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Tanıl Bora - Nationalist Discourses in Turkey

October 29, 1995, Republic Day; Istanbul, the center of the celebrations and the scene for an "olympiad" of Turkish nationalism. In line with the Olympic creed, "The most important thing is not to win but to take part," all existing types of nationalism were present: under the umbrella of the governorship's organization (or "impresarioship") and to the familiar strains of the Tenth-Year March, the nationalism of the state. Caught between the choices of taking shelter beneath that umbrella or opening their own umbrella, turned upside-down, and getting soaked in the meantime, "Kemalist" "left-wing" nationalism, with its "ability to interpret," tries to find an eave under which it can give meaning to the "pomp" of the ceremony by calling it secularism. Idealist nationalism with its triple crescent flags and its wolf's-head signs, now mixes with any crowd.¹ "Neo"-nationalism, with its "modern" and ideology-free panorama, exhibits itself through the codes of the pop singer cult and the hedonism of urban youth. All these types of nationalism, since then, have increasingly interfused. In this article, I try to analyze the elements of this complexity, which ultimately reinforces the hegemony of nationalism.

Factors That Accelerated Turkish Nationalism in the 1990s

Turkish nationalism gained momentum in the late 1980s and early 1990s. This development took place parallel to the nationalistic wave rising throughout the world, and particularly in the triangle formed by the Balkans, the Middle East, and the Caucasus, of which Turkey is the point of intersection. Globalization, in a way that is actually not at all paradoxical, encouraged or incited nationalism: because altering frontiers and military conflicts became possible again after the collapse of bipolarization; because minorities and human rights have become diplomatic issues; because trans-national processes of economic—and geographical—deregulation have upset the structures of the nation-state. These factors have affected the ideology of Turkish nationalism in a way that ratifies and contemporizes its reactionary patterns; for modern Turkey, established during a grave crisis in which its very existence was threatened,² has a nation-state tradition that subsequently perceived surrounding countries as a severe threat rectified by the Cold War. This condition regarding survival and threat had a considerable effect on the way in which Turkish nationalism and the Turkish national identity took shape. The fact that globalization challenges the nation-state can easily be perceived as the modern version of a centuries-old threat toward Turkey /Anatolia, thus reinforcing this mindset. The Kurdish issue no doubt plays the leading role in this perception of the challenge posed by globalization as a part of this ongoing process, which started with the Crusades and extended to the "Oriental Issue," the Western influence and Westernizing reform policies which caused the downfall of the Ottoman Empire, and the Treaty of Sevres, which—temporarily—buried the hope to found a new state that would rise from the ruins of the Ottoman Empire.

Another factor that afflicts the conscience of the Turkish nation is that the rise of the crisis regarding survival and threat occurred immediately after a course of self-confidence that was not properly enjoyed. Turkey had entered the 1990s with a boom of self-confidence. Capital accumulated thanks to the new right-wing economic policies in the 1980s, the progress made in merging with the flow of global capital, the fact that consumption had become modernized and widespread: all these fostered hopes of graduating economically to the "world's top

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league," as media commentators call it. By the end of the 1980s, when Turkey applied for full membership in the EU, the prevailing feeling was that the goal of attaining the "rank of modern civilization," cherished since the founding of the Republic, had finally been achieved—or at least this belief was shared by the pro-Western elite and the urban middle class. The neo-pan-Turkist perspective that focused on an economic "rationality" espoused by the Turkic republics, which had won their independence after the fall of the Soviet Union, reinforced this feeling.³ The historical and cultural legacy of the Turkic republics, regarded as a hinterland from the point of view of official nationalism, were considered to be an additional guarantee for Turkey as it sought to bond to the West without losing its own authentic identity. Turgut Özal, prime minister of the "Motherland Party" ANAP's powerful liberal-conservative government of the 1980s, with a conception of a Turkish-Islamic-Western synthesis far more forceful than that of his predecessors, was also a symbol of the period's wind of optimism and self-confidence. Özal had the opportunity to repeat the Turkish right-wing politicians' buzzwords such as "great Turkey" and "powerful Turkey" in a relatively "realistic" context; at the beginning of the 1990s, an assertive catchphrase, "The twenty-first century will be the Turkish century," was added to these mottoes.

The Gulf War can be seen as a turning point, when the atmosphere of self-confidence and optimism started to fade and when the transition began. The Gulf War was experienced in Turkey alternating as, on the one hand, "national strategy" plans to "develop" in terms of influence, prestige, and geography and, on the other hand, the fear that the surrounding noose of threat would tighten and that Western hegemony, both in the region and in the country, would increase. The formation of a Kurdish state in northern Iraq after the war, and, moreover, the momentum of the Kurdish nationalist movement in Turkey proved the pessimists right and gave the fundamentalist/essentialist factions the opportunity to raise their voices. With Turkey's policies regarding the Kurdish issue restricted to the fanaticism of the "military solution"—while its entire "democratization" program remained under the embargo of these policies—the pressure it faced on the European platform was used by the radical nationalists to corroborate the argument that Turkey was confronted with a conspiracy.

Two other factors played a part in the eroding of Turkey's self-confidence and the increasing concern for the survival of the nation. One was the gradual revelation that the Turkic republics were not primitive and loyal states that considered Turkey to be their unconditional leader; that Turkey was equipped with nothing other than "Orientalist" prejudices in terms of knowledge about the Caucasus and Central Asia. The second was the spiral of economic crises that engulfed Turkey, now entirely dependent on the whims of free-flowing international capital, and that in 2001 brought the country to the brink of disaster comparable to that Argentina experienced. Eventually, as of the middle of the 1990s, Turkey, which had entered the 1990s with the slogan "The Twenty-First Century Will Be the Turkish Century," came face-to-face with the gravest depression in the history of the republic.

From the 1990s to the beginning of the twenty-first century, two dynamics were at play in the shaping of Turkish nationalism. One is a reactionary nationalistic movement that uses the theme of national survival in a dramatized way—this movement not only strengthens the opposing radical nationalistic movement, but also influences right-wing politics, and even, increasingly, the center-left-wing; furthermore, it dominates the army, above all, but also the state elite. The second is a pro-Western nationalistic movement (reminiscent of the nationalism of the late 1980s and early 1990s) which believes that the nation's best interest lies in merging with the globalization process and in harmonizing with civilization—in fact, its proponents are from the rising segments of the new urban middle class, the

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internationalizing sectors of big capital, and the media elite. In order to analyze the interplay between these two movements one must consider Turkish nationalism not as a homogenous discourse, but as a series of discourses and a vast lexis. I distinguish four main nationalist languages that speak using this lexis. The first is the language of the official Kemalist nationalism (ADD, or Atatürk nationalism), focused on the mission to build and perpetuate the nation-state; in one respect, this is the root-language of Turkish nationalism. The second, which can be considered a dialect of this root-language, is "left-wing" Kemalist nationalism (ulusçuluk).⁴ The third, while being a liberal dialect of the Kemalist root-language, grows and develops under the spell of the promises held forth by the era of globalization; it is the language of a pro-Western nationalism advocating "civilizationism" and prosperity. The fourth, again a deviate dialect of the Kemalist root-language, is the language of the racist-ethnicist neo-pan-Turkism and from the reaction to the Kurdish nationalist movement. In the event that Islamism, which is currently expanding, merges with a nationalistic discourse, another dialect will be entering this family of languages. Below I discuss these four or five nationalistic dialects, as well as their verbal and visual elements.

Official Nationalism: Atatürk Nationalism

"Atatürk nationalism," the official nationalism of Turkey since the founding of the republic, is in a crisis due to the difficulty of balancing the tension between a "French-style" conception of nationalism, based on the principle of citizenship and territoriality, and ethnicist variations ("German-style" nationalism). Ziya Gökalp's synthesis, based on cultural identity, rested on an extremely delicate balance between a territorial conception of nationalism based on citizenship, handed down from Ottoman patriotism and the conceptions of nationalism that emphasize the nation's uniqueness and eternal existence. The official ideology may well be in line with nationalism based on the principle of citizenship; but in foreign disputes, in "national causes," and even, for instance, in the domains of popular culture such as international sports competitions, an ethnicist, "essentialist," aggressive language of nationalism can easily make itself felt. We can assume that the instinctive, if not conscious inclination to which the advocates of the official ideology are predisposed leans toward keeping the nationalistic model's duality latent, but keeping it all the same, for this duality and tension help extend their margin of political and ideological maneuvering.

Official nationalism, with its ideological ambiguity, thoroughly depends on the existence, power, and manifestations of the nation-state, its symbols and rituals, its pomp and omnipresence. The army, as the crystallized evidence of the existence, power, and manifestations of the nation-state, takes on a central role in the regeneration of official nationalism. Owing to the requirements of the ideology of vigilance and the automatic system of perceiving threat internalized by all armies, and specifically as a consequence of the "state-founding military" character of the TSK (Turkish Armed Forces), which are identified with Mustafa Kemal and his mission, the army considers itself to be the "true owner" and personified symbol of nationalism. Official nationalism, whose core is the army, has a mental perspective focused on the state itself and on populist attributions of heroism.

The definition of nation in a publication by the General Secretariat of the National Security Council as "one of the constituent elements of the state" and the expression "The state's indivisible identity with the country and the nation," a favorite among official refrains, both constitute avowals of the state-centered conception of nationalism. An important feature of the language of official nationalism is that its ritualism is far too rigid, cold, and stereotyped, and that its "enthusiasm" remains artificial. Official nationalism is "exhibitionist." It invades political rhetoric with its cliché vocabulary. In public life there is a frenzied consumption of

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symbols of the nation-state such as the national anthem, the effigy of Atatürk, the flag, and the star and crescent. Although this situation is not always directly related to the pressures or "incitements" of the state, it is at any rate encouraged by the rigid control the state has over civil society.

During the 1994 crisis, the symbols of the nation-state and the phraseology and images of official nationalism were diffused to an even greater extent. The Turkish flag was ubiquitous. People attached stickers of the Turkish flag to their license plates. Star-and-crescent-shaped necklaces and badges were especially popular. Certain singers and models decked their costumes with the star and crescent. Pretexts to sing the national anthem multiplied. While it used to be played in soccer stadiums only before games in which the national team appeared, the spectators started to stand and sing the national anthem before every league match. It could even be heard before pop concerts and at the opening of fashion shows in luxury hotels. Facing the economic crises of 1994 and 2001, both the government and business circles evinced a heroic nationalistic discourse: national-progressivist slogans were coined, such as "The Economic War of Independence," "All for Turkey," "Striving for Turkey," and "For Turkey, with a Good Will." The rise of the "Islamist" movement compelled official nationalism to emphasize the image of Atatürk in its repertory; and the portrait of Atatürk, which became a kind of logo, was displayed at every opportunity.

Kemalist Nationalism (Ulusçuluk)

Kemalism, which was questioned to a great extent among the leftist public opinion of the 1980s, flourished anew among the social democratic intelligentsia of the 1990s. The neo-Kemalism of the 1990s, besides constituting a reaction against the neo-right-wing hegemony and particularly against the Islamist movement, had been incited by the anti-Kemalism these movements shared. Neo-Kemalism maintained that Kemalism had been cast out by the right-wing, who "watered it down" by putting their own people in permanent governmental positions after the September 12, 1980, coup, so that it was therefore no longer an official ideology. Thus, in the beginning, Kemalism stood relatively distant from the state and constituted a more "civil" tendency compared to what it had been in the 1960s. On the axis of this movement, which could be considered as the demand for a Kemalist revision, stood the secularist reaction opposing the rise of Islamism. During the last two years nationalism has come to the fore, with the realization that it could serve to popularize secularism, which is the chief cause. Because of the great disquiet that the neo-Kemalist movement felt in the face of the danger that the Sharia (the rule of Islamic law) would be reinstated, the functionality of nationalism also depended on the need to seek support from the state and the army (on the "interest" certain of its elements would show anew in authoritarian state-controlled solutions based on the army). The fact that the Atatürk motif became incredibly widespread as official nationalism became excessively demonstrative gave rise to the hope of "transmitting" Kemalism by way of nationalism.

The nationalistic (ulusalcılık) discourse that the neo-Kemalist wave has acquired from the left-wing Kemalist discourse of the 1960s and 1970s is a version of ("Atatürkist") nationalism that claims to be left-wing. This claim is based on the neo-Kemalists' appropriation of the humanistic-universalist branch of Turkish nationalism, which is based on citizenship and territoriality. But it overlooks and cloaks the ambivalent character of Turkish nationalism; furthermore, to the extent that it insists on the dissimilarity of Kemalist nationalism from other nationalistic movements, it regenerates the nationalistic ideologies of essentialism and uniqueness. In the 1960s and 1970s, the chief principle of Kemalist nationalism, and the fundamental basis of its claim to be left-wing, were anti-imperialism and

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the stand for independence. In the 1990s this was replaced by secularism, and at the beginning of the twenty-first century, the motifs of antiimperialism and independence once again became marked by the influence of the antiglobal-istic discourse. This left-wing nationalistic discourse, while expressing its opposition to the Arabs and Iran, both of which it reduces to a symbol of political Islam, exhibits a stance that is racist, disparaging, and Orientalist. Bülent Ecevit, the prime minister of the "social-liberal-nationalistic" coalition government formed after the 1999 elections, typically represents the stance of proindependence left-wing nationalism; the anti-Western motifs, autarkist "national pride," and xenophobia in this posture are striking.

The Kemalist nationalistic discourse construes nationalism as the advocate of the process of secularization/modernization. And the fact that the term *ulusçuluk* is preferred to *milliyetçilik* is a part of the design that equates the concept with modernization and secularization. The term *millet* designates the religious community in the Ottoman language; the modern term for nation, *ulus*, prevents the connotations of belonging to the Muslim community (*ümmet*) that the Ottoman term implies. In building the nation-state in Turkey, nationalism has followed a course that aimed at taking over the monopolized sacredness of the nation-state and replacing religion with it. The efforts to "nationalize" religion are an even clearer indication of this desire; Kemalist nationalism, whether by recollecting the single-party Kemalist period when the call to prayer was given in Turkish, or by considering the Alaouite religion as a kind of "Turkish Islam," tends toward a kind of "Islamic-Lutheranism."

Liberal Neonationalism

Official nationalism has a strong modernist-Westernizing vein. Together with Kemalist nationalism, the movement I defined as "liberal nationalism" is also an offspring of this vein: this is a discourse that interprets modernization using the ideology of economics, and that emphasizes the progressivist-developmental aspect of the process of modernization. We can say that the ideology of liberal nationalism matured toward the end of the 1980s, through the progress of the capitalization/modernization process in Turkey.

The liberal nationalistic discourse defines national identity in terms of its fervor and ability to attain the level of the "developed" or wealthy countries of the world: the West. It explains "national pride" not through the nation's unique, authentic characteristics but through its capacity to harmonize with universal standards—the essentialist nationalistic discourse, of course, fancies this harmony to be an inborn trait "intrinsic to us." Such a nationalistic concept, which is tied to the Kemalist goal of "attaining the rank of modern civilization" and deems this vital for nationalism, was potentially present in the liberal and social democratic circles in Turkey.

The dazzling aura of the globalization discourse made this concept more manifest and turned it into an ideological discourse. The liberal nationalistic discourse emerged as the progression toward an oratorio after the self-confidence prelude mentioned at the beginning of this article. The most influential advocate of this discourse is the media, which is intertwined with big capital. Economics holds a privileged position in liberal nationalism. As is well known, creating the national market may be the most important function of nationalism; it is only natural that a liberal type of nationalism should emphasize this function. However, this is the "cold" and scheming aspect of nationalism, which really does not befit its enthusiastic character. As a matter of fact, even the National Economy movement, which emerged at the time the Turkish nation-state was founded, justified its goals through factors external to economics while completely transforming the economy into a vehicle. The economical

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dimension of nationalism has been able to become a verbal-visual entity through the populist progressivist discourse of the DP-AP (the Democratic Party and the Justice Party) tradition. As for a more weighty position, it has been able to acquire this only recently, as the ideology of economics became hegemonic, and also because Turkish capitalism's progress in interfusing with the global economy was "worked into" the collective consciousness as a national achievement. The liberal discourse can now speak with enthusiasm and pride of the "marketing and cultural unity of frozen foods, telephone ads and soccer games."⁵ Now, the performance achieved in exports, the rise in consumption and standard of living, the fact that "our government bonds are eagerly bought on the Tokyo stock exchange"⁶—in short, the dynamism of the economy—are treated as the factors that most flatter our national pride. The incredibly enterprising energy of the "Turkish people," which was revealed with the liberalizing of the economy, is lauded as an extremely valuable national characteristic. Even the examples of anomie and vandalism generated by the inconsistencies of a sacralized economic entrepreneurship are sometimes tolerated because they are considered to be the side effect of a "healthy" potential booming with the desire to change and develop (a sort of "new blood").

A radical variation of liberal nationalism, interfused with the ideology of economics, is the neoliberal chauvinism of prosperity. This attitude, which violates the idea of social solidarity by its reluctance to share with "underdeveloped" regions or communities the prosperity it produces itself, is akin to "class racism," which excludes lower classes by viewing them as backward and "of no breeding" and branding them as a different race.⁷ Certain symptoms of this variation of prosperity chauvinism and class racism can be seen in liberal nationalism in Turkey. Some examples are the Aegean businessmen demanding financial federalism in 1994 because they were unhappy about having "Ankara" "laying hands" on the wealth they were producing, or the villagers who owned land in the economically developing regions being the strongest advocates of privatization because they considered workers and civil servants "parasites," or the Europeanized urban upper middle classes (Euro-Turks) that have "caught up with the EU norms," educationally, professionally, and in terms of consumption, as well as with their good manners, cultural interests, and even "biological standards" (light complexion, tall stature, and other physical "acquisitions"), who distinguish themselves as the elite group that represents the nation's essence, as opposed to the impoverished lower classes, which they see as a hindrance to entering the EU. When the reactions of class egotism are shaped into nationalistic patterns, they can form the nuclei of the variation in question. The stance that sees "parasites" gnawing at economic prosperity, as personified by the Kurdish immigrants who come to the western regions for work and as refugees from the war, can easily ally the chauvinism of prosperity with nationalistic radicalism.

One very important source of pride for liberal nationalism is the degree to which the domestic market merges with the global market and becomes identical to world markets. This best manifests itself in the field of consumption. In this day and age, the indicator of the "rank of modern civilization" is consumer culture, which is also a sign of "universal culture." Neoliberalism has buried the slogan of old-style nationalism, "Local goods are the goods of the Turks, every Turk should use them"; it takes pride in seeing in Istanbul "brands that are cousin to those one can see in Paris, in Washington, in Tokyo," in catching up with the universal "aesthetics of store windows and shopping."⁸ It glories in providing, in tourism, "not just nature and history, as it did in the past, but also entertainment," and in having achieved an "international lifestyle" with credit cards, bars, discos, McDonald's, and international pizza chains — for these all mean that we are a "country that has attained a

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philosophy equivalent to that of the West, and a similar level of institutionalization.”⁹ This language of nationalism resembles that of advertising, which is a sine qua non rite of consumer culture.

The civilizationist discourse of liberal nationalism, which adapted to market fetishism the ideal of “attaining the rank of modern civilization” inherited from Atatürkism, defines a cultural identity in terms of its ability to “achieve” and “catch up with” the modern lifestyle. Such merits as being open to the world, enjoying the pleasures of life, and mastering the tools of the “information society” such as computers and the English language, are lauded as the values of the “new Turkish” identity. Hadi Uluengin extols the victory of the Efes Pilsen basketball team over Panathinakos in Athens because “basketball is without hesitation the sport of urbanites and of the cities.” He believes “my country has cast off its *çarıks* [rawhide sandals], and become a dynamic society in basketball shoes; it has graduated from the stagnant soil to the swishing basket.”¹⁰ The figure that acts as national hero for the “new Turk” or “Euro-Turk” (or the “white Turk,” in the words of those who oppose this discourse critically) is youth—particularly urban upper- and middle-class youth. At any rate, urban youth is the most dynamic consumer of the modern/global lifestyle and of its distributor and simulator, the media. Urban youth is integrated with modern culture in Turkey as much as in the West—indeed, even more vigorously and creatively—and their physical appearance is a source of pride in the “new Turk.” Ertuğrul Özkök, the editor-in-chief of *Hürriyet*, one of the mouthpieces of liberal neonationalism, is also the apostle of the good tidings that “the Turkish populace is becoming more comely.”¹¹ Özkök, describing a soldier who lost his leg in the southeast, draws attention to “his very slender face set off by thin wire-framed glasses; the portrait of the changing, modernizing new Turkish youth.”¹² He describes Sabahattin Öztürk, who won Turkey its first world championship in wrestling in twenty-three years: “Contemporary and good-looking. No mustache, strongly built, young and modern. . . . Our Sabahattin is more handsome, more modern, more contemporary than his counterparts in the West.”¹³ The civilizationist discourse of nationalism, which in its entirety is the “local” product of cultural discrimination or cultural racism as practiced in the West, will also lead to the eugenic tendency of neoracism in the event that it gets carried away by the enthusiasms embodied in the assertion “the Turkish populace is becoming more comely.”

In a development parallel to the fact that consumer culture is the most valid indicator of “the rank of modern civilization,” popular culture is replacing “high culture,” as various forms of mass culture come to dominate “national culture.” Liberal nationalism gives its due to this change occurring in the stock of nationalism's potential images; it transfers the “fervor” of nationalism to the world of popular culture. The position that Turkish pop music has acquired in the ritual economy of neonationalism reflects this tendency. The narcissism that manifests itself in the “I love you so much” messages that stars and admirers exchange as a kind of credo for pop music rites is transferred to a sort of national narcissism through the liberal nationalistic discourse. Narcissism intermingles with hedonism. Özkök, again advocating this neonationalism, preaches a “civil,” entertain-ing national self-confidence that appeals to everyday life, and which has no truck with “gray colors, grave speeches,” or politics: “Turkey's indestructible strength, its somehow persisting stability [which also manifests itself in pop music—T. B.] lies in this passion to live.”¹⁴ The liberal nationalistic discourse, with its narcissistic and hedonistic character, stands aloof from the rigidity of official nationalism on the one hand, and from the fanaticism of ethno-essentialist nationalism on the other. In contrast to the anachronisms of these types of nationalism, it presents itself as the nationalism of the twenty-first century: a sterile nationalism, without complexes, which isn't formalist, which has dissociated itself from populism and the rural world, and which does not transform

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national altruism into masochism. The leading exponents of this discourse support terminologies such as "constitutional citizenship" or "Turkish nationalism" that have nothing to do with the ethno-essentialist line; but while doing this, they take care not to depart from the aura of sacredness that is part and parcel of traditional nationalism. Özkök, for instance, has used the story of the guitarist of a heavy metal group from Istanbul who died while fighting the PKK in the south-west as proof that neonationalism is not at all lacking in patriotism. The liberal neonationalistic discourse is not only compatible with such causes and taboos of official nationalism, it can even transform and appropriate its basic themes. For example, the "renaissance of Turkish music," which pop music is believed to have achieved, is celebrated as the realization, in the dynamics of the market and on the "civil" level, of the Gökalpian East-West synthesis, something the state was not able to bring about with its cultural policies: "Turkey has finally found the magnificent synthesis that it had been looking for since the nineteenth century. We are discovering how to experience the East with the rhythm of the West."¹⁵ Or, pop star Tarkan "is the first full-blown megastar of the East-West synthesis, uniting Turkish people of all ages. . . . The new music that gushes forth from Tarkan's unbuttoned shirt is the first sign that an exodus that had rejected the East without being able to set foot in the West, a mental migration, an aesthetic nomadism is achieving a transition to sedentary life."¹⁶ The language of liberal neonationalism speaks a loose discourse; it is not yet articulate. For this reason, it can easily succumb to the hegemony of other nationalistic discourses. However, due to its capacity to address a large audience, it still has a chance to assert its domination in the modernization process. And Turkey's goal of entering the EU now introduces the necessary grounds to encourage the growth of this language of nationalism.

Turkist Radical Nationalism

Pan-Turanist/Turkist nationalism is a perverted branch of official nationalism. It is a fascist ideology founded by the Turkist intelligentsia, which has pursued the idea of the racist-ethnicist vein of Atatürk nationalism to its extreme. It departs from the patriotic/"Anatolianist" line of official (Atatürk-ist) nationalism in that it accepts the entire territory inhabited by people of Turkic descent as its homeland. In terms of the conception of an organic and authoritarian society, or of cultural essentialism (the ideal of becoming pure Turkish), one may say that the difference between this type of nationalism and the official nationalism of the period remains on a quantitative level (on a scale of moderateness-extremeness). As for a historical conception based on imagining an eternal national existence or the conception of a "national religion," these are the points where Turkism and official nationalism are able to agree. After the tension between the pan-Turanist/Turkist movement and official nationalism reached its peak during the World War II years, in 1944 Turkey joined the Western Alliance with "urgent haste" and the Turkist movement was reduced to an intellectual movement that could be considered marginal. In the 1960s, a new course was plotted by the idealist movement and the MHP (Nationalist Movement Party) formed by Alpaslan Türkeş, who merged the legacy of the Turkist movement with a nationalist-conservative reactionary potential created in the 1950s, founded on an anticommunist fanaticism. On the ideological level, racist motives lost ground and a new nationalistic discourse based on cultural-historical essentialism developed. This development, which intensified in the 1970s, in the late 1970s and early 1980s went so far as to assert that Islam is the primary and even principal element of national identity. Following the military coup of September 12, 1980, the dominance of Islamic identity increased to a great extent. Also questioned was the rationale whereby the state undertook the mission, prior to September 12, of acting as a de facto militia. During this period, pan-Turkist themes also became blurred.¹⁷ With pan-Turkism becoming "rational," but especially with the reactionary

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nationalist wave that arose against the Kurdish national movement, a new transformation took place in the 1990s. The idealist movement, both as original defender of pan-Turkism and by supporting the state morally and materially against Kurdish "secessionism," rehabilitated its relationship with official nationalism and drew closer to the political center. At the same time, it strengthened its cultural and popular ties.¹⁸ By losing its "extremist" aspect it became "normalized." Within this development, the MHP rapidly grew stronger, increasing its votes from 2.9 percent in 1987 to near the 10 percent threshold required to enter the parliament in the general elections of 1995; finally, it took part in the coalition government by garnering close to 18 percent of the votes in the 1999 elections.

One aspect of the ideological change that the idealist movement went through with the transformation of radical nationalism in the 1990s was "re-Turkicizing." Pan-Turanist/Turkist literature, which had become marginalized since the middle of the 1970s, was revived during this period. References made to Turkish mythology and ancient Turkish history multiplied. The totem of original ("first") Turkism, the bozkurt (gray wolf), regained esteem both as a symbol and as the name of the young idealist movement, Bozkurtlar (the Bozkurts). Another development that occurred on the ideological level as a natural consequence of re-Turkicizing was the reduction of Islamism to the position of a subordinate/secondary component of national identity. Other factors of this transformation are as follows: the rivalry between the Islamic and the nationalistic movement became more severe because the Islamic movement grew and became a hegemonic power; the Islamic movement (and the Islamic countries) compete in the Turkic republics with the influence Turkey enjoys there; the MHP now echoes official nationalism and this draws it closer to a secular position. Even though the MHP did not strongly support the February 28, 1997, process in which the Islamic party RP (Welfare Party) was removed from (political) power through the initiative of the army, the MHP did give the state implicit approval with the aim of winning the trust of the regime. This approval reinforced the secular tendency of the MHP, which paralleled the MHP's adoption of Atatürk through depicting him as an uncompromising Turkish nationalist, and as a Turkist who was not loath to espouse the pan-Turkist utopia.

One very important development was that from the beginning of the 1990s the young idealist nationalistic movement, which had a fanatical, "harsh" character, reached out beyond the limits of its traditional constituency and began displaying its repertory of symbols outside of its inner circle. The movement started finding sympathizers among the young urban upper-middle-class constituency and reaching modern youth who listened to rock and pop music. The popularization of the idealist-Turkist symbols and the modernization tendency of the idealist movement's young constituency enabled links to form between this movement and the wind of liberal nationalism.

While this expansion opened a new field for the movement, it also constituted a problem for the MHP, because of the modernization of nationalism within its own constituency and the danger of the party's disarticulation. From the organizational point of view, it was difficult to absorb the conflicts between the traditional constituency, which has stronger religious proclivities, and the dynamics of the new urban-modern constituency. And from the ideological point of view, the party felt the anxiety that the rigid essentialism of the Turkist movement could be destroyed by the ways in which the identity of official nationalism and especially liberal nationalism were perceived. The latter they found to be more "lax," and they thought there was a risk it would shift toward cosmopolitanism and become nonnational in character. The problems caused by this tension undoubtedly played a part in the MHP's poor showing in the 1995 general elections, in which it could not make the 10 percent threshold.

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After the death of Türkeş, whose emphasis of the "modernizing" image of his party had been somewhat exaggerated, Devlet Bahçeli took over the presidency of the MHP; his extroverted, relatively "moderate" image rendered the traditional proclivities of the constituency more harmonious and rehabilitated the internal relations of the organization; this paved the way for the success of the MHP in the 1999 elections.

In general the MHP showed a "low profile" during its coalitional governance from 1999 to 2002. It was important for the party to gain the confidence of the powers of the regime (the army, bureaucracy, big capital). In addition, anxious to "quietly" satisfy the mass constituency comprised mostly of the lower middle class, the party tried to expand its clientele. What is first striking in the ideological articulation of nationalism are the MHP ministers' sallies, which could be called naive and symbolic. Examples are statements about how "yogurt was invented by the Turks," the labeling of local plant and animal species with Turkish names, and the cool reception given to the foreign aid provided during the great earthquake of 1999, with the concern that it was a vehicle of "foreign interference" or even "espionage." Apart from this, two important matters that challenged the MHP's own specific conception of nationalism were whether the death sentence of the PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan would be carried out or not, and the legal measures necessary for Turkey to become a member of the EU. On the Öcalan matter, the MHP leadership supported the execution of Öcalan, because they see him as personifying the entire responsibility for the "Kurdish problem," which in any event they codified as the "problem of terrorism." Nevertheless, during their coalitional governance they consented to not having the sentence executed. This consent, which they justified in terms of not wanting "to put Turkey in a difficult position on the international front," was a part of the MHP's absolute loyalty to supraparty "state policies" and its strategy of earning trust in the eyes of the establishment. As for the goal of entering the EU, also designated by the establishment as a supraparty "national policy," the MHP does not oppose it; however, it interprets EU membership as a transitional step in Turkey's march toward the status of "great power" or "world power." The party insists, therefore, that the EU must not prevent Turkey from pursuing its aspirations of being an "eternal historical nation." On the other hand, the MHP spokesmen kept on interpreting the EU's supranational legal arrangements toward integration as undermining the foundations of the nation-state, and beyond this as a natural continuation of Europe's ancient plans specifically aimed at partitioning Turkey. As a matter of fact, in the summer of 2002, the MHP voted against the EU harmonization laws in parliament, going against the national left-wing/liberal-conservative majority of the government of which it is a part. The MHP's strategy on the eve of the November 2002 elections fit a reactionary and autarkist line opposed to integration with the EU.

Nationalism in Islamism

After the 1980s, Turkish modern Islamist intellectuals developed a radical criticism of the nation-state and of nationalism. In the traditional Islamist discourse the Muslim community (ümmet) stands above the nation. Still, one cannot overlook the strong nationalistic implications in the discourse at the center of the Islamist movement in Turkey, which includes the RP, MSP (National Salvation Party), FP (Virtue Party), SP (Happiness Party), and AKP (Justice and Development Party, or "white" party). The ideology underlying this type of nationalism envisages Turkey as the potential leader of the Islamic world and union. Within this context, the nostalgia for the Ottoman past can become a modern and nationalistic imperial (or irredentist) fantasy.¹⁹ Anti-Western xenophobia is the common denominator of Turkist nationalism and Islamism. The specific point of Islamism is that it assumes religious identity to be the differentiating element, the backbone of the nation and of "being

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national" (millîlik). In view of this, Islam (actually, "Turko-Islam") is viewed as the core of authenticity of the Turkish national identity.

Another ideological denominator linking the main Islamistic movement with official modernist nationalism is progressivism-developmentalism. The RP leadership, comprised of the Muslim technocratic elite and the new Muslim bourgeoisie, lauding "heavy industry" as opposed to "financial speculation," is a faithful disciple of the "cause for national progressivism." This vein creates the possibility for a bond to form between the nationalistic elements within the RP-centered Islamist movement and the liberal nationalistic discourse.

Hybrid Languages and the Problem of Hegemony

Each type of nationalism involves articulations, osmoses, and syntheses alongside its "Eastern" and "Western," ethno-essentialist and civil aspects. In Turkey, in this ambience where the nationalistic language and its different dialects are in progress, such cross-breedings prove to be fruitful and complex. Positions known as left and right can come together on the common ground of nationalism. And the most striking "fusions" or meetings derive from the transfer of the verbal-visual universe of nationalism to the field of popular culture. Many national symbols become a kind of "pop" coat of arms, and thus can be worn relatively independent of a specific political meaning. National symbols become trademarks, and their consumption is engendered. Thus, a dual process begins. On the one hand, nationalistic "exhibitionism" dominates the everyday and public arenas, and on the other, by "becoming pop" it becomes tamed.

This broad and disorganized lexicon created by the plurality of nationalistic discourses gives rise before all else to a great swarm of words, a nationalistic hubbub. Nationalism's tyrannizing discourse dominates politics and everyday life. Nationalism's monopolizing logic expands to the utmost, generating an introverted fervor and violence, arousing hostility in the political opposition, insisting on national unity as a dogma that singles out political subjects, and turning the "shared good" into something otherworldly. And the struggle for hegemony, which arises in the different nationalistic discourses as they aim to show that they themselves are the "true" nationalism, above all reinforces the pressure of nationalism's structural logic.

Within the struggle for hegemony, because liberal nationalism is far from being complete ideologically and as a doctrine, it has a power that may not be visible but is actually very influential. This is why it covers most of this article; this dialect tends to form the dominant pattern of the Turkish nationalistic discourse. All languages of nationalism become apt to join this discursive system, regardless of the themes and material they use. But a handicap of the language of liberal nationalism is that it appeals to the "winners" of this process, and it is not likely that it can convince the "underclasses" during difficult economic situations; this is why it probably will find it necessary to join other nationalistic languages—by making concessions from its own discursive system. Under these circumstances, official nationalism and Turkist nationalism will continue to make themselves felt because they are more complete ("ready") discourses and because of the "maturity" of their reflexes in the face of burning national issues.

—Translated by Linda Stark

Notes

OBTIC

Bora, Tamil. "Nationalist Discourses in Turkey." *South Atlantic Quarterly* 102, no. 2/3 (2003): 433-51.

i The nationalists who call themselves "idealist" (ulkucu) in Turkey are the radical right-wing pan-Turkist faction originating from the Idealist Hearths founded in 1969 by student supporters of the MHP (Nationalist Movement Party) to spread the nationalistic consciousness and raise individuals committed to their race, religion, and culture. In this text, and whenever the "idealist nationalists" in Turkey are concerned, the word idealist, while bearing these connotations, should be thought of in terms of a highly enthusiastic attitude toward this pan-Turkist movement.

2 Tamil Bora, "Turkish National Identity, Turkish Nationalism, and the Balkan Question," in *Balkans—A Mirror of the New International Order*, ed. Günay Göksu Özdoğan and Kemali Saybasili (Istanbul: Eren Yayıncılık, 1995), 101-20.

3 Tamil Bora and Omer Laciner, "Die Turkrepubliken und die Türkei: Der zweite Anlauf" *Zeitschrift für Türkeistudien*, no. 1 (1995): 115-38.

4 There are two terms for nationalism in Turkish. Milliyetçilik derives from the Ottoman word for "nation" (and also for the religious community), millet; it is a more common equivalent. Ulusçuluk derives from the modern Turkish word for "nation," ulus, and is preferred by the left-wing nationalists. In this text, where Kemalist nationalism is concerned, the term refers to ulusçuluk; in all other cases the term nationalism refers to milliyetçilik.

5 Hadi Uluengin, *Hürriyet*, August 24, 1993.

6 *Hürriyet* headline, May 13, 1993.

7 See Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities* (London: Verso, 1991).

8 Ertugrul Ozkok, *Hürriyet*, December 19, 1993.

9 Giineri Civaoglu, *Sahah*, August 13, 1993.

10 Hadi Uluengin, *Hürriyet*, November 27, 1993.

11 Ertugrul Ozkok, *Hürriyet*, November 4, 1992.

12 Ibid.

13 Ertugrul Ozkok, *Hürriyet*, August 29, 1993.

14 Ertugrul Ozkok, *Hürriyet*, May 30, 1993.

15 Ibid.

16 Ertugrul Ozkok, *Hürriyet*, July 3, 1994.

17 Tamil Bora and Kemal Can, *Devlet Ocak Dergah* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1999).

18 Tamil Bora, "Der 'Nationale Reflex': Die fundamentalistische Disposition des Nationalen in der Türkei und der proto-faschistische Nationalismus der MHP," *Sociologus—Zeitschrift für Ethnosoziologie und Ethnopsychologie*, no. 1/2 (2001): 123-39.

19 Tamil Bora, "Istanbul of the Conqueror: The 'Alternative Global City'—Dreams of Political Islam," in *Istanbul: Between the Global and the Local*, ed. Çağlar Keyder (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999), 47-58.