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# SIYASAL: Journal of Political Sciences

RESEARCH ARTICLE/ARAŞTIRMA MAKALESİ

## Extreme Nationalist Discourse In The Early Period Of The Turkish Republic and Its Reflection In The Turkish Media: The Case Of The Journal Gök-Börü

Mehmet Işık<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

Since its emergence, nationalism has been maintaining its influence on societies and media has enabled the re-production of nationalist ideologies, rituals, symbols, myths and discourses. Nationalism has changed and transformed both over time and among different political regimes and societies. Therefore, in order to fully understand the current state of nationalist ideologies, it is important to examine the historical development of nationalism and its reflections in media. This article examines the emergence and early period of Turkish nationalism and its reflections in the Turkish media. After the establishment of the Turkish Republic, particularly during the period between 1923 and 1950, new notions and institutions settled into the society. One of the most important notions during that time was nationalism given that the new Turkish Republic was established as a nation state. Turkish nationalism is mostly affected by political and social changes of the external world. Between the two world wars, extreme nationalist ideologies were popular all around the globe. This atmosphere of the external world also affected Turkish nationalist discourse and its reflections in the media. "Gök-börü" Journal is an important example of extreme Turkish nationalist discourse. The Journal was published in the Autumn of 1942 when Germany was pushing through Russia. This period was also a time when extreme nationalism and racism was occurring in the world and in Turkey, both were popular concepts. The journal can be differentiated from the other Turkic magazines published during the same period by its harsh rhetoric and ideas about blood nationalism.

### Keywords

Gök-Börü journal • Turkish nationalism • Turkist journals • Racism • Historical development of Turkish nationalism • Türkkan

### Türkiye Cumhuriyetinin İlk Döneminde Aşırı Milliyetçi Söylem ve Türk Medyasında Yansımaları: Gök-Börü Dergisi Örneği

#### Öz

Milliyetçilik ortaya çıkışından bu yana, toplumlar üzerinde etkisini sürdürmektedir, medya ise milliyetçi ideolojilerin, ritüellerin, sembollerin, mitlerin ve söylemlerin yeniden üretilmesine imkan vermiştir. Milliyetçilik hem zaman içinde hem de farklı siyasal rejim ve toplumlar arasında değişip ve dönüşmüştür. Bu nedenle, milliyetçi ideolojilerin mevcut durumunu tam olarak anlamak için, milliyetçiliğin tarihsel gelişimini ve bu gelişimin medyadaki yansımalarını incelemek önemlidir. Bu makale Türk milliyetçiliğinin erken dönem biçimlerini ve Türk mediasındaki yansımalarını incelemektedir. Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin kuruluşundan sonra, özellikle 1923-1950 arası dönemde, yeni kavramlar ve kurumlar topluma yerleşmiştir. Bu dönemde tartışılan önemli kavramlardan biri de, yeni Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin bir ulus devlet olarak kurulması nedeniyle, milliyetçiliktir. Literatürde Türk milliyetçiliğinin çoğunlukla dış dünyanın politik ve sosyal değişimlerinden etkilendiği belirtilmektedir. İki dünya savaşı arasında, aşırı milliyetçi ideolojiler tüm dünyada popüler bir durumdadır. Dış dünyanın bu atmosferi Türk milliyetçi söylemini dolayısıyla da bu söylemin medyadaki yansımalarını etkilemiştir. "Gök-börü" Dergisi aşırı Türk milliyetçi söyleminin önemli bir örneğidir. Dergi, dünyada ve Türkiye'de aşırı milliyetçiliğin popüler olduğu bir dönemde, Almanya'nın Rusya içlerine ilerlediği 1942 sonbaharında yayımlanmaya başlamıştır. Dergi dönemde yayınlanan diğer Türkçü dergilerden sert söylemiyle ve kan milliyetçiliği konusundaki düşünceleriyle farklılaşmaktadır.

#### Anahtar kelimeler

Gök-Börü dergisi • Türk milliyetçiliği • Türk gazeteleri • Irkçılık • Türk milliyetçiliğinin tarihsel gelişimi • Türkkan

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Nationalism can be seen as a relatively new ideology in Turkish society. The term ‘Turk’ was not often used as a marker of ethnicity or identity in Ottoman Society, and it was not seen on the political stage until the late 19th century. Within the Ottoman Empire’s ruling system, Arabs, Albanians, Bulgarians, Turks, Serbians, Kurds and other nations were all subjects of the Sultan almost without exception. It is often pointed out in the relevant literature that the Turks were the last nation in the Ottoman Empire to develop their nationalist ideology. However, although it appeared late in the Ottoman Empire, Turkish nationalism developed over time and “proved to be a strong force of both impressive dimensions and great potential sweeping away (perhaps almost too easily) all the obstacles in its way” (Azariyan 2011: 72). Despite an significant amount of literature on the evolution of Turkish nationalism, scholars paid less attention to the extreme and racist nationalistic movements in Turkish nationalism during the time between two world wars.

From the late 1930s, a racist nationalism movement within Turkish nationalism was gaining strength. While accepting the thesis of the founders of Turkish nationalism such as Ziya Gökalp and Yusuf Akçura, this movement was unlike contemporary ideology, which differs largely from the previous understandings of Turkish nationalism, by excluding those who were not “Pureblood Turks”. According to the ideology of this movement, problems within the previous Turkish states and within the new Turkish Republic -such as the collapse of the Ottoman Empire - had been caused by those who were not “Pureblood Turks”. This extreme movement found its supporters among intellectuals such as university lecturers, teachers, students, retired army generals, officers and some Russian immigrant Turkists. Therefore, the ideology was mostly spread through publications, especially Turkist journals. The Turanist-Turkist journals therefore gained importance especially after the closure of the Turkish Hearths (Türk Ocakları) on 10 April 1931. The Turkish Hearths was an organisation of mostly intellectuals, which served as a hotbed of Turkish nationalism. They were the intellectual powerhouse of Turkish nationalism between 1912 and 1930 (Cagaptay 2006: 175). Nihal Atsız, an important figure in nationalist ideology, published early examples of these journals in 1931.

Their understanding of nationalism differs from Atatürk’s nationalism due to their negative perspectives on non-Turks, and those Turks not living in Turkey.

This study aims to highlight that extreme nationalism in Turkey gained strength during the time between the two world wars, and that this Turkish nationalism was affected by the racist movements in the world at that time.

It is possible to see the reflection of these ideologies in the Turkist journals, which were popular in terms of both quality and quantity, around the 1940s. In terms of its writers and audience numbers, the *Gök-Börü* journal was one of the most important Turkist journals at that time. Therefore, this study will analyse the ethnic and racist nationalist ideology in Turkey by examining the discourse of the *Gök-Börü* journal, in order to put forward the main features of Turkist ideology. The study will briefly examine the important milestones of the evolution of Turkish nationalism in Turkey up to the publication of the journal in 1942. Then, it will examine the extreme nationalist discourse of the Turkist thinkers in the texts of the *Gök-Börü* journal.

### **The Evolution of Turkish Nationalism**

When the existing literature about the evolution of nationalism is examined, it is possible to divide the evolution of Turkish nationalism into two periods. The first period is that of the Ottoman Empire and the second is the period starting from the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923. There is also a change in the understanding of nationalism in the second phase, especially after 1930, which will be referenced briefly in the study.

#### **Nationalism in the Ottoman Period**

The Ottoman Empire had been one of the major global powers, since the foundation of the dynasty in 1299. The Empire was not a nation state; it was a dynastic Empire, which contained many ethnic groups such as Turks, Arabs, Greeks, Serbs, Croats, Albanians, Bulgarians, Arabs, Syrians, Armenians and Kurds. The rulers of the empire were called “*Sultans*” and all the inhabitants of the country were reputedly descended from a Turkish warrior named Osman Gazi (Goldschmidt 1991: 187). The Ottoman Empire was ruled under the influence of Islamic governing traditions and the system was an original structure which was formed by integrating people from different backgrounds such as different ethnicity, religion and culture into the “*millet [nation] system*” of the Empire (Mardin 1982: 175; Karpas 2002: 611-613, Sugar 2014: 231-232). The “*Millet system*” in the Ottoman Empire was the system that managed and organised the community under the rule of Ottoman Empire “according to their religion or sects” (Ortaylı 2002: 396). The citizens of the country were either called “*Beraya*” (who mostly belonged to the ruling class and held high status and were economically successful) or “*re’aya*” (those who did not belong to the ruling class). The “*Re’aya*” were the elements of the population who were obliged to pay taxes, and were mostly peasants, artisans,

and merchants (Goldschmidt 1991: 188). The authority of the Ottoman Sultans originated in the Islamic religious-political tradition *Caliphate*. The Ottoman Sultans were conceived as “*the shadow of God on earth*”, and therefore their authority could not be criticised (Berkes 1998: 13, Lewis 2009: 224-5). There was no *nation* in the sense of modern nationalism discourse. The essential division in the population was between the Muslims and the non-Muslims (Kushner 1977: 9; Azarian 2011: 73). The first nationalist movement in the Ottoman Empire was seen among the Christian population of the Balkans - parallel to the nationalist movements in the West. According to Ülken (2008: 133), “nationalism’s idea first expanded among the people who wanted to divide the Empire and to build their own nations”.

Growing nationalist movements led to the unravelling of the Empire. Romania, Montenegro, Greece, Bulgaria, Samos, and the island of Crete split from the Ottoman Empire. As a result of reform movements, to reinforce the development of the state, some young intellectuals were sent to Europe in order to bring scientific and technological innovations to the Empire. However, these young intellectuals (known as the “Young Turks”), engaged in politics during their education. Therefore, when they returned to the state, they brought western political ideas to the state rather than technology and science. The Young Turks believed that the adoption of western ideas by the Ottoman Empire would stop the decline of the state. On the contrary, ideas of nation and homeland, and concepts such as liberty and equality, had already shaken the classical Ottoman system. Nationalist and separatist movements among the Christian population, with the guidance of Western countries, increased dramatically (Kia 2011: 15-16; Keyder 1997: 33).

The Young Turks tried to end the political unravelling of the Empire. However, Ottoman intellectuals did not immediately turn towards Turkish nationalism in the face of the non-Muslim population’s nationalist and separatist movements. In contrast, within the Tanzimat Period, which started in 1839 with *Gülhane Hattı Hümayun*, they tried to keep the unity of the state and all the nations of the Empire together with the ideology of “Ottomanism” (Ülker 2005: 618-619; Vezenkov 2009). They tried to improve the feeling of belongingness of different nations to the Empire by bringing the same rights and same obligations to those citizens under the Ottoman identity. All subjects were equal in the eyes of Ottoman law, regardless of their ethnicity, religion or language. Ottomanism, however, was founded upon the notion of equality among religions - it was not a panacea for the internal strife afflicting the Ottoman realm. Because of the rising nationalist movements around the world,

these attempts did not stop the political decline of the state. Among these movements, a relatively delayed ideology was born; Turkish nationalism.

In the first period of Turkish nationalism in the Ottoman Empire, The Young Turks used magazines and newspapers extremely effectively. The reason for placing so much emphasis on this broadcasting was that The Young Turks firmly believed in the connection between press and nationalism, since the construction of a nation requires the spreading of nationalist ideas and cultural homogenization. Broadcasting has also functioned as a forum where a national community 'imaginaire' is reflected, shaped and represented (Morley and Robins, 1997: 242). Hobsbawm (1993), referring to the potential of broadcasting, emphasizes that the mass media is more effective than purposive propaganda in terms of transforming the actual national symbols into a part of every individual's life. As Anderson states (2006: 75), "the seeds of Turkish nationalism are easily detectable in the appearance of a lively vernacular press in Istanbul in the 1870s". During this period the number of Turkish newspapers and magazines were increasing continuously. Characteristically, Ibrahim Şinasi (founder of the first such newspaper), had just returned from five years study in France. Where he led, others soon followed (such as Namık Kemal) by 1876, there were seven Turkish-language dailies in Constantinople".

One of the main elements of Turkish nationalism are the works of Ziya Gökalp and Yusuf Akçura. These thinkers contributed greatly to the development of Turkish nationalism during this period (Deringil 2000: 180). Akçura and Gökalp tried to build and unite the Turkish nation; according to Akçura "striving to create an Ottoman nation was a vain and frustrating attempt" therefore it is important to build a Turkish nation (1995: 17). For him "politics of Turkism is open to everyone such as Islamism. It is not only limited to the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, one should take a look at the other parts of the world which are filled with Turks" (Akçura 1995: 24). Yusuf Akçura was trying to unite all Turks around the world under Turkish nationalism. This ideology is known as Turanism.

Ziya Gökalp is another important figure of Turkish nationalism and has mostly been considered as the founder of this ideology (Kurzman 2002: 192; Çağaptay 2006: 8). According to Gökalp, "a nation is not a racial or ethnic or geographic or political or volitional group but one composed of individuals who share a common language, religion, morality and aesthetics, that is to say, who have received the same education" (1968: 15). Gökalp states that nation is not synonymous with race, and he rejects those attempts that reduce the nation

to race. As he states, “race is a term properly used only in zoology.” And he believes that a nation must have a “shared consciousness” in order to survive (Gökalp 1968: 12).

### **Nationalism in the Early Republican Period**

The First World War caused the partitioning of the Ottoman Empire into smaller entities. However during this period, a revolutionary Turkish leader, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, a military commander who had distinguished himself during the Battle of Gallipoli, emerged from the ashes of a defeated, desolate, and occupied state. Under his leadership, the Turkish Independence War was won and the Turkish Republic was established. The Turkish republic became the official successor state of the Ottoman Empire, encompassing what had been the heartland of the Empire. The transition “from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic implied a political reorganisation according to completely different principles: Turkey was to become a nation-state following Western models” (Schön 2013: 2; Karpat 1974: 5). Atatürk established the People’s Party on September 9, 1923, then officially announced the foundation of the Turkish Republic on 29 October 1923 (Lewis 1968: 260-261). Now “the sultanate, the caliphate, and the ruling class legally gave way to a republic, manifesting and organising the sovereignty of the people and their right to rule themselves for their own benefit. The new slogan was “Sovereignty Belongs to the Nation”. The Republic was to be by and for the people” (Yarar 2014: 30).

After the proclamation of the Republic, Mustafa Kemal tried to build a nation from people living in different parts of Anatolia, who had different backgrounds. Atatürk described the “Turkish Nation” as the “people who established the Turkish Republic”. In doing so Mustafa Kemal Atatürk excluded ethnic or religious distinctions and dismissed any type of discrimination. Mustafa Kemal defines the nation as unity of language, unity of sense, and consensus and he adopted an understanding of nationalism that is based on culture and identity. According to Mustafa Kemal, unity of religion or ethnicity was not essential for the formation of a nation. For him “a nation arises from having a rich historical legacy of memories, a sincere mutual desire and consent to live together and having a common will to preserve their owned heritage” (İnan 1969: 23-24).

Atatürk distanced himself from any type of “international brotherhood” ideology such as Pan-Turkism, Pan-İslamism and draws a line between his understanding of nationalism and any irredentist movement (Yıldız 2004:100-101). The borders of the new Turkish Republic did not change after

the Balkan Wars, remaining the same as the national pact, “*Misak-ı Milli*”. Therefore, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk did not follow an expansionist policy. He tried to build a nation, and by doing so he and other republican leaders did not exclude the non-Muslim society. They accepted them as a part of the Turkish nation, however they always stipulated three conditions:

the non-Muslims had to adopt (a) the Turkish language as their mother tongue, (b) the Turkish culture, and (c) the ideal of Turkism (Bali 2004: 1). As Atatürk states, one of the most obvious, precious qualities of a nation is the language. A person who says he belongs to the Turkish nation should first and under all circumstances speak Turkish. It is not possible to believe a person’s claims that he belongs to the Turkish nation, to the Turkish culture, if he does not speak Turkish (Bali 2004: 2).

Turkic activities had continued during the first years of the new republic. One of the most important figures of the Turkic activities during that time was the Turkish Hearths. The Turkish Hearths were reopened in January 1924 after having closed in 1918. The Turkish Hearths were on one hand trying to provide support for the administration of the Republic and its thoughts, and on the other they were trying to be a platform where Pan-Turkist ideas could be expressed. However, these Pan-Turkist ideas were incompatible with the ideology of the newly formed Turkish Republic (Ertekin 2002: 359-360). In this context, emerging intellectual debates and the centralisation efforts of the Kemalist understanding of nation deepened the conflict between the Turkish Hearths and the Republican People’s Party. Some scholars think that before the closing period of the Turkish Hearths, the Hearths had more than 250 branches in Turkey and also had over 30,000 members, so this situation may have been seen as an obstacle by the RPP for single party centralism. (Üstel 2002: 266). In the end, with an extraordinary congress in 10 April 1931 the Turkish Hearths decided to join the RPP (Üstel 2004: 382).

Rulers of the new Turkish Republic separated themselves from the Pan-Turkist movements; however it is not realistic to say that there were no Pan-Turkist movements during the first years of the republican period. Although the Turkish Hearths were acting in line with the RPP’s policies and stating their aims and objectives were to preserve the Turkish culture and Kemalist reforms (Landau 1999: 115), they were also becoming a platform for Pan-Turkist movements (Önen 2003: 254). The government wished to stop the Pan-Turkist movements by closing the Turkish Hearths, however the discussions that took place on this subject served to revive Turkism. During this revival, without doubt, the most important person was Nihal Atsız, along with his works. However, these revivals did not escape the sight of the government. Indeed, during that time the

current understanding of nationalism was incompatible with the government's understanding of nationalism. Therefore, journals, which were published by the representatives of these nationalist ideologies such as "*Orhun*", "*Geçit*", "*Birlik*", one by one began to be closed in 1934 (Toprak 1984: 46; Önen 2003: 262). However, pressure on the Pan-Turkist movement did not last long, and after four years Pan-Turkist movements gained momentum again. In the re-empowerment of the Pan-Turkist movement in Turkey, the influence of Germany's success in the first years of World War II was great. The expectation that the Germans would save the captive Turks in Central Asia, and the Caucasus from the Soviet Union, influenced this development. The Germans intensified their propaganda activities in the press in Turkey, especially in this period. According to Glasneck (1966), "The greatest success of German fascism in influencing the Turkish press, undoubtedly happens with bribery of some newspaper owners, editorials and some journalists". With these activities, Germany was aiming to ensure that the Turkish press would be indifferent to the fate of the neighboring countries that had been attacked by fascists (Glasneck, 1966: 6).

The ones who revitalised the Turanist and Pan-Turkist movements were not the senior names of Turkism such as Nihal Atsız and Zeki Velidi, rather it was the younger generation who trained in the educational institutions of the Republic who revitalised these movements (Önen 2003: 315). Within this younger generation, the most significant character was, Reha Oğuz Türkkan. The impact of his racist nationalist ideology was reflected in the Journal named *Ergenekon*, which he published (Özdoğan 2001: 209). With his extreme and mostly racist ideas he became an important figure of the Turanist and Turkist movement. *Ergenekon*, which started on the same day Mustafa Kemal Atatürk died, enabled Türkkan to take his place on the stage of the Turanist Turkist movement.

Türkkan stated his political ideas, which he named "Outline of New Turkism", as "Turkism, is an ideal which wishes all Turks of the world to escape from bondage and become united to bring a Great Turkish Union into being" (Türkkan 1944: 103). According to Türkkan, this Great Turkish Union was the union of the disorganised Turks who came from the same lineage, the same blood (race), speak the same language and belong to the same nation. For him, it was important to unite as a "Great Turkish Clan". After the end of 1943, those Turkists who continued to operate their activities smoothly throughout the war years became targets due to their racist thoughts and discourse, especially given the war against Germany. Thereupon the representatives of the racist Turanist movements were arrested on 9 May 1944 (Ertekin 2002: 370).

Nationalism was a significant cause of World War I, as well as World War II. Moreover, during the period between these two world wars, extreme nationalism increased markedly in the world. As can be seen from the information presented above, it is possible to say that this global increase in extremist nationalism affected Turkish nationalism. It is also possible to see the reflections of these extreme nationalist movements in Turkish media, especially within Journals. During that time the important journals of Turkism were, *Bozkurt* (by Z. Velidi Togan, Peyami Safa, Ali İhsan Sabis, M.Sadık Aran and Abdülkadir İnan), *Kopuz* (by Dr. Rıza Nur), *Çınaraltı* (by Seyfi Orhon), and *Gök-Börü* (Öztürkmen 2012: 315). In the following part of the study, nationalist discourse of the *Gök-Börü* journal will be examined as an important example of extreme nationalism in order to determine the main features of extreme Turkish nationalism during the time between the two world wars.

### **Nationalist Discourse In The Gök-Börü Journal**

*Gök-Börü* is the product of a period between two wars when racist nationalism was gaining power all over the world, not just in Turkey. The German success against the Soviet Union during the 1941 Barbarosa military action and the seizing of large parts of the Crimea, led to an increase in the number of Turkist journals published in Turkey after 1942. *Millet*, owned by Hüseyin Avni Gökçurk and directed by Remzi Oğuz Arık was published in May 1942; *Tarıdağ* was published weekly by Rıza Nur; Ahmet Caferoğlu's monthly journal *Türk Amacı* was published in July 1942 and the last *Gök-Börü* was published in November 1942. However, the great revival of Turkic journals in 1942 gave way to disappointment in 1943. The Soviet Union, which was supposed to collapse under Germany's assault, did not. Instead it halted the German forces and began counterattacking. In this period, when it was gradually starting to become clear just which side was going to win this war, sensitivity towards the Soviet Union (who had always been there for Turkey), increased steadily. In this case, Turanist/Turkist factions, who had continued their publications without encountering any difficulties in 1942, started to be forbidden again in 1943 (Önen, 2003: 371). In this context, the *Gök-Börü* Magazine, published in this extraordinary period when the great revival of 1942 was giving way to disappointment in 1943, provides a unique example of the transformation of the racist-nationalist discourse in Turkey from 1942 to 1943. The journal (whose first issue was out on 5 November 1942), was published for a total of 13 issues and then, on 20th May 1943 it was shut down under Martial Law. The owner and editor of the Journal was Reha Oğuz Türkkkan and it had been published once every 15 days. *Gök-Börü*, seeing all the Turks in the world as a

nation, undertook the mission of acknowledging them and integrating them into society, bringing their problems to Turkey's agenda and producing solutions to their problems. Being different from others, the journal used a rigid language style when communicating with its own populace. The discourse in the journal addressed a young and semi-intellectual mass and was directed at awakening the target audience. The whole of society, especially the youth, was invited to work and struggle for Turkism.

*Gök-Börü* adopted the problems of Turkic communities in various regions in the world besides Turks living in Turkey. It aimed at supporting the racial and emotional closeness between the Anatolian Turks and outer Turks by emphasising their languages, religions, cultures and traditions. For Azeri people - who are the closest to Turkey among outer Turks - the journal was indispensable. Just as the problems of this country were touched upon in a number of issues, probes and poems coming from Azeri Turks were also given space on the pages.

Notions such as “Turkism”, “nationalism”, “Turkishness”, “race”, “pure race”, “minorities”, “youth”, “sports/physical training”, and “Turkish history” were the topics that *Gök-Börü* often gave prominence on its pages and brought these forward for discussion.

### **Method of the Study**

In recent years, there has been a significant increase in research directed at the early years of the Republic and the Single Party Period in Turkey. A remarkable body of literature regarding the political, social, intellectual and economic life of the period has been formed. Despite this, the quantity of academic research especially that regarding the racist Turanist movement which was born towards the end of 1930s and gained more and more power in the War years, has not reached an adequate level both in the sense of quality and quantity.

In this study, the nationalist ideology reflected on the pages of *Gök-Börü* Journal, which was published in 13 issues between 5 November 1942 and 22 May 1943 by Reha Oğuz Türkkan, was analysed through the method of discourse analysis. Within this context, this study analyses how ideological discourse around Turkish nationalism was actualised in the Turkish media and exhibits this through a discourse analysis method of the articles of the journal. In other words, the formation and stabilisation of an ideology that is articulated to various discursive elements from the texts, by excluding or including what it was established and whether there was a struggle between

the parties in this establishment period was examined with their causes (Dursun 2001: 15-16). As it can be seen in the study, *Gök-Börü* aimed to define and rebuild the identity of the nationalist mass which it targeted. For this reason, the examination of the discourses on the pages of the journal regarding nation, race, pure race, Turkism, leftist movements, communism, fascism, youth, minorities, and what kind of a subject is designed, forms the major axis of the study.

### **Findings of the Analysis**

In this study where the discourse of *Gök-Börü* journal is resolved, a contextual resolution of the journal texts is not achieved. For the purpose of obtaining clues regarding how certain key themes in the frame of Turkish nationalism was developed in journal articles, and around which themes the discourse was usually developed, thematic analysis was used in the study (Bryman 2012: 578-579). As the result of the analysis, it was determined that the discourse was frequently developed within the frame of six explanatory categories and these results are presented as sub-titles of these categories.

#### ***Gök-Börü* Journal and its Authors**

The *Gök-Börü* journal made a great effort to explain its purpose and features to its target audience right from its first issue. Within this scope, this theme was specified to put forward how the *Gök-Börü* journal and its authors saw themselves, how they defined their purpose, in which social groups they positioned themselves and what kind of a role they assumed they had.

It defined itself as a “Turkist Journal” and it gave prominence to the expression of “Turkist Journal” under the *Gök-Börü* title in every issue of the journal. The journal that defined itself as “nationalist with the purest and the most extreme meaning”, saw its mission as leading the Turks, and was inspired by “Bozkurt” (the azure-coloured wolf which can be seen once or twice in every 100 years according to *Gök-Börü* Turkish mythology).

*Gök-Börü*, is the journal of Turkism. This journal which is released by pure Turks and again which is owned by pure Turks, is nationalist in its purest and most radical meaning. Therefore, this is the only spirit in its publication... *GÖK-BÖRÜ* is not a dream treading on air, but a fearless Bozkurt [a mythological sacred gray wolf] which is concerned about the countless problems of the home country and our nation. This Bozkurt will walk on the true path of our race fearlessly and tirelessly. On the horizon of the path we are walking on, a Turkish future, which is united, independent, powerful and prosperous, is waiting for us. Since we believe that

this shiny Turkish sun will rise, our voices are such powerful, our steps are such steady. O, the passengers of this holy path! Let us unite hand by hand, let us believe and work... What will create this future are our effort and our work (*Gök-Börü*, November 5<sup>th</sup>, 1942:1).

In the discourse of the *Gök-Börü* journal, the concept of the Bozkurt has a central place. Just as the name of the journal, which Türkkan released just after Ergenekon, is Bozkurts, on the cover of every issue of *Gök-Börü* there is a Bozkurt picture. This is not a coincidence; on the contrary, it is a deliberate choice. The Bozkurt figure was selected because it directly referred to the legendary past of Middle Asia Turkish and it was accepted as the mythological ancestor of the ancient Turkish tribes. Thus, according to Türkkan “Bozkurt (*Gök-Börü*) is the national symbol of all the past and current Turkists” (*Gök-Börü*, November 5<sup>th</sup>, 1942:1).

The journal answered the question of what the *Gök-Börü* (*Bozkurt*) was which it asked as such:

1. It is the symbol of a history, a root and an ancestry! ..... 2. Bozkurt, which only belonged to Turks, was a holy sign which gathered all the Turks!... 3. Bozkurt is a leader. This first ancestor of the Turkish ancestry always observes the Turkish Nation and the spirit of the Ancestor Bozkurt appears in the most almighty Turk in inconvenient moments. Did Çingiz Khan not say that he was also a Bozkurt? Atilla was also a Bozkurt, and Bumin, İterish, Osman Ghazi, Orhan Ghazi, The Conquerer (Fatih II.), Selim the First, too. Was not Atatürk, the hero of the Independence War also a Bozkurt? Did not English authors name him Bozkurt?... In brief, every almighty Turk, every Turkish chief, who leads Turkish nation to the salvation or grand works, is a BOZKURT. Each one of us is from the ancestry of Bozkurt. Yet only this geniuses are azure-maned, flame-eyed, lighted, furry BOZKURTS. 4. Bozkurt is not a well-behaved existence. Bozkurt is not a lazy jackal either. Bozkurt is a wild, fiery and spry creature (*Gök-Börü*, November 5<sup>th</sup>, 1942:1 and 23).

### **Gök-Börü’s Ideas About Turk, Turkism and Outer Turks**

Since *Gök-Börü* defines itself as a “nationalist” publication “in the meaning of the purest and the most radical”, the issues given the most prominence on the pages are usually related to nationalism. Turkish nationalism, Turkism and outer Turks have a central place in the discourse of the journal.

Türkkan explained the thoughts of the journal related to nationalism in his article titled “Glances at Turkism” with his “famous” drawings in detail. According to this, in order to reach “Great Turkish Unity”, Turkey primarily needs to gain power. For Turkey to gain power, the causes such as “Pure

Blood (Race)” and “Nation” and then such causes as “Youth and Education”, “Morality”, “Rural”, “Science”, “Administration”, “Industry” and “Religion” should be resolved. Great Turkish Unity is a distant target that can only be reached after overcoming the obstacles in Anatolia.

...And there is the Turkish Unity and Turan mountains at the farthest place. After the first mountains are passed over, after Anatolia gains power, the path that will be walked upon. I hope, after that, they can understand that the ideal that we see as the most important thing, the cause of Great Turkish Unity is only a distant target for us (Türkkan, November 5<sup>th</sup>, 1942: 5).

Together with this, this distant target should never be forgotten, and they should work to reach this target: “No matter how far is the cause of Great Turkish Unity, we should see the mountains on the horizon, work with the love of the distant purpose to be reached and faith should be increased when we are working for the causes before us” (Türkkan, November 5<sup>th</sup>, 1942: 5).

Türkkan, in parallel with its approach of distant ideal, sees outer Turks as the branches of Turkish nation:

We know that Turkish nation does not consist of Anatolian Turks. Anatolian Turks, Azerbaijan Turks, Crimean and Turkistan Turks, all belong to the same great Turkish nation; because, despite the political border, state and small dialect differences between them, they all connect to same history and same culture. Azeris, Turkmens, Uzbeks, Kazaks, Kirgizs are the branches of our nation (Türkkan, May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1943: 3).

Azerbaijan and Azeri Turks have more allocated space on the pages of *Gök-Börü* compared to other outer Turks. In almost every issue, topics related to Azerbaijan are referred to: “Azerbaijan is not only the name of another Turkish nationality, but also the name of a vast country where an important Turkish community lives [...] This Turkish homeland next to the east border of the Turkish Republic is the place where real Turks have lived since forever”. (Türkkan, 22 Mayıs 1943: 3).

The journal asserts that Turks have had a nationalist spirit since ancient times:

Nation spirit and nationalism existed among the Turks when the other nations had not yet discovered it. All historical documents prove this. Yet these Turkists were always small in number. Since Gök-Turks up to now, the majority of our nation, and especially the intellectuals, did not agree with these patriots, unfortunately, and forgot the issues of Turkism due to foreign influence (Türkkan, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1943: 3).

Together with this, under all the disasters that have been experienced since Middle Asia lies the lack of national consciousness:

Whichever disaster that we have experienced since Middle Asia periods up to now we analyse; there is the lack of national consciousness under all of them (Türkkan, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1943: 3).

We get Arabicized almost as if we are contesting with each other, we lost our Turkishness. How easy it is to blame the religion! What made us forget our Turkishness is not Islam, but the lack of our national consciousness (Türkkan, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1943: 3).

*Gök-Börü* stands against the lack of national consciousness; for this reason, it is opposed to the passive nationalism. It defends an understanding of nationalism, which always includes struggle:

Passive nationalism is a thing of whose existence and absence means the same thing in terms of benefit. Because of this, we always hesitate when we call such people as “nationalist”... Lazy and coward nationalists are like the captain who does not navigate and those who carries the title of cavalry without riding a horse (Türkkan, May 6<sup>th</sup>, 1943: 3). The real nationalist is the one who lives accordingly to the opinion he believes in and works for the victory of his ideal (Türkkan, May 6<sup>th</sup>, 1943: 3).

According to the journal, “Turkish nationalism is not the property of any class or community. It is the real property of all the honoured Turks no matter what their class or community is and the only guarantee for the future and the unity” (Tesbihçioğlu, 25 March 1943: 23). From this point of view, *Gök-Börü*, which asserts that the problems can be resolved by the foundation of a nationalist regime, puts forward the idea that the Turkish nation will be as powerful as it was in the past and will rule the world under this regime:

In the nationalist regime which is the most perfect one, what can the most supreme race of Turkish nation do! The expression of impossible can be erased from the Turkish dictionaries (Türkkan, February 15<sup>th</sup>, 1943: 10).

*Gök-Börü* asserts that there is an inclination towards the nationlessness and indicates that it is the most fearful wound that we have:

Nationlessness is our most fearful wound. We tried to imitate China in Middle Asia. Just after we accepted Islam, we became more Arab than Arab, more Persian than Persian. And since we turned to European civilization, we contest with each other in being the imitator of the West (Türkkan, December 15<sup>th</sup>, 1942: 3).

“O, Turkish Nation! Do not go into nationlessness! You will be ruined there! (Türkkan, December 15<sup>th</sup>, 1942: 4)

## The Notion of Race

Since *Gök-Börü* defends the understanding of nationalism blended with racism, the issue of race has quite an important place in the discourse of the journal. Since the journal of Ergenekon, the unchangeable motto of the journals released by Türkkan, “Turkish race above all the races!” has been given a place on the cover of every *Gök-Börü* issue. Türkkan and the other authors of the journal wrote many articles explaining this expression:

When we say “Turkish race above all the races”, we firstly mean that Turkish ancestry and Turkish nation is superior to all the other ancestry and nation in the sense of capability and creation. We believe that this superiority is especially obvious in the fields of bravery, military genius, artistry and intelligence. The most powerful source of our belief is our shiny past... Yet today Turkish nation is underdeveloped due to historical disasters and mistakes in the sense of civilization. The fact that Turkish nation is not actually “above all the nations” does not mean that we should deny that it is always superior in the sense of capability. A Turk is always superior and when it creates the necessary conditions, just as in the fields of bravery, military and intelligences, it will again be at the top in the civilization as well. Since we believe both in today and tomorrow, we have formed our ideal with this only formula: Turkish race above all the races (*Gök-Börü*, January 1st, 1943: 22).

Turks have adopted the principle of Turkish race above all the races since the antiquity (*Gök-Börü*, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1943: 23).

*Gök-Börü* specifies that races are not equal, there are superior races on earth. The Turks are claimed to be in the category of “superior race” with their works, characters and history. The journal states that Turks come from the Turkish race - which is at the top of the superior races – and explains the features of the superior race claiming that all of these features are present in the Turkish race:

We, Turks, are of the race of Turk which is at the top of the superior races thanks to our natural greatest capabilities such as military and social genius, intelligence, organization, heroism [...] Turkish nation is naturally of the most superior race. There are always the capabilities of being the most powerful nation in his blood. We are always the most superior race (Türkkan 25 March 1943: 4).

The journal, which considers being Turk as the biggest happiness, lists the capabilities of the Turkish nation whenever the opportunity arises:

Unless I was not Turk, I would consider myself as the least lucky man in the world (*Gök-Börü*, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1943: 14).

... and thus, TURK IS THE MOST SUPERIOR HUMAN (*Gök-Börü*, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1943: 12).

Besides there is not a proof of the special or racial sensitivity of Turkish race against any virus, it is the race that usually has the most natural resistance against all the viruses (Aygün, May 6<sup>th</sup>, 1943: 14).

*Gök-Börü* asserts that development which is not based on race cannot succeed, and the future will belong to the Turks as long as they give the required value to their blood:

Every development cause, every ideal that is not based on Race, Nation and Morality Revolutions and that cannot be built upon them is like the house built on sand, it will collapse; it is like the tree which is watered without being cleaned of its worms and bugs; it will dry (Türkkan, November 5<sup>th</sup>, 1942: 6).

Turk, the real Turk, Turk which is the real owner of this land, is gaining his value, the real value is being given to the unique Turkish blood [...] THE PAST BELONGED TO TURK, THE FUTURE WILL BELONG TO TURK as well (Tebihçioğlu, 5 November 1942: 11).

We will demand pure Turkness in the blood. We will carry out an absolute Turkness road in the language. We will Turkicize our religion. Turkness in the names, dressing, hats, decoration and sports!... Turkness everywhere from the stamps to the saluting!... If we do this, tomorrows will be ours (Türkkan, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1943: 5).

*Gök-Börü* states that the blood of nations should not be mixed including the Turks, and claims that those who criticise the issue of race are the ones whose blood is mixed:

Most of the race critics here, are the ones who are stranger to Turkish race or the ones who are mixed in the sense of ancestry as told above... If we pay attention, we can see that those who criticize racism are intellectuals who are afraid of their ancestry (Türkkan, March 25<sup>th</sup>, 1943: 3).

The journal builds the understanding of the pureness of the blood on historical grounds and tries to prove that Turks have been careful about this by giving examples from animals:

Turks never let half-bloods mate with each other and get breeds from them, because Turks experienced that generations from those half-blood finally got degenerated even then... Turks have called the baby born of the half-blood as sulphur, pussy, helpless, bastard camel and considered such kind of mating a sin... Mating between half-bloods and thus generating a bastard generation is indeed a natural sin. (Aygün, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1943: 5).

The journal indicates that a Young Turk should not marry those who are not of Turkish ancestry, and should not dirty its ancestry, warning those who

violate it as the first duty of being a Turk, (Türkkan, February 1<sup>st</sup>, 1943: 3) it appreciates the marriage traditions of Gizilbashes in the context of pure blood:

Gizilbashes do not take and give bride from those who are not Gizilbashes. Besides, they marry those who are from another Gizilbashes village. Thanks to this tradition they have been able to protect their purity of blood... They have been able to protect their past, blood, culture and traditions better (Zaratol, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1943: 6).

The journal is so rigid about racism that it asserts, “A Turk is not allowed to love other lands apart from Turkic regions, people other than Turks. If we need to love someone, let us love our own race, our own country – “because they need our love more than anything” (Tesbihçioğlu, January 15<sup>th</sup>, 1943: 6). At this point, young Turks are invited to love their race:

O, young Turk –be sure that your RACE has deserved your loved thanks to its glorious past and superior characteristics- and it is waiting for the love jealously: your duty is to make sure that it reaches the level that deserves this love (Tesbihçioğlu, January 15<sup>th</sup>, 1943: 6).

According to the journal, the reason why Turks are able to protect their nationality is the fact that they have protected their blood in contrast to the assertion of the fact that they have accepted Islam. Thus, Gagavuz - who are not Muslims - have been able to protect their Turkness:

Muslim Turks have been able to protect their nationality. But Bulgarians who are Turks by race and culture lost their nationality when they became Christian [...] Let me ask, why Gagavuzs do not lose their nationality but Bulgarians do [...] Bulgarians lost their Turkish blood between 60% and 65%. They were mixed with Slavs together with seven Slavic tribes against one Turkish tribe and thus lost their traditions. But, Gagavuzs have protected their Turkish Blood [...] Thus their nationality has remained intact. We can deduce that race and blood are the fundamentals of the nationality. (Samur, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1943: 20).

*Gök-Börü* puts forward the assertion that the race tie is natural and the fact that certain countries feel closer to each other lies in the race tie:

Race tie is one of the natural powers; and natural powers commands us without us knowing, yet it knows how to make us obey its commands (Akansel, December 15<sup>th</sup>, 1942: 18).

BLOOD TIE IS REAL! Why is America so interested in England? Because approximately eighty percent of the American people are of English race (Akansel, December 15<sup>th</sup>, 1942: 10).

## Minorities

Another theme related to the understanding of nationalism which is developed on the pages of the journal, is opposition against minorities. The idea of the superiority of the Turkish race and belief in not mixing the blood brings great hostility against minorities. The journal asserts that underlying all the troubles that Turks have experienced since the beginning of Ottoman Empire are minorities and even the Ottoman dynasty was rejected because it became hybridised:

One of the deepest wounds of our Ottoman history is perhaps leaving the destiny of the Turk into the lap of others who are not Turkish. We should avoid it. We should not believe anyone who is not Turkish in our national practices! The worst Turk is better than the best non-Turk (Gök-Börü, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1943: 12).

Homeland is saved. Hybridised dynasty has been fired, reactionary regime has been got rid of, a sovereign and young “West Turkland” is founded (Türkkan 22 April 1943: 3).

It is expressed in the journal that Turks have always tolerated minorities, however they have seized the regions where they arrived as guests:

Minorities are gone wild, Jews revealed their secret communities like “Zionism”, Armenians “Tashnak”, Greeks “Etniki Eteryä”, Circassian “Circassian Right”, Albanians “Bashkim”, Arabs and they became grabbers in the Turkish soils where they came as a guest. All the half-bloods, bastards and degenerated ones were almost contesting with each other in exchanging Turkish rights to the strangers, demanding mandatory, feasting in their kiosks in Istanbul (Türkkan, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1943: 3).

It is emphasised that while Turks were fighting and dying on the fronts, the minorities became wealthy through trading:

Not only the noble sons of Turkish race forgive the strangers who they tolerated more than enough, but also give them a place in its homeland and national life. While the Turk was shedding his own blood, guarding the borders and working hard to manage the government organisation interior, the trade was going into the hands of the minorities that it feed with his bread, soul and blood. The Turk was compelled; they were getting richer and richer. The Turk was shedding his blood; they were relaxing [...] Just as our president says, they did not hesitate to turning even the air we breathe into a tool of trade; they did not feel guilty neither in the sense of patriotism nor morality! (Kurtuluş, January 15<sup>th</sup>, 1943: 11).

In stark contrast to their wealth, it is claimed that these minorities do not give anything back:

Our minorities always use what they can but never feel in debt (Kurtuluş, January 15<sup>th</sup>, 1943: 11).

I cannot call the market of our homeland as “ours” which has been left to the hands of Moizs, Agops, Hristos and other degenerated ones. These men, -these “bastards” as İnönü says- disrespects these hard times when the war is coming and our people is suffering from poverty and all kinds of community and understanding principle with the ideology of exploitation, because they lack morality (Türkkan, November 24<sup>th</sup>, 1942: 3).

Property Tax is accepted as “a Great Revolution” (Kurtuluş, January 15<sup>th</sup>, 1943: 11) it is mentioned that it is the first time the government had demanded selflessness from the minorities:

Finally, our government demanded selflessness from them as well. Property Tax is released to stop the inflation, to take back millions of money saved in some people’s pockets thanks to the robbing of the people, to stop the injustice, to stop the expensiveness and to prevent the depression. This was a unique revolution in our history! When those who got rich by engrossing and due to the conditions of wars are invited to give back what they owe to this Community, every citizen is asked for selflessness, no matter whether they are Turk or not... They might be some financial mistakes. Yet each cognate should accept this selflessness in joy for the Turkish economy and Turkish market that will be born as a result of this great Revolution! Even though, all his wealth will be gone! (Kurtuluş, January 15<sup>th</sup>, 1943: 11).

On the pages of the journal, a negative discourse is used towards the non-Turkic Muslims living in Turkey: “Who is this orator? His father is Circassian, mother is Arab, and his grandfather is a convert doctor”. (*Gök-Börü*, April 8<sup>th</sup>, 1943: 13).

Even in stories, there is a negative approach towards some ethnic groups. In every issue of the journal, the ethnic identities of the antagonists of the novel “Rage of the Wolves” (still in publication), are stressed:

(Referring to Husrev Pasha, the mayor of Aydın) He is bringing his Bosnian friends to Aydın and gives the most beautiful soils by taking them from their owners by force to these man who are allegedly not even circumcised (Öztürk, November 24<sup>th</sup>, 1942: 21).

It is understood that these rebels are those miserable gathered around Yanaki the butcher and a couple of Greek punks (Öztürk, February 15<sup>th</sup>, 1942: 21). ...With the punk Albanians gathered around him... (Öztürk, February 15<sup>th</sup>, 1942: 22).

## **The War**

Given that *Gök-Börü* was first published during the Second World War, war became one of the major themes. According to the journal “no matter from which battle from the philosophy of the war is carried on and no matter which consequence this philosophy reaches to, there is an obvious infallible and unchangeable reality. That is, the war is the most sacred national cause”

(Akgün, November 24<sup>th</sup>, 1942: 6). The journal (which asserts that the war is one of the glorious legacies our ancestors by saying “Battles would protect what battles established”), defends Turkey, which was established with the War of Liberation and would protect itself only by fighting. According to the journal, people “who want peace should prepare for the war” (Akgün, November 24<sup>th</sup>, 1942: 6). Thus, a real nationalist must not think that the war is humanistic at all:

Real nationalists do not deem necessity to think about to what degree the war is humanistic. Because they have a consciousness that comprehends the war’s indivisible integrity and takes the war as the cause’s base (Akgün, November 24<sup>th</sup>, 1942: 6).

The journal defends war, that it is not as horrible as it is claimed to be, for them the war is like a “medication” which does not have a very good taste (Tesbihçioğlu, December 15<sup>th</sup>, 1942: 8-9):

Is the war that terrible, meaningless and redundant as they claim it to be? No. The war is a necessity for mankind [...] I think that the moment in which a person would be in his highest point is the moment he faces death [...] Therefore the war is one of the institutions that makes human a human (Gök-Börü, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1943: 14).

It is propounded that the idea that war is horrible belongs to narrow-minded people; it is asserted moreover, that civilisations are based on war:

Narrow-minded people who are not capable of penetrate into the depth of incidents, only see ‘Death, Ruin and Absence’ in this war and all the wars; we say that this war is an evolvment and a reason for civilization. If war did not exist various civilisations would not communicate with each other this rapidly. If war did not exist, the life would be uniform, people would not need to have new moves (Tesbihçioğlu, December 15<sup>th</sup>, 1942: 8).

They say that the war decreases the population of humankind. We say that if the war did not exist, human generation would increase that much that this world could not feed them. (Tesbihçioğlu, December 15<sup>th</sup>, 1942: 8).

### **Fascism**

Even if the understanding of nationalism that *Gök-Börü* defends shows parallels with German Nazism, the journal does not accept this in any way. In the journal there are no examples of praise for Germany or for Hitler. On the contrary, the Journal emphasised that their ideology is nothing to do with Germany, and any claims of imitating German nationalism are certainly rejected:

Begin with there is a huge difference between the Germans’ racism and our racism (Gök-Börü, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1943: 12).

Real nationalist from any part of the world believes in his own nation's supremacy and goodness and about conducting the same principle, both German nationalists, English nationalists and French and Turkish nationalists do not have any difference. But the accusation of imitation does not come to anyone's minds because it is not possible to conceive a nationalist that does not believe in the supremacy of the nation (Gökbörü, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1943: 22).

### Conclusion

In general, the journal *Gök-Börü* enhanced an extreme nationalist discourse that leans towards racist ideologies - Turkism in particular. In this discourse, the idea that the "Turkish race is above all other races", and that a conflict exists between pure-blooded Turks and non-Turks or non-pure-blooded Turks/crossbreeds - or in other words the antagonism of "us and them"- has a central importance.

*Gök-Börü*, similar to other Turkist journals of the period, adopted a discourse that exceeds ordinary nationalism by following a strategy that calls for and feeds the blind rage and hatred of those parts of the community whose nationalist spirit is strong. Furthermore, a discourse fed on rage and hatred against the minorities is dominant in *Gök-Börü*. The discourse promotes the idea that Turks are "good", and that Turkish nationalism is good and positive, whereas nationalism of minorities is seen to be sinister and evil.

*Gök-Börü* adopted a discourse which reveres "Turkey" and Turkish identity as a whole by converting the successes of the Turkish states (especially those which were established in Central Asia and in those areas adjacent to Turkey), whilst marginalising non-Turkish Muslims, people who marry them and those who are not pure-blood Turkish.

The historical tension of Turkish nationalism demonstrates a cycle of alternately idealising the image of the West and Europe, and alternately seeing it as an "enemy" (Gökalp 2004: 303) reflected in the journal of *Gök-Börü*. On one hand, while the education and discipline systems of countries like England were praised, on the other, academics and young people were blamed for idealising Europe.

*Gök-Börü*, is quite successful in reflecting the basic arguments of racist ideology and Turkish nationalism in its discourse. It reveres both Turkishness and the Turkish nation and denounces forms of otherness which are seen to be enemies in the series. National identity is, however, rebuilt to be strong and mighty.

The educational and political backgrounds of its contributors, discussions held both specific to Turkey and across the world, its ideological tendencies, responsibilities that are attributed to youth, and its contribution to Turkish nationalism ensured that the *Gök-Börü* journal gained an important place in Turkey's political and intellectual life.

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