

PREFACE

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This study has been prepared by translating selected sections of the book titled “*Cumhuriyetin Yüziüncü 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-

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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 intellect³ 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.