

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, Atif 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 Gökâlp's conception. This argument is logical, as the Turkish nation has witnessed both the theoretical discussions and their practical implementation. Ultimately, Gökâlp 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 Gökâlp'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 enslave 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 İnkılap 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: *ülküçüler*) 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 Türkes, *Temel Görüşler*, p. 43.

³⁰ Türkes, *Temel Görüşler*, p. 28.

³¹ Türkes, *Temel Görüşler*, p. 25.

³² Türkes, *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 Türkes, Temel Görüşler, p. 31-32.

³⁴ M. Hanifi Macit, "Alparslan Türkes'in 'Demokratik Millî Devlet' Projesi", Doğumunun 100. Yıl Dönümünde Lider Türkiye İçin Alparslan Türkes 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 Hareket 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_Beyanamesi_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 idealist (ülküçü) 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 developing 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 powerful state on earth, for the peace, tranquility, justice, and well-being of Turkishness, 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 Antalya, 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 Antalya, 25 November 2018.

the concept, having emerged in various forms throughout different historical periods⁴⁸, 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 crisis⁴⁹, 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 arise⁵⁰.

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. In 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 Akli 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 it⁵². 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 It 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 Turkishness⁶⁴, 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 direction⁶⁶. 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, “*Türkiye 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 discomfures 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.

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