# "Our Bodies are Turkish, Our Soul Islamic"

## The Grey Wolves and the Essence of Present-Day Turkish-Islam Mobilization

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While during the last almost twenty years the Grey Wolves (*Bozkurtlar*, in Turkish), the youth groups of the far-right Nationalist Action Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*, *MHP*, in Turkish) lost a lot of their initial strength and appeal, mostly owed to the domestic tensions in Turkey between left and right throughout the Cold War, the present day nationalistic mobilization in Turkey seems to indicate the inherent potency of their ideological legacy, as well as a gradual revival of their activism.

This legacy operates within the larger "laboratory of the Turkish-Islam synthesis"[2], where the Grey Wolves' ideology and mobilization actually "Islamized Turkishness"[3] since the beginning of their establishment.

Under this light, their alliance with today's AKP seems plainly discernible, while their idea of a world order (*Nizam-ı Alem*), where Muslim Turkey has a special and eventually dominant role, has become the kernel of the dominant narrative of the Turkish regime. The reactive and reactionary idea of *Nizam-ı Alem* is systematically promoted by the "Idealist Hearths" (*Ülkü Ocakları*, in Turkish), the organizational cradle of the Grey Wolves in Turkey and abroad, intimately linked to the MHP.

The weakening of the Kemalist secular nationalism, under the weight of the popularity of neo-Ottomanism, together with the fading of anti-systemic political Islamism, lifted the two barriers that had initially averted the deeper fusion of Turkish nationalism and Turkish Islamism. This act brought them together in the heart of today's Turkish regime. Still, this fusion was already operative since the 70s within the *Ülkü Ocakları*. Tracing back their ideological birth and endeavors can shed new light on what is revealed to be the deep essence of present-day Turkey.

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[2] Bursa, Zeynep, personal interview conducted by the author, 14 December 2020

[3] Tepe, Sultan, Turkish Studies, A Kemalist-Islamist movement? The nationalist action party; https://doi.org/10.1080/14683840008721234 ; First published: 2000, published online April 2007. Date accessed:  10 December 2020

Nevertheless, while the depth of *Nizam-ı Alem* is expected to become a long-lasting heritage for the post-Erdogan period, the rise of the *Idealist Hearths'* combative mobilization might become a serious threat to the AKP-MHP alliance.

### *The ostracized children of the Republic*

According to Oguz Turkkan, when Ismet Inonu took over the presidency of the Republic of Turkey in 1938, replacing Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, Turkish nationalism was no longer seen as the first and foremost ideology by the state. Ismet Inonu replaced Ataturk's photograph on the banknotes with his, then made away with the Turkist and Pan-Turkist symbols (such as the Grey Wolves on banknotes and started to shy away from the Turkish nationalism of Ataturk[4]. Inonu's perception was that Turkey should stay away from the upcoming world conflict and he tried to keep nationalism in low profile so that Turkey would not to be perceived as being sympathetic towards Nazi Germany.

In this new political and ideological environment, racist Turanist ideas started to be publicly expressed as a criticism of the Kemalist nationalism, which, in the eyes of the racists, "the Kemalist strain of Turkish nationalism was too soft, tolerant and all-embracing"[5], even if "the Kemalist approach to religious and ethnic minorities could hardly be described as egalitarian"[6]. According to Ayturk, this Turanist racism was not directly linked to the European racism of the same period, but it seems to have been more the result of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire after the First World War. It was a racism based on the belief "that the Turkish-

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[4] Turkkan, Oguz "Turkculugun Yeni Esaslari", Pozitif, Istanbul, 2006 in Limoncuoglu, Alihan, "The Evolution of Turkish Nationalism Between 1904 and 1980", Exeter University, College of Social Sciences and International Studies, 2015

[5] Ayturk, Ilker, "The Racist Critics of Ataturk and Kemalism, from the 1930s to the 1960s"; https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0022009410392411; Journal of Contemporary History, Published 7 April 2011. Date accessed: 12 December 2020

[6] Ayturk, Ilker, *idem*

speaking Ottoman Muslims could maintain their existence as a sovereign nation only if they internalized and implemented the principle of the survival of the fittest in a Darwinian struggle between human races" [7].

Racist-Turanist criticism against Kemalist nationalism focused on a very strict ethnic approach of "who is a Turk" and also on irredentism, since they considered that all Turkic populations should be freed from the Soviet Union. For these Turanists, the Lausanne Treaty was good only compared to the Sevres Treaty, and the Kemalist Republic could only represent an interim period before a new Turanist government could "regroup national forces and strike at the right moment to re-conquer the outlying Turkish terra irredenta"[8].

These critics, under the de facto leadership of Nihal Atsız (1905-1975), a racist ideologue and activist, were very outspoken during the first Inonu period. As a result, they became a serious problem for the regime both domestically and internationally. The ideas of a Turkish *Lebensraum*, as advocated by Atsiz, together with the racist ideas, were putting Turkey in a very difficult situation. Especially after early 1944, Ankara was becoming more and more aware that the defeat of the Nazis was just a matter of time and that a non-aligned Turkey would face a growing danger by staying alone facing Stalin's Soviet Union.

In the same period, the regime took action and on 19 May 1944, forty-seven prominent racist-Turanists, including Atsiz and the young Alparslan Türkeş, were taken into custody. The "Racism–Turanism Trials", that were also a message to the wining Allies that Turkey was against racist ideas and extremists, lasted for the next three years and eventually all of the accused were acquitted. However, as Ilker Ayturk argues,

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[7] Ayturk, Ilker, *idem*
[8] Ayturk, Ilker, *idem*

"...Racism-Turanism Trials had an enduring impact on public opinion and the Turkish intelligentsia. The year 1944 marked the end of Kemalist fraternizing with radical forms of Turkish nationalism; from this year on, all forms of nationalism other than the Kemalist version lost their privileged association with the Turkish state and moved to the ranks of the opposition. In this sense, 1944 should be considered a turning point in the history of Turkish nationalism"[9].

The perceived threat posed by these ideas and by pan-Turkism is clearly revealed by President Inonu himself. When commenting on the arrests of the racist-Turanists, he declared that "the idea of Pan-Turkism is new but dangerous and sick... Only foreigners can profit from their actions... It can be seen that our national policy is far from looking for adventures outside our country"[10].

The "Racism-Turanism Trials" and the separation of the official, Kemalist nationalism with ideas of race and, most importantly, with Turanism, irredentism and pan-Turkism, was one of the two barriers that originally prevented Turkish nationalism to espouse irredentist views. Eventually, it also allowed it to blend with Islamism, the latter being the ostracism of popular and Anatolian Islam.

However, Atsiz's seed was already sowed deep in the heart of Turkish nationalists and it would bear fruit in the following decades. Limoncuoglu[11] argues that, Nihal Atsiz has given the "spirit" the "geist" of the nationalist movement in Turkey. Particularly with his historical novels and more specifically with his "Grey wolves" saga, with "Grey wolves' Death" (*Bozkurtlarin Olumu*) and "Grey wolves are Rising" (*Bozkurtlar Diriliyor*). These novels inspired generations, galvanized pan-

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[9] Ayturk, Ilker, *idem*

[10] Sarac, Bunyamin, "1944 Turkculuk Olayı ve Basvekil Saracoglu", Akademi, Izmir, 1994 in Limoncuoglu, Alihan, "The Evolution of Turkish Nationalism Between 1904 and 1980", Exeter University, College of Social Sciences and International Studies, 2015

[11] Limoncuoglu, Alihan, "The Evolution of Turkish Nationalism Between 1904 and 1980", Exeter University, College of Social Sciences and International Studies, 2015

Turkic nationalist feelings and popularized names like Bahadir, Alp, Alper and Kursat, that are names of Turkic/Turanist mythology and not of the Islamic tradition.

Atsiz and his companions did not have any issues with secularism and Islam was not really part of their struggle. However, when put together, with the limits against irredentist pan-Turkism, the Republic had also already marked its limits, and in a much more virulent way, with Islam. Even so, these two marginalized "children" of Turkey will meet in the period of the 60s and the 70s. This not only under the common threat of communism, but also in "their condemnation of Kemalist nationalism and CHP (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, Republican People's Party) policies, which they argued, had weakened the Turkish nation and made it susceptible to the influence of foreign ideologies"[12].

### *"Allah sacked God"*

When in 1969, Alparslan Türkeş changed the name of the Republican Peasant Nation Party (*Cumhuriyetçi Köylü Millet Partisi,* in Turkish), of which he had become the president in 1965, to Nationalist Action Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*, in Turkish), he opened the door for the blending of Turkish nationalism with Islam. In the Adana Congress in 1969, where Türkeş changed the name of the party, he and his supporters marginalized the already small group of Turkists and Turanists and made substantial openings to Islam, so much so that Atsiz himself would exasperatedly denounce, "in MHP, Allah sacked God (*Tanrı*, in Turkish; "MHP'de Allah, Tanrı'yı kovdu!"[13]). Atsiz, by using the word *Tanrı*, as God was

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[12] Uzer, Umut, *An Intellectual History of Turkish Nationalism: Between Turkish Ethnicity and Islamic Identity*; The University of Utah Press, 2016

[13] Yalcin, Soner, "MHP'nin 40 yildir bitmeyen derdi", Hurriyet, 24 February 2008; https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/mhp-nin-40-yildir-bitmeyen-derdi-8299240; Date accessed: 5 January 20120

called in the pre-Islamic Turkic world, while *Allah* is the Islamic name of God[14], wanted to say that MHP was becoming Islamised.

Türkeş' Nine Lights Doctrine (*Dokuz Işık Doktrini*) became the ideological backbone of the party and it refers to the following principles: *milliyetçilik* (nationalism), *ülkücülük* (idealism), *ahlakçılık* (moralism), *toplumculuk* (communitarianism), *ilimcilik* (scientific mentality), *hürriyetçilik* (liberty), *köycülük* (peasantism), *gelişmecilik ve halkçılık* (progressivism and populism), and *endüstricilik ve teknikçilik* (industrialism and technical advancement).

Türkeş was actually replacing Ataturk's secularism (*laiklilik*) with "moralism", which was quickly interpreted under a religious point of view. Çetinsaya explains that,

> "where in 1965 the "morality" section of the "Nine Lights" does not mention Islam and refers only to "Turkish traditions, spirit and to beliefs of the Turkish nation," by 1972 "Islamic principles" had been added, and the preamble to the "Lights" stressed the Islamic contribution to world civilization[15]".

In the same period, Türkeş declared that,

> "In the path of Turkish nationalism, cultural groups were molded in Turkish-Islamic tradition. Islam constitutes an important component of Turkish morality. Islam is a source that keeps the nation together and

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[14] Within the Turkish frame of that period, Atsiz was using a very sensitive reference to the fact Atatürk and his colleagues had attempted to Turkify Islam by substituting the Turkish word *Tanrı* for the Arabic word *Allah.* This substitution was in place until 1950 when the *Democrat Party* (*Demokrat Parti*, in Turkish) abolished it.

[15] Çetinsaya, Gökhan, "Rethinking Nationalism and Islam: Some Preliminary Notes on the Roots of 'Turkish-Islamic Synthesis' in Modern Turkish Political Thought"; https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/j.1478-1913.1999.tb02753.x; First published: 1999. Date accessed: 18 December 2020

provides spiritual and moral discipline. Thus, Turkish nationalism is not based on a conflict between Islam and ethnic-nationalism rather it includes an historic synthesis of Islamic and Turkish ethnic values[16]".

By espousing only the cultural dimensions of Islam, Türkeş and his followers were able not only to appeal to the masses, something they desperately needed to win votes, but also to stay away from the political conflicts between political Islam and the secular state. In the same Congress of Adana, the three crescents, a very clear Islamic symbol, were chosen as the symbol of MHP and not the Grey Wolf as the Turkists (have) wanted.

After an initial period between 1965 and 1970, when Islam was emphasized to a lesser degree, Türkeş and his followers, under the perceived threat of communism and the violent clashes with leftists, fully espoused the new concept of "Turkish-Islam synthesis". This synthesis puts Islam, in its cultural and not its political dimension, on the same level with ethnicity (being a Turk) as the two components of Turkish nationalism.

### Grey Wolves and the struggle for global order

While MHP was Türkeş' political project, the *Idealist Hearths* were his dream, his vision, his ideal world to be one day erected in reality. The first *Idealist Hearth* was founded in 18 May 1966 at the University of Ankara. Within a few years, the number of *Idealist Hearths* in Turkey rose impressively. Cold War Turkey was the field of violent clashes between leftists and rightists, and the "Idealist Hearths" were an integral part of this era of violence.

In Turkish, *"ülkü"* means "ideal", meaning that the Hearths are representing the "ideal" Turkish world to be created. The Grey Wolf symbol was, and still is the

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[16] Turkes Alparslan, *Dokuz Isik* (Nine Lights) (Istanbul: Kamer Yayinlan, 1998) in Tepe, Sultan, *idem* ⌞SEP⌟

symbol of the *Idealist Hearths*, together with the three crescents. According to Türkeş' definition,

> "*ülkü* is to construct the Turkish nation that is the most advanced, civilized, and powerful entity of the world. People who follow this ideal constitute *ülkücüler* (the idealists). Idealists must be ready to sacrifice themselves in serving the state and the nation[17]".

In the mid-70s, while the anti-communist struggle was in its pick and civil chaos was threatening Turkey, the *Idealist Hearths,* who were massively mobilized in street violence, discovered a new, reactionary mission for Muslim Turkey: To lead the global order. Opçin-Kıdal argues that,

> "The idealist movement, which was previously only fighting against communism on the street, came to see itself as locked in a struggle for the *nizam-alem* (global order), and that the Turks had a mission to contribute to the global. This was an adaptation of Islamic teaching, *i'lâ-yi kelimetullâh* (exalting the name and word of God), and with this ideological reconfiguration, the grey wolves [sic] became *alperen* (both warrior and religious). Türkeş even went on a pilgrimage to Mecca during this period, performing a practical expression of his increasing emphasis on religion[18]".

The ideological "father" of this mission, that will become the very essence of the "Idealists", was Seyyd Ahmet Arvasi (1932-1988), an ideologue journalist, poet, scholar propagandist who elaborated the concept of *Türk-İslam Ülküsü* (Turkish-

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[17] Türkeş, Alparslan, *24-25 Kasım 1967 yılında yapılan CKMP'nin 8. Büyük Kurultayı. Ülkücü Hareket.* 1967, Ankara, Alternatif in Opçin-Kıdal, Arzu, Continuity and change in the ideology of the Naionalist Action Party (MHP), 1965-2015: From Alparslan Turkes to Devlet Bahceli; http://repository.bilkent.edu.tr/handle/11693/54497; October 2020, Bilkent University. Dae accessed: 10 January 2021

[18] Opçin-Kıdal, *idem*

Islamic Ideal) as a form of cultural and religious nationalism, framing national and religious identity as indivisible and mutually constitutive[19].

Arvasi was one of the most influential figures who defined the ideals of the *Idealist Hearths*. His writings are seen as one of the best expressions of the Idealist mindset in the 70s[20]. For Arvasi, the Turkish nation should dominate the global order through its two interrelated religious and historical missions. Turks have two interrelated religious and historical missions: *i'lâ-yi kelimetullâh* (exalting the name and word of God), or the defense of the superiority of the Qur'an, and *Nizam-ı Alem* or making God's commands and standards supreme law in the physical world. The formula was "Turkishness is our body, Islam is our soul[21]".

The *Idealist Hearths* systematically promoted the idea of a global order, *Nizam-ı Alem*, where Muslim Turks would play a leading, dominant role[22] and thus became the cradle of the current reactionary Turkish-Islam mobilization.

### From soft power to hard power

When Erdogan's Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, in Turkish) came to power in 2002, the direction and essence of political Islam in Turkey entered an era of deep transformations. Almost two decades later, the party's original all-inclusive liberal identity that had significantly departed from the Turkish-Islam synthesis had gradually vanished since the party leadership started to perceive that Turkey's prospects of entering the EU were actually void.

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[19] Uzer, Umut, *idem*

[20] Çetinsaya, Gökhan, *idem*

[21] Duberstein, Tasha, "At the Nexus of Nationalism and Islamism: Seyyid Ahmet Arvasi and the Intellectual History of Conservative Nationalism", University of Washington; https://digital.lib.washington.edu/researchworks/bitstream/handle/1773/45792/Duberstein_washington_0250O_21856.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y; First published:2020. Date accessed: 3 January 2021

[22] Tepe, Sultan, *idem*

This marginalized the liberals within the party as well as the liberal supporters of the party, paving the way for a new expression of Turkish-Islam synthesis under the neo-Ottoman ideas of Ahmet Davutoglu, who was then only the chief advisor to then-Prime Minister Erdogan. Striking the sensitive cords of the Turkish-Islam synthesis and legitimizing it with the Ottoman past and legacy, neo-Ottomanism became very popular amongst a very significant part of the society and the ruling elites while the burgeoning TV popular culture gave an extra push to its popularity.

At the same time, as AKP was enhancing its grip of power and cultural dominance, political Islam lost its marginalized anti-systemic character, giving its place to cultural and social Islam.

Parallel and intrinsically to these changes, traditional Kemalism and Kemalist nationalism became weaker under the impact of neo-Ottomanism, both domestically and Turkey's in foreign policy.

The collapse of the peace process with the Kurds in 2015 removed the last obstacle for bringing together AKP and MHP, under the star of a re-formulated Turkish-Islam synthesis, the essence of which strikingly resembles the reactionary *Nizam-i Alem* of the "Idealist Hearths". This ideological fusion became deeper after the failed coup attempt of July 15th 2016 that also marked the end of neo-Ottomanism as a soft power while Turkey entered into a period where the fundamental insecurity for the survival of the state (*devletin bekası,* in Turkish) came to blend with the desperate need for a Turkish *Nizam-ı Alem,* as a reaction to the threat and as a reactionary idea against the traditional kemalist nationalism and the soft power of neo-Ottomanism.

Islamist intellectuals and ideologues elaborated equivalent ideas, like Necip Fazil Kisakürek, a leading Islamist intellectual and poet who is greatly admired by Erdogan, had a vision of Turkey leading an awakened Islamic world while

Necmetin Erbakan, the leader of political Islam in Turkey had a vision of an Islamic Common Market. But these visions and ideologies lacked the combative mobilization, the experience of violence, the militaristic character, and the hard power dynamic of the "Idealist Hearths". As a result, they had given birth to the soft power dynamic of Ahmet Davutoglu's Strategic Depth (*Stratejik Derinlik* in Turkish) and his neo-Ottomanism (or pan-Islamism as Behlül Ozkan argues[23]).

Davutoglu's pan-Islamism was an irredentist and expansionist ideology based on the idea of Turkey as a soft, economic and cultural power and of a Turkish *Lebensraum*, *hayat alani* in his texts. While Davutoglu's *hayat alani* is borrowed wholesale from imperial geo- political theorists[24], his idea also resembles Atsiz's belief of a Turkish *Lebensraum*, that he advised a future Turanic government to secure by war if necessary[25]. Therefore, Davutoglu's pan-Islamism unintentionally provided a fertile background to the reactive and combative *Nizam-ı Alem's* ideological framework.

After 2016 and his dismissal as a Prime Minister and the failed coup attempt of July 15th, the neo-Ottoman/pan-Islamic vision of Turkey changed essentially and became a militarized struggle for the survival of the state (*devletin bekasi*), through which Turkey can survive the attacks and threats of those powers that do not want Turkey to grow and enhance its role in the global order.

This tension, emerging between the grandiose idea that Turkey must rise and is rising as a great power and the paranoid fear that Turkey is under attack and will dismantle, became the backbone of the struggle for a Turkish global order, turning Turkey into a militarized hard power in the international arena.

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[23] Ozkan, Behlül, Turkey, Davutoglu and the Idea of Pan- Islamism, Turkey, Davutoglu and the Idea of Pan-Islamism, Survival: Global Politics and Strategy, 56:4, 119-140, DOI: 10.1080/00396338.2014.941570; First published: July 2014. Date accessed: 10 December 2021

[24] Ozkan, Behlül, *idem*

[25] Ayturk, Ilker, *idem*

Adar argues that, "since 2016, Turkish foreign policy has markedly shifted from soft power policies of the early 2010s towards a hard power approach manifesting at numerous fronts[26].

Intrinsic to this transformation to hard power is the vision of AKP's political elites about Turkey's historical role in a the global order. "Within half a century, even if we don't end up witnessing it, Turkey will emerge as one of the strongest powers of the world, sailing into larger accomplishments", Erdogan said in February 2020. İbrahim Karagül, the now ex editor-in-chief of AKP mouthpiece *Yeni Şafak* daily wrote in October 2020 that Turkey is a rising global power that has regained its "geopolitical mind" and that the "world order's central actors" were watching Turkey's "geopolitical mind" in action with great surprise[27].

### *The other side of Janus: Idealist Hearths in the streets?*

The combative nationalist mobilization that has become the essence of today's Turkey is equally very strong domestically, where the alliance between AKP and MHP (a covert coalition) has led to a rapprochement and increasing similarity in the bases of the two parties and where "it is obvious that the tendency is strongly in favor of the Idealists and nationalism"[28]. The *Idealist Hearths* are much less exposed to "Islamization", while the current political power of Erdogan and AKP are becoming more nationalistic. Zeynep Bursa says that, "Erdogan became more nationalistic while the Grey Wolves remained as Islamized as before"[29].

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[26] Adar, Sinem, APSA MENA Politics. https://apsamena.org/2020/11/10/understanding-turkeys-increasingly-militaristic-foreign-policy/; First published: Spring 2020. Date accessed: 2 July 2020

[27] Karagül, İbrahim, Yeni Şafak; https://www.yenisafak.com/yazarlar/ibrahimkaragul/turkiye-kuresel-guc-simdi-azerbaycan-da-yukselecek-iran-ermenistanin-yaninda-peki-tahrani-korkutan-ne-2056392; First published: 2 October 2020. Date accessed: 23 December 2020

[28] Can, Kemal, *idem*

[29] Bursa, Zeynep, *idem*

This is observed in a period where the *Idealist Hearths* seem to come back after a long period of decline, a revival both on ideological but also in power levels. According to Can,

"Despite the fact that the *Idealist Hearths* were an organization designed to be the purest and most dynamic center of the ideology of nationalism, there has been a significant decline in this function and feeling for more than twenty years, under the current leader of MHP, Devlet Bahçeli who has deliberately suppressed this function and feeling and replaced by priorities expressed through the security of the state. However, it can be said that the extremely deep sensitivities of the right represented by the MHP have become more of an operational force involved in the polarization policy and marginalizing moves of the regime[30]".

As an instrument of this operational force, the *Idealist Hearths* have augmented their presence in the streets during the last two decades and this despite the official narrative according to which the party keeps the Grey Wolves off the streets. Kumral argues that,

"While violent events associated with the Ulkucu movement were very low during the military junta regime in the early 1980s, these violent events rose dramatically in the course of 1990s, temporarily declined between 1999 and 2002, and accelerated rapidly after 2002[31]".

And she highlights that,

"(the) form of nationalist mobilization of masses in the 1990s has increasingly taken violent routes, and in the 2000s Ulkucu activists have

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[30] Can, Kemal, *idem*

[31] Kumral Şefika, Journal of Labor and Society, "Ballots with Bullets: Elections, Violence, and the Rise of the Extreme Right in Turkey"; https://doi.org/10.1111/wusa.12287; First published: 28 June 2017. Date accessed: 23 November 2020

increasingly utilized their mobilization skills in gathering crowds for demonstrations and converting these gatherings into violence".

These mobilization skills and the potential of violence from the *Idealist Hearths*, could be more enhanced by the fact that MHP and the *Idealist Hearths* "believe that the power belongs to them"[32]. This makes the Grey Wolves more daring to go down the streets, because they feel more encouraged[33].

This was seen during the orchestrated marches targeting Armenians near Lyon by the Grey Wolves in October 2020, as Bursa argues, and she highlights that the Grey Wolves' presence in Europe is very important and is directly linked to Erdogan and his aggressiveness, while equally important is their presence in social media that gives them a great power of immediate mobilization[34].

### *Conclusion: Towards "raging nationalism"?*

By having emerged as the very essence of today's Turkey's nationalist mobilization, the ideology and combative activism of the *Idealist Hearths* is radically transforming the country's political and cultural dynamics.

The dominance of *Nizam-ı Alem* in the narrative and expectations of both the political elites, the state apparatus and a significant part of the society is seriously narrowing President Erdogan's space of maneuver and has also become already a heavy "inheritance" for the post-Erdogan period. Whereas the rising activism of the *Idealist Hearths*, that has permeated an important part of the society and the state is becoming a challenge for the cohesion of the regime but also for a transition to a post-Erdogan period.

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[32] Can, Kemal, *idem*

[33] Bursa, Zeynep, *idem*

[34] Bursa, Zeynep, *idem*

Following assaults against an opposition journalist, working for the pro-IYI party *Yeniçağ* daily and a politician from Ahmet Davutoglu's *Gelecek* (Future) Party, the son of Alparslan Türkeş, Tuğrul, who serves as an MP with AKP, penned an article where he expressed his fear of a "burgeoning raging nationalism"[35]. Is this a reference to MHP's usual threat that asks: "Do as we want or we won't be able to control our base"[36]?

While MHP's alliance with AKP has been founded on ideological fusion, mainly around the notion of *Nizam-ı Alem* and the militaristic activism that Turkey has to espouse in order to fulfill its historical mission as a great power, this very activism domestically is perceived by a growing number of AKP members as a dangerous deviation from what Tuğrul Türkeş describes as a constructive nationalism. The more "enraged" and out of control Grey Wolves and MHP's nationalism will become domestically, the more difficult the alliance with AKP will be in the next period.

However, the depth and the mobilizing force of the equally raging *Nizam-ı Alem* as a national rampant feeling of Turkey's historical role as a great power will most likely survive the alliance and will continue to give a militaristic and expansionist dynamism in Turkey's ruling elites, even in the post-Erdogan period.

[35] Türkeş, Tuğrul, TUDEV, Azgın Milliyetçilik: 21'inci yüzyılın ilk çeyreğinde Dünya ve Türkiye'deki gelişmeler üzerine; https://www.tudev.org.tr/azgin-milliyetcilik-yildirim-tugrul-turkes/; First published: 17 January 2021. Date accessed: 18 January 2021

[36] Tanil Bora in Tom Stevenson, Middle East Eye, ANALYSIS: The growing strength of Turkey's ultra-nationalists; https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/analysis-growing-strength-turkeys-ultra-nationalists; First published: 2 June 2016. Date accessed: 12 December 2020