



## 1944 PAN-TURANISM MOVEMENTS: FROM CULTURAL NATIONALISM TO POLITICAL NATIONALISM

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### ДВИЖЕНИЕТО ПАН-ТУРАНИЗЪМ 1944 Г.: ОТ КУЛТУРЕН НАЦИОНАЛИЗЪМ КЪМ ПОЛИТИЧЕСКИ НАЦИОНАЛИЗЪМ

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**ABSTRACT:** *The trial of Turanism in 1944 has a historical importance in terms of nationalism being an actionary movement in Turkish history. When socialism turned out to be a dreadful ideology by getting reactions all over the world, there would not be any more natural attitude than that intellectuals coming from an education system full of nationalist proposals conflicted with this movement. However, that the same intellectuals crashed the logic of the government saying "if needed, we bring communism, then we deal with it without the help of anyone" was really a dramatic paradox. Movements of Turkism on 3<sup>rd</sup> of May did not curb the movement of Turkism, on the contrary, the transformation the government avoided most happened and supporters of Turkism spread to all parts of the country by politicizing. While Nihal Atsız, one of the nationalist leaders of the time was summarizing results taken out from the trial process by his ideology, he could not even be regarded unjust in his remarks saying "The 3<sup>rd</sup> of May became a turning point in the history of Turkism. Turkism, which was only a thought and emotion and which could not go beyond literary and scientific borders, became a movement suddenly on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May, 1944".*

**Keywords:** Turanism Movements, Turk nationalism, one-party ideology, Nihal Atsız, socialism, racism.

In the period of one party system, it is observed that intellectuals who supported Kemalist version of nationalism went into a dilemma because İnönü - "the second man" - who took over the control during the last years of Atatürk era put this principle of the 6 arrow in such a way that it was "directed under the tight control of government". In these years, some intellectuals who believed that Kemalist nationalism did not provide enough pleasure started to enliven cultural nationalism institutions that appeared slowly at the last periods of Ottoman Empire.

Nihal Atsız, famous thinker of pan-Turkism, achieved to establish himself just at these periods. Atsız both separated cultural nationalism from Kemalist nationalism to some extent and lay the foundations political nationalism in the journal that he himself issued called "Atsız journal" (NİHAT-CEMİLOĞLU, 1995:68). Giving a short break to his studies one year after he issued his journal, Nihal Atsız published the journal *Orkun*. Atsız who continued to publish his journal with the famous names of Turkism such as S. Kemal Yetkin, Fethi Tevetoğlu, Abdullah Tansel, N. Sami Banarlı had to suspend his studies most of the time due the negative attitude that

mindset of İnönü assumed against alternative nationalism perceptions that could flourish outside of the CHP's scope. (NİHAT-CEMİLOĞLU:69) In 1930s, other journals that should be counted among Turkism publications are "Çığır" by Hıfzı Oğuz and as well as "Birlik Journal" published by "Milli Türk Talebe Birliği".

#### **Introduction: Nihal Atsız and the first theorists of Pan-Turkism**

Nihal Atsız who completed his educations in French and German schools respectively, (METE, 1990:10-12) went into "military medical school" by passing the examination in 1922. Atsız, having a very stormy youth, firstly attended the social opposition to communism movement that newly felt itself in the country these years. Then he organized this opposition movement and the minority nationalists that he met during his school life. Atsız, who were forced to leave the school due to a conflict between him and a teacher coming from an Arabic origin when he was at the third class of military medicine school, worked as a foreign language teacher in Kabataş high school for a short time.

Albeit with difficulty, Atsız who drove the attention of Fuat Köprülü –an important figure of the time- in terms of the fact that he studied Turkish names of places in Anatolia. Atsız continued his profession of teaching from where he had stopped. Atsız, who several times argued with the left-sided academicians of the period and complained these to Turkish society and explicitly adopted an opposite manner against them, succeeded in keeping his position as lecturer at university for some time. (METE:34-37)

At the same period, famous Pan-Turkist ideolog Reha Oğuz Türkkkan took his place in the scope of his battle, too. Türkkkan, who attempted an organization under the name of “*Kitap Sevenler Kurumu*” and who published the book “*Türkçülüğün Esasları*” by Ziya Gökalp as the first action, again found the opportunity to remind the name of Gökalp to the youth, who İnönü could never bear and tried to make forgotten. Another mission of Türkkkan was to sow the seeds of political nationalism which would later take root among university youth by organizing the nationalist youth that gathered around the association he led against socialist movements.

The period before the World War II involves the years in which new ideas came into question and collected communal support. At the same period, socialist movement that explicitly opposed to the cultural nationalism enlivening once again collected support which could not be underestimated compared to resolution period of Ottoman Empire. In this context, the struggle of Turkism together with intellectual movement of socialist movement gave way to a medium of useful-fresh ideological thought in Turkey. Tens of journals that came into press world in these years with the aim of refuting the opposite claim by being opponent of one another became the initiators for the integration of society and politics on the base of civil-society. Press organs like Adımlar, Gün, Kızıl Ses, Yurt and Dünya as an opposition to the journals such as Orhun, Bozkurt, Gök- Börü and Ergenekon published by Turkist intellectuals contributed to the social structure in some way in the frame of their social accumulations.

The attitude of Reha Oğuz Türkkkan side which gave excessive importance to union of race contributed to the opposite side in that they called all Turk nationalists as racist-chauvinist-fascist and provided a great trump. The claims which form a base for 1944 Nationalism Movements and cover important part of the indictment

always continued on this plane. Doubtlessly, that the first comprehensive criticism which the left-side made on Turk Nationalists falls on the claim of “strong nationalism” isn’t a coincidence from this respect. This criticism-accusation published in Yurt and Dünya journal has the characteristics of representing the state of mind of the period.

#### **Towards the Movement of Pan-Turkism in 1944**

*“These fresh events we experienced in the nearest history show us that nationalism away from evolutionism cannot be thought. So the ones who have appeared in the name of strong nationalism and who give up the route to development and westernization that republic regime has adopted and claim to return to traditions and who try to overwhelm what is done in favor of civilization and westernization with the cries of “we are losing our identity” are in fact the biggest enemies of Turkish nation. The real patriotism should be asked for in only revolutionists” (CEMGİL, 1943:426)*

In the same period, Pan-Turanism - Pan-Turkism movement is severely criticized in the brochure published under the signature of Faris Erkman particularly in that it criticized the tendency for westernization and caused Turkish Republics to come into question. Meanwhile, developments that are experienced and the attitudes of Hasan Ali Yücel -Minister of Education of the time- pushed cultural nationalists to focus on more valid defense mechanisms. Just at this point, it is again faced with the line of Atsız.

At the journal *Orhun*, Atsız put forwarded that education staff which he regarded as the base of Turkish nation and government tradition were filled up with left-sided personnel complaining that socialist movement wrapped up the whole country. Atsız, who exemplified left-sided personnel intake in the journal, wrote two papers successively addressing the Prime Minister of the time, Şükrü Saraçoğlu. After these papers which received severe criticism from Hasan Ali Yücel - the minister of education of the time-, Atsız whose teaching profession was ended at Boğaziçi High School gave place to these views in his first letter he wrote on March 1<sup>st</sup> 1944:

#### **Heavy accusation against CHP**

*“Left-sided thought is continuing secretly due to tolerance and indifference given to it. Illnesses stuck in these ideas are observed at high schools... This illness is spreading in higher education much more. It is getting bigger by*

*adding the ones who are not pleased and who are not Turkish. It is turning out to be a movement rather than staying as a confidential and sincere thought. It is publishing journals of various size and qualities. It is attacking to morale, feelings of honor and patriotism and fact of nation with all in the same key.” (ATSIZ, 1944)*

At different points in his article, after making clear the left-sided action frame which he himself rejected, Nihal Atsız summon the prime minister of the time to help and to become vigilant. The letter: *“Why do you tolerate this anti-patriotic movement issued at journals and even at daily papers poisoning Turkish nation by disguising under sometimes patriotic, sometimes humanistic, and sometimes scientific figures? Why do you grudge this nation freedom and why do you provide high ranks to the ones having wished this country to be a slave of the others? If these are the requirements of democracy, then a broad freedom of thought should be in this country, especially in scientific area. If my remarks were welcomed with tolerance unique to democracy, I have a lot to say”* (DURAL, 1998:75-76)

The most interesting point in the letter above is the fear that Atsız felt and not knowing how the letter would be welcomed rather than the reproof of Atsız. Because, when the period is examined in its own conditions, it cannot be put forward that the situation is clean cut for nationalists. The line of İnönü wanted communism to get a ground in turkey to some extend in pragmatic sense and dreamed of interrupting nationalist movement with this. For this reason, socialist journals and papers of the time could provide shares from government finance and these publications were supported either secretly or explicitly. Whereas, it is requested from nationalist writers to leave independent thought clubs of which they had been constant members and important government subscriptions of nationalistic journals that constituted important financial resource of these journals were cut. “Incorrigible radical boys!” like Atsız were usually thrown away from civil service posts. So, factors lying under Atsız’s hatred of communism are important in terms of narrowing down independent action taking areas and nationalist staff that established the government and undertook social engineering. It can be said that nationalism in the context of Kemalist process of Turkish modernization functioned as a tool of making the society aware of applications of revolution process in terms of Kemalism and grasping the centre of politics by the conservative intellectuals that the

revolution targeted. By bounding themselves to nationalist movement arouse between the years 1930-1950, most intellectuals coming from conservative background targeted to clear up registry of right-sided politics which were rotten by Islamism and to avoid the reaction of the system.

With a remark that he added to the end of his first letter, Atsız was reminding that he would impart “composing left-sided radical cadre in the government” with their names in case of closure of Orkun in the second letter he would write. Likewise, Atsız, who gave place to many names in the second letter just after the first one, was causing Turkish intellectual and political world to put to rout. At the very end of the second letter published on 21 March in 1944, the republic administration of the time sued Atsız and his friends and 1944 notorious nationalism movements broke out.

### **Cold shower for the nationalists**

1944 nationalism movements were active in the context of culture till then and were in close connection with the government and it is important in that it was the date Turk nationalist rebelled against the system for the first time. Because on this date, Turk nationalists had understood for the first time that the government they had idealized in their minds would not be compatible with the current state structure staff. Nationalists grasped that struggling in the system actively by desiring the administration was more meaningful rather than accepting the system unconditionally. (BORA-CAN-2003: 43-48)

On the other hand, CHP administration of the time never held off making speeches that could never be told apart from German National Socialist Party while claiming that they were against severe nationalism. In this context, the only goal of the speeches made usually was doubtlessly to express that nationalism were under the government monopoly and could not be left to “three or four raiders”. Just as the same way, Şükrü Saraçoğlu, the prime minister of the time, was explaining what he understood from nationalism in one of his speech like this *“I am a Prime minister of pan-Turkism. While Turkism is as mush an issue of culture on our side as it is a blood issue.”*

Except for some of the writings of Reha Oğuz Türkkan and Atsız, the supporters of Turkism at the time did not associated Turkism with blood tie. It is no doubt that the works of the government led by Saraçoğlu were not confined to this of course. On the papers of the time, that the

condition of having the qualification of being from Turkish race even for the students that would be accepted to some ordinary schools would be asked for and that every member would be called for a comprehensive Turkism interview was stated through giving government advertisements. (TÜRKEŞ, 1988:28-29) Moreover, it can easily be observed how they benefited from “ideological tools of black government” as to nationalism in one lesson book taught at schools during the leadership of İnönü: “In whatever country a revolution is done, it should be realized with the hands of genuine children of that country and should stay on their hands. For example, Turkish revolution should stay on the hands of Turks. Even unconditional... when someone different from the founder of the government comes to power, that government collapses. If you ask for an example; here is the Abbasids, here is the Andalusia, and here is the ottoman. Certainly, Turks will be on the power of new Turkish republic. We will not believe in anyone excluding Turkish.” (BOZKURT, 2003: 446-447)

As far as it is understood from the above excerpt, the groups by whom it is feared that the control would fall under the control of them are not the English, French which were the occupation powers in the country short time ago, but they are the citizens having the origin of Kurdish, Caucasian, Armenian, and Jewish. At the same time, it is very interesting that the side which fell into the error of looking for a pure race by dividing the ethnical groups of its country was not the Turkish nationalism but a group which took part in CHP.

#### **“I learned nationalism from the government”**

In the letters that were in such a state of mind, declaration of the fact that ministry of education had turned into a home of communism and in a letter directing accusations to the Minister of Education of the time primarily triggered the entire nationalists in the country. Sabahattin Ali and left-sided thinkers of the period sued against Atsız again and again with the support of the government. Atsız was waiting for the fist session impatiently. Türkeş who later would be the political leader of Turkish nationalism describes 1944 nationalism movement starting in such an atmosphere as follows:

*“Eventually, the judgment date of the prosecution initiated in Ankara was determined. Nihal Atsız got on the train one evening and arrived at*

*Ankara the next morning. He had not said the day he would get on the train to anyone and neither he informed to anyone in Ankara...The moment this passenger, who did not take any attention at Haydar Pasha train station, set foot in Ankara train station, it got topsy-turvy. University youth surrounded him with flower bouquets when he appeared at the step of the wagon. A very crowded welcoming group started to tinkle the surroundings: ‘Damn it communists, hooray Atsız! They enfolded the editor of Orhun in their arms” (TÜRKEŞ:32)*

In the following parts of his book, by putting forward that the government is horrified, Türkeş claims that it is the only and first manifestation till that day in which the government had no a finger. (DARENDELİOĞLU, 1977,108-109) Finally, Nihal Atsız, who appeared in the court in 3rd May 1944, was welcomed again with the demonstrations of love by hundreds of nationalist youth after the trial.

However, this time task force was alarmed and in the confusion occurred Nihal Atsız was arrested together with many youngsters. After this, government members who settled down to speak of the harms of pan-Turanism started to arrest everyone from their homes who had a tiny relation with Atsız as well as Alparslan Türkeş with arrest warrant they issued at the courts again and again.

In the 1944 nationalism movements, nationalist groups were sentenced for the first time, tortured, and they understood that to what extent the ideological tools of the government could expand against nationalists. This comprised the first seeds of the restless attitude that nationalist movement -which grounded its relation with the government on a more critical base with 12<sup>th</sup> of September- hold against the government. Judgment committee of the extended pan-Turanism movement that started on 4<sup>th</sup> September again were composed of lieutenant general Yusuf Ziya Yazgan, colonel Cevdet Ergut as well as colonel Galip Kaan.

The authorities of the period who arrested hundreds of people had decided to judge only 23 leading people. However, some of the acquisitions taking place in the indictment were at a unbearable level and first of these was the acquisition of one or two names with treason among whom there was Alparslan Türkeş who were a young lieutenant at that time. Alparslan Türkeş described the thought of nationalism he had adopted as follows:

"I had first learned superiority and importance of Turkism from my parents.... Then my teachers said the same things at every school I got education. When my military life started, my commanders in troops and all the generals whom I was in court of always repeated this fact. I always obeyed the principles that my nation adopted, I am a strong nationalist; however, I am not a racist who is an advocator of "genocide" in the perceived sense. The judge listened to a bit long-lasting answer of mine. "Could he ever say 'you are lying'? The prison and the house of general Sabit Noyan was full of signs saying 'One Turk equals to ten enemy' (Türkeş, 70-74:)

As it is understood from these lines, 1944 nationalism movements – well beyond of being a simple case- is the manifestation of a sequence of values that the government compelled people to accept with ideological tools of the government and of a deep worry that the government had for the possibility of development of nationalism independent of itself. In the case which represents a very paradoxical scene, the defense of Nihal Atsız is very interesting, too. Atsız -Turkish theorist- succeeded to go beyond only answering the acquisitions in his indictment. At the same time, the following parts that will be quoted from this defense will pop up as a comprehensive criticism of the system by Turkish nationalists:

#### **Conclusion: Turkish nationalist movement is politicizing**

*The current republic is not a genuine republic. Republic is the choice of the public in its traditional sense. Election of MPs is Suffrage indirect in our system. MPs are not selected but appointed. But it should be suffrage direct. There is still one-party administration. This is not compatible with democracy. For democracy, a multi-party system should be established. But just as I did not say my ideas and believes to anyone in this matter verbally, I did not write a letter, either.*

In the case which came to an end on 29<sup>th</sup> of March 1945, the some of the accused who were out of acquaintance were sentenced to jail between 8 and 10 yeas. Even though the İsmet İnönü -president of the time- made negative speeches about the suspected who were still being judged, 1944 nationalism movement which were put off due to plead of 19 may celebrations has a historic importance in Turkish history in the context of being a actionary movement of

nationalism. However, that the same intellectuals crashed the logic of the government saying "if needed, we bring communism, then we deal with it without the help of anyone" was really a dramatic paradox.

In contrast to what is expected, While Atsız was summarizing results of the thought, he could not even be regarded unjust in his remarks saying "The 3<sup>rd</sup> of May became a turning point in the history of Turkism. Turkism which was only a thought and emotion and which could not go beyond literary and scientific borders became a movement suddenly on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May, 1944". (ATSIZ, 1967:4)

Özleyiş journal which was published im 1945 constituted a new idea club for thoughts of pan-Turkism. Özleyiş was followed by Toprak, Altınışık, Meşale, Hareket, Milli Birlik, Ergenekon, Türkeli Dışında Damla, Doğu, Türk'e Doğru, Kürşad, Bayrak, Kanak, Bozlak and Fecir which entered into publication one by one at different regions of the country. NİHAT- CEMİLOĞLU:756) it would be useful to emphasize on the names of these journals with a hermeneutic point of view in essence. Because the names of the journals represent the properties of radical-Turkism, nationalism closes to Islam, pursuit of a combined nationalism and sympathy towards westernization. It will be enough to look at the names of the journals to see that the first cores of the conflicts between Turk-Turk/Islamist-Islamist-liberal sides had spread till the years 1940 which still continues in the nationalist movement. Likewise, that the origins of ontological problems -which nationalist movement discusses heavily even today- retraces to 1944 movements in which Turkish nationalism got a political appearance reveals that the period in question functioned as a "litmus-paper" in terms of grasping the infrastructure of nationalism.

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