitaplar/alookatthenewage.pdf

Devlet Bahçeli, "Bir Dönüm Noktasında Geleceğe Bakmak", *Milliyet*, 2000. https://www.mhp.org.tr/usr_img/_mhp2007/kitaplar/yenicaginesiginde.pdf s.59

Devlet Bahçeli, "Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin 100. Kuruluş Yıldönümü İçin Millî Hedef ve Öncelikler", *Milliyetçi* Çizgi, 11 January 1995.

Devlet Bahçeli, "Türkiye-AB İlişkilerinde Hayal ve Gerçek", *Türkiye ve Siyaset Dergisi,* Vol.9-10, July-October 2002.

Devlet Bahçeli, "Türkiye-AB İlişkilerinde Kırılma Noktaları", *Türkiye ve Siyaset Dergisi,* Vol.7, March-April 2002.

Devlet Bahçeli, *21. Yüzyıl ve 2023 Türkiye Vizyonu*, In Expanded 2nd Edition, "MHP 5. Olağan Büyük Kurultay Açılış Konuşması, 23 November 1997, https://www.mhp.org.tr/usr_img/_mhp2007/kitaplar/21yy2023turkiyevizyonu.pdf, s.26

Devlet Bahçeli, *Hoşgörü ve Uzlaşma* İkliminde Türkiye, "Speech on April 18, 2000 at the MHP Group Meeting in the GNAT", https://www.mhp.org.tr/usr_img/_mhp2007/kitaplar/hosgoruikliminde.pdf

Devlet Bahçeli, *Tek Başına MHP: 22 Temmuz 2007 Seçim Beyannamesi Tanıtım Toplantısı,* https://www.mhp.org.tr/usr_img/_mhp2007/kitaplar/2007secbeytantopkonusma.pdf

Devlet Bahçeli, *Türkiye'nin AB* Üyeliği *ve MHP*, Ankara 2002, https://www.mhp.org.tr/usr_img/_mhp2007/kitaplar/turkiyeab.pdf

Esat Öz, "Türkiye'nin AB Üyeliği, Perspektif Zaafları ve Tartışma Ahlakı", *Türkiye ve Siyaset Dergisi*, Vol.9-10, July-October 2002.

İzzet U. Yönter, İlyas Topsakal, *Türk Kuşağı: Türkiye'nin* Büyük *Stratejisi*, Ötüken Publications., İstanbul 2022.

Kürşat Eser, "Kıbrıs Meselesi ve Türkiye-AB İlişkileri", *Türkiye ve Siyaset Dergisi,* Vol.7, March-April 2002.

MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's Speech on the 40th Anniversary of the Founding of the MHP, 9 February 2009, https://www.mhp.org.tr/usr_img/_mhp2007/kitaplar/40yilkitabi.pdf, p.53-54.

Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, *Seçim Beyannamesi: 2023'e Doğru Yükselen* Ülke Türkiye *Sözleşmesi*, Ankara, 2011.

Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, *Seçim Beyannamesi: Huzurlu ve Güvenli Gelecek,* Ankara, 2015.

Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, *Seçim Beyannamesi: Lider Türkiye'ye Doğru*, Ankara, 1999.

Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, *Seçim Beyannamesi: Milli Duruş ve Kararlılık Belgesi*, Ankara, 2007.

Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, *Seçim Beyannamesi: Toplumsal Onarım ve Huzurlu Gelecek*, Ankara, 2015.

Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, *Seçim Beyannamesi:* Türkiye'nin Onurlu Geleceği, Ankara, 2002.

Rasim Koç, *Meclisteki* Türkeş, Doğu Kütüphanesi, İstanbul 2007, p.242.

Shahana Sariyeva, *Azerbaijan-Turkish Relations (1992-2012): Common Interests and Solidarity*, Unpublished Master Thesis, International Helenic University, 2012.

"2006 Written Press Statement by Devlet Bahçeli on the provocations and mass actions that have gained momentum in our country in recent days, in addition to the issues related to the provocations and uprising rehearsals in Nowruz and the "Turkishness" debate", http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/97/index.html

"Bahçeli'den Gül'ün Ermenistan Ziyaretine Tepki", *Haberler*, 01.09.2008, https://www.haberler.com/bahceli-den-gul-un-ermenistan-ziyaretine-tepki-haberi/

"Devlet Bahçeli'den Düşürülen Rus Uçağına İlişkin Açıklama", *NTV*, 26 November 2015, https://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/devletbahceliden-dusurulen-rus-ucagina-iliskin-aciklama,jHI8shRo4ECOzEhv1tX7qQ

"Press Conference by Devlet Bahçeli on the EU's Double Standard on Iraq and Cyprus", 16 April 2003 http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/191/index.html

"Press Statement by Devlet Bahçeli on the Elections in Iraq", 28 January 2005, http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/144/index.html

"Erdoğan'dan Davos'ta One Minute Çıkışı", Dünya Bülteni, https://www.dunyabulteni.net/tarihte-bugun/tarihte-bugun-erdogandan-davosta-one-minute-cikisi-h194810.html

"Günlük Politika Ana Politikayı Unutturamaz", 18 May 1974, Speech at the Youth Conference in Ankara, Metin Turhan, Başbuğ Türkeş: Türklük-İslâmiyet-Bölücülük ve Diğer Konular Hakkında Konuşma, Mülâkat ve Sözleri, Kripto Publications, Ankara 2017.

"MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's written press statement on 'The controversy in Davos and the attitude of the Prime Minister'", 31 January 2009, http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/563/index.html

"MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's Written Press Statement on the "Downing of the SU-24 Fighter Jet of the Russian Federation and the Developments", 26 November2015,

"MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's Speech at the Meeting of the Central Committee, Central Executive Committee and Members of Parliament on May 1, 1999", http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/962/index.html

"MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's Speech at the European Turkish Federation Congress on April 12, 2003", http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/190/index.html

"MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's speech to the GNAT on February 13, 2001", http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/270/index.html

"MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's GNAT Group speech on January 15, 2001", http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/216/index.html

"MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's GNAT Group speech on November 16,1999", http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/976/index.html

"MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's GNAT Group Speech on April 16, 2002", http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/233/index.html

"MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's Speech at the FMC Meeting on November 18, 2000", http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/319/index.html

"MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's Speech at the Congress Organized by the Austrian Turkish Federation on May 19, 2002", http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/239/index.html

"MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's GNAT Group speech on November 23, 1999", http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/977/index.html

"MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's GNAT Group speech on March 26, 2002" http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/228/index.html

"MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's speech to the GNAT on March 28, 2000", http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/346/index.html

"MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's GNAT Group speech on February 28, 2017", http://www.mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/4219/index.html

"MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's Speech at the 12th Erciyes Victory Congress on August 4, 2001", http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/301/index.html

"MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's Commemoration Speech of Başbuğ Alparslan Türkeş on April 4, 1999", http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/971/index.html

"MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's 6th Ordinary Grand Congress Speech on November 5, 2000", http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/322/index.html,

"MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's press statement dated March 5, 2002", http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/223/index.html

"MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's GNAT Group speech on April 5, 2016", http://www.mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/4052/index.html

"MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's GNAT Group speech on June 8, 1999", http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/972/index.html

"MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's press statement dated February 8, 1999", http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/971/index.html

"MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's Speech at the MHP 6th Regional Consultation Meeting in Kayseri on June 9, 2001", http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/290/index.html

"Text of the Press Conference of MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli on the EU Brussels Summit Results", 21 December 2004, http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/172/index.html

"MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's Speech at the 4th Grand Assembly of the Dutch Turkish Federation", 5 January 2002, http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/214/index.html

"MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's Press Statement on the Netherlands' Offensive Attitudes and Policies", http://www.mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/4230/index.html

"MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's Speech at the MHP Ankara Provincial Congress", 16 July 2006, http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/83/index.html

"MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's Speech at the FMC Meeting", 4 January 2003, http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/175/index.html

"MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's Speech at the GNAT Group Meeting", 8 January2008 http://www.mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/421/index.html

"MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's Speech at the GNAT Group Meeting", 29 January 2018, http://www.mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/426/index.html,

"MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's Speech at the GNAT Group Meeting", 19 February 2018, http://www.mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/431/index.html

"Text of the Press Conference of MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli", 9 June 2004 http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/159/index.html

"Press Statement by MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli after the Organization of the New Council", 21 November 2000, http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/317/index.html

"MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's speech at the Ankara Regional Consultation Meeting on March 3, 2007", http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/44/index.html

"Text of MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's Speech at the Central Executive Board Meeting", 11 September 2004, http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/165/index.html

"Text of MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's Speech at the FMC Meeting", 8 May 2004, http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/156/index.html

"MHP Chairman Mr. Devlet Bahçeli's written press statement on relations with Armenia", 3 September 2009, http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/719/index.html

"MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's Speech at the Kocayayla Turkmen Assembly on July 22, 2001", http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/299/index.html

"Speech by MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli at the Opening Ceremony of the Academic Year of Gazi University on October 5, 1999", http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/969/index.html

"No: 320, 16 October 2017, Kerkük'teki Gelişmeler ve Irak Hükümeti'nin Tutumu Hk.", *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey*, http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-320_-kerkukteki-gelismeler-ve-irak-hukumetinin-tutumu-hk.tr.mfa

"Recep Erdogan storms out of Davos after clash with Israeli president over Gaza", *The Guardian*, 30 January 2009, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/jan/30/turkish-prime-minister-gaza-davos

"Sezer inaugurates BTC pipeline", Hürriyet, 26.05.2005, http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/sezer-inaugurates-btc-pipeline-38733072

"Sonsuza Kadar Var Ol Türkiye! Text of MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's Speech at the Opening of MHP's 9th Ordinary Grand Congress", https://www.mhp.org.tr/usr_img/_mhp2007/kitaplar/sonsuzakadar_varolturkiye_9kurultay.pdf

"MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli's Written Press Statement Evaluating the Recent Political and Social Developments in Turkey, including the black propaganda and campaign launched against institutions and state organs on the pretext of the events in Şemdinli", 19.03.2006, http://mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/genel_baskan/konusma/99/index.html,

"Türkiye-Rusya Uçak Krizi 10 Günde Neler Yaşandı", *BBC Türkçe*, 4 December 2015, https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler/2015/12/151204_rusya_krizin_10_gunu

"Türkmen Uyarısı", *Sabah*, 11 September 2004, http://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/2004/09/11/gnd101.html

TÜRKİYE'NİN
TERÖRLE MÜCADELESİ
KAVRAMLAR ÖRGÜTLER VE AKTÖRLER

Derleyen
Doç. Dr. Göktuğ SÖNMEZ

KIBRIS'TA
İKİ DEVLETLİ ÇÖZÜM
TARİH, KİMLİK, SİYASET

Prof. Dr. İsmail ŞAHİN

BAĞIMSIZLIKLARININ 30. YILINDA
TÜRK DEVLETLERİ
EKONOMİK, POLİTİK ve SOSYAL DÖNÜŞÜM

DERLEYENLER
Prof. Dr. Savaş ÇEVİK
Prof. Dr. Erol TURAN