

Nihal Atsız's World-View and Its Influences on the Shared Symbols, Rituals, Myths and Practices of the *Ülkücü* Movement

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INTRODUCTION

The shared symbols, myths and rituals have always had a vital importance in the establishment, organization and maintenance of popular nationalist movements. While some of these symbols and practices are common among all nationalist social movements, some others are context-specific because they are meaningful, and have an organizing power only in a certain social context. In fact, as the ideology of nationalism is constructed on the basis of the idea of homogeneity and collectivity of a certain social group, the presence of context-specific shared elements in a certain form of nationalism becomes necessary to create the sentiment of we-ness within the group so that the given social group could imagine itself as a distinctive or *sui-generis* social entity and perceive outsiders as the “others.” For these shared symbols, myths and rituals to be effective in constructing a group-consciousness, rather than to be directly political and rigid¹, they should be flexible and ambiguous enough to be interpreted and internalized in different ways within the group.² In other words, the shared elements in a nationalist movement should be amenable to different interpretations, so that varieties of individual perceptions of them would not create a dissolving crisis in this group. That is why most of the nationalist symbols, myths and rituals are mystical and constructed to be ineffable. When the mysticism and ineffableness becomes embedded in the shared elements of nationalist movements, the range of the varieties of the individual interpretation and of internalization of these shared elements becomes wider.³

¹ Abner Cohen, ‘Political Symbolism’ *Annual Review of Anthropology* Vol. 8 1979, p. 88.

² Anthony Cohen, *Topluluğun Simgesel Kuruluşu* (Ankara: Dost, 1999), p. 15.

³ Ömer Seyfettin’s stories of *Kızılma Neresi* and *Başını Vermeyen Şehit* are very explanatory in terms of indicating to us that the preservation of the fluidity, flexibility and mysticism of the national symbols are thought of as significant for Turkish nationalists as well.

Although the group members consider these shared symbols and practices given and self-evident, they are constructed and recognized within historical and social processes, and through interaction within the group. Hence, their maintenance depends on the ability of the social group to reproduce them within the realm of social relations. Art and literature are some of the most appropriate spheres for the reproduction of the nationalist symbols, rituals and myths⁴. However, apart from reproducing existing shared elements of a nationalist movement, art and literature can be the spheres of the invention and creation of new symbols and new myths; and in some cases the artistic and literal works, themselves, can be nationalist symbols.

Turkish nationalism is not an exception to the fact that literal and artistic works effectively provide or reproduce nationalist symbols and practices. However, as Turkish nationalism's configuration has been subject to change along with the socio-economic conditions of Turkish society, the shared symbols, rituals and myths that have been incorporated into Turkish nationalism has varied throughout the history of modern Turkey. This is, of course, not to deny the fact that there have been some continual symbols and myths within the ideology of Turkish nationalism.

Turkish nationalism does not solely consist of its official interpretation by the Turkish state; it has always had some variants. Although the main skeleton of Turkish nationalism was historically created by Turkish state elite, how it manifested itself and was practiced inevitably differed within the private sphere, because Turkish society has had a heterogeneous social structure constituted by different social groups with different characteristics and hence different tendencies and perceptions. For instance, one can easily realize that the practice of Turkish nationalism in the urban context is strikingly different from its practice in the rural context. As the Turkish society developed through capitalist lines and as new social classes come into scene in the urban context and consequently as the new political identities started to flourish in the political sphere, these differences have become even more visible. Especially

⁴ Herkül Millas, ' Edebiyat Metinlerinde Milliyetçi Tarih Söylemi' in *Tarih ve Milliyetçilik: 1.Uhusal Tarih Kongresi* (Mersin: Mersin Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1997), p. 94.

after 1960s, when various political ideologies came into the political scene, one could observe that Turkish nationalism acquired different and even contradictory forms as a result of its integration with different political ideologies. Therefore, the nationalist symbols, rituals and myths utilized in Turkish nationalism varied according to also the political ideology with which Turkish nationalism integrated. However, one should note that this does not mean that such diverse manifestations of Turkish nationalism represent a complete rupture with official Turkish nationalism. In most cases, the “unofficial manifestations of Turkish nationalism”⁵ was built on the basis of the ideological assumptions and symbols of the Turkish nationalism of the Turkish state.

The Nationalist Action Party (MHP) or the idealist movement (*ülkücü hareket*) in the popular language is one of the political and social movements who adopted and developed a distinct understanding of Turkish nationalism. In terms of its dynamic structure, what we claimed about the Turkish nationalism in general is also valid for the nationalism of the *ülkücü* movement in particular: there is not one strict form of MHP nationalism. Its form and even its content are subject to change according to time and also according to specific social contexts. Therefore, the symbols, practices, discourses, assumptions, rituals etc. employed by the Nationalist Action Party do not exhibit a homogenous and fixed character. However, at the same time, it is still possible to argue that there have also existed certain continual symbols and practices, which has been adopted by almost all sympathizers of the *ülkücü* movement. In fact, the presence of these shared elements, without an exception among all *ülküçüs* make it possible for them to develop and maintain a group identity. However, I should remark that even if all *ülkücü* movement has collectively shared symbols and practices, how they are understood, imagined or manufactured might vary. As I mentioned at the beginning such flexibility is necessary for a shared element to be effective and influential in nationalist movements.

⁵ Umut Özkırımlı, “Türkiye’de Gayrıresmi Milliyetçilik ve Popüler Milliyetçilik” in Tanıl Bora and Murat Gültekingil eds. *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce: Milliyetçilik* Vol. 4 (İstanbul: İletişim, 2002) p. 706.

While some of the shared elements in the *ülkücü* nationalism were produced by the movement itself, through its own social and political practice, a great part of these shared symbols, rituals and myths were transferred from official Turkish nationalism. For instance, one can argue that the Turkish nationalist elements in the “dominant official ideology”⁶ of the Turkish state were reproduced by the *ülkücü* movement in their extreme and crudest forms. Apart from the elements in official Turkish nationalism⁷, the symbols and representations used in some independent literary and artistic works have become a source of inspiration for the organization and mobilization of the Nationalist Action Party. Nihal Atsız, for instance, was one of the most important figures that have influenced the *ülkücü* movement.

This situation demands the following significant question: Although there never emerged any complete correspondence between the ideology of the Nationalist Action Party and the ideological outlook of Nihal Atsız as we shall see later, what factors prepared the conditions for the fact the latter is very influential over the former? In this paper, I will attempt to answer this question and my answer, at the end, would provide us some hints for understanding both the nature of the *ülkücü* movement and Nihal Atsız’s perspective on the world. While answering this question I will establish some links between some continual structural characteristics of the *ülkücü* movement and the general political outlook of Nihal Atsız. However, before undertaking such an attempt, first of all it will be necessary to define and show some general characteristics of the *ülkücü* movement and then to present some evidence that shows the idea that Nihal Atsız’s works were really influential on the

⁶ What I mean by the “official dominant ideology” is the unity of certain assumptions, beliefs, practices and symbols that are employed by the dominant social forces to justify the existing social establishment. The configuration of the official dominant ideology might vary according to specific social and political conditions at a certain historical moment. The official dominant ideology is usually an amalgam of certain discourses and assumptions from different ideological outlooks. For instance, the Turkish official dominant ideology can incorporate the elements of liberalism, socialism, nationalism and fascism, at the same time, in terms of building and maintaining hegemony over subjugated segments of society. This conceptualization takes its inspiration from Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, eds, Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1976. and also Ernesto Laclau, *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory*, London: Verso Books, 1977.

⁷ Tanil Bora and Kemal Can, *Devlet Ocak Dergah*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 1991), p.43.

mobilization of *ülkücüs*. In the latter part, while discussing the factors that could facilitate Atsız's influence over the *ülkücüs*, I will explore the parallelism between the ideas, symbols and notions in Atsız's novels of *Bozkurtların Ölümü*, *Bozkurtların Dirilişi* and *Deli Kurt*, some of his articles, poems, stories and the practices, assumptions, on the one hand and discourses of the *ülkücü* movement, on the other.

A) WHO ARE ÜLKÜCÜS?

In this paper, as most of the scholars do, *Ülkücü* movement will be taken as the political movement that developed under the leadership of Alparslan Türkeş. Türkeş, as a former army officer, held the presidency of Republican Peasants Nation Party (CKMP) in 1965 and reconstructed the party through ultra-nationalist and anti-communist lines with its Nine Lights doctrine⁸ and in the end, renamed it as the Nationalist Action Party in 1969⁹. Although it is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss whether the formation of the *ülkücü movement* was the direct product of the deliberate attempt of the Turkish state to counter a rising socialist political struggle in Turkey¹⁰ one can easily observe the fact that the *ülkücü movement* until 1980s portrayed the “dangers” posed by communism as its *raison d’etre* and as an important tool for organization, motivation and mobilization. The *ülkücü movement*, then, will be thought of as the political movement that emerged under the actual or symbolic leadership of Alparslan Türkeş and under the banner of nationalism and anti-communism and then continued, after the death of Alparslan Türkeş, by persisting to convey certain historically essential characteristics of *ülkücü* identity but with some changes, as we shall see later. However, my identification of the *ülkücü movement* on the basis of its political party and leader should not mislead us to consider the characteristics of this movement as

⁸ The doctrine of *Nine Lights* was to defend the following nine principles: nationalism(*milliyetçilik*), idealism (*ülküçülük*), morality(*ahlakçılık*), social-mindedness(*toplumculuk*), scientism(*ilimcilik*), the guaranteeing the freedoms (*hürriyetçilik*), peasantry (*köylüçülük*), development and populism(*gelişmecilik ve halkçılık*), industrialization and technology (*endüstricilik ve teknikçilik*)

⁹ Mustafa Çalık sees the 1 August 1965, the election of Alparslan Türkeş for the president of the CKMP as the beginning of *ülkücü* movement. (Mustafa Çalık, *MHP Hareketi* (Ankara: Cedit Neşriyat, 1995), p. 93.

¹⁰ Ömer Laçiner in the preface that he wrote to the book Tanıl Bora, *Devlet Ocak Dergah* (İstanbul: İletişim, 1991) proposes some ideas through these lines.

consisted solely of the party's official political activities and perspectives. *Ülkücü movement* is also a distinctive political and social culture, as well as a means to constructing a social identity. This situation emerged as a result of the party's distinct ways of popularizing itself. The party established some additional institutions like *Ülkü Ocakları* (Idealist Club), *Komunizmle Mücadele Dernekleri* (Associations for the Struggle Against Communism), where the *ülküçüs* socialized themselves and, developed and reproduced their own *ülküçü* identity and, got involved in the local political struggle with local agendas. This made it possible for the Nationalist Action Party to create and maintain a "calcified" popular support with a specific nationalist culture and identity.

As I mentioned before, political and ideological outlook of the *ülküçü movement* had a very dynamic structure as its configuration changed according to social and economic developments in Turkish society. At a certain level of abstraction and by disregarding the variants within the *ülküçü* movement itself, it is possible to periodize the historical development of the Nationalist Action Party by analyzing the changing political tendencies of the *ülküçüs*. The first period of the *ülküçü* movement is the era between 1965 and 1969, within which the party leadership prioritize the agendas of anti-communism and Turkish nationalism. The period between 1969 and 1980 marks the era in which the Islamic elements were increasingly incorporated in the party's Turkish nationalism and anti-communism¹¹. In the period between 1980 and 1990 the *ülküçü* movement experienced a political identity crisis because of both the fact that Turkish left, increasing power of which had been one of the important justifications for the existence of the *ülküçü movement*, lost effectiveness on Turkish politics and that the *ülküçü* movement's leadership remained indecisive and inconclusive about developing a consistent attitude and policy towards the 1980 military intervention, which hit also the most prominent *ülküçü* cadres and its party organization.

During this period, *ülküçüs* inclined to more intensify already existing Islamic elements in

¹¹ Burak Arıkan, 'Türkeş'ten Bahçeli'ye MHP: Değişim Nereye Kadar' in Seyfi Öngider ed. *Milliyetçilik, Faşizm ve MHP* (İstanbul: Aykırı, 2002), p. 44.

their world outlook at the expense of Turkist sentiments.¹² However, post-1990 period, without completely leaving the Islamist discourse, witnessed the revitalization of the Türkist elements in the *ülkücü* movement, as a result of the independence of the Turkic republics of the former Soviet Union and of the rise of a Kurdish separatist movement¹³. Such a periodization of the history of the *ülkücü* movement will be very helpful for us to set the reasons for the changing intensities of Nihal Atsız's influence on *ülküçüs*. This periodization will be embedded in my analysis throughout this paper.

B) THE CONTINUAL INFLUENCE OF NİHAL ATSIZ OVER THE ÜLKÜCÜ MOVEMENT

Given the facts that Nihal Atsız's political outlook involves an extreme and pure Turkish racism and that the *ülkücü* movement in the discursive level rejected and criticized the ideology of racism, one can doubt the existence of an ideological and emotional link between Nihal Atsız and *ülküçüs*. It is true that after 1969, when the *ülkücü* movement incorporated Islamic elements into its Turkish nationalism, Atsız's organic connection with *ülküçüs* was completely broken.¹⁴ However, this does not necessarily mean that Atsız ceased to be an important and inspiring figure for *ülküçüs*.¹⁵ Almost in all periods of the *ülkücü* movement Nihal Atsız's works have provided conceptional and symbolic inputs to the cognitive world of *ülküçüs* and that he has always, but with different intensities, been an important and respected figure within the *ülkücü* movement.

Once the similarities between the *ülkücü* practices, symbols and rituals, and the elements used in Nihal Atsız's literal works are traced, one can easily have the sense that Nihal Atsız had many "contributions" for the *ülkücü* style of action. In fact, this reasoning can

¹² Merdan Yanardağ, 'MHP'nin Geleceği: Sonuçlar ve Olasılıklar' in Seyfi Öngider ed. *Milliyetçilik, Faşizm ve MHP* (İstanbul: Aykırı, 2002), p. 23.

¹³ Kemal Can, 'Ülkücü Hareketin İdeolojisi' in Tanıl Bora and Murat Gültekingil eds. *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce: Milliyetçilik* Vol. 4 (İstanbul: İletişim, 2002) p. 672.

¹⁴ Güven Bakırezer, 'Nihal Atsız' in Tanıl Bora and Murat Gültekingil eds. *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce: Milliyetçilik* Vol. 4 (İstanbul: İletişim, 2002) p. 353.

¹⁵ Can, p. 667.

be supported with some material evidences. For instance, a former *ülküci* scholar, Mustafa Çalık, who undertook an empirical study among “Gümüşhane MHP elite composed of 144 people” in 1977 asked the question to *ülküci*s that “Which authors or books became the most influential over you?” Interestingly nobody gave the name of Alparslan Türkeş’s works. While Necdet Sevinç is the most frequent answer with 23 people, Nihal Atsız follows him with 21. Osman Yüksel Serdengeçti is the third with 12 ranks.¹⁶ One can easily claim that Necdet Sevinç is not a surprising answer when we consider the fact he was the editor of *Bizim Anadolu(Our Anatolia)* that was the official newspaper of the Nationalist Action Party. In 1977, this was the only official party publication that can be distributed to rural places of Anatolia. Therefore, what is much more important and surprising and hence worth analysing than the *readability* of Necdet Sevinç is the *popularity* of Nihal Atsız among Gümüşhane *ülküci*s given the facts that there was not an organic connection between the Nationalist Action Party and Nihal Atsız in 1977 and that the publication and distribution opportunities were limited in 1977 Turkey, and that after 1970s Nationalist Action Party started to give an increasing emphasis on the Islamic elements in its ideology at the expense of Turkism, a tendency which would clash Nihal Atsız’s world outlook.¹⁷

There are some other indications of the popularity and importance of Nihal Atsız among *ülküci* community. The current party president Devlet Bahçeli’s following interpretation of the 3 Mayıs 1944 case about Racism and Turanism in Turkey (*Irkıçılık, Turancılık Davası*), in which the prominent Turkist figures like Nihal Atsız, Rıza Nur and Alparslan Türkeş were charged with having racist and Turanist ideas, shows that Nihal Atsız’s significance and prestige among the *ülküci* community is still strong:

Bilindiği gibi, Türk Milliyetçiliği tarihinde önemli dönüm noktalarından biri olan 3 Mayıs 1944 hadisesinin üzerinden tam 49 yıl geçmiş bulunmaktadır. Ama 3 Mayıs 1944’ü

¹⁶ Mustafa Çalık, *MHP Hareketi* (Ankara: Cedit Neşriyat, 1995), p. 126.

¹⁷ If the Declaration of the Nationalist Action Party in 1977 Elections (MHP, *1977 Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi Seçim Beyannamesi*, (Ankara: Emel, 1977) and the party’s youth organization’s program-like publication (MHP İstanbul İl Gençlik Teşkilatı, *50. Yıla Doğru* (İstanbul: Yüksel, 1973) is compared, the over-dosage of Islamic sentiments in the former is quite visible.

doğuran şartlar ve gelişmeler önemini ve sıcaklığını bugün de korumaktadır. İşte böyle bir dönemde kararlı ve ilkel bir grup Türk Milliyetçisi aydın, rejimin yarattığı baskıcı ortama rağmen, tehlikeli gidişata “dur” demek için kamuoyuna ve devlet yönetimine uyarılarda bulunmuşlardır. Büyük fikir ve dava adamı rahmetli Nihal Atsız’ın önderlik ettiği ve rahmetli Başbuğumuzun da yer aldığı bu aydın hareketine duyarlı Türk gençliği de destek olmuş; böylelikle Türk Milliyetçiliği, fikir akımı hüviyetinin yanında sosyal bir hareket mahiyeti de kazanmaya başlamıştır. (...) Bu vesileyle, Başbuğumuz Alparslan Türkeş Bey ve kıymetli fikir adamı Nihal Atsız Bey başta olmak üzere zorlu bir dönemde adını tarihe yazdıran bütün dava büyüklerimizi rahmet ve minnetle anıyorum. Ruhları şâd, mekânları cennet olsun¹⁸.

Some other examples and cases show not only the fact that today, among the *ülkücü* community, Nihal Atsız is a prominent figure, who became very effective in the construction of the cognitive world of and style of action of *ülküçüs*, but also the fact that Nihal Atsız, himself, has become a symbol of *ülkücü* movement. The following sentences from a popular *ülkücü* newspaper is an appropriate occasion to see how Nihal Atsız has become a symbolic personality for the *ülkücü* movement:

Değerli okurlarımız, geçen hafta verdiğimiz Başbuğ Alparslan Türkeş posterine gösterdiğiniz yoğun alâkaya teşekkür ederiz. İlgi ve taleplerinizi dikkate alan yayın kurulumuz bundan böyle Türk Milleti’ne hizmeti geçmiş abide şahsiyetlerin posterlerini siz değerli okurlarına armağan etmeyi kararlaştırmıştır. Bu çerçevede gelecek hafta Türk Milliyetçiliği’nin ölümsüz önderlerinden Hüseyin Nihal Atsız’ın 35x50 ebadında bir posterini vereceğiz. Hayatı Türk Milliyetçiliği mücadelesiyle geçmiş bu Ülkü Devi’nin orijinal tablosunu kaçırmayın.¹⁹

After this point, I will attempt to analyze the factors that could create the convenient context for this situation to occur. I will claim that seven interrelated essential characteristics of the *ülkücü* movement prepared a convenient context for Nihal Atsız’s ideas, symbols and myths to be influential over the cognitive world and action style of the *ülkücü* movement.

C) SEVEN STRUCTURAL AND CONTINUAL CHARACTERISTICS OF ÜLKÜCÜ MOVEMENT and NİHAL ATSIZ’S WORLD VIEW

¹⁸ From, Devlet Bahçeli’s official circular distributed within the Nationalist Action Party,

¹⁹ *Kurultay*, 18 January 2004.

1) Ülkücü Movement's Tendency to Differentiate Itself from Existing Political Forces and Its Marginalism

Although in some historical periods, it seems difficult to differentiate Nationalist Action Party from the parties in central right in terms of the policies developed and political strategies pursued, the supporters of the Nationalist Action Party tended to consider that they have a separate and distinctive political identity. Most of the time, the party elite, also, had to develop some marginal policies and discourses to differentiate the party from “*status quo*”²⁰ politics. These policies, to some extent, satisfied party's supporters' sense of distinctiveness and marginality.²¹ Developing a marginal discourse was necessary especially for drawing a continual political support from local middle-class and small capital holders of Central Anatolia, who economically suffered from the penetration of the big capital owners into the local markets that they had occupied beforehand and hence were alienated from existing socio economic transformation of Turkish society.²² One can argue that after 1990s, this radicalism became necessary for attracting the urban poor, who were alienated from the existing social order to a great extent as a result of deepening unequal distribution of economic resources in the urban context. However, as the ideology of central right of Turkish politics and the dominant official ideology of the Turkish state had a changing conceptional and discursive outlook, as a result of the changing political and economic strategies of the dominant social forces in Turkey²³, the *ülkücü* movement also had to arrange its political stance and discourse according to the nature of the political discourse of the central right and of the Turkish state.²⁴ This situation was combined with the *ülkücü* movement's own political maneuvers for getting a popular support from Turkish society. Therefore, although *ülküçüs* have had some continual

²⁰ See Muharrem Şemsek interview in Ruşen Çakır, *Nereye Gitti Bu Ülkücüler* (İstanbul: Metis, 2003), p. 20.

²¹ The declaration of the Nationalist Movement Party in 1977 says “Bugüne kadar iktidara gelmiş bulunan kapitalist şartiler, işverenlere zenginlere, esasen müreffeh ve eğemen sınıflara imtiyaz ve iltimasla hareket etmiştir. Hasbelkader iktidara gelen sol görüşlü partiler ise işçilere, memurlara ve kendi görüşüne uygun sınıflara imtiyaz ve iltimasla davranmıştır.” From these sentences, one can understand that The Nationalist Action Party tends to give the image that the *ülküçüs* are neither a capitalist nor a leftist, but having a separate, distinctive identity.

²² Bora and Can, p. 53.

²³ Erdoğan Aydın, *Milliyetçilik: Türkiye'nin Çıkmazı* (İstanbul: Gendaş, 2002), p. 28.

²⁴ Can, p. 683.

and stable political elements and discourses within their ideological outlook, the incorporation of these stable elements into some other varying ideological elements rendered the *ülküci* movement's political perspective fluctuating and hence fluid. For instance, the party's ambiguous strategies towards incorporation of Islam and liberalism into Turkish nationalism have always constituted a dynamic of crisis within the party²⁵. Especially, the party's understanding of Islamic politics and its formulation of the relationship between Turkish nationalism and Muslimhood were very unstable and unclear. This unclear nature of the *ülküci* movement's ideology and hence the party's inability to create a separate and stable *ülküci* doctrine²⁶ made it possible for *ülküci*s to be nourished by different and even inconsistent literal resources²⁷. Therefore, despite the fact that Nihal Atsız's symbols, ideas, and discourses were not officially recognized and even, in some periods rejected by the party's official political line²⁸ the unstable and unclear ideological context of the party made it possible for *ülküci*s to be strongly inspired by Nihal Atsız.

Taking into consideration the *ülküci* movement's tendency to be distinctive in Turkish politics, one can argue that Nihal Atsız's continual Turkist and even explicitly racist ideas, and his radical and strict discourse provided *ülküci*s the necessary ideational materials and symbols to develop a separate, distinctive, and a marginal identity²⁹. Atsız's continual clash with the state and central right politics, and his "criminal" and anti-systemic character³⁰ rendered Nihal Atsız an *ideal charismatic ülkücü*³¹ in the eyes of the supporters of Nationalist Action Party³² who had a continual tendency towards marginalism.

²⁵ Hugh Poulton, *Top Hat, Grey Wolf and Crescent* (London: Hurst and Company, 1997), p. 156

²⁶ Bora and Can, p. 65.

²⁷ For example both Necip Fazıl Kısakürek and Nihal Atsız could be a source of inspiration for *Ülkücüs*.

²⁸ For instance, the party, in the official level, always denied racism, which was feverishly defended by Nihal Atsız. After party's strengthening inclination towards Turk-Islam synthesis, the party leadership banned the circulation of Nihal Atsız's articles, journals and books within the organization. However, this could not prevent Atsız's world-view from oozing into *ülküci* movement.

²⁹ Bora and Can, p. 55.

³⁰ Because of having a pure racist and irredentist discourse and of using a very affronting language against his political opponents, Atsız was sued and charged many times in his life.

³¹ Orhangazi Ertekin, 'Cumhuriyet Döneminde Türkcülüğün Çatallanan Yolları' in Tanıl Bora and Murat Gültekinil eds. *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce: Milliyetçilik* Vol. 4 (İstanbul: İletişim, 2002) p. 345

³² For instance, Fethi Tevetoğlu, who was known as an *ülküci* intellectual, idealizes the life of Nihal Atsız in flowing sentences: "Dünyadaki Türk vatanının, tarihdeki Türk milletinin bölünmezliklerine inanmış ATSIIZ, 70

2) The Continual Presence of Turkist Elements in the *Ülkücü* Worldview

We mentioned that the *ülkücü* movement, in its history, has not been able to develop a consistent ideological framework that would be binding for all its supporters and we added that this situation made it possible for many different and even contradictory notions to ooze into the cognitive world of *ülküçüs*. However, the *ülkücü* movement always tended to harmonize these new elements with already existing Turkist elements in its ideological framework. Most of the time³³, the way of interpretation and internalization of these new elements were, in the last analysis, determined by Turkist components within the *ülkücü* ideology³⁴. For instance, the articulation of Islamic elements into *ülkücü* ideology is rationalized with the idea that Islam is commensurable with Turks' essential characteristics and their omnipresent monotheistic beliefs. From the *ülkücü* point of view, Islam was the best belief system that would help Turks to further increase and intensify their superior characteristics.³⁵ Therefore we can argue that Turkish nationalism and Turkism have always been prominent and decisive sentiments within the Nationalist Action Party³⁶. However, we should note that the forms and intensities of *ülküçüs*' Turkism have been subject to change according to socio-economic developments within Turkish society³⁷. Although the party leadership always declared that its interpretation of Turkism is not in the form a Turkish

yıllık ömrünü mahkemelerle hapisaneler arasında, Türk vatan ve milletini bölmek isteyenlere karşı mücadele ile, bir "Milli Çile Destanı" olarak geçirmişlerdir. Bütün varlığını Türkçülük mefkuresine adanmış, Türklük için yaşamış, Türklük için çile çekmiş, Türkçülük uğrunda savaşmış ve can vermiş ATSIZ'in şeref dolu hayatı, gerçek bir GAZA DESTANI'dır. (emphasis belongs to Tevetoğlu) (Fethi Tevetoğlu, 'Önsöz' in *Atsız'dan Adile Ayda'ya Mektuplar* (Ankara: Ayyıldız, 1988) p. 7.

³³ In some, but rare, cases Islamic elements might have become determining in the last instance.

³⁴ However, at this point, we should add that given the heterogeneous structure of the *ülkücü* movement, party's such an official understanding of the relationship between Turkishness and Islam was not completely adopted by all *ülkücü* cadres. Especially, in rural regions, Islamic tone could have been preponderant over Turkism. In addition, between 1980s and 1990s, *ülküçüs* explicitly took refuge to Islamic elements at the expense of Turkism and one can argue that in this period the former started to overshadow the latter. However, this temporary situation led to an identity crisis for the *ülkücü* movement as they got difficulty in differentiating themselves from political Islam. (Arıkan, pp. 44-45.)

³⁵ For such a functional understanding of religion in *ülkücü* worldview, see MHP İstanbul İl Gençlik Teşkilatı, *50. Yıla Doğru* (İstanbul: Yüksel, 1973) pp. 153-163.

³⁶ Emre Arslan 'Türkiye'de Irkçılık' eds. *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce: Milliyetçilik* Vol. 4 (İstanbul: İletişim, 2002) p. 423.

³⁷ Poulton, p. 153.

racism³⁸, one can realize that, most of the time, the Turkish nationalism of the Nationalist Action Party was carried to a level of Turkish racism in the *ülküçü* discourse and practice³⁹. In this sense, one can argue that the correspondence between Nihal Atsız's Turkism combined with an explicit racism⁴⁰ and *ülküçü* movement's continual Turkist and latent racist discourse created a convenient milieu for the former to be effective on the latter.

Without a doubt, the sentiment of the superiority of Turkish nation and of Turkish culture constituted the essence of *ülküçü* movement's Turkist outlook. *Ülkücüs*, as most of the Turkists do, have looked for the origin, sources and the purest forms of Turks' superior national and cultural characteristics in the pre-Islamic and allegedly Turkish originated societies or tribes in the Central Asia. They understood the Turkish history in a unified form starting with the ancient Central Asian Turkish nomads and extending towards current Turkish Republic⁴¹. The following remarks of Mehmet Doğan, who is one of the prominent figures of Nationalist Action Party very well summarizes such an understanding of Turkish history:

MHP'nin varoluşunu belirleyen ana ölçütleri, Türk Tarihi'nin gelişim sürecindeki 'öz' tavrılarda bulmamız mümkündür. Mete Han'ın davranışları, Çiçi Yabğu'nun başkaldırısındaki espri, Orkun Kitabeleri'ndeki refah ve bağımsızlık uyarıları, Oğuzlar'ın 9.yüzyıldan sonra 'bağımsızlık ve refah içinde yaşama endişesiyle' Batı'ya yönelmeleri, Selçuklu'nun yarattığı refah ve imarlı Anadolu, Osmanlı'nın gayretleri ve Cumhuriyet'in varoluş sebebi ve ilkeleri...⁴²

³⁸ Can, p. 667.

³⁹ Can, p. 684.

⁴⁰ Unlike the leadership of the Nationalist Action Party, Nihal Atsız never denied that he is a racist, as it can be understood from his following statement: "Netice olarak şunu söylüyorum. Türkçülük milliyetçiliktir. Irkçılık ve Turancılık da bunun şumulüne dahildir. Memleket ya bu iki tem üzerinde yükselecek ya da yıkılacaktır. Irkçılık ve Turancılık anayasaya aykırı değildir. (...) Irkçı ve Turancı olduğum için mahkum olursam bu mahkumluk hayatımın en büyük şerefini teşkil edecektir" (from nihal Atsız's defense in the "1944 Racism and *Pan-Turanism* Trial")

⁴¹ To see this, one can look the party's youth organization's program-like publication (MHP İstanbul İl Gençlik Teşkilatı, *50. Yıla Doğru* (İstanbul: Yüksel, 1973)

⁴² Mehmet Doğan, *Alparslan Türkeş ve Gölgedeki Adam* (Ankara: Ocak, 2002), p. 257.

According to this interpretation, the current Turkish society in Anatolia, as the latest of all Turkish civilizations in history, inevitably carry the essential superior characteristics of the Turkish nation as all previous Turkish societies did in history⁴³. The construction of these alleged essential superior characteristics of Turks was, most of the time, through the reinterpretation⁴⁴ of existing “scientific” and historical research over the pre-Islamic, Central Asian Turkish tribes or civilizations⁴⁵. It is possible to claim that the findings in Nihal Atsız’s own historical research, also, contributed *ülküçüs* in the process of the “exploration” and construction of Turks’ original superior characteristics. However, what was much more important than Nihal Atsız’s historical research was his effective embodying and elaboration of the so called original superior characteristics of the Turkish nation in his novels like *Bozkurtların Ölümü* and *Bozkurtların Dirilişi*. By operationalizing these essential Turkish characteristics within the fictive world of his novels, within which early Turkish figures presented their superiorities in their most extreme forms and already existing Turkish myths were reproduced in an exaggerated and mystical manner, Nihal Atsız undeniably ensured imaginability of the “original Turkish life style”⁴⁶ and of the superiority of Turkish nation, on the one hand and understandability, communicability and hence popularization of the Turkist sentiments, symbols and notions of the *ülküçü* movement, on the other. In his novels, *Bozkurtların Ölümü* and *Bozkurtların Dirilişi*, while literally describing the Turkish life style under Göktürk state and narrating the relationship between so called Turkish and Chinese originated societies in Central Asia, Atsız, in its most extreme and crudest form, reproduces the myth that all Turks, which were idealized in terms of their physical strength and military

⁴³MHP İstanbul İl Gençlik Teşkilatı, *50. Yıla Doğru* (İstanbul: Yüksel, 1973) p. 26.

⁴⁴ One can look at the party’s youth organization’s program-like publication (MHP İstanbul İl Gençlik Teşkilatı, *50. Yıla Doğru* (İstanbul: Yüksel, 1973)

⁴⁵ Günay Göksu Özdoğan, ‘Dünyada ve Türkiye’de Turancılık’ in Tanıl Bora and Murat Gültekingil eds. *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce: Milliyetçilik* Vol. 4 (İstanbul: İletişim, 2002) p. 402.

⁴⁶ Nihal Atsız’s following words are revealing such kind of a role of his literal works: “Vaktiyle, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi’nde çalıştığım yılların birinde, bir Doğu Türkistanlı beni ziyaret ederek Türkistanı group görmediğimi sormuştu. Tabii, görmedim diye cevap vermişim. O zaman: “Bozkurtlar’ı (implying the collection of Bozkurtların Ölümü and Bozkurtların Dirilişi, C.S) okudum. Bu romanı ancak orasını gören biri yazmış olabilir diye düşündüm” demişti. “Görmedim amma kalben ve hissen orada yaşadım” karşılığımı vermişim. (Nihal Atsız, ‘Adile Ayda’ya Mektuplar’, in *Atsız’dan Adile Ayda’ya Mektuplar* (Ankara: Ayyıldız, 1988), p. 75.

capability, are racially superior to Chinese people, who are physically and genetically unable to develop military capabilities and hence, desperately concentrated on the activities of settled life, which are considered much less valuable than a military and “barbaric” life style. The following passage from Atsız’s novels, in which almost all so called Turkish and Chinese individuals are described through same qualities, shows that Atsız reproduces the idea that Turkish nation and culture is superior to others, which was embedded in the *ülkücü* worldview

Çinli çerilere en kolay şeyleri öğretmek bile güç oluyordu. Çin kağanının özel çerisindeki Türklerle başı hoştı. Bunları ok atmasını, kılıç savurmasını ata binmesini zaten biliyorlardı. Hep birlikte saldırı borusu ile toplanış, birden yüzgeri ediş de onlar için su içmek gibiydi. Fakat on sekiz yaşına kadar eline pusat almamış, ata binmemiş Çinliler’den çeri yetiştirmek üzücü bir işti. Kavrayışları da yoktu. Çinliler çeri olmak için değil dokuma yapmak, yemiş yetiştirmek ve filozof olmak için yaratılmış yaribuçuk kişilerdi.⁴⁷

One can argue that Nihal Atsız’s literal elaboration of already existing Turkist sentiments and symbols transformed *ülkücüs’* Turkist sets of assumptions and knowledge about Turkish nation into “a belief system.”⁴⁸

In fact, when the party lacked a consistent ideology and a concrete political project, Turanism, which is the ideal of unifying the Turkic world under one political entity, has been the vital component of the party’s Turkism⁴⁹. Especially after the demise of real socialism and following the political independence of Turkic republics of the former Soviet Republic in 1990s, the *Turkist* and *Turanist* tone of the party became more prevailing⁵⁰. It is even possible to argue that the political project of *Turanism* was one of the most important inspirations for

⁴⁷ Nihal Atsız, *Bozkurtların Ölümü*, (İstanbul: Baysan, 1992), p. 412.

⁴⁸ I use the term “belief system” here in the context of Nevzat Kösoğlu’s following words. Nevzat Kösoğlu, who is a member of the central committee of Nationalist Action Party mentions the following ideas while he is explaining his views on Turkish nationalism : “The streams of thought can be influential on his supporters only if they are transformed into beliefs. Sole cognitive knowledge, even if they are valuable as a methodology, lacks the ability to provide energy and potential for confrontation. Only when it is escalated into a belief, the knowledge can have the power to push the person to act and change his attitudes. The greater the belief and potential of confrontation belief produced, the greater the enthusiasm in the life of a person or a society(…)(Nevzat Kösoğlu, ‘Türk Milliyetçiliği İdeolojisinin Doğuşu ve Özellikleri’ in Tanıl Bora and Murat Gültekingil eds. *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce: Milliyetçilik* Vol. 4 (İstanbul: İletişim, 2002) p. 208.

⁴⁹ Poulton, p. 147.

⁵⁰ Özdoğan, p. 402.

the mobilization of the *ülkücü* community⁵¹. At this point, Nihal Atsız's novels, *Bozkurtların Ölümü* and *Bozkurtların Dirilişi*, both of which strongly emphasized the necessity of the unification of Turks for being politically successful against Chinese Empires, reinforced the *ülküçüs'* political commitment of the unification or at least rapprochement of "Turkish world". In *Bozkurtların Ölümü*, one of the most significant factors leading to Chinese Empire's enslavement of Turks was the dissociation of Göktürks into two segments (*Doğu Kağanlığı* and *Batı Kağanlığı*) and the disconnectedness and antagonism between the Turkish tribes in the region. Following segments from Atsız's novels is explicitly through these lines:

Eskiden Türkelinde tek kağan varken budunun boğazı tok, sırtı pek, yağı azdı. El ikiye bölününce ilk iş olarak birbirlerine yan bakmaya başladılar.⁵²
Buyruk Senindir Tegin! Batı Elinde doğdum ama dirliğimin çoğu doğuda geçti. Doğulu da sayılıırım. Zaten benim için Türkün doğulusu, batılısı olmaz. Türkleri doğulu, batılı diye ayırmak kağanların teginlerin işidir.⁵³

In 1990s, *ülküçüs* envisioned the social life in newly independent Turkic republics through the lenses of their historically constructed knowledge, myths and symbols about pre-Islamic social life in Central Asia, as if the social life in Central Asia never underwent a transformation until the "Ergenekon" case⁵⁴. Given the reality that the social life, culture and language in Turkey are so different from those of new Turkic Republics in Central Asia, these imagined symbols and myths⁵⁵ remained to be the only channel through which *ülküçüs* could develop an emotional link with newly independent Turkic societies. At this point, the role of

⁵¹ Yanardağ, p. 23.

⁵² Nihal Atsız, *Bozkurtların Ölümü*, (Istanbul: Baysan, 1992), p.73

⁵³ Ibid, p. 213.

⁵⁴ Özdoğan, p. 404.

⁵⁵ For instance, Kürşad, who allegedly attempted a revolution against the Chinese enslavement of Göktürks, was a symbolized figure in *ülkücü* movement and it is undeniable that Atsız's mythical elaboration of Kürşad's life in *Bozkurtların Ölümü* and *Bozkurtların Dirilişi* was one of the most important factor behind such a symbolization. The same thing can be mentioned for the symbol of Tanrı Dağı as it can be seen from the following passage. "Bir eliyle tuğu yükseltirken, öteki eliyle dumanlı alana bir işaret yaparak "kalkın" diye haykırdı. Kırk şehit birden kalktılar. Kürşad eliyle ileride bir yeri gösterdi. "Oraya" diye gürledi. Gösterdiği yer Tanrı Dağı idi. Tepesinde ataların ruhları dolaşıyordu. Kırk bir şehidin ruhu bir fırtına gibi, bir musiki gibi, bir ışık gibi akarak Tanrı Dağı'na doğru yürümeye başladılar." (Atsız, *Bozkurtların Ölümü*, p. 470)

The symbol of greywolf (*bozkurt*) one of the most well-known and common symbol of *ülkücü* movement is reinforced and reproduced by Nihal Atsız's identifying the Goktürk soldiers with the name *bozkurts*

Nihal Atsız's stories and novels are so important in terms of containing these symbols and myths, which would help *ülkücüs* to "imagine" the social life in the Central Asia and to develop an emotional affiliation with it. In fact, the language used by Atsız, which contained the idioms, names⁵⁶ and words specific to pre-Islamic Turkish life style,⁵⁷ became very effective in making *ülkücüs* realize the distinctiveness of Turkishness. His descriptions of the Central Asian plateaus and of the social life of Turkish horse nomads in positive terms reinforced *ülkücüs'* romanticist idealization of the original pre-Islamic Turkish life in the Central Asia on the one hand, and of the newly independent Turkic Republics of the Soviet Union, which were believed to continue to carry these original characteristics, on the other. The following passages from Atsız's novels provided significant inputs for the *ülkücüs'* imagination of the Turkic social life in Central Asia:

Güz gelmişti. Türk ellerinin yaman güzü Çin beği Şen-king'i bayağı sayrı etmişti. Bu Türk ülkesini hem beğeniyor hem de yadırgıyordu. Burada açık ve temiz bir hava, insanı sağlamaştırıran kırmızı ve gülbüz, sağlam kızlar olduğu için Türk ellerini seviyordu. Fakat güneşinin keskin, soğunun sert, kişilerinin çetin ve kızlarının sarp olmasını hiç beğenmiyordu.⁵⁸

Yazın ilk günlerinden bir gündü. Birden Yamtar'ın içi sızladı. Ah Ötüken ah!...Şimdi Türkelinde olsaydı yeşil yamaçlarda, sonsuz bozkırda nasıl at koşturur, dağlarda nasıl geyik avlardı. Bu Siganfu şehrinde ise tıpkı Çinliler gibi boğucu sokaklarda salına salına yürümekten, uyuşuk uyuşuk gezmekten başka bir şey yaptığı yoktu⁵⁹.

In short, the continual existence of the ideas of Turkism and *Turanism* in the ideology of the Nationalist Action Party rendered the *ülkücüs* receptive of Turkist symbols, myths and descriptions in Nihal Atsız's novels. Especially after 1990s, with the independence of the Turkic Republics of the former Soviet Union, the Turkist elements in Atsız's works helped *ülkücüs* to establish an emotional attachment with the Turks of the Central Asia. Therefore,

⁵⁶ In pp 435 and 435 of *Bozkurtların Ölümü* the long list of the names of the Turkish soldiers, which seems irrelevant at the first glance, in its essence carry a considerable potential for having a motivating influence over the *ülküçü* movement.

⁵⁷ Frequency in the usage of idioms like "Albız Alsin", "Gök girsin, kızıl çıksın" etc. enriched *ülküçüs'* cognitive world while imagining the social life of "original" Turks or that of recent Turkic republics in Central Asia.

⁵⁸ Atsız, *Bozkurtların Ölümü*, p. 61.

⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 391.

Nationalist Action Party's inclination to show an "official" respect to Atsız after 1990s⁶⁰ is not a simple coincidence.

3) THE STATE FETISHISM OF THE ÜLKÜCÜ COMMUNITY AND THE NOTION OF STATE IN NİHAL ATSIZ

The *ülkücü* movement, in his history, has always had a tendency to declare that their essential political commitment is the protection, maintenance and vivification of the Turkish state⁶¹. For *ülküçüs*, state is a sacred and omnipotent entity to which all Turks should respect and show their loyalty⁶². However, this should not be confused with their conceptualization of the notion of government. *Ülkücü* movement distinguishes the state from government, as the former is an eternal, perfect and continual entity, while the latter corresponds to persons or groups who are in the position of running the state. In this sense, as a worldly political body, the government might be temporary and even corrupt, while the state, as a spiritual and sacred entity, always has an unquestionable moral value in the eyes of *ülküçüs*. In this sense, if there is an infirmity in the operation of political affairs, this is because of not the nature of state structure but of the corrupt or faulty policies of government offices. Therefore whatever the conditions are one should abstain from reacting against the state and from seeing it responsible for any negative political development. Such an ambiguous formulation, which is amenable to unintended misinterpretations, constituted a crisis dynamics within the *ülkücü* movement, given that in some historical moments *ülkücü* activities directly came face to face with the constitution of state and even with the state security forces. 1980 coup, after which *ülküçüs* were officially accused of threatening and violating the maintenance and security of the state, marked a crisis of legitimacy for the *ülkücü* movement⁶³, who, until that moment of

⁶⁰ Ertekin, p. 385.

⁶¹ Bora and Can, p. 130.

⁶² Ahmet Şafak, the vice president of İstanbul organization of Nationalist Action Party states that "Devlet-i ebed müddet fikri çağları aşan bir geleneğin adı olmuştur. Devlet: dinin, diyanetin, milletin hamisi ve hadimidir. Onsuz il ve kağan olmaz. Kağanın olmadığı yerde bereket yoktur. Devlet bereketi arttırıcı, a dil paylaşımı sağlayıcıdır. Devlet kısaca "Baba" dır." Ahmet Şafak, *Yükselen Milliyetçilik ve Liberal İhanet* (İstanbul: Kamer, 1994), p. 13.

⁶³ Ibid, p. 95.

history, had justified its policies and activities with the idea and sentiment that it is struggling for the protection of the state. However, even after this development, the *ülküci* movement did abstain from reacting against state and from leaving its state-fetishist discourse⁶⁴.

The permanent and unquestionable obedience to the state was one of the themes that constituted the backbone of Nihal Atsız's novels. Especially in *Bozkurtlar Diriliyor*, in Kürşad's son Urungu's loyalty to the state authority, although he has a legitimate right to claim for the position of Khan, and in *Deli Kurt*, as a novel in the context of 15th century Ottoman society, in İsa Çelebi's (an Ottoman prince) son Murad's satisfaction with modest positions in the Ottoman army, one can see the embedded ethical message that under any condition, state's security concerns are preponderant over individual ambitions. One can see this theme in the following dialogue between Urungu and his mother in *Bozkurtlar Diriliyor*:

-Urungu! Bozkurt soyunun yüce bir oğlusun. Çünkü Kür Şad'ın oğlusun. Bununla övünmek hakkındır. Ben de KürŞad'ın konçuyu olduğum için bütün ömrümce övündüm. Fakat bunu açığa vurmam. Kağan olmak hakkı iken baban bu haktan vazgeçerek vuruştun. Sen de babana yaraşır oğul olmak istiyorsan Bozkurt soyundan olduğun kimseye söylemeden yaşa. Kurtbaşı gönder Ötüken'e dikilinceye kadar vuruş. Bir teğın olarak değil. Urungu olarak kal!

(...)

- Niçin ana?

- Çünkü en güçlü, en iyi insan hakkından vazgeçen insandır. En büyük kahramanlık da hiçbir karşılık beklemeden yapılandır.⁶⁵

Such a latent parallelism between *ülküci* movement's fetishist perception of the state and Nihal Atsız's emphasis on the utmost importance of state security is the another element that prepared the context for Nihal Atsız's continual influence over *ülküci* community.

⁶⁴ Muhsin Yazıcıoğlu's following remarks about the post-1980 atmosphere very well summarizes this situation: "Kötü muamele, zulüm, işkence insanlık dışı bir boyut kazanmıştı. Sol örgütler 'gelin eylem birliği yapalım önce idareye karşı mücadele edelim, aramızdaki mücadeleyi sonar yapalım' diyorlardı. Avrupa insane hakları komiteleri geliyorlardı. Sol örgüt üyeleri 'işkence var' diyor, bizimkiler 'Türk devleti işkence yapmaz, bunlar münferit' diyorlardı. Halbuki C5'te sistemli işkence görmüştük, cezaevinde Güney Amerika usulü yöntemlerle sistemli işkence yapılıyordu. Peki bu gerçeği neden yabancı heyetlere söylemiyorduk. Evet, kendi devletimizi yabancılara şikayeti içimize sindiremiyorduk; bir milliyetçi kendi devletini yabancıya şikayet edemezdi." (Muhsin Yazıcıoğlu, "Maziye Bir Bakış" in Mehmet Doğan, *Alparslan Türkeş ve Gölgedeki Adam* (Ankara: Ocak, 2002), p. 215.

⁶⁵ Nihal Atsız, *Bozkurtlar Diriliyor*, (İstanbul: Baysan, 1992), pp. 16-17.

4) ÜLKÜCÜ MOVEMENT'S CONTINUAL TENDENCY TO CREATE ENEMIES AND NİHAL ATSIZ

The formation or reinforcement of group identity and of the sentiment of we-ness through antagonizing and otherizing external groups is one of the common characteristics of nationalist movements. As a radical nationalist movement, the Nationalist Movement Party, throughout its history, tended to politically position itself *vis a vis* certain political or ethnic “enemies⁶⁶”. Needless to say, combined with the *ülkücü* community’s inclination to identify itself with the state security, these external enemies has become those social and political groups, which, in the eyes of *ülkücü* community, carried the potential of violating the security of the state and of Turkish nation⁶⁷.

Between 1960s and 1980s, the reaction to and confrontation with Turkish left, which was considered the most dangerous threat to the “security of nation and state”, was a *raison d’etre* for the *ülkücü* movement, *par excellence*⁶⁸. Anti- communism, in this period, was the major source of legitimization⁶⁹ and almost only motive for mobilization⁷⁰ and popularization for the *ülkücü* movement. As the party combined its anti-communism with an anti- Russian sentiment, with the idea that the underlying intention behind the communist ideology is the Russian expansion, *ülkücüs* did not perceive their anti-communist stance as a separate agenda from Turkism and *Turanism*.

Nihal Atsız, at this point, with his elaboration of anti-communism within an anti-Russian and a Turkist framework⁷¹, provided symbolic inputs and motivating elements for the

⁶⁶ Arıkan, p. 60.

⁶⁷ The following sentences from the Nationalist Action Party’s propaganda text for 1977 elections are in this line of thought: “KOMUNİZM, okullarımızda, sokaklarımızda, meydanlarımızda kol gezmektedir. Artık meydanlarımızda şanlı ay yıldızlı bayrağımızı unutup Kızıl Bayrak çekenler görülmektedir. Lenin, Stalin ve Mao gibi kızıl, kanlı diktatörlüğün resimleri dolaşiyor. Yolunu sapıtanlar, duvarlarımıza “tek yol devrim” diye yazıyorlar! Bu kızıl diktatörlere bağlananların “tek yol devrim” diyenlerin kızıl bayrak çekenlerin amacı nedir? Bunlar sana ne yapmak istiyorlar? Bunların gizli ve açık planları nelerdir? (...) Komünizm devletimizi yıkmak, vatanımızı bölmek için içimize nifak ve kin tohumları saçmaktadır. (

⁶⁸ Ömer Laçiner’s ‘Preface’ in Tanıl Bora and Kemal Can, *Devlet Ocak Dergah*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 1991), pp. 7-8

⁶⁹ Bora and Can, p. 46.

⁷⁰ Çalık, p. 117.

⁷¹ Ertekin, p. 373.

ülkücü movement.⁷² The following remarks of Nihal Atsız indicates that, like *ülküçüs*, he does not separate his anti-communism from an anti-Russian sentiment:

Komunizm, ruh ve seciye bakımından soysuzlaşmış binlerce casusu bulunan bir Moskof emperyalizmidir. Hırslarına sınır bulunmayan; Akdenize, Atlasa, Hint Okyanusuna çıkmak isteyen; bütün dünyayı elde etmek hülyası ardında koşan kaba ve Moskofa yakışan bir emperyalizm... Bütün bu doymak bilmez hırsın dayanağı da düşyaya ictimai adalet götürmek efsanesi..⁷³

In his articles, Atsız did not hesitate to grant an explicit support and encouragement for anti-communist mobilization of the *ülkücü* movement. The classical Turkist symbols, especially the Bozkurt figure, that he used to praise *ülkücü* anti-communism was in turn reproduced within the *ülkücü* discourse

Türkiye'de faşist, şu veya bu değil, Türkçü gençler vardır. Bunlar göğüslerine millî alâmet olan Bozkurtlu rozet takarlar ve kendilerine Bozkurt derler. Komünistlerin gemi azıya aldığı yıllarda Adalet Partisi, kasdî mi olduğu hâlâ anlaşılmayan bir acz içinde olaylara seyirci kalırken millî duyguyu ve hattâ devleti bilek gücü ile savunanlar, düşmanları tarafından komando diye adlandırılan bu Bozkurtlardı.⁷⁴

The disappearance of radical Turkish left from political scene, as a result of the strict pressures of the 1980 coup regime, marked the beginning of an identity and legitimacy crisis for *ülküçüs* throughout 1980s. However, after 1990s, when state's perception of present threat shifted from "the communist expansion" to the rise of Political Islam and of the Kurdish separatist movement, the *ülkücü* community turned towards developing an anti- Kurdish and anti-

⁷² The following words of Namık Kemal Zeybek, one of the prominent members of Nationalist Action Party before 1980, shows that the reaction to socialist movements considerably influenced the institutionalization of *ülkücü* movement and Nihal Atsız's ideas and symbols were very important in the development of this process: "MHP Gençlik kollarında etkinliklerimiz sürerken Parti ile doğrudan ilişkisi olmayan bir kuruluşa da gerek olduğu ortaya çıktı. Sosyalist gençlerin fakültelerde kurdukları Fikir Kulüpleri ve Federasyonları vardı. Milliyetçi Türk Gençlik Teşkilatı'nın Cebeci'deki merkezinde yaptığımız bir toplantıda Ülkü Ocakları'nı kurmağa karar verdik. Ülkü sözü Atsız'ın Türk Ülküsü adlı kitabından ve dokuz ışığın ilkelerinden birisi olan Ülkücülükten yakınlık duyduğumuz bir sözdü." Namık Kemal Zeybek, "MHP'de..", in Mehmet Doğan, *Alparslan Türkeş ve Gölgedeki Adam* (Ankara: Ocak, 2002), p. 208.

⁷³ Nihal Atsız, *Makaleler III* (İstanbul: Baysan, 1992), p. 301.

⁷⁴ Ibid, p. 74.

Islamist stance. However, given the presence of Islamic elements in the *ülküci* ideology and considering the sensitivity of *ülküci*s towards Islam, one can argue that *ülküci*s' already existing but increasing reaction to Kurdish separatism has become much sharper *vis a vis* its reaction to political Islam.

Despite such a sharp attitude towards Kurdish movement, one can still encounter certain inconsistencies in the *ülküci* anti-Kurdish discourse. While the majority of the *ülküci* community continued to adopt the party's official stance of denying the existence of any separate Kurdish ethnic identity in Anatolia, which was an assimilative approach⁷⁵, small, but a rapidly growing group of *ülküci* recognized the Kurdishness in Anatolia but developed a racist and antagonistic attitude towards it⁷⁶. The latter stance towards Kurds was the one that was insistently defended by Nihal Atsız, as he, always, considered Kurds, an internal enemy of the Turkish state.

When, within the *ülküci* movement, there always exist a contradiction between the assimilative official discourse, on the one hand, and increasingly popularizing racist discourse, on the other, there appeared an appropriate context for outside-party approaches to ooze into the *ülküci* movement, especially for those who adopted a racist anti-Kurdishness. In this sense, although his explicit racist approach to the Kurdish issue does not resonate within the official *ülküci* understanding of Kurdish question, it carried the potential of having a reflection on popular *ülküci* anti-Kurdishness, which began to intensify especially after the rise of Kurdish moment in 1990s and especially in ethnically stratified rural contexts. The following remarks of Nihal Atsız on Kurds were supportive of the rise of the Turkist slogans like "Love

⁷⁵ This approach is uttered by Alparslan Türkeş in following sentences: "Bugün Anadolu'muzun doğusunda yaşayan ve Kürtçe denen sun'i, sonradan meydana gelmiş bir dille konuşan bu insanlarımız eğer ayrı bir soy, ayrı bir millet olsaydı o zaman bölge insanların Türk'ü temsil edecek, idare edecek kademelere gelmemeleri için mücadele ederdik. Şiddetle karşı çıkardık. Devletimizin, milletimizin geleceği için, Türk'ün gururu, haysiyeti için bu mücadeleyi verirdik. Niçin yapmadık? Çünkü bu insanlarımız su katılmadık Türk'tür. Her Türk gibi kaymakam, vali, bakan ve hatta Cumhurbaşkanı olma hakları vardır." (Excerpt taken by Tanıl Bora, 'Alparslan Türkeş' in Tanıl Bora and Murat Gültekinil eds. *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce: Milliyetçilik* Vol. 4 (İstanbul: İletişim, 2002), p. 687. For the employment of the same discourse see MHP İstanbul İl Gençlik Teşkilatı, *50. Yıla Doğru* (İstanbul: Yüksel, 1973), p. 58.

⁷⁶ Can, p. 672.

or leave (*Ya Sev Ya Terket*)” and “If you are a Turk, Praise with it! If not, Obey to Turk”

(*Türkseniz İftihar Ediniz, Değilseniz İtaat Bekleriz*) among *ülküçüs* after 1990s⁷⁷:

Yani Türk Devleti şimdiye kadar bunlaro kendisinden ayrı tutmamış, onlara her makamı vermiştir. Fakat ayrı Kürt devleti kurmak gayesi ile bir takım davranışları olan üniversiteli kürtlerin çoğalmasından sonra devlet şüphesiz kürt asıllılara karşı daha uyanık olacak, bunları kritik noktalara getirmeyecektir. Kürtler mevcut nisbetteki akıllarını başlarına devşirmeyerek yabancı kışkırtılara oyuncak olmakta devam ve Kürt devleti hayali ardında koşarlarsa nasipleri yeryüzünden kazanmak olacaktır. Türk ırkı oluk gibi kanı ve sayısız emeği pahasına yurt edindiği Türkiye'ye göz dikenleri ne yapabileceğini göstermiş, 1915'de Ermenileri, 1922'de Rumları bu ülkede yok etmiştir⁷⁸.

(...) yüzde yüz çoğunlukta olsalar bile Türkiye'nin herhangi bir bölgesinde devlet kurma hayalleri hayal olarak kalacaktır. (...) onun için Türk milletinin başını belaya sokmadan kendileri de yok olmadan çekip gitsinler. Nereye mi? Gözleri nereyi görürü, gönülleri nereyi çekerse oraya gitsinler. (...) Türk ırkının aşırı sabırlı olduğunu fakat ayranı kabardığı zaman “Kağan Arslan” gibi önünde durulmadığını ırkdaşları Ermeniler'e sorarak öğrensınler de akılları başlarına gelsin⁷⁹.

In short, anti- communist (between 1960-1980) and anti-Kurdish sentiments (after 1990s) in the *ülküçü* worldview as the aspects of *ülküçüs*' continual tendency to build their political stance on the basis of the confrontation with a political or an ethnic enemy, were ideologically supported by Nihal Atsız's permanent anti-communism and anti-Kurdishness.

5) MILITARISM AND VIOLENCE IN THE ÜLKÜCÜ WORLDVIEW AND NİHAL ATSIZ

The idea that warfare is an inherent cultural and even a racial tendency of Turkish nation and that having superior military capability is one of the quintessential and defining characteristic of Turkish identity has always been an officially supported, long-standing element of almost all variants of Turkish nationalism⁸⁰. The praise for and legitimacy of militarism, was

⁷⁷ Can, pp. 670-671.

⁷⁸ Atsız, *Makalalar III*, p. 382.

⁷⁹ Ibid, p. 386.

⁸⁰ Ayşe Gül Altınay and Tanıl Bora “Ordu, Militarizm ve Milliyetçilik” in Tanıl Bora and Murat Gültekingil eds. *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce: Milliyetçilik* Vol. 4 (İstanbul: İletişim, 2002), pp. 142-154.

also an integral part of the *ülküci* nationalism⁸¹. *Ülkücüs*, in all occasions, recognized and reproduced the proposition that Turks are army-nations and that their inherent military capabilities render them superior to other nations⁸². When Nihal Atsız, in *Bozkurtların Ölümü* and *Bozkurtların Dirilişi*, describes *Göktürks* as if they were in the constant state of war, he provides a literal support for the thesis that militarism and warfare have been the inherent characteristics of Turkish nation and that this inherent quality makes them superior to other surrounding cultures and civilization. In this mentality, what determines the victorious nation, in the last instance, is the level of military capability.

More importantly, his presentation of this “militaristic spirit” in an exaggerated, mystical and heroic manner facilitated *ülküci*’ internalization of the belief that Turks have always had superior military capabilities. As it can be seen from following passages, in his novels, Atsız’s constant glorification of militarism, warfare and physical strength and his under-rating the value of science, philosophy and culture had the potential to inspire *ülküci*, who adopted the longstanding, official nationalist assumption that Turks were inherently militaristic.

Yamtar, başını kaldırdı:

- Biliyor musun şu acunda çok salak kişiler var, dedi.
- Nerden bildin
- Suğdaklarla konuştum da anladım.
- Suğdaklar sana ne dediler
- Yeryüzünde en tatlı işin alış veriş yapıp akça kazanmak olduğunu söylediler.

(...)

⁸¹ Look MHP İstanbul İl Gençlik Teşkilatı, *50. Yıla Doğru* (İstanbul: Yüksel, 1973), pp. 26-28.

⁸² For instance, Nationalist Action Party’s program-like publication in 1973 starts with the following words of Ahmet Hikmet Müftüoğlu “Bu sağlam vücut yalnız asker elbisesi giymek, bu sert pençeler yalnız silah kullanmak, bu kalın ses yalnız kumanda vermek için yaratılmıştır. (...) Sen gürbüz ninenin, gürbüz ve temiz sütünü emerken azamet-I nefes, sebat ve tahammül, itaat ve tahakküm gibi amir olmak için yaratılmış bir cinsin faziletlerine malik olmuştun. Bu hakimiyet esaslarını başka milletler mekeblerde, medreselerde anlarlar. (...) Ey Türk! Cihanın tarihi vatanı uğruna senin kadar uğraşan, kanını döken bir millet daha gösteremez. Senin kadar kimse kendi vatanına sahip olmağa hak kazanamamıştır.” (MHP İstanbul İl Gençlik Teşkilatı, *50. Yıla Doğru* (İstanbul: Yüksel, 1973, p. 19)

- Hay salak kötü kişiler hay! Demek savaşın tadını almamışlar. Öküze kıımız versen tadını alır mı? Bunlar da öyle⁸³

In the proceeding parts of *Bozkurtların Ölümü*, while describing the “reawakening and deillumination” process of a Turkish soldier Yamtar, who attempts to learn philosophy with the “deception” of a Chinese philosopher, Nihal Atsız uses the following words:

Açlığın verdiği mecburiyetle filozof olmuş, fakat felsefe onu bir türlü doyuramamıştı. Şimdi iyice doyduktan sonra felsefeye, bilime dalmakta ne zoru vardı. Kişi oğlu savaşmak için doğar, savaşacak gücü bulmak için yemek yerdi. Yamtar felsefeye doyacağını sanmakla aldanmış, uzun denemelere rağmen açlığını giderememişti.⁸⁴

However, we should note here that more importantly, the militaristic outlook in the *ülküçü* movement have not remained within the limits of ideas and discourse but have resonated within many practices, policies and even organizational structure of the *ülküçü* community. Especially between 1960s and 1980s, when the socialist left was relatively influential in Turkish politics, militaristic style of organization through the establishment of certain paramilitary institutional extensions, on the one hand and the management of the organized violence against communist political forces, on the other, was some of the most striking characteristics of the *ülküçü* movement. *Ülkücüs* attempted to legitimize their use of violence and establishment of a militaristic party organization by adopting the reasoning that present government and military forces underestimated or were unaware of the seriousness of the threats that the internal collaborators of the Russian-oriented communism posed and hence it was the duty of the *ülküçü* movement to get rid of the communist threat in Turkey⁸⁵. For *ülküçüs*, the situation

⁸³ Atsız, *Bozkurtların Ölümü*, pp. 134-135.

⁸⁴ Ibid, p. 405.

⁸⁵ Alparslan Türkeş in his Adana meeting in 1969 defends and legitimates the *ülküçü* violence in his following sentences: “Komunistlerin bazılarının dövüldüğü, köksüz fikirlerin daha üstün milli fikirler tarafından baskıya alındığı doğrudur. Fakat kimler dövülmüştür? Türk milletini köleleştirmek isteyenlerin aleti olanlar, Türk’ün Allahına sövenler, tarihiyle alay etmeye yeltenenler dövülmüştür. Gençlerimizin meşru savunma haklarını kullanmaktan ibaret kalan davranışlarına asla gölge düşürülemez.” Excerpt taken by Tanıl Bora, ‘Alparslan Türkeş’ in Tanıl Bora and Murat Gültekingil eds. *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce: Milliyetçilik* Vol. 4

was so serious that unless there occurred a militaristic and violence-oriented *ülkücü* reaction to communist forces between 1960s and 1980s, the Turkish state and nation could have vanished⁸⁶.

Similar to the way through which *ülküçüs* legitimized their the use of violence against socialists, Atsız, in his novels, legitimizes the military attacks to China with the idea that when there is constant possibility of starvation for Turkish nomads, it was necessary and inevitable to use violence for being able to protect Turkish race and to maintain the Turkish state. The underlying common idea in *ülküçüs*' and Atsız's legitimization of the use of violence is that Turks use their inherently superior military capabilities for only just reasons, in the form of a self-defense and when it is necessary. As it can be seen from following passages, in Atsız's novels, there were only two alternatives for Turkish horse nomads in Central Asian plateaus: to die or to attack.

Açlık ve kıtlıkla kırılmış, azalmış arıklamış olmalarına rağmen eldeki bütün kuvvetlerini toplayarak Çin'le çarpışarlarsa doyacıklarına, başka çıkar yol olmadığına inanıyorlardı⁸⁷

Burada bekleyip açlıktan ölecek miyiz? Yoksa yaşamak için akın ve çapul mu yapacağız⁸⁸.

In short, as *ülküçüs* have the tendency to praise militaristic values and violence and that they considered their violence-oriented political practice legitimate especially before 1980s, the presence of militarism and of justification of offense in Atsız's novels provided rich materials for the formation of the *ülküçüs*' cognitive world.

(İstanbul: İletişim, 2002), p. 690.

⁸⁶ A prominent *ülküçü*, Mehmet Doğan states in his book that “eğer 1980 öncesinde MHP'nin *ülküçü* gençliğin mücadelesi olmasaydı, herkes uykudan uyanana kadar Türkiye kalası düşerdi. İşte o zaman Ruslar ortadoğuya, Akdeniz'e hakim olur, ortadoğunun zengin kaynaklarına sahip olan Kominist Rusya yıkılmazdı, bu gün tarih sahnesine çıkan 5 Türk cumhuriyeti de olmazdı” (Gramatical mistakes owe to Mehmet Doğan) (Mehmet Doğan, *Alparslan Türkeş ve Gölgedeki Adam* (Ankara: Ocak, 2002), p. 151)

⁸⁷ Ibid, p. 329.

⁸⁸Ibid, p. 331.

6) CULT OF LEADERSHIP IN THE ÜLKÜCÜ MOVEMENT AND NİHAL ATSIZ

Although, as we mentioned at the beginning, the *ülkücü* movement could not have managed to form a consistent ideological framework and political outlook throughout its history, there did not emerge strong centrifugal tendencies within the movement that would shake the authority of the movement's leadership. On the contrary, one can argue that the lack of ideological consistency, itself, has created the need for a strong leadership whose authority and wisdom would be unquestionable. This is because of the fact that a strong and collectively respected leader could have both created a sense of togetherness among *ülküçüs* and ensured the full bindingness and confidentiality of the party decisions. Therefore, respect to and compliance with the leader has always been one of the main components of the *ülkücü* culture.⁸⁹ When Alparslan Türkeş was alive, his authority was almost complete and his respectability was unquestionable in the party⁹⁰. His death created a short-term power vacuum, but Devlet Bahçeli, even if he was not as respected and prestigious as Türkeş, filled this vacuum by prolonging the cult of leadership in the *ülkücü* movement. This situation was legitimized through the idea that the obedience to the leadership was an essential and inseparable part of Turkish custom and traditions⁹¹ and hence any disrespectful behavior towards the leadership would mean the violation of the Turkish tradition itself.

The necessity to keep the obedience to the leader in every condition was one of the themes that was widely elaborated in Nihal Atsız's novels, stories and articles⁹². Nihal Atsız's idealized Turkish heroes in his novels *Bozkurtların Ölümü*, *Bozkurtların Dirilişi* and *Deli Kurt* never attempt to disobey the rules and commandments of their leaders even if they do not agree to some political decisions of their leaders and also they never challenge the authority of their Khan even if they believe that the leadership has certain political weaknesses and is in

⁸⁹ Arıkan, p. 43 and Çakır, p. 13.

⁹⁰ Bora and Can, p. 64.

⁹¹ Can, p. 683.

⁹² Bakırezer, p. 356.

corruption⁹³. For instance, in *Bozkurtların Ölümü*, although almost all soldiers are aware of the fact that their leader, Kara Kagan's marriage with İcing Katun, who is a Chinese woman, and also former wife and murderer of previous leader Çuluk Kağan, is a politically wrong and morally erroneous behavior, they never attempt to interfere with or object to their Khan's such a decision⁹⁴. When İcing Katun's increasing intrigues drag the Göktürk country into a political turmoil, Khan's subjects keep their respect and obedience to the Khan, as it can be seen from following passages:

“- Uluğ Tarkan! Beni artık kağanmışım gibi selamlama! Bir tutsağa saygı gösterilmez, dedi
Koca Tarkan, kırışmış yüzün ortasında hala sert bakan gözlerini yer dikti:
- Zamanı Tanı yaratmış, kişi oğullarını onun içine pusatsız atmıştır. Kılıç, kargı, ok... Bunlar ancak kişi oğullarına karşı işe yarar. Tanrı bize ölüm verdiyse, Türk budununu kutsuz kıldıysa, bunu gidermek için çalışalım. Tusak da olsan sen yine Göktürk kağanısın⁹⁵.”

Ülkücü movement's continuous strategy of legitimizing the intra-community authoritarianism and cult of leadership with the idea that obedience to the leader's decisions and commandments has been the constant aspects of Turkish customs and traditions has made *ülcücüs* take inspiration from Atsız's elaboration and the praise of the presence of the cult of leadership in early Turks.

7) MORALITY AND MORALISM IN THE ÜLKÜCÜ MOVEMENT AND NİHAL ATSIZ

While introducing the general characteristics of the *ülcücü* movement at the beginning of this paper, I mentioned that the Nationalist Action Party drew most of his supporters from especially small capital holders and peasants in Anatolia, who were concerned with the eco-

⁹³ The frequent expression of the sentence “Buyruk Senindir Kağan!” (Command Acknowledged, Khan!) in Atsız's *Bozkurtların Ölümü* and *Bozkurtların Dirilişi* seems to be designed to increase the effectiveness of the message that the obedience to the leader was a significant part of Turkish culture.

⁹⁴ In fact, even if Turkish soldiers hate İcing Katun, they do not hesitate to respect her, because she is the wife or beloved one of their Khan. In one of the campaigns towards China, Turkish soldiers, interestingly cries like “For Ötüken, For Kara Khan, For İcing Katun, For Şenking!” “Onlar da Çinlileri ikiye bölen vuruşlarını Ötüken Aşkına, Kara Kağan Aşkına, İcing Katun Aşkına, Şen King Aşkına diye bağırarak yapıyorlar, bir yandan da güneş görmüş kar gibi eriyorlardı.” (Atsız, *Bozkurtların Ölümü*, p. 327.)

⁹⁵ Atsız, *Bozkurtların Ölümü*, p. 360.

conomic and social transformation that Turkish society has undergone with the development of capitalism in Turkey. As the urban culture of big cities started to penetrate into the rural areas of Anatolia, with the development of communication facilities; and as the transformation of the Turkish economy through capitalist lines threatened the traditional interests of local bourgeois groups in rural regions, there emerged a reaction to existing large-scale social and economic change⁹⁶. This reaction, most of the time, carried a religious tone and uttered the concerns of “degeneration” and “alienation” of social life⁹⁷. The *ülküci* movement especially in 1960s and 1970s⁹⁸, by developing extremely populist discourses, attempted to take advantage of the rise of this kind of concerns and sentiments by integrating them with the movement’s constant Turkism and anti-communism. By exhibiting the rapid social changes in Turkish social culture as the moral degeneration of the original Turkish culture and by presenting the Turkist solution of “return to essence”(öze dönüş) against the threat of degeneration, they, in a Turkish nationalist line, succeeded to politicize and mobilize those people in Turkist and nationalist lines. Moreover, by declaring the rise of communism and of “leftist culture” as responsible for the “moral degeneration” of “pure” Anatolian Turkish lifestyle, they managed to consummate those reactions under the banner of anti-communism.⁹⁹

The moralism, which was in the form of a strong reaction to the rise of some cosmopolitan aspects of urban culture, and to the external cultural influences over Turkish society was one of the most directly presented themes in Atsız’s writings. As he has a strict model of Turkishness in his mind, he perceived any deviation from this model as an indication of degeneration and alienation.¹⁰⁰ The following poem, called *Topal Asker*, shows the harshness and the sense of resentment in Atsız’s moralism, which was incorporated into an anti-elitism:

⁹⁶ Bora and Can, p. 69.

⁹⁷ Can, p. 665.

⁹⁸ Yanardağ, p. 17.

⁹⁹ Çalık, p. 117.

¹⁰⁰ Bakirezer, p. 356.

Sen Şişli'de danserken her gece , gündüz
Biz ötede ne ovalar ,çaylar,ne dümdüz
Yaylaları geçtik,karlı dağları aştık;
Siz salonda dansederken bizler savaştık.

(...)

Güya sizin mezenizdi ! Yiyip içtiniz;
Zıpladınız,kudurdunuz arsız,edepsiz!...
Gerçi salonlarda "yıldız" dı senin adın,
Hakkikatte fahişesin ey alçak kadın

(...)

Ey allıklı ve düzgünlü yosma bil şunu:
Bütün millet öğrenmiştir senin fuşunu.
Omuzunda neden seni fuzuli çeksin?
Kinimizin şiddetiyle gebereceksin!¹⁰¹

Like *ülküçüs*, Atsız thought that communists, who were under the influence of Russian culture and assimilative Russian nationalism, embodied the most extreme form of this deviation and degeneration.¹⁰² All these characteristics of Atsız's moralism into consideration, one can argue that *ülküçü* movement's continual moralist reaction to large-scale social changes in Turkey is inspired by Atsız's expression of his moralism in a very crude and extreme way.

CONCLUSION

Throughout this paper, I attempted to answer the following question: Although Hüseyin Nihal Atsız did not have any organic link with *ülküçü* movement and although he did not share many ideas and policies developed by the leadership of the *ülküçü* community, what might have led to his continuous popularity and influence over *ülküçüs*. While answering this question, I indicated that certain continual structural characteristics of the *ülküçü* movement created a convenient milieu for Nihal Atsız's ideas and symbols to be inspiring for the *ülküçü*

¹⁰¹ Atsız's poem, Topal Asker, in which he explicitly revealed his moralism, has been very popular and influential among *ülküçü* population. For example, in his book, the vice-president of Nationalist Action Party's Istanbul Organization directly quotes Nihal Atsız's poem in following words: "Atsız'ın şikayet ve lanet ettiği sosyete güruhu aynı yozlaşmış ve çürümüş çukurluğu ile meşgul iken ve geccecik fidanların vatan toprağı için şehadet şerbeti içtiğı bir zaman diliminde zevk, eğlence, fuhuş ve içki cennetinden çıkmaması "Topal Asker" in günümüzde de yaşadığını belgelemektedir." (Şafak, p. 142.)

¹⁰² Nihal Atsız, *Makaleler III*, pp.295-393

community. Without a doubt, the answer to such a question would be impossible without the analysis of Nihal Atsız's worldview, itself. Therefore, this answer contained the analysis of both the essential components of the *ülküci* ideology and the nature of Nihal Atsız's perspective.

I should remind that in order to fully understand how Nihal Atsız became popular within the *ülküci* community, one should take into consideration the interrelatedness of these essential and continual characteristics of the *ülküci* movement. For instance, one should not forget that if *ülküci*'s did not have the tendency to differentiate itself from existing political forces and if *ülküci* were not continually deprived of a consistent ideology, the parallelism between the continual presence of Turkist elements in *ülküci* ideology and Nihal Atsız's explicit Turkism would not by itself prepare the ground for the popularization of Atsız within *ülküci* community. I should, also add that even if the parallelism between seven continual characteristics of the *ülküci* movement and Nihal Atsız's world outlook was a necessary factor for the latter to be effective over latter, one should remind that if Nihal Atsız, in his writings, did not present these parallel elements in a more direct, crude, understandable and communicable way than the leadership of the Nationalist Action Party, which did not have an ability to do this because of the inconsistencies in its overall ideology, his ideas, symbols and myths would not easily penetrate into the cognitive world of *ülküci*. Therefore, throughout the essay, I showed how Nihal Atsız expresses some of well-known ideas, myths and symbols of *ülküci* ideology in a crude and direct way. The last point is that the intensity and prominence of each characteristic might vary according to specific socio-economic conditions of Turkish society at a given historical moment, a fact which led to the change in the intensity of Nihal Atsız's continual influence over *ülküci* community. In all these respects, the analysis that I have made throughout this essay should not be seen as consisted solely of establishing certain links between the continual and essential characteristics of the *ülküci* movement and Nihal Atsız's worldview. Rather, my analysis also showed the interrelatedness of the essential

continual characteristics of the *ülküci* movement that prepared the ground for Nihal Atsız's popularity, Nihal Atsız's effective elaboration, in his writings, of the continual themes and symbols that have been embedded in the ideology of *ülküci* movement and changing forms and intensities of his influence over the *ülküci* community as a result of the fact that the ideological formation of the latter took different in forms in different historical periods.