

PORTRAIT OF A TURKISH SOCIAL DEMOCRAT:  
ISMAIL CEM

A Ph.D. Dissertation

by  
OZAN ÖRMECİ

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE  
BILKENT UNIVERSITY  
ANKARA  
APRIL 2011







*To Cansu...*





PORTRAIT OF A TURKISH SOCIAL DEMOCRAT:  
ISMAIL CEM

The Institute of Economics and Social Sciences  
of  
Bilkent University

by  
OZAN ÖRMECİ

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

THE DEPARTMENT OF  
POLITICAL SCIENCE  
BİLKENT UNIVERSITY  
ANKARA  
APRIL 2011





I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science.

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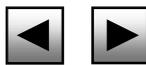
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## **ABSTRACT**

### **PORTRAIT OF A TURKISH SOCIAL DEMOCRAT: ISMAIL CEM**

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Ph.D., Department of Political Science

Supervisor: Asst. Prof. Berrak Burçak

APRIL 2011

İsmail Cem (1940-2007) was a Turkish intellectual and social democratic politician who spent his life investigating the characteristics and problems of Turkish modernization and social democratic solutions to these problems. Cem started his career as a peculiar socialist journalist who had a special curiosity towards the Ottoman past in the late 1960s and early 1970s. With his books and articles he became an influential and prestigious figure in the leftist intellectual and political circles and served as the manager of Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT). Unlike usual leftist-modernist intellectuals, he was very critical of “top to bottom” Turkish modernization and had propositions to solve Turkey’s political problems within the limits of democracy. During these years, Cem’s democratic socialism slowly evolved into social democracy. Starting from the 1980s, Cem appeared this time as a social democratic politician and tried to realize his projects and reduce his theories into practice. He was one of the leading figures of Turkish social democracy and was the creator of the “Anatolian Left” together





with Deniz Baykal. In the mid-1990s he served for a short time as the Minister of Culture and starting from 1997 -with short interruptions- for five years he worked as the Foreign Minister of Turkey. He continued to write about Turkish politics and foreign policy and left behind an important collection of books and articles.

İsmail Cem saw his life's work as involving basically three tasks: to reconcile Turkey with its Ottoman past by softening the radical modernist mentality of the earlier Republican period both on the intellectual and social levels, to find solutions to Turkey's various political problems by making a social democratic interpretation of Kemalism and thus, achieving democratic consolidation in Turkey and to transform his country into a respected regional power in international relations by pursuing an active foreign policy through full membership to the European Union as well as by developing relations with Middle Eastern and Eurasian countries. Both as a public intellectual and politician, he was able to take considerable steps in order to realize these three tasks, though he did not have chance to complete his mission. Although he was an important part of the intellectual force behind Turkey's pro-Western secular segments, we do not know too much about Cem's personal life and intellectual development throughout the years. This thesis is an attempt to analyze İsmail Cem by focusing on his life, his ideas, his political career, his propositions to Turkey's major democratic problems and his foreign policy understanding and practices analytically.

**Keywords:** İsmail Cem, Republican People's Party, Social Democracy, Turkish Left, Kemalism, New Left, Turkish Foreign Policy.





## ÖZET

### **BİR TÜRK SOSYAL DEMOKRATININ PORTRESİ: İSMAİL CEM**

Örmeci, Ozan

Doktora, Siyaset Bilimi Bölümü

Tez Yöneticisi: Yrd. Doç. Dr. Berrak Burçak

NİSAN 2011

İsmail Cem (1940-2007) hayatını Türk modernleşmesinin özelliklerini ve sorunlarını araştırmaya ve bunlara sosyal demokrat çözüm önerileri bulmaya adanmış bir entelektüel ve sosyal demokrat politikacıdır. Cem kariyerine 1960'ların sonları ve 1970'lerin başlarında Osmanlı tarihine özel ilgi gösteren ilginç bir sosyalist gazeteci olarak başlamıştır. Kitapları ve köşe yazılarıyla sol siyasal ve entelektüel çevrelerde etkili ve saygın bir kişi haline gelmiş, bir dönem TRT Genel Müdürü olarak da görev yapmıştır. Dönemin yaygın modernist solcu entelektüellerinin aksine Cem Türk modernleşmesinin tepeden inme metotlarını eleştirmiş ve Türkiye'nin siyasal sorunlarını demokratik sistem içerisinde çözmesi için çözüm önerileri geliştirmiştir. Bu yıllarda Cem'in demokratik sosyalist dünya görüşü yavaş yavaş sosyal demokrasiye doğru evrilmiştir. 1980'lerden başlayarak Cem artık bir sosyal demokrat politikacı olarak sahne almış ve projelerini gerçekleştirmeye ve teori ile pratiği birleştirmeye çalışmıştır. Türk sosyal demokrasisinin önemli bir ismi haline gelmiş ve arkadaşı Deniz





Baykal'la beraber Anadolu Solu'nun teorisyeni olmuştur. 1990'ların ortalarında kısa bir dönem Kültür Bakanı olarak sahne alan Cem, 1997 yılından başlayarak -kısa aralıklarla- beş yıl süreyle Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Dış İşleri Bakanı olarak görev yapmıştır. Bunun yanında Türk siyasal hayatı ve dış politikasıyla ilgili yazmaya devam etmiş ve ardında önemli bir külliyat bırakmıştır.

İsmail Cem Türk siyasal ve düşünce hayatındaki yerini üç somut vazife ile ilişkilendirmiştir; Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'ni Kemalizm'in radikal özelliklerini törpüleyerek hem entelektüel, hem de toplumsal düzeyde Osmanlı tarihiyle barıştırmak, Kemalizm'in sosyal demokratik bir yorumunu yaparak Türkiye'nin demokratik pekişmesini sağlamak ve hem Avrupa Birliği üyeliği, hem de Orta Doğu ve Avrasya ülkeleriyle yakın ilişkiler kurmak suretiyle Türkiye'yi bölgesinde etkili bir güç haline getirmek. Bu üç görev doğrultusunda hem bir entelektüel, hem de bir politikacı olarak Cem önemli ölçülerde yol almış ancak görevini tamamlamaya fırsat bulamamıştır. Türk siyasal ve entelektüel hayatında bu denli önemli roller oynamasına karşın Cem'in özel hayatı ve yıllar içerisindeki düşünsel gelişimiyle ilgili pek az şey bilinmektedir. Bu tez İsmail Cem'i analiz etmek için onun hayatı, fikirleri, siyasi kariyeri, Türkiye'nin demokratik sorunlarına getirdiği çözüm önerileri ve dış politika perspektifi ve uygulamalarını analitik bir şekilde incelemek amacıyla yapılmış bir denemedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** İsmail Cem, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, Sosyal Demokrasi, Türk Solu, Kemalizm, Yeni Sol, Türk Dış Politikası.





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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Who is afraid of democracy and democratization? In Turkey, consequences of globalization and democratization have begun to disturb millions of people who think that their state is in fact collapsing, although Turkey conducts full accession negotiations with European Union at the same time. This is mostly caused by the sociopolitical issues related to the secularism-Islam clash, the Kurdish question and civil-military relations, three problematic aspects of Turkish political life. Is a democratization and globalization process in conformity with the state's founding principles possible for Turkey? There is no doubt that this phrase has become the main research field for social scientists in Turkey especially in the last decade due to Turkey's serious problems overcoming the difficulties related to globalization, accession to the European Union and democratization. These problems became apparent and much stronger after the collapse of the coalition government headed by Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit and the takeover of the Islamist originated Justice and Development Party in 2002. İsmail Cem (1940-2007), a distinguished Turkish social democratic theoretician, journalist and politician who was one of the most important members of the collapsed coalition government as the Foreign Minister of Turkey,





with his unique approach to Turkish modernity and the Turkish political system as well as his moderate social democratic propositions for Turkey's democratic problems, deserves to be understood and remembered on the eve of new democracy problems Turkey is about to meet.

İsmail Cem was a Turkish intellectual and social democratic politician who spent his life investigating the characteristics and problems of Turkish modernization and social democratic solutions to these problems. Cem started his career as a unique socialist journalist who had a special curiosity towards the Ottoman past in the late 1960s and early 1970s. With his books and articles he became an influential and prestigious figure in the leftist intellectual and political circles and served as the manager of Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT). Unlike usual leftist-modernist intellectuals, he was very critical of "top to bottom" Turkish modernization and had propositions to solve Turkey's political problems within the limits of democracy. During these years, Cem's democratic socialism slowly evolved into social democracy. Starting from the 1980s, Cem appeared this time as a social democratic politician and tried to realize his projects and reduce his theories into practice. He was one of the leading figures of Turkish social democracy and was the creator of the "Anatolian Left" together with Deniz Baykal. In the mid-1990s he served for a short time as the Minister of Culture and starting from 1997 -with short interruptions- for five years he worked as the Foreign Minister of Turkey. He continued to write about Turkish politics and foreign policy and left behind an important collection of books and articles. He also brought courtesy to Turkish politics due to his gentle style and was respected by nearly all political actors and circles both within and outside of Turkey. Cem's political rivals and allies have been





able to find a large common ground in agreeing that Cem was a real democrat and humanist.

İsmail Cem saw his life's work as involving basically three tasks: to reconcile Turkey with its Ottoman past by softening the radical modernist mentality of the earlier Republican period both on the intellectual and social levels, to find solutions to Turkey's various political problems by making a social democratic interpretation of Kemalism and thus, achieving democratic consolidation in Turkey and to transform his country into a respected regional power in international relations by pursuing an active foreign policy through full membership to the European Union as well as by developing relations with Middle Eastern and Eurasian countries. Both as a public intellectual and politician, he was able to take considerable steps in order to realize these three tasks, though he did not have chance to complete his mission. Although he was an important part of the intellectual force behind Turkey's pro-Western secular segments, we do not know too much about Cem's personal life and intellectual development throughout the years.

This thesis is an attempt to analyze İsmail Cem by focusing on his life, his ideas, his political career, his propositions to Turkey's major democratic problems and his foreign policy understanding and practices analytically. It will be investigated how and why İsmail Cem's policies and managing style allowed a high majority of the Turkish people to accept globalization and full accession to the European Union not as a threat to secularism or independence, but as a positive process that would complete the modernization and democratization movement of the country that started with its founder Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. This question is also meaningful regarding Turkey's recent polarization and popular third-world tendencies of Turkey's secular segments as a reaction to threats and dangers in the





way of democratization and globalization. In Turkey's recent strained position, İsmail Cem's analysis of Turkish modernization, his proposals for Turkey's political problems, his vision for Turkey's EU membership and his foreign policy understanding based on a kind of synthesis between protecting national interests and supporting the democratization process and globalization, seem to be necessary for Turkey to be better analyzed and understood especially concerning the successes achieved in the realm of international relations during his tenure in office in the Turkish Foreign Ministry. That is why throughout the thesis the main question will be whether a democratization and globalization process in conformity with the state's founding principles could be possible for Turkey. Cem's contributions to Turkish intellectual and political life as well as his foreign policy understanding will be analyzed within this perspective and it will be asserted that a social democratic moderate version of Kemalism, as was created and suggested by İsmail Cem, could bring social peace to Turkey and could allow democratization and globalization not to be perceived as a threat to the Turkish state and the state's founding principles by the Turkish people and the Turkish state elite.

The scarcity of biographical works and elite studies in Turkish political science orientate scholars to explain political developments solely based on social dynamics and international relations. However, the importance of the role of agents (political elites) has been the focus of Western scholars starting with Dankwart Rustow<sup>1</sup>, especially in studies concerning democratic transition. Rustow and his transitionalist approach emerged as a reaction to the inefficiency of structuralist and modernist approaches in understanding the role of contingency and political actors. Rustow basically asserted that democracy is produced by the initiatives of human

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<sup>1</sup> Dankwart Rustow. 1970. "Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model" in *Comparative Politics* 2 (April).





beings [i.e. political elites], that democratization is not a worldwide uniform process and that there can be many roads to democracy. Rustow proposed to students of comparative politics to concentrate on political actors and their strategies which are assumed to be rational and autonomous. He also underlined the importance of choice and contingency. Moreover, Rustow rejected and offered an alternative to functionalist theories. Together with the devaluation of the modernization theory and class-based structuralist approaches, functionalist theories began to lose their supremacy in comparative politics works. There is no doubt that Rustow's accent on agency, process and bargaining opened a new field in comparative politics and increased the value of elite studies. In this sense, analyzing İsmail Cem's life, personality and deeds is an important step to explain Turkish democratic transformation in the last decade. It must also be noted that biographical works can be much more successful when the events and memories are fresh and witnesses and actors of these events are still alive. With this thesis, I hope to make a significant contribution to Turkish political studies by analyzing an important social democratic figure who contributed to Turkish democratization and foreign policy and offered a new model of moderate social democratic version of Kemalism that could prevent harsh political confrontations.

İsmail Cem, as a man of letters and ideas and one of the leading theoreticians of Turkish social democracy, wrote many books and articles which allow this thesis to make a comprehensive analysis based on primary sources.<sup>2</sup> Throughout the thesis,

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<sup>2</sup> İsmail Cem. 1986. "1988 Genel Seçimine İlişkin Seçim Organizasyonu ve Çalışma Modeli".

İsmail Cem. 1984. "Birbirine 'Katlanmak' zorunluluğu" in *DEMOKRASİ Ortak kitap 2*. İstanbul: YAZKO.

İsmail Cem. 1999. *Dış İşleri Bakanı İsmail Cem Konuşmalar Demeçler Açıklamalar*. Ankara: Dışişleri Bakanlığı Enformasyon Dairesi Başkanlığı.

İsmail Cem. 1987. *Engeller ve Çözümler Türkiye'de Sosyal Demokrasi*. İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi.

İsmail Cem. 1994. *Gelecek İçin Denemeler*. İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi.

İsmail Cem. 2000. *Gelecek İçin Denemeler*. İstanbul: Can Yayınları.

İsmail Cem. 1980. *Siyaset Yazıları: 1975-1980 Türkiye'si*. İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi.





in order to substantiate his ideas, all of Cem's books, articles, declarations and speeches will be analyzed. In this sense, this study will also be based on discourse and content analysis. While discourse analysis will enable us to study Cem's rhetoric and basic arguments by using the tools of qualitative research, content analysis of the primary and secondary sources will help us elicit the main concepts used by Cem in formulating his foreign policy. The richness found in the area of primary sources is not available for secondary sources since the number of secondary resources related to İsmail Cem is very limited.<sup>3</sup> This is caused by the lack of biographical works in Turkish political studies, the "second man" position of Cem, being the Minister of Foreign Affairs instead of Prime Minister and the proximity of Cem's deeds.

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- İsmail Cem. 1984. *Siyaset Yazıları: "Geçiş Dönemi Türkiye" (1981-1984 Yılları)*. İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi.
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- İsmail Cem. 2005. *Türkiye, Avrupa, Avrasya İkinci cilt: Avrupa'nın "Birliđi" ve Türkiye*. İstanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları.
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- İsmail Cem. 1970. *Türkiye Üzerine (Araştırmalar)*. İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi.
- İsmail Cem. 2003. *Yeni Bir Türkiye İçin...*. İstanbul: Cem Ofset Matbaacılık Sanayi AŞ.
- İsmail Cem and Deniz Baykal. 1992. "SHP'de YENİ SOL'un Türkiye Programı - DEĞİŞİM".
- İsmail Cem and Deniz Baykal. 1992. *Yeni Sol*. İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi.
- <sup>3</sup> Abdullah Muradođlu. 2002. *Selanik'ten İstanbul'a İpekçi'ler ve İsmail Cem*. İstanbul: Bakış Yayınları.
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Moreover, books written on Cem are mostly journalistic and stray from academic validity. It must also be noted that these books do not really focus on Cem's achievements or his ideological orientation and do not have concrete arguments about Cem's political stance. Abdullah Muradođlu's book entitled *Selanik'ten İstanbul'a İpekçi'ler ve İsmail Cem* is basically a controversial and non-academic research book about the İpekçi family and their members, in which a large part was dedicated to İsmail Cem's life story and family background. Can Dündar's *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim* is based on Dündar's interview and discussions with İsmail Cem about Cem's life and deeds in his last days and carries very important, detailed and chronological information about Cem's life and political career. Cem Gökçe's *İsmail Cem Olayı* is a short book written in the mid-1970s in order to defend the "just cause" of İsmail Cem against his removal from the TRT directorial position. İsmet Solak's *İsmail Cem Dosyası* is a more comprehensive version of Gökçe's book, which covers İsmail Cem's TRT years. A book published by the Turkish Journalists Syndicate's Ankara branch *Anayasa Işığında Kanun Hükmünde Kararnameler ve İsmail Cem'in Durumu* is about an academic discussion between law professors about the controversial removal of Cem from the TRT office. Oktay Duran's *İsmail Cem'in Ardından* consists of articles and notes written on Cem by distinguished statesmen, politicians, journalists and intellectuals after Cem's passing away. Although secondary works written on İsmail Cem do not have academic validity, they still make an important contribution in collecting and analyzing Cem's life, political affiliations and memories. There are also numerous political history books and memoirs that will be used in the thesis in which İsmail Cem takes part.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Aydın Engin. 2007. "Politika Gazetesi" in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce cilt 8 Sol*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.  
Can Dündar and Rıdvan Akar. 2008. *Ecevit ve Gizli Arşivi*. Ankara: İmge Kitabevi.  
Cemal Süreya. 1991. *99-Yüz*. İstanbul: Sistem Yayıncılık.





This study will necessarily draw from multidisciplinary fields including political science, international relations, sociology, history, political psychology and European studies. The interdisciplinary character of this dissertation will enable us to analyze various aspects of the topic. After the monographic second chapter that focuses on İsmail Cem's biographical details, his political career and dominant character traits, Cem's political views on different topics will be analyzed in detail by acknowledging and pointing out the changes he went through in the 1970s to 1980s in the third chapter called "Cem as a public intellectual". Cem's views will be explained within the panorama of Turkish political history and international developments and with the addition of some memoirs and events from Cem's personal life. Cem's understanding of social democracy will be explained analytically under some subheadings that will expose a comprehensive analysis of Cem's world view and his place in Turkish intellectual life. In the fourth chapter, Cem's career as a politician will be analyzed in detail by focusing on his views, deeds and statements as an active politician. Chapter 4 will focus on Cem's political achievements and contributions to Turkish political life as a social democratic politician. In the fifth chapter, Cem's views on the challenges to Turkish democratic consolidation, namely civil-military relations, the Kurdish question and political

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Islam-secularism discussions, will be dealt with. Cem's views on these problems and his suggestions for solving these problems will be analyzed in detail. The dissertation will follow with a detailed summary and analysis of the developments in Turkish foreign policy during Cem's tenure in office as the minister of Foreign Affairs. The core aims and principles of Cem's foreign policy will be explained in detail topic ally. Cem's policies and performance on six major topics: namely Turkish-American relations, Turkish-EU relations, the struggle against international terrorism, the Cyprus problem and relations with Greece, and relations with the Eurasian and Middle Eastern countries will be examined closely and separately in this chapter. Chapter 6 will also focus on Cem's contributions to Turkish foreign policy. The thesis will end with the concluding Chapter 7 that summarizes and focuses on the main findings of the thesis.





## CHAPTER II

### A MAN OF LETTERS AND ROMANCE

İsmail Cem (1940-2007) was a prestigious and important figure in Turkish intellectual and political life, who spent his life investigating the characteristics and problems of Turkish modernization and social democratic solutions to these problems. Cem had a successful, adventurous and colorful life.

#### 2.1. Family Background, Childhood and Parents

İsmail Cem İpekçi<sup>1</sup> is a descendant of the famous İpekçi family, émigrés from Salonika<sup>2</sup>. The İpekçi family is a large, rooted and rich family that emigrated to İstanbul from Salonika in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>3</sup> The family takes

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<sup>1</sup> İsmail Cem İpekçi in journalism and his political career preferred to use “İsmail Cem” as his name and refrained from using his last name “İpekçi”. Cem told Can Dündar that this was caused by his chief from *Milliyet* newspaper Turhan Aytul’s preference. Aytul, in 1963, in the early days of Cem’s journalism career when Cem handed in his first article, advised Cem not to use his last name in the signature part since his cousin Abdi İpekçi was the editor-in-chief of the *Milliyet* newspaper and this situation could overshadow the success and the prestige of Cem’s writings. See; Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 70. Later, when Cem was the director of TRT (Turkish Radio and Television Corporation), Justice Party deputies stressed Cem’s preference of not using his last name in hot parliamentary debates by making reference to Sabetaism-Judaism discussions and blamed him for committing a crime of hiding one’s last name as an official of the state. Cem after this accusation shortened his name and made “İsmail Cem” by court decision. See; Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 72.

<sup>2</sup> Selanik in Turkish and Thessaloniki in Greek.

<sup>3</sup> Cem’s grandfather migrated to İstanbul in 1912 from Salonika after the entry of Greek soldiers to the city. See; Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 8.





its name from their commercial activity.<sup>4</sup> What makes the İpekçi family so recognized and publicized is not only their wealth, but also their famous members<sup>5</sup> and claims about their Jewish-Sabetaist background.<sup>6</sup> The Sabetaism debate has become one of the most popular and controversial topics in Turkish intellectual life in the last decade although it was a matter of interest only for political Islamists two decades ago. As it was stated by Cengiz Şişman, many prestigious people including İsmail Cem became victims of this madness.<sup>7</sup> Although what has been written on Sabetaism and the non-academic controversial claims about the Sabetaist background of the İpekçi family could cover much more space, this thesis will leave aside these conspiracy theories and the Sabetaist witch-hunt and will rather focus on Cem's life story and personality.

İsmail Cem was born on 15 February 1940 in İstanbul in the early days of the Second World War. Although Turkey did not enter into the war, it was inevitably economically affected in a very negative way because of the extraordinary conditions in most developed countries of the world which Turkey approached as trade partners.

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<sup>4</sup> The İpekçi family for long years dealt with silk production and trade but after migrating to İstanbul they were engaged in other commercial activities such as storekeeping, the cinema business, film-making and postcard production. See; Abdullah Muradođlu, *Selanik'ten İstanbul'a İpekçi'ler ve İsmail Cem*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>5</sup> The famous journalist and the editor-in-chief of *Milliyet* newspaper Abdi İpekçi (1929-1979) was İsmail Cem's cousin and a member of the İpekçi family. Abdi İpekçi was assassinated in 1979 by ultra-nationalist groups. The assassin was Mehmet Ali Ağca, an ultra-nationalist militant, member of the Grey Wolves organization and a sympathizer of the Nationalist Action Party, who later tried to assassinate Pope John Paul II on 13 May 1981. Fashion designer Cemil İpekçi was an adopted child who became a member of the İpekçi family and İsmail Cem's cousin. İsmail Cem's father İhsan İpekçi was the owner of İpek Film and a well-known film-maker, writer and scenarist. The famous caricaturist of Cumhuriyet newspaper Ali Ulvi Ersoy was İsmail Cem's sister's husband. Soprano "La Diva Turca" Leyla Gencer, journalist Ergun Balcı, actor Engin Cezzar, journalist İbrahim Çamlı, musician Özdemir Erdoğan and writer Erdal Öz were all somehow related to the İpekçi family. See; Tayfun Er. 2007. *Erguvaniler Türkiye'de İktidar Dođanlar*, İzmir: Duvar Yayınları, pp. 76-77.

<sup>6</sup> This claim was never proved or accepted by İpekçi family members. However, Cemil İpekçi in an interview given to *Aksiyon* magazine approved the claim. See; Cemal A. Kalyoncu. "Cemil İpekçi: Sabetai Sevi'nin torunuyum", *Aksiyon*, 18 Eylül 1999, issue: 250, pp. 33-38. Cem's daughter İpek Cem Taha also negated these claims about her family background.

<sup>7</sup> Cengiz Şişman. 2008. *Sabatay Sevi ve Sabataycılar: Mitler ve Gerçekler*, Ankara: Aşına Kitaplar, p. 16.





Moreover, İsmet İnönü<sup>8</sup>, the “National Chief (*Milli Şef*)” implemented an authoritarian regime in these difficult years in order to protect Turkey from internal uprisings and negative consequences of the World War. However, İsmail Cem admits that he was a lucky child and that he had a very happy infancy.<sup>9</sup> Cem lived in a large apartment in Nişantaşı-Teşvikiye with his family, but spent summers in their summer house on the Prinkipo Island (Büyükada). Cem’s family was wealthy, but his biggest luxuries were his bicycle, spindals made of glass and tin soldier toys in those years.<sup>10</sup> Although he reacted negatively to his teacher for the homework she had given him on the first day of elementary school (the elementary school branch of Işık College<sup>11</sup>), he finished the first year as the most successful student and was awarded with Ferenc Molnár’s *The Pal Street Boys* book by his teacher.<sup>12</sup> *The Pal Street Boys* was little Cem’s favorite book alongside some heroic nationalist stories. He did not remember himself as a naughty child but later his mother Rikkat İpekçi complained to his wife Elçin Cem about the naughtiness of İsmail Cem when he was a little boy. The fundamental feeling Cem had during his childhood was feeling sorry for other children who did not have the same opportunities as him<sup>13</sup>, a psychological

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<sup>8</sup> İsmet İnönü (1884-1973) was a Turkish Army General during the Turkish Independence War. He became one of the national heroes and closest friend of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk after the establishment of The Republic of Turkey. He served as Prime Minister three terms (1923-1924, 1925-1937, 1961-1965) and as the second President of the Republic (1938-1950). Professor Metin Heper, who made a comprehensive analysis of İnönü’s personality and political career, concluded that İnönü had always believed in democracy and wanted to establish a healthy democracy in Turkey. However, İnönü thought that he needed to protect the regime first in order to establish democracy; that is why he used some authoritarian methods in the past. İnönü loved participatory democracy but also prudent government. He thought of the next generation of his country more than the next elections, which means he was not a politician but rather a statesman. He wanted RPP to act as the guardian of general interests and did not engage in daily politics. Heper points out that İnönü was respected by people more than he was liked. Heper also mentions that although İnönü was completely secular in the political sense, he was a religious man. He was dreaming of cooperation between different political parties in the country rather than competition. For details see; Metin Heper. 1998. *İsmet İnönü The Making of a Turkish Statesman*. Leiden: Brill.

<sup>9</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 3.

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>11</sup> Known as the school of wealthy Istanbulite families. See; Abdullah Muradoğlu, *Selanik’ten İstanbul’a İpekçi’ler ve İsmail Cem*, p. 112.

<sup>12</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, pp. 6-7.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*, p. 8.





aspect that probably shaped Cem's social democratic world view. Little Cem's favorite social activity was going to his father's cinema to watch movies on Sunday mornings with his friends.

İsmail Cem's father İhsan İpekçi (1901-1966) naturally played an important role in the formation of his son's personality. Cem had great respect and love towards his father and he felt very comfortable being the "son of the boss" when he was a child. İhsan İpekçi was a well-known film-maker and scenarist and had acquaintances with leftist intellectuals such as Sabahattin Ali<sup>14</sup> and Nazım Hikmet<sup>15</sup>. The İpekçi family's close friend circle mostly consisted of intellectuals and artists with social democratic/socialist views.<sup>16</sup> However, Cem remembers that his father never talked about politics when he was around, probably in order to not direct him towards a certain ideology. In Cem's view, his father was not really interested in politics, but he was a passionate romantic, humanist and democrat.<sup>17</sup> His novels published in the *Hürriyet* (Liberty) newspaper with the nickname of "İhsan Koza" were based on grievous love stories that took place in war periods.<sup>18</sup> İhsan İpekçi's humanism naturally affected his intelligent son and played a great role in shaping

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<sup>14</sup> Sabahattin Ali (1907-1948) was a socialist journalist and writer who opposed to some policies of the single-party period in Turkey and who was later killed in a suspicious assassination. Ali Ertekin, the man who took responsibility for committing the murder, was sentenced to only four years and he was set free after an amnesty law announced in the same year.

<sup>15</sup> Nazım Hikmet Ran (1901-1963) was Turkey's most famous poet who spent most of his life in prison and in exile because of his communist views and romantic revolutionary works. Cem's father İhsan İpekçi tried to help Nazım Hikmet in his difficult days by giving him a job as a scenarist of İpek Film. According to İsmail Cem, this was caused by his father's humanist personality and admiration for Nazım's poems rather than his ideological positioning. Nazım Hikmet also spent his last night before escaping to exile in İhsan İpekçi's house. According to rumors, Nazım Hikmet also signed a poem to İhsan İpekçi with a note saying "to the only bourgeois I love". See; Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 9. İsmail Cem's admiration of Nazım Hikmet was no less than his father's. In 2002, during a special night organized in order to commemorate Nazım Hikmet, Cem was touched by Nazım Hikmet's poems read by Genco Erkal and accompanied by Fazıl Say's piano compositions. Cem was pictured as crying. See; Abdullah Muradoğlu, *Selanik'ten İstanbul'a İpekçi'ler ve İsmail Cem*, p. 92.

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*, p. 117.

<sup>17</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, pp. 10-11.

<sup>18</sup> *Senede Bir Gün* (A Day in a Year) was one of İhsan İpekçi's novels that became very famous after its adaptation to the screen. See; Abdullah Muradoğlu, *Selanik'ten İstanbul'a İpekçi'ler ve İsmail Cem*, p. 31.





Cem's romantic and tolerant personality. The İpekçi family did not have a strict political attitude but still Cem remembers that the founder of the Republic of Turkey Mustafa Kemal Atatürk<sup>19</sup> was a real hero for them<sup>20</sup> and his father was close to Atatürk's Republican People's Party<sup>21</sup> although he was against certain policies of İsmet İnönü such as the Wealth Tax<sup>22</sup>. İhsan İpekçi had close ties with the Kemalist government and he even had the chance to cinematize Atatürk twice upon his request.<sup>23</sup> However, the İpekçi family's admiration for Atatürk was not an obstacle for them to have sympathy for the transition to a multi-party regime and the take-over of the Democrat Party<sup>24</sup> after 27 years of rule of the Republican People's Party in 1950.<sup>25</sup> İhsan İpekçi was also a very productive and innovative person since he became one of the pioneers of the cinema industry in Turkey. Cem's insistence on change and innovation in his political career (which will be shown later with

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<sup>19</sup> Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881-1938) was the cult military and political leader of the Turkish Independence War, founder of the Republic of Turkey and the first President of the Republic. See; Metin Heper. 2006. *Türkiye Sözlüğü Siyaset, Toplum ve Kültür*. İstanbul: Doğu Batı Yayınları, pp. 143-144.

<sup>20</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 12.

<sup>21</sup> Founded by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and his friends, the Republican People's Party (RPP) is Turkey's first and oldest political party that established the modern Republic of Turkey and laid the foundation of a secular and democratic state. Starting from the mid-1960s the party transformed itself from a Kemalist party into a social democratic one and became a member of the Socialist International. See; Metin Heper, *Türkiye Sözlüğü Siyaset, Toplum ve Kültür*, pp. 183-186. For a detailed study on RPP see; Ayşe Güneş Ayata. 1992. *CHP (Örgüt ve İdeoloji)*. Ankara: Gündoğan Yayınları. Also see; Bila, Hikmet. 1999. *CHP 1919-1999*. İstanbul: Doğan Kitapçılık AŞ.

<sup>22</sup> Wealth Tax (Varlık Vergisi in Turkish) was a forced tax taken on the wealthy citizens of Turkey in 1942, with the purpose of raising funds for the country's defense expenditures because of the danger of probable engagement in the Second World War. The Wealth Tax was paid by all Turkish citizens but the country's non-Muslim citizens were generally imposed higher tariffs. See; Abdullah Muradoğlu, *Selanik'ten İstanbul'a İpekçi'ler ve İsmail Cem*, p. 117.

<sup>23</sup> The first film turned out to be a scandal since Atatürk's negative reaction to some of the spectators was recorded. However, later Atatürk loved this part most and watched the film many times. The second film was about Yugoslavian king Alexander's visit to Turkey. See; Hıfzı Topuz. 2000. *Eski Dostlar*. İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, pp. 137-138.

<sup>24</sup> Founded in 1946, the Democrat Party (DP) was an economically liberal and culturally conservative party that formed the government between 1950 and 1960 and started the populist right-wing tradition in Turkey. By the 27 May 1960 intervention, the party was closed down but it was succeeded by Justice Party (1960-1980), True Path Party (1983-2007) and Democratic Party (2007-). See; Metin Heper, *Türkiye Sözlüğü Siyaset, Toplum ve Kültür*, pp. 200-201. For a detailed study on Democrat Party see; Cem Eroğul. 2003. *Demokrat Parti Tarihi ve İdeolojisi*. Ankara: İmge Kitabevi Yayınları. Also see; Cemil Koçak. 2010. *İkinci Parti: Türkiye'de İki Partili Siyasi Sistemin Kuruluş Yılları 1945-1950 Cilt 1*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınevi.

<sup>25</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 10.





examples from Cem's life) probably comes from his father's feverish character. İhsan İpekçi was also a warm-hearted person who was devoted to animals, especially dogs. İsmail Cem too became a very devoted person to animals and cared for a canary and dogs in addition to his aquarium hobby.<sup>26</sup>

İsmail Cem's mother Rikkat İpekçi also naturally contributed a lot to the shaping of his character. Cem told journalist Can Dündar that his mother was a very cold-blooded and calm person unlike his passionate father and his own tranquility probably comes from his mother.<sup>27</sup> Cem was very close to his mother since he spent most of his time in the house with her while his father was out for business. İsmail Cem had a bit distant but harmonious relationship with his elder sister Alev İpekçi. Cem later told Can Dündar that the way his parents, especially his mother brought him up, provided him with self-confidence<sup>28</sup> and a well-balanced emotional character.<sup>29</sup>

## 2.2. Robert College Years

After finishing the elementary school of Işık College, Cem started Robert College of İstanbul, a very famous, rooted and selective private school known for its high-quality English teaching and American style of education. Cem loved Robert College a lot because of the opportunities and the liberal atmosphere it offered. In Turkey too, the early 1950s were the years of economic advancement and political liberalization. At Robert College, İsmail Cem had the chance to listen and learn symphonic music and encounter the works of authors such as Ernest Hemingway,

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<sup>26</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, pp. 271-278.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>28</sup> For instance, after Cem was removed from the directorship position of TRT, he wrote in his memoirs that he would have much more important memoirs than TRT days in the future; a statement that clearly shows Cem's self-confidence and determination in politics. See; İsmail Cem, *TRT'de 500 Gün ... bir dönem Türkiye'sinin hikayesi*, p. 6.

<sup>29</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 26.





Charles Dickens, John Steinbeck, Arthur Miller and Albert Camus for the first time by reading their books in English.<sup>30</sup> Robert College in a sense allowed Cem to start thinking beyond national borders and invent new worlds because of his knowledge of the most widely spoken language of the world. Cem remembers his college days with pride and praises his school for its libertarian atmosphere, allowing free-speech and free discussion through student clubs.<sup>31</sup> Cem learned the basis of rhetoric, rules of a democratic political discussion, the art of photography and the main principles of journalism in college. He even worked as a reporter for the school journal entitled *Echo (Yankı)* with his friend Ercan Arıklı who later became a famous journalist.<sup>32</sup> Cem also wrote his first poems also in Robert College. One of his poems he wrote for the street cleaners he saw in the mornings named “*Sabahleyin Sokaklar* (Streets in the Morning)” was even published in a literary magazine in Edirne, which delighted young Cem.<sup>33</sup> The poem was simple and obviously not a masterpiece, but still its social content gave traces of Cem’s idealistic and romantic personality that does not accept the inequalities and desperation of poor people.

### **STREETS IN THE MORNING**

Streets are completely different in the morning,  
Garbage men are there,  
And freezing workers.

Garbage men are in the streets,  
They all have homesickness,  
They chant folksongs  
They twist their moustaches and cuss  
With their garbage smelling hands.

Streets smell dirt and hope in the mornings,  
You can read goodness from people’s faces.  
Garbage men and workers are in the streets,  
It touches my heart.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 15.

<sup>31</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 14-15.

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>33</sup> Abdullah Muradoğlu, *Selanik’ten İstanbul’a İpekçi’ler ve İsmail Cem*, p. 117.

<sup>34</sup> SABAHLEYİN SOKAKLAR





İsmail Cem also took part in school's chess team, touring and photography clubs. When his father brought a new Folkländer photographic machine from Germany<sup>35</sup>, he became an amateur photographer and never lost his passion for photography during his entire life.<sup>36</sup> In 1956, when Robert College witnessed the first student demonstration in its history, Cem photographed the demonstration and published pictures in *Cumhuriyet* (Republic) newspaper with the help of his elder sister Alev İpekçi's husband, Ali Ulvi Ersoy, who was working as a caricaturist in that journal.<sup>37</sup> At the age of sixteen, Cem started to enjoy journalism since his pictures were published in a respected newspaper.<sup>38</sup> Cem also participated in the opening ceremony of Anıtkabir<sup>39</sup> with his father and filmed the ceremony.<sup>40</sup> He loved most literature and logic lessons but did not like biology and geometry

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Bambaşka olur sabah sokaklar  
Çöpçü vardır sokaklarda  
Ve üşüyen ameleler.

Çöpçüler vardır sokaklarda;  
Hepsi sıra hasreti çeker.  
Türkü söylerler  
Bıyık burup, çöp kokan elleriyle  
Küfrederler.

Pislik ve ümit kokar sabahleyin sokaklar,  
İnsanların yüzlerinde okunur iyilik.  
Çöpçülerle ameleler vardır sokaklarda,  
Yüreğime dokunur.

See; Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 22.

<sup>35</sup> Abdullah Muradoğlu, *Selanik'ten İstanbul'a İpekçi'ler ve İsmail Cem*, p. 118.

<sup>36</sup> İsmail Cem later published two photographic album books (the second one is called "Mevsimler/Seasons") and arranged five exhibitions. In photography, Cem adopted an artistic style and produced photographs based on the color harmony of picturesque landscapes rather than social realist perspective. See; Cüneyt Özdemir. 2000. *Reytingsiz Sohbetler*. İstanbul: Su Yayınları, pp. 99-100. However, some of Cem's pictures -such as "Les Clochards" and "Global Reality" which could be seen in the attachment part- touched upon social problems and showed parallel tendencies with Cem's political stance. Other than these two rare social based photographs, in his book Seasons, Cem wanted to "present impressions from seasons that are beyond the calendars". See; İsmail Cem, *Mevsimler/Seasons*, p. 1. To see some of Cem's photographs from the book Seasons, see attachments.

<sup>37</sup> Abdullah Muradoğlu, *Selanik'ten İstanbul'a İpekçi'ler ve İsmail Cem*, pp. 119-120.

<sup>38</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 49.

<sup>39</sup> The mausoleum of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in Ankara.

<sup>40</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 19.





although he was a very successful student.<sup>41</sup> He also acted in two dramas as a member of Robert College's theatre club.<sup>42</sup> İsmail and Elçin Cem first met in Robert College but their relationship was no more than friendship in those years. Elçin Cem remembers young Cem as bright, intelligent and good-looking but also a different person from his fellows with whom she loved to talk on different matters.<sup>43</sup>

One of the most interesting events in Cem's college years was his voyage to the USA with the American Field Service exchange program for a year (1956-1957). Cem stayed with an American family (the Parkhursts) in San Francisco and had the chance to visit "splendid" American cities like New York.<sup>44</sup> Cem admits that he was affected by the glorious aspects of the American style of living, but he never lost his passion for his own country unlike some of his friends who became Americanized after a year in the USA.<sup>45</sup> Cem was successful at school both in courses and social life. He had very good relations with the Parkhurst family members, but his political choice for the 1956 American presidential elections was against the family's wishes. Cem had sympathy for the Democratic Party's presidential candidate, Adlai Stevenson, whereas the Parkhursts, as a traditionally Republican family, supported the Republican Party's candidate Dwight D. Eisenhower. Cem's support for the weaker side, for instance in boxing matches or in American presidential elections, led the Parkhursts to call him the "supporter of the underdog" in a jocular way.<sup>46</sup> Cem also had his first political experience working for the Democratic Party's student club in college. Cem loved some aspects of the American system, for instance having the chance to speak freely and criticize the American system in

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<sup>41</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 20.

<sup>42</sup> *ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>43</sup> *ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>44</sup> *ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>45</sup> *ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>46</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 30-31.





school even as a non-American student.<sup>47</sup> However, he also found American life, especially fraternity clubs system in the school, too competitive and felt sorry for students who did not make it socially at school.<sup>48</sup> Although Cem was impressed by the USA's technological possibilities, glorious cities and freedom of thought, his sympathy for the aggrieved side led him to find the American system too draconian and disadvantageous for the weaker ones. He also felt a kind of responsibility for developing his country and aiding the poor children who did not have the same opportunities as Cem did after experiencing American life. Cem's experience in the USA might have played an important role in the shaping of his "underdevelopment" theory in subsequent years. Cem loved American people and found them helpful and optimistic, but opposed many American policies starting from his youth.<sup>49</sup> In Cem's view, what made the American state powerful and the American society integrated was the environment of liberty that the system offered to people to protect their own sub-cultures and live according to their own preferences, despite perpetual enormous inequalities in the system.<sup>50</sup>

After spending a year in the USA, Cem returned to Robert College, but this time as a more politicized student. Since he had worked in a student club of the Democratic Party in the USA and became experienced, Cem wanted to work for the Republican People's Party and organize his friends. So, he became a member of RPP's Teşvikiye branch and soon became the head of the RPP Teşvikiye's youth department in 1958.<sup>51</sup> Cem organized free courses of English for citizens in RPP's Beşiktaş branch.<sup>52</sup> The late 1950s were politically very heated and increasing

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<sup>47</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 33.

<sup>48</sup> *ibid.*, p. 35.

<sup>49</sup> *ibid.*, p. 38.

<sup>50</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 40-41.

<sup>51</sup> Abdullah Muradoğlu, *Selanik'ten İstanbul'a İpekçi'ler ve İsmail Cem*, p. 117.

<sup>52</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 47.





pressures of the Democrat Party government and Prime Minister Adnan Menderes over the media, bureaucracy, and the Republican People's Party led to the first student demonstrations and mass protestations. At the time, Cem was reading all sorts of publications including Necip Fazıl Kısakürek's<sup>53</sup> *Büyük Doğu* (Grand East) in addition to his favorite *Cumhuriyet* newspaper.<sup>54</sup> In fact, Cem always had a great curiosity towards the East because his Western lifestyle and education did not satisfy his passion for information and culture on its own. Starting from his youth, Cem tried to learn about Islam.<sup>55</sup> Thanks to his Turkish literature teacher from Robert College he read *Hallac-ı Mansur*<sup>56</sup> in his early college days.<sup>57</sup> Although he did not have a strict political ideology in those years, he was extremely uncomfortable with the DP's authoritarian policies and censorship practices over the press. Cem even kept guard duty in front of the RPP leader and National War hero İsmet İnönü's house as a reaction to physical assaults made to İsmet Pasha by DP supporters.<sup>58</sup> Cem later admitted that in those years as an unconscious young partisan, he was in favor of military intervention to straighten things out in the country.<sup>59</sup>

### 2.3. The Lausanne University Years

İsmail Cem graduated from Robert College in 1959 and began to look for university education options. His father wanted him to become a lawyer.<sup>60</sup> İhsan İpekçi was a bit disturbed of Cem's circle of friends in İstanbul who were from

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<sup>53</sup> Necip Fazıl Kısakürek (1904-1983) was a famous Turkish poet, writer and philosopher known for his Islamic and anti-communist political views. See; Metin Heper, *Türkiye Sözlüğü Siyaset, Toplum ve Kültür*, p. 328.

<sup>54</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, pp. 46-47.

<sup>55</sup> *ibid.*, p. xvii.

<sup>56</sup> Mansur al-Hallaj (858-922) was a Persian and Shiite philosopher and writer known for his famous saying "En-el hak (I am God)".

<sup>57</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 15.

<sup>58</sup> Abdullah Muradoğlu, *Selanik'ten İstanbul'a İpekçi'ler ve İsmail Cem*, p. 117.

<sup>59</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 55.

<sup>60</sup> Abdullah Muradoğlu, *Selanik'ten İstanbul'a İpekçi'ler ve İsmail Cem*, p. 121.





wealthy families and he wanted him to study abroad.<sup>61</sup> However, Cem was not sure about going abroad, especially in those difficult days of his country, because of the DP's authoritarianism. He felt that leaving his country would be treason<sup>62</sup> and he was dreaming of saving the country.<sup>63</sup> However, upon his father's insistence he took the exams and qualified for Lausanne University's Law department. Cem's hesitancy of going abroad disappeared after some of his friends from Robert College were admitted to Lausanne University.<sup>64</sup> In September 1959, Cem arrived at Lausanne to start his law education. He was a very active student in Lausanne among the Turkish community and he became the president of the Turkish Student Union. Polarization within the country between RPP and DP supporters was also reflected among Turkish students in Lausanne. Cem, in accordance with the major intellectual trend of those years in Turkey, was in favor of military intervention and the adoption of a new constitution that would increase and guarantee civil freedoms.<sup>65</sup> İsmail Cem learned of the take-over of the Turkish military on 27 May 1960 on the phone and welcomed the event like all other family members and most of the Turkish intellectuals of that period.<sup>66</sup> However, during trials, especially after the execution of Prime Minister Adnan Menderes<sup>67</sup>, Minister of Finance Hasan Polatkan and Foreign Minister Fatin Rüştü Zorlu, he felt extremely despondent.<sup>68</sup> In Cem's view, 27 May was a turning point for Turkey to develop its democracy and intellectual

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<sup>61</sup> İhsan İpekçi's discontent was caused by young İsmail Cem's smoking habit, political activities and flyaway entertainments. See; Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 53.

<sup>62</sup> *ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>63</sup> Abdullah Muradoğlu, *Selanik'ten İstanbul'a İpekçi'ler ve İsmail Cem*, p. 122.

<sup>64</sup> İsmail Cem's wife Elçin Cem (Trak), his sister İnci Arıklı (Trak) who later became Ercan Arıklı's wife, Ercan Arıklı, Alp Yalman, Ali Pasiner, Haluk Ferhatoğlu, Tamer Soyer, Şener Soyer and Ahmet Tekeli were all İsmail Cem's friends from Robert College who also studied at Lausanne University. See; Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 54.

<sup>65</sup> *ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>66</sup> *ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>67</sup> Adnan Menderes (1899-1961) was the founder and leader of the Democrat Party, the first fully democratically elected Turkish Prime Minister who ruled the country between 1950 and 1960 but was executed in 1961 after the 27 May 1960 military intervention. See; Metin Heper, *Türkiye Sözlüğü Siyaset, Toplum ve Kültür*, p. 358.

<sup>68</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 57.





accumulation, especially concerning Marxist-leftist ideology and the syndical movement.<sup>69</sup> The 1961 constitution expanded the scope of democracy and established the necessary institutions that would limit the government's power and in that sense it was a progressive step. However, as Cem grew older, he understood better the negative consequences of 27 May military intervention.

In Lausanne, İsmail Cem met with French-European culture and was greatly impressed by it. He learned French and improved his cultural knowledge of art. As a young man living on his own in a foreign country, he learned how to cope with difficulties of life and how to study in a more disciplined way. In those years, the French dispute over Algeria was heated and as a classical and romantic “underdog supporter” Cem was in favor of a free Algeria.<sup>70</sup> Cem's ideological transformation also started in Lausanne since he had first read Marxist classics at the university.<sup>71</sup> Cem, who would later become one of the most important theoreticians of Turkish social democracy, had the chance to observe and analyze European socialist/social democratic movements in Lausanne. He started to perceive the world and politics in a more class-based materialistic manner and to use historical materialism<sup>72</sup> in his researches. He also got closer to Elçin Trak in Lausanne and the young lovers decided to marry after spending a year together abroad.<sup>73</sup> Cem's days with Elçin Trak in Lausanne were entertaining. They were also very comfortable being Turks in Europe. Turkey in those years was an important country for the Western democratic world as the frontier post that neighbored the USSR. Cem remembered that Turkey's image was very good in the eyes of Europeans due to the Cold War conditions but

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<sup>69</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 57.

<sup>70</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 58-59.

<sup>71</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 60-61.

<sup>72</sup> Communist theoretician Karl Marx's (1818-1883) methodological approach to social sciences, which is based on class-conflict analysis and economic determinism.

<sup>73</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 61.





this situation changed after the termination of the Cold War and Turkey's problems of democracy became important issues in the West.<sup>74</sup>

## 2.4. Journalism

İsmail Cem graduated from the Law School of Lausanne University in 1962 and began to work at the *Milliyet* (Nationality) newspaper with the help of his famous journalist cousin Abdi İpekçi in 1963.<sup>75</sup> *Milliyet* was a “left of the center (*ortanın solu*)”<sup>76</sup> newspaper which made it very convenient for Cem to reflect his views openly and develop his knowledge by working with experienced liberal and social democratic figures of the period.<sup>77</sup> Cem prepared a short section of news from foreign countries. His section's name was “5 Dakikada Dünya Turu (Tour around the World in 5 Minutes)”.<sup>78</sup> He also helped Abdi İpekçi, Turhan Aytul and Hasan Pulur, three of the most famous journalists of that period, in their researches. His section in *Milliyet* newspaper turned out to be a real success, but Cem was not satisfied with translating and summarizing international news agencies' daily news. He was dreaming of expressing his views on Turkish and international politics freely in his own column. Cem loved *Milliyet*'s atmosphere and worked passionately in family-type closeness with his colleagues. Similar to his colleagues, he idealized his job as

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<sup>74</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 62.

<sup>75</sup> Abdullah Muradoğlu, *Selanik'ten İstanbul'a İpekçi'ler ve İsmail Cem*, p. 124.

<sup>76</sup> “Left of the center” symbolizes Republican People's Party's transformation towards a social democratic party after 27 May military intervention and the adoption of 1961 constitution. The term was first used by İsmet İnönü on 25 July 1965 but Bülent Ecevit, young secretary general of the party in the 1960s, was the leading architect of the movement. See; Gülsüm Tütüncü Esmer, 2006. *CHP: 1965-1980 Türk Siyasal Yaşamında Ortanın Solu*. Antalya: Yeniden Anadolu ve Müdafaa-i Hukuk Yayınları, p. 59. Ecevit also wrote a booklet called *Ortanın Solu* (Left of the Center) in 1966. See; Bülent Ecevit. 1974. *Ortanın Solu*. İstanbul: Tekin Yayınevi.

<sup>77</sup> *Milliyet*'s staff of the 1960s can be described as a “Dream Team”. Abdi İpekçi (editor in chief), Sami Kohen, Dinçer Güner, Ali Gevgilili, Mete Akyol, Mehmet Ali Birand, Hasan Pulur, Turhan Aytul, Çetin Altan, Burhan Felek, Talat Halman, Refik Erduran, Kemal Bisalman, Metin Toker, Bedri Koraman, Mümtaz Soysal, Örsan Öymen, Yılmaz Çetiner and Bülent Ecevit were *Milliyet*'s most important writers.

<sup>78</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 67.





being like Robin Hood<sup>79</sup>, fighting against injustices in order to protect the poor and weaker side.<sup>80</sup> He followed political developments closely but he was not a member of a political party. Instead of a political party, Cem was working for Turkish Journalists Syndicate (*Gazeteciler Sendikası*) which was tied to Türk-İş (Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions).<sup>81</sup> He worked on the education activities of Türk-İş and gave lectures to workers and shantytown inhabitants about their social rights and advantages of organized democratic syndicalism. Cem admitted that these activities developed his knowledge about Turkey and gave him the opportunity to break from the theoretical world and encounter real social problems.<sup>82</sup> As the well-educated son of an elite Istanbulite family, union activities improved Cem's dialogue with ordinary people and his oratory skills. Cem's first article in *Milliyet* was published on 28 August 1963. The article was about a demonstration of African-Americans in order to protest discriminatory laws against them in the United States.<sup>83</sup> Meanwhile, İsmail Cem married Elçin Trak on 23 December 1963 and the young couple's dream that started in Lausanne became real.<sup>84</sup> During those years, RPP was also discovering its leftist identity by the official declaration of İsmet İnönü<sup>85</sup> and winds were starting to blow from the left in the country. Although İnönü later tried to clarify his words and underlined that due to their statist (*étatiste*) economic preferences he had called RPP as a party on the left of the center, and that their

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<sup>79</sup> A protagonist from English folklore known as a man who robs the rich to give their wealth to the poor.

<sup>80</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 67.

<sup>81</sup> The Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions (TÜRK-İŞ) is Turkey's biggest syndical confederation established in 1952.

<sup>82</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 69.

<sup>83</sup> The article can be seen here; Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 71.

<sup>84</sup> From this marriage the İpekçi family had two children; İhsan Kerim Cem and İpek Cem (later İpek Cem Taha).

<sup>85</sup> Özkan Ağtaş. 2007. "Ortanın Solu: İsmet İnönü'den Bülent Ecevit'e" in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce cilt 8 Sol*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, p. 196.





economic programme was similar to American President Franklin D. Roosevelt's<sup>86</sup> "New Deal" policy, RPP soon began to be perceived as a social democratic party in the country.<sup>87</sup>

Cem was successful and happy at *Milliyet* but he felt that his cousin Abdi İpekçi could not give him what he deserved because of his fears of rumors about their kinship.<sup>88</sup> However, Cem decided to rise and he could not be easily satisfied with a translation job. After a short discussion with Abdi İpekçi, Cem decided to leave *Milliyet* and soon began to work at the *Cumhuriyet* newspaper. *Cumhuriyet* was the battleground of Kemalist and leftist ideologies in the media and Cem had the chance to work with very important names.<sup>89</sup> Cem worked as the assistant editor at *Cumhuriyet* and tried to highlight news concerning the Turkish Labor Party (Türkiye İşçi Partisi).<sup>90</sup> The Turkish Labor Party (the TLP) was Turkey's first real socialist political party that made a serious impact on Turkish politics in the 1960s. With TLP's entry into parliament, thanks to the proportional representation electoral system that was implemented after the 27 May intervention and the 1961 constitution, for the first time socialist ideas found formal representation in the parliament with fifteen delegates and began to gain popularity.<sup>91</sup> *Cumhuriyet* in the 1960s in a sense was serving as an umbrella representing Kemalist, social

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<sup>86</sup> Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1882-1945), shortly known as FDR, was the 32<sup>nd</sup> President of the United States. He was a central figure of the 20<sup>th</sup> century during a time of worldwide economic crisis (Great Depression of 1929) and world war (Second World War). Elected to four terms in office, he served from 1933 to 1945 and is the only U.S. president to have served more than two terms. Roosevelt was known for his sympathy for statist-leftist economic policies and lack of enmity towards USSR.

<sup>87</sup> Özkan Ağaş, "Ortanın Solu: İsmet İnönü'den Bülent Ecevit'e", p. 197.

<sup>88</sup> Can Dünder, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 70.

<sup>89</sup> Some of *Cumhuriyet*'s writers in the 1960s were; Nadir Nadi, İlhan Selçuk, Ecvet Güresin, Cevat Fehmi Başkut, Uğur Mumcu, Server Tanilli, Ali Ulvi Ersoy (İsmail Cem's sister Alev İpekçi's husband) and Şevket Süreyya Aydemir.

<sup>90</sup> Abdullah Muradoğlu, *Selanik'ten İstanbul'a İpekçi'ler ve İsmail Cem*, p. 125.

<sup>91</sup> Igor Lipovsky. 1992. *The Socialist Movement in Turkey 1960-1980*. Leiden: Brill, p. 19.





democratic/socialist, communist, *Yön* (Direction)<sup>92</sup> type and National Democratic Revolution (*Milli Demokratik Devrim*)<sup>93</sup> ideas. At the same time, the young secretary general of the RPP, Bülent Ecevit, was challenging the system and making efforts to transform the RPP into a “democratic leftist” party.<sup>94</sup> Ecevit first attracted the attention of the media in 1963 as a young Minister of Labor and Social Security who achieved to legalize the right to strike and law of collective bargaining.<sup>95</sup> Ecevit was close to European socialist and social democratic parties but he was also an anti-imperialist similar to Latin American populist leaders.<sup>96</sup> According to socialist writer Emin Alper, Ecevit was trying to make a unique synthesis of European Keynesianism and third world socialism for Turkey.<sup>97</sup> İsmail Cem was also similar to Ecevit, that is closer to European socialism than Chinese or Soviet versions of socialism, and he was also skeptical and critical about so-called Westernization in Turkish history. In addition, although he never approved of a total rejection of private property and free-market economics, his ideas in the 1960s were closer to the TLP.<sup>98</sup> *Cumhuriyet* was very active and Cem was both serving as an assistant editor and as a contributor-writer in his column

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<sup>92</sup> Founded by the famous writer Doğan Avcıoğlu, *Yön* (published between 1961 and 1967) was the legendary leftist magazine of the 1960s. *Yön* typified the socialism of the 1960s in many respects. The *Yön* group was mainly comprised of intellectuals, bureaucrats and patriotic officers. The strategy of the founders of *Yön* was to change the society from the top down by using an eclectic ideology containing anti-imperialist socialist and Kemalist elements. They promoted a military coup which would be undertaken by the progressive intelligentsia and officers. Avcıoğlu represented his views best and with integrity in his famous work *Türkiye'nin Düzeni* (The System of Turkey). See; Doğan Avcıoğlu. 1974. *Türkiye'nin Düzeni Dün, Bugün, Yarın*. İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi.

<sup>93</sup> The National Democratic Revolution (NDR) movement was an important leftist fraction in Turkish left in the 1960s led by Mihri Belli. The NDR was ideologically close to the *Yön* movement but they implemented the strategy of guerilla warfare and found followers especially among university students. For a detailed study about socialist movements in Turkey see; Igor Lipovsky. 1992. *The Socialist Movement in Turkey 1960-1980*. Leiden: Brill.

<sup>94</sup> In the early 1970s Ecevit and his followers began to use the term “democratic left (demokratik sol)” instead of “left of the center (ortanın solu)”. See; Gülsüm Tütüncü Esmer, *CHP: 1965-1980 Türk Siyasal Yaşamında Ortanın Solu*, p. 144.

<sup>95</sup> Emin Alper. 2007. “Bülent Ecevit” in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce cilt 8 Sol*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, p. 204.

<sup>96</sup> *ibid.*, p. 203.

<sup>97</sup> *ibid.*, p. 213.

<sup>98</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 73.





“*Düşünenlerin Düşüncesi* (The Idea of the Mindful)” on the second page of the newspaper.<sup>99</sup> Cem was witnessing the split of the Turkish left as an employee of *Cumhuriyet*. Although in many ways, his ideas intersected with the *Yön* movement<sup>100</sup> and Kemalist writers, he was on TLP’s side and developing himself with many writers that are not accepted as a part of the classical Turkish left such as İdris Küçükömer<sup>101</sup>, Kemal Tahir<sup>102</sup> and Şerif Mardin<sup>103</sup>. Notably, İsmail Cem’s devotion to Kemal Tahir (similar to Bülent Ecevit) was a determining factor in his political stance. In fact, Cem was with Kemal Tahir a day before his passing away in 1973 in journalist Mehmet Barlas’ house for a meeting among some intellectuals of the period including Mete Tunçay, Ali Sirmen and Afşin Germen.<sup>104</sup> After Tahir’s death, Cem in his article defined Kemal Tahir as the man who first made Turkey’s accounts with its past.<sup>105</sup>

In 1966, Cem wanted to take his chances, so he left *Cumhuriyet* and published a weekly magazine called *ABC* with his close friend Ercan Arıklı.<sup>106</sup> The magazine found readers among intellectuals but due to financial problems it was

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<sup>99</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 73.

<sup>100</sup> After his death, Cem wrote an article about Doğan Avcıoğlu and praised him as one of vanguards of socialist movement in Turkey although he expressed that his methods were controversial. See; Hikmet Özdemir. 2000. *Doğan Avcıoğlu Bir Yön Türk’ün Ardından*. Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, pp. 263-264.

<sup>101</sup> İdris Küçükömer (1925-1987) was a Turkish economist and philosopher known for his anti-Jacobin, anti-authoritarian approaches on the left. Küçükömer was defending revolution from below and was very critical of the state’s dominant role in Turkish modernization. Küçükömer also approached pious Anatolian people with sympathy. His most influential work is *Düzenin Yabancılaşması* (Alienation of the System). See; İdris Küçükömer. 1994. *Düzenin Yabancılaşması*. İstanbul: Bağlam Yayıncılık. See; Metin Heper, *Türkiye Sözlüğü Siyaset, Toplum ve Kültür*, pp. 343-344.

<sup>102</sup> Kemal Tahir (1910-1973) was a Turkish writer who brought a critical approach to Turkish modernization and leftist movements in Turkey with his best-seller novels. Together with Bülent Ecevit, İsmail Cem was a devoted reader of Tahir. Writer Yalçın Küçük even called Cem and Ecevit “Tahiri -follower of Tahir-”. See; Yalçın Küçük. 2002. *Şebeke Network*. İstanbul: Yazı-Görüntü-Ses Yayınları, p. 44.

<sup>103</sup> Şerif Mardin (1927-) is a prominent Turkish sociologist who received his PhD from Stanford University and who is recognized for his works on center-periphery cleavage, Turkish modernization and religious brotherhoods. See; Metin Heper, *Türkiye Sözlüğü Siyaset, Toplum ve Kültür*, p. 355.

<sup>104</sup> Mehmet Barlas. 2005. *Rüzgar Gibi Geçti*. İstanbul: İnkılâp Kitabevi, pp. 153-154.

<sup>105</sup> Abdullah Muradoğlu, *Selanik’ten İstanbul’a İpekiçiler ve İsmail Cem*, p. 164.

<sup>106</sup> *ibid.*, p. 125.





short-lived. After this failure, Cem once again began to work for *Cumhuriyet* and in 1968 he decided to fulfill his military service at a time when leftist student demonstrations were at the peak everywhere in the world. Cem served first in Tuzla Infantry School and had chance to meet with very different people coming from different parts of Anatolia. Cem explained military service as an educational and new experience. After 6 months in Tuzla, Cem began to work in the Military Academy as an education planner.<sup>107</sup> Although both Cem and his friend and lawyer journalist Uğur Mumcu were recognized as “leftists”, in the escalating political violence and turbulence of the late 1960s, Cem did not make “unfavorable infantry (*sakıncalı piyadelik*)” like Uğur Mumcu.<sup>108</sup> During his military service, Cem also researched and wrote about Turkish history and politics in order to publish his books in the near future.<sup>109</sup> After returning from the military, Abdi İpekçi this time offered him a regular columnist position at *Milliyet*. Cem accepted this attractive offer and began to work again at *Milliyet*. In 1970, after making a long journey in the region, he published a series of news and articles about social problems in south-east Anatolia where the population mostly consisted of Kurdish citizens. “*Acılı Doğu* (East in Pain)” was published between 12 June and 18 June 1970 and became a sensation in the media.<sup>110</sup> Cem published this series in his first book *Türkiye Üzerine Araştırmalar* (Researches on Turkey).<sup>111</sup> The book was journalistic and far from showing Cem’s theoretical knowledge, but it was still very important because it was one of the earliest books written on the Kurdish question. In the same year, he

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<sup>107</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 75.

<sup>108</sup> The famous journalist Uğur Mumcu was a good friend of Cem, but he did not hesitate to point out Cem’s privileged position of coming from a wealthy family in their military duty period. See; Abdullah Muradoğlu, *Selanik’ten İstanbul’a İpekçi’ler ve İsmail Cem*, p. 126.

<sup>109</sup> Cem told Can Dündar that he wrote most of his famous book *Türkiye’de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi* (History of Underdevelopment in Turkey) while making his military duty. See; Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 76.

<sup>110</sup> Abdullah Muradoğlu, *Selanik’ten İstanbul’a İpekçi’ler ve İsmail Cem*, p. 126.

<sup>111</sup> İsmail Cem. 1970. *Türkiye Üzerine (Araştırmalar)*. İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi.





published his most well-known book *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi* (History of Underdevelopment in Turkey), in which Cem tried to explain Ottoman and Turkish political history from a historical materialist perspective.<sup>112</sup> The book turned out to be a real success and became a classic of 1970s theoretical books in the leftist tradition. What is interesting is that the book also took positive reactions from the rightist-conservative circles because of its critical attitude towards the Westernization process of Ottoman and Turkish states and Cem's interest in national values though having been educated abroad. İsmail Cem's name and his soft writing style gained recognition and popularity. He also wrote interesting articles about social chaos in India after making a visit to this country.<sup>113</sup>

## 2.5. The 12 March Days

By early 1971, Turkey was in a state of social unrest. The growing activities of the leftist groups and, to some extent, rightist circles and the increasing militancy of workers' demonstrations weakened Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel's<sup>114</sup> Justice Party government to the point of paralysis. The government was incapable of putting an end to the violence in the universities and the streets. In those circumstances, the chief of the general staff issued a memorandum on 12 March 1971, which interrupted the normal functioning of the parliamentary regime and suspended democratic freedoms. The 12 March regime forced Prime Minister Demirel to resign and the Constitutional Court to close down and outlaw the socialist TLP and the Islamic-oriented National Order Party

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<sup>112</sup> İsmail Cem. 1970. *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*. İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi.

<sup>113</sup> Abdullah Muradoğlu, *Selanik'ten İstanbul'a İpekçi'ler ve İsmail Cem*, p. 127.

<sup>114</sup> Süleyman Demirel (1924-) is a liberal-conservative Turkish politician who served seven times as Prime Minister and became the 9<sup>th</sup> President of the Republic of Turkey (1993-2000). See; Metin Heper, *Türkiye Sözlüğü Siyaset, Toplum ve Kültür*, pp. 198-199.





led by Necmettin Erbakan<sup>115</sup>. 1961 constitution was accused of being a luxury for Turkey and it was amended in order to limit social and political freedoms. Cem, as a social democratic journalist close to the TLP, was completely against the 12 March regime and its policies.

Cem's opposition to the 12 March's technocratic government, which was backed up by the military under the Prime Ministry of RPP deputy Nihat Erim, made him a star in the media and on the left similar to young secretary general of RPP, Bülent Ecevit.<sup>116</sup> Before and during the 12 March, Cem criticized the *Yön* movement and the National Democratic Revolution thesis for their adventurism and militarism (search for leftist junta).<sup>117</sup> Cem criticized the military harshly but also blamed JP leader Süleyman Demirel for cooperating with the military and RPP leader İsmet İnönü for supposedly creating and supporting the 12 March regime. Cem even blamed the 12 March's so-called "Atatürkist" technocratic government for being on the verge of fascism.<sup>118</sup> Ecevit and Cem's popularity rose after their democratic stance against the military memorandum. Both were fighting to transform the RPP from the state's party into a people's party under the guidance of social democratic principles.<sup>119</sup> In their view, the 12 March was the consequence of the Demirel government's orientation towards a multi-dimensional international policy after problems occurred with the USA.<sup>120</sup> Their

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<sup>115</sup> Necmettin Erbakan (1926-2011) was a politician who started the political Islam tradition in the modern Republic of Turkey. Erbakan was Turkey's Prime Minister between 1996 and 1997. See; Metin Heper, *Türkiye Sözlüğü Siyaset, Toplum ve Kültür*, pp. 237-238.

<sup>116</sup> Bülent Ecevit (1925-2006) was a Turkish journalist, poet and popular social democratic politician who served four times as Prime Minister and headed the Republican People's Party and Democratic Left Party for long years. See; Metin Heper, *Türkiye Sözlüğü Siyaset, Toplum ve Kültür*, pp. 227-228. For a study on Ecevit see; Esmâ Ceyda Dibek. 2002. *Bülent Ecevit: Continuity and Change in his Political Views*. MA Thesis in the department of Political Science. Bilkent University, Ankara.

<sup>117</sup> Abdullah Muradoğlu, *Selanik'ten İstanbul'a İpekçi'ler ve İsmail Cem*, p. 127.

<sup>118</sup> İsmail Cem, *TRT'de 500 Gün ... bir dönem Türkiye'sinin hikayesi*, p. 28.

<sup>119</sup> Ahmet Taner Kışlalı. 1993. *Atatürk'e Saldırmanın Dayanılmaz Hafifliği*. Ankara: İmge Yayınevi, p. 167.

<sup>120</sup> Turkish-American relations were shaken first after the famous Johnson Letter in 1964 when US President Lyndon Johnson wrote a letter to Prime Minister İsmet İnönü and warned Turkey not to





rhetoric was anti-imperialist, in favor of state-led economic development and more equal allocation and distribution of the state's resources. In 1973, Cem collected his articles about the 12 March in a book called *12 Mart* (12 March) and tried to make a structural explanation of military intervention. A few years later, he published a two-volume book *Tarih Açısından 12 Mart* (12 March in Terms of History)<sup>121</sup> about the 12 March in which he added a detailed interview with the Demirel government's Foreign Minister İhsan Sabri Çağlayangil<sup>122</sup> to his articles. The book once again became sensational for Cem's materialistic explanations of the 12 March intervention and especially for the interview he made with Çağlayangil. Çağlayangil during the interview decoded the 12 March and confessed the hidden American effect behind this military intervention.<sup>123</sup> Cem continued to write brave articles against the 12 March regime and he made interviews with important politicians including Süleyman Demirel and Bülent Ecevit during the same period in question.

While Cem was becoming an important figure and a theoretician of the left, Ecevit was preparing to topple down legendary İsmet Pasha in the RPP General Assembly. On 14 May 1972, Ecevit realized the impossible and became the third secretary general of the RPP after Atatürk and İnönü.<sup>124</sup> Cem's critical articles about the 12 March regime put *Milliyet* and *Milliyet's* chief editor Abdi İpekçi on the spot and İpekçi had to warn Cem to soften his criticism.<sup>125</sup>

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intervene in Cyprus to prevent ethno-political conflicts between the two communities. During the late 1960s and 1970s Turkish-American relations never became coherent as before the Johnson Letter.

<sup>121</sup> İsmail Cem. 1993. *Tarih Açısından 12 Mart*. İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi.

<sup>122</sup> İhsan Sabri Çağlayangil (1908-1993) was a famous Turkish politician who served as Foreign Minister from Justice Party during 1965-1971 and 1975-1977. See; Metin Heper, *Türkiye Sözlüğü Siyaset, Toplum ve Kültür*, p. 188.

<sup>123</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 81.

<sup>124</sup> Fatih Dağistanlı, *Sosyal Demokratlar*, p. 55.

<sup>125</sup> Abdullah Muradoğlu, *Selânik'ten İstanbul'a İpekçi'ler ve İsmail Cem*, p. 127.





However, Cem, as “stubbornness enclosed with soft material”<sup>126</sup>, continued to criticize the 12 March regime harshly and raise his reputation among social democratic circles. After Ecevit’s takeover in RPP, Cem began to show more interest in the RPP and its populist social democratic program. His pro-TLP rhetoric was replaced by a pro-Ecevit stance and pro-RPP expression.<sup>127</sup> At the 1973 elections, RPP with its new, young and charismatic leader garnered 33.3 % of the votes and became the first party in the parliament.<sup>128</sup> Ecevit made an unexpected move and formed a coalition government with Erbakan’s Islamic oriented National Salvation Party on 26 January 1974.<sup>129</sup> Cem was very happy about the RPP’s takeover and he saw this coalition as a chance to get over the Islamist-secularist clash, which he identified as a “historic mistake (*tarihi yanilgi*)”.<sup>130</sup> In Cem’s view, Turkey’s social problems were not related to superstructural secularism discussions but were rather related to class-based economic inequalities. Similar to Mümtaz Soysal, an influential leftist academician and journalist of the period, he saw the growing Islamic movement as a “metaphysical reaction of the suppressed masses”.<sup>131</sup> Ecevit also made similar evaluations and even defended some of his projects such as “land reform” with Islamic arguments.<sup>132</sup> After the 12 March, Cem also increased his unionist efforts and between 1971 and 1974, he served as the head of the Journalist

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<sup>126</sup> His cousin Abdi İpekçi defined Cem as “stubbornness enclosed with soft material (yumuşak malzeme içine sarılmış inat)” in order to explain his tolerant but also determinate personality. See; Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 70.

<sup>127</sup> Abdullah Muradoğlu, *Selanik’ten İstanbul’a İpekçi’ler ve İsmail Cem*, p. 130.

<sup>128</sup> Fatih Dağıstanlı, *Sosyal Demokratlar*, p. 60.

<sup>129</sup> *ibid.*, p. 66.

<sup>130</sup> İsmail Cem, *TRT’de 500 Gün ... bir dönem Türkiye’sinin hikayesi*, p. 12.

<sup>131</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 91.

<sup>132</sup> Ecevit in some of his speeches talked about the just system that Islam ordered and defended land reform project as a necessity of Islam. See; Abdullah Muradoğlu, *Selanik’ten İstanbul’a İpekçi’ler ve İsmail Cem*, p. 131.





Union of Turkey in its İstanbul branch.<sup>133</sup> He continued to write in *Milliyet* until a sudden telephone call changed his life.

## 2.6. The TRT Years

On 7 February 1974 when the RPP-NSP coalition government received its vote of confidence from the parliament and officially started its position, Cem was in Ankara for an interview with İhsan Sabri Çağlayangil.<sup>134</sup> In the afternoon, he went to the office of his friend Deniz Baykal<sup>135</sup> who was in those years the promising young deputy and the Minister of Finance of RPP.<sup>136</sup> Baykal told Cem that Prime Minister Ecevit wanted him to become the director of the TRT (Turkish Radio and Television Corporation). Cem was surprised and ambivalent about how he would answer, but he was also confident and thought he would do a good job if he accepted the offer. The next day, Cem went to the Prime Ministry and met with Ecevit and his important deputies such as Turan Güneş, Orhan Birgit and Deniz Baykal. Cem thanked Ecevit for the offer and requested permission for a day to think about the offer.<sup>137</sup> On his return to İstanbul, he telephoned Baykal and kindly refused the offer. Cem had no government job experience and he had never wanted to leave İstanbul for Ankara.<sup>138</sup> Cem was a keen admirer of İstanbul and he thought that Ankara's gray tone and bureaucratic nature would not fit him.<sup>139</sup> Moreover, becoming the head of the TRT

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<sup>133</sup> Abdullah Muradođlu, *Selanik'ten İstanbul'a İpekçi'ler ve İsmail Cem*, p. 128.

<sup>134</sup> İsmail Cem, *TRT'de 500 Gün ... bir dönem Türkiye'sinin hikayesi*, p. 7.

<sup>135</sup> Deniz Baykal (1938-) was RPP's leader for 18 years with some short interruptions and an experienced Turkish politician who had previously been in a cabinet post. Baykal recently resigned from RPP's presidency after a sex tape scandal and was replaced by Kemal Kılıçdarođlu on 6 May 2010.

<sup>136</sup> İsmail Cem, *TRT'de 500 Gün ... bir dönem Türkiye'sinin hikayesi*, p. 8.

<sup>137</sup> Abdullah Muradođlu, *Selanik'ten İstanbul'a İpekçi'ler ve İsmail Cem*, p. 135.

<sup>138</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 89.

<sup>139</sup> İsmail Cem, *TRT'de 500 Gün ... bir dönem Türkiye'sinin hikayesi*, p. 18.





was a very difficult task given the rising atmosphere of polarization in the country.<sup>140</sup> These were the main motives for Cem in refusing the offer. Fifteen minutes after his refusal, his telephone rang; this time it was Prime Minister Ecevit on the phone.<sup>141</sup> Ecevit told Cem that this was a matter of state and he should accept the offer.<sup>142</sup> After a long telephone call, Cem felt like he had to accept the offer and said “yes” to Ecevit. He was now the head of the TRT, a very important position, especially in the days of a single television channel that could heavily affect large populations.

Cem’s appointment received different reactions from leftist and rightist circles. In general, the leftist media celebrated Cem’s take-over, whereas the nationalist media focused on his lack of experience and Sabetaist family background.<sup>143</sup> Classical Kemalist/Atatürkist circles and the entrepreneur class got suspicious mostly because of Cem’s socialist ideology and coalition partner NSP’s anti-Western, anti-secular and anti-capitalist rhetoric.<sup>144</sup> Islamist circles, on the other hand, surprisingly supported Cem and exalted his views in *Türkiye’de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi* that were close to İdris Küçükömer and Kemal Tahir.<sup>145</sup> Later, Bülent Ecevit told journalist İsmet Solak that he had chosen Cem for the TRT deliberately in order to gain the support of Erbakan and to not create a disagreement among coalition partners in the early days of the partnership. Ecevit also remembered that Erbakan became very happy after hearing Cem’s name from Ecevit.<sup>146</sup> Cem did not respond to harsh critics and began to collect and read books about communication, broadcasting and television technology. He also tried to take advice and tips from his journalist friends. He felt responsible and under pressure, but he

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<sup>140</sup> Cem later defined being the head of TRT as “being in a barrel full of nails (iğneli fiçıda olmak)”. See; Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 96.

<sup>141</sup> İsmail Cem, *TRT’de 500 Gün ... bir dönem Türkiye’sinin hikayesi*, p. 10.

<sup>142</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 90.

<sup>143</sup> *ibid.*, p. 90.

<sup>144</sup> İsmail Cem, *TRT’de 500 Gün ... bir dönem Türkiye’sinin hikayesi*, p. 13.

<sup>145</sup> Abdullah Muradoğlu, *Selanik’ten İstanbul’a İpekçi’ler ve İsmail Cem*, p. 137.

<sup>146</sup> *ibid.*, p. 138.





was also determinate and energetic. On 15 February 1974, on the day of his 34<sup>th</sup> birthday, Cem took the train for Ankara and started his job officially.<sup>147</sup>

Cem met with the clumsy bureaucratic nature of the state for the first time at the TRT. He tried to surmount bureaucratic difficulties with an interactive management and close dialogue with the staff.<sup>148</sup> Because of clientelistic political exercises of governments, the TRT owned more than 5.000 permanent staff; most of them did nothing except take their wages.<sup>149</sup> Starting from his first day in the office, Cem tried to stretch or even sometimes reverse some “ridiculous rules and precedents”.<sup>150</sup> For instance, he visited all TRT buildings and offices and met with the staff by presenting himself instead of waiting for their visit. He built a positive social dialogue with employees.<sup>151</sup> At the beginning, because of his young age, he felt a bit disturbed by the elder staff of TRT’s obedient addressing to him.<sup>152</sup> TRT had the ability to take on staff by itself without a cabinet decision in addition to appointments made by the political authority. Moreover, once a person was employed it was impossible to fire without giving severance pay. In addition, the effects of the 12 March intervention were still in force at TRT and retired officers were filling in the critical positions. These were Cem’s first considerations about the reason behind TRT’s highly populated staff and its money squandering tradition. Cem, at the expense of breaking his friends’ and relatives’ hearts, tried to use TRT’s resources in a very close-fisted way and brought work and financial discipline to the

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<sup>147</sup> Abdullah Muradođlu, *Selanik’ten İstanbul’a İpekçi’ler ve İsmail Cem*, p. 141.

<sup>148</sup> Actor Haldun Dormen remembers that he was extremely surprised after Cem quickly accepted his projects for TRT within a day. See; Haldun Dormen. 1993. *Antrakt*. İstanbul: İnkılâp Kitabevi, p. 68.

<sup>149</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 92.

<sup>150</sup> İsmail Cem, *TRT’de 500 Gün ... bir dönem Türkiye’sinin hikayesi*, p. 14.

<sup>151</sup> TRT’s famous news-caster of the period Jülide Gülizar remembers that TRT employees became very excited and happy after hearing İsmail Cem’s appointment since he was their colleague as a journalist and a well-known and charismatic social democratic figure. Moreover, she adds that Cem’s dialogue with the crew was very friendly. See; Jülide Gülizar. 1995. *TRT Meydan Savaşı*. Ankara: Ümit Yayıncılık, pp. 72-73.

<sup>152</sup> İsmail Cem, *TRT’de 500 Gün ... bir dönem Türkiye’sinin hikayesi*, p. 15.





institution.<sup>153</sup> After making his protocol visits to state institutions and political party leaders<sup>154</sup>, Cem at short notice formed his own young crew at TRT. The crew consisted of Cem's close friend and journalist Mehmet Barlas, Mustafa Gürsel, Hıfzı Topuz, Mete Buharalı, Rua Tezcan and Haluk Şahin.<sup>155</sup> At the administrative board, Cem did not have problems except with two members; retired Admiral Sezai Orkunt and Fikret Ekinci, two names close to the Turkish military and the 12 March regime.<sup>156</sup> On 11 March 1974, Cem made a press conference and stated that "TRT would follow a modern, democratic, pluralist broadcasting policy in terms of constitution and laws".<sup>157</sup> He also mentioned that "TRT's mission is not acting like the voice of governments" but rather "serving as a communication and cultural instrument for Turkey".<sup>158</sup> Cem promised a more dynamic news agency and stated that "being uninformed is similar to being immobile".<sup>159</sup> Another remarkable point Cem made was that under his control "TRT's cultural policy would be Turkey's culture".<sup>160</sup> Cem's preference of "Turkey's culture (*Türkiye kültürü*)" instead of "Turkish culture (*Türk kültürü*)" became a polemic after his press conference.<sup>161</sup> Starting from his first day in office, Demirel, JP deputies and the rightist press began to attack Cem for meaningless or insignificant issues.<sup>162</sup> However, Cem later wrote

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<sup>153</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, pp. 92-93.

<sup>154</sup> At Cem's visit, JP leader Süleyman Demirel told him that "he and his party members could criticize him and he should not resent this since this is about politics". See; İsmail Cem, *TRT'de 500 Gün ... bir dönem Türkiye'sinin hikayesi*, p. 27.

<sup>155</sup> Abdullah Muradoğlu, *Selanik'ten İstanbul'a İpekçi'ler ve İsmail Cem*, p. 141.

<sup>156</sup> İsmail Cem, *TRT'de 500 Gün ... bir dönem Türkiye'sinin hikayesi*, pp. 19-20.

<sup>157</sup> *ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>158</sup> *ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>159</sup> Refik Özdek. 1977. *Hedef TRT*, Ankara: Ekonomik ve Sosyal Yayınlar AŞ., p. 97.

<sup>160</sup> *ibid.*, p. 97.

<sup>161</sup> İsmet Solak, *İsmail Cem Dosyası*, p. 61.

<sup>162</sup> Cem's articles against the 12 March regime, his views on the Turkish Labor Party and Nazım Hikmet and TRT's interview payment to Italian actress Sophia Loren were some of these discussion topics. See; Jülide Gülizar, *TRT Meydan Savaşı*, pp. 76-77.





that these attacks increased Cem's determination and attachment to his work instead of intimidating him.<sup>163</sup> Cem was ready to make changes and to display his talents.

As the new director of TRT, Cem first decided to make a technological leap forward in order to add all parts and cities of Turkey in the service area. Following the construction of TRT İstanbul studios, new broadcasting stations opened in Mudanya, Antalya, Kayseri, İstanbul and İzmir.<sup>164</sup> Preparations for the opening of new broadcasting stations in Samsun, Gaziantep and Diyarbakır were terminated.<sup>165</sup> TRT was broadcasting five days and twenty hours per week before Cem's take over. Cem increased TRT's broadcasting to seven days and fifty-two hours per week.<sup>166</sup> In order to accustom people to watching television, he started with popular sports programs such as *Telespor*.<sup>167</sup> Although he took criticism from Marxist intellectuals for numbing people, he started the live broadcasting of the Turkish Football League and World Cup matches.<sup>168</sup> With the aim of elevating people's knowledge about nature, world history, politics and culture, he regularly put European-made and highly qualified documentary films in the broadcasting schedule.<sup>169</sup> Classical Turkish novels such as Aziz Nesin's *Yaşar Ne Yaşar Ne Yaşamaz*, Sait Faik Abasıyanık's *Kumpanya*, Halit Ziya Uşaklıgil's *Aşk-ı Memnu* and Ömer Seyfettin's short stories were cinematized and shown on TRT during Cem's managerial period.<sup>170</sup> Even nationalist writers like Refik Özdek felt the need to congratulate Cem for this success<sup>171</sup> and defined him as "young, bright and energetic" but in favor of

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<sup>163</sup> İsmail Cem, *TRT'de 500 Gün ... bir dönem Türkiye'sinin hikayesi*, p. 32.

<sup>164</sup> Abdullah Muradoğlu, *Selanik'ten İstanbul'a İpekçi'ler ve İsmail Cem*, p. 146.

<sup>165</sup> İsmail Cem, *TRT'de 500 Gün ... bir dönem Türkiye'sinin hikayesi*, p. 93.

<sup>166</sup> *ibid.*, p. 91.

<sup>167</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, pp. 100-104.

<sup>168</sup> İsmail Cem, *TRT'de 500 Gün ... bir dönem Türkiye'sinin hikayesi*, p. 43.

<sup>169</sup> *ibid.*, p. 50.

<sup>170</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 58-59.

<sup>171</sup> Refik Özdek, *Hedef TRT*, pp. 105-106.





socialism.<sup>172</sup> Cem made contracts with important Turkish film directors such as Halit Refiğ<sup>173</sup>, Metin Erksan and Lütfi Akat in order to adapt these literary classics to television properly.<sup>174</sup> Cem also planned the broadcasting of the 1976 Olympics in color and the opening of the TRT-2 channel but his tenure in office ended before he realized these innovations.<sup>175</sup> After Cem, Turkey was not able to pass into color broadcasting until 1982 and TRT-2 opened at last in 1986.

Another important change Cem made was related to TRT's news center. Cem always believed that the failure of TRT news was caused by the dilemma that TRT reporters lived because of their double identity; being a journalist and being a civil servant.<sup>176</sup> So, he appointed Mehmet Barlas, a young and bright social democratic journalist of the 1970s, as the chief of TRT's news center and provided freedom<sup>177</sup> to TRT's journalists to carry out their job without governmental or bureaucratic pressure.<sup>178</sup> TRT gave a very successful test during Turkey's Cyprus Peace Operation<sup>179</sup> and became the world's first news agency and channel to declare that Makarios<sup>180</sup> was alive and that Turkey started a military intervention in Cyprus.<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> Refik Özdek, *Hedef TRT*, p. 93.

<sup>173</sup> Halit Refiğ (1934-2009) was a famous and award-winning Turkish film director known for his admiration of Kemal Tahir and national stance on the left. İsmail Cem and Halit Refiğ's political views intersected at Kemal Tahir and the duo made a sensational television series *Aşk-ı Memnu* (Forbidden Love) in 1975 from Uşaklıgil's namesake novel. During Cem's period, TRT also showed Refiğ's Tahir adaptation film *Haremde Dört Kadın* (Four Women in the Harem). The broadcasting of the film took huge reactions from rightist-nationalist circles because the film's content is based on the lives of four women in Ottoman harem. See; Şengün Kılıç Hristidis. 2007. *Sinemada Ulusal Tavr* "*Halit Refiğ Kitabı*". İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, pp. 165, 215-218.

<sup>174</sup> Abdullah Muradoğlu, *Selanik'ten İstanbul'a İpekçi'ler ve İsmail Cem*, p. 154.

<sup>175</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 131.

<sup>176</sup> İsmail Cem, *TRT'de 500 Gün ... bir dönem Türkiye'sinin hikayesi*, p. 67.

<sup>177</sup> Jülide Gülizar, *TRT Meydan Savaşı*, p. 74.

<sup>178</sup> İsmail Cem, *TRT'de 500 Gün ... bir dönem Türkiye'sinin hikayesi*, p. 70.

<sup>179</sup> On 20 July 1974, the Turkish Armed Forces, using its guarantorship rights, launched a military operation against the Cyprus Republic just after the fascist coup staged by the Cypriot National Guard against President Makarios (with the intention of annexing the island to Greece) and mass killings made by EOKA members. The operation was successful but the island was divided into the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot sides. See; Meltem Müftüler Baç. 2001. *Türkiye ve AB: Soğuk Savaş Sonrası İlişkiler*. İstanbul: Alfa Basın Yayın Dağıtım, pp. 44-45.

<sup>180</sup> Makarios (1913-1977) was the archbishop of Cypriot Orthodox Church and first President of Cyprus Republic.

<sup>181</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, pp. 112-116.





TRT's panel discussions which were moderated by Mehmet Barlas became very successful and all sides were represented equally in these discussions.<sup>182</sup> During Cem's period TRT, although it was one of the founding members of the European Broadcasting Union (EBU), for the first time became elected to the administrative board (1975-1978 period), due to its successes and Turkey's social democratic government's positive image against the Greek military junta in power.<sup>183</sup> Cem remembers that thanks to Turkey's membership to EBU, TRT's and thus Turkey's influence about news concerning Turkey's Cyprus Peace Operation became more effective.<sup>184</sup> Moreover, leading European television magazine *Gong*, after interviews with 51 television critics, elected TRT as the fifth most successful television channel in Europe.<sup>185</sup> During Cem's period Turkey also for the first time participated in the Eurovision Song Contest and was represented by Semiha Yankı's "*Seninle Bir Dakika* (A minute with you)" song.<sup>186</sup> Although Turkey finished the contest with three points in last place, the participation was important since it showed Cem's confidence in his own country to compete with developed European countries and his support of globalization and of catching up with European standards. Unfortunately, TRT's expenditures for the qualification to select Turkey's song for Eurovision and the failure of Semiha Yankı at the contest were interpreted as a disgrace by nationalist circles. However, Cem was brave enough to say that "We had our language listened to by 800 million Europeans, this is a success".<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> İsmail Cem, *TRT'de 500 Gün ... bir dönem Türkiye'sinin hikayesi*, p. 89.

<sup>183</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 98-102.

<sup>184</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 127.

<sup>185</sup> Cem Gökçe, *İsmail Cem Olayı*, pp. 26-27.

<sup>186</sup> Refik Özdek, *Hedef TRT*, p. 161.

<sup>187</sup> *ibid.*, p. 164.





Maybe the only problematic action of Cem was to prevent female news-casters to appear on television.<sup>188</sup> Jülide Gülizar remembers that one day suddenly İsmail Cem and Mehmet Barlas made a speech and declared that television news would be presented by male news-casters whereas radio news would be presented by female news-casters.<sup>189</sup> Jülide Gülizar saw this action as an insult to Turkish women at the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Republic and thought that it was made because of the coalition partner NSP's pressures.<sup>190</sup> However, soon it was found out that the decision was made by Cem and Barlas because of Turkish television spectators' higher interest in female news-casters rather than news.<sup>191</sup> After reactions shown by Kemalist circles and women's associations, Cem had to apologize to Gülizar and other female news-casters and annulled his decision.<sup>192</sup> İsmail Cem's innovative management showed its effects also in radio broadcasting. Cem brought experienced journalist Hıfzı Topuz to head the radios.<sup>193</sup> Topuz soon established two new radio stations, TRT-2 and TRT-3, with his limited budget and turned TRT-2 radio station into a public university and tried to increase the Turkish people's education level.<sup>194</sup> TRT, with its television channel and three radio stations, became a very respectful and popular institution with the works of Cem and his squad. All public opinion polls showed that Cem brought energy and respect to TRT.<sup>195</sup>

Although Cem and his squad made visible innovations and developments, the rising atmosphere of polarization in the country led to harsh criticisms targeting TRT's practices and Cem as a person. Kemalist-leftist circles -what Cem called "petty bourgeois radicals"- criticized Cem from his early days in office for his

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<sup>188</sup> Jülide Gülizar. 2007. *Onlar Da İnsandı*. Ankara: Sinemis Yayınları, p. 106.

<sup>189</sup> Jülide Gülizar, *TRT Meydan Savaşı*, p. 90.

<sup>190</sup> Jülide Gülizar, *Onlar Da İnsandı*, pp. 107-108.

<sup>191</sup> Jülide Gülizar, *TRT Meydan Savaşı*, p. 102.

<sup>192</sup> *ibid.*, p. 103.

<sup>193</sup> İsmail Cem, *TRT'de 500 Gün ... bir dönem Türkiye'sinin hikayesi*, p. 73.

<sup>194</sup> *ibid.*, p. 79.

<sup>195</sup> Cem Gökçe, *İsmail Cem Olayı*, p. 92.





tolerant approach to religious groups and rhetoric.<sup>196</sup> For instance, the removal of a drama called *Maymun Davası* (The Monkey Case) from the schedule for its Darwinist content that could disturb pious people created discomfort in Kemalist circles.<sup>197</sup> Kemalist magazine *Yankı* attacked Cem and labeled TRT as ORT - Ottoman Radio and Television- by making reference to Cem's tolerant approach to conservative circles and admiration of Kemal Tahir.<sup>198</sup> Classical Kemalist circles and the capital owner class approached the coalition and Cem's practices with doubt and considered the mixture of socialism and Islamism as the historical antithesis of Atatürkism.<sup>199</sup> The Republican People's Party and social democratic circles supported Cem but complained about Cem's objectivity.<sup>200</sup> RPP supporters and deputies anticipated support from TRT's broadcasting with its new manager appointed by RPP and its Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit, but soon they found out that Cem was completely objective as a manager. Socialist circles embraced Cem most and supported his democratic openings as well as his innovative practices. For instance, famous socialist poet, writer and philosopher Attila İlhan praised Cem for "transforming TRT into people's television".<sup>201</sup> The only problem Cem had with socialists was their orthodox Marxist viewpoint that led to their disdain of TRT as a superstructural institution.<sup>202</sup>

Rightist-nationalist circles on the other hand approached Cem in a very prejudiced way. Young and socialist Cem had a tendency to interpret and explain these attacks from a class-based perspective in those years because of his obsession

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<sup>196</sup> İsmail Cem, *TRT'de 500 Gün ... bir dönem Türkiye'sinin hikayesi*, p. 103.

<sup>197</sup> Abdullah Muradoğlu, *Selanik'ten İstanbul'a İpekçi'ler ve İsmail Cem*, p. 167.

<sup>198</sup> *ibid.*, p. 173.

<sup>199</sup> *ibid.*, p. 138.

<sup>200</sup> İsmail Cem, *TRT'de 500 Gün ... bir dönem Türkiye'sinin hikayesi*, pp. 103-104.

<sup>201</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 126.

<sup>202</sup> İsmail Cem, *TRT'de 500 Gün ... bir dönem Türkiye'sinin hikayesi*, p. 105.





with materialism.<sup>203</sup> Their first attacking point was Cem’s inexperience and leftist stance.<sup>204</sup> The second attacking point was about Cem’s so-called “enmity towards Turkish culture and history”.<sup>205</sup> In other words, Cem’s tolerant approach to religious people was annoying Kemalist circles but at the same time it was found inadequate by rightist nationalist circles.<sup>206</sup> Cem was also blamed for corruption by JP deputies but these accusations were found to be false.<sup>207</sup> Conservative-Islamist circles approached Cem with tolerance because of the NSP’s coalition partnership and Cem’s democratic stance.<sup>208</sup> Erbakan even declared that “TRT manager should not have to be uncolored”.<sup>209</sup> But soon after the dissolution of RPP-NSP coalition government and especially after the establishment of the National Front<sup>210</sup> government, Cem’s family background and leftist views were also heavily criticized in the conservative press. Because of the parliamentary discussions focused on TRT, TRT’s young manager became the “İsmail Cem phenomenon” as it was written by Cem Gökçe.<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> For instance, Cem wrote that Demirel’s attacks towards him as the director of TRT were normal since this was caused by the class position of social segments that supported Demirel and the JP. See; İsmail Cem, *TRT’de 500 Gün ... bir dönem Türkiye’sinin hikayesi*, p. 31.

<sup>204</sup> *ibid.*, p. 109.

<sup>205</sup> These accusations were mostly ridiculous and prejudiced. For instance, Cem was blamed for corrupting Turkish youth’s moral values and encouraging them to have pre-marital sexual intercourse because he allowed the broadcasting of the famous film *Love Story*. See; Mehmet Barlas, *Rüzgar Gibi Geçti*, p. 98.

<sup>206</sup> But one of his most feverish opponents of the time, rightist-nationalist *Tercüman* newspaper’s writer Ahmet Kabaklı, 17 years later on 24 December 1991 in his article in the Türkiye newspaper praised Cem and Kemal Tahir for their national stance in the 1970s. See; Abdullah Muradoğlu, *Selanik’ten İstanbul’a İpekçi’ler ve İsmail Cem*, p. 165.

<sup>207</sup> Cem was blamed for deriving improper personal benefit from İpek Film but it was soon understood that his father sold the company to another businessman in 1964. See; İsmail Cem, *TRT’de 500 Gün ... bir dönem Türkiye’sinin hikayesi*, p. 110.

<sup>208</sup> Abdullah Muradoğlu, *Selanik’ten İstanbul’a İpekçi’ler ve İsmail Cem*, p. 190.

<sup>209</sup> Refik Özdek, *Hedef TRT*, p. 99.

<sup>210</sup> National Front (Milliyetçi Cephe) governments refer to rightist coalition governments established between JP, NSP and NAP in the 1970s. The first National Front (Milliyetçi Cephe) government was founded in April 1975 with the coalition of the Justice Party, National Salvation Party, Republican Reliance Party and Nationalist Action Party under the Prime Ministry of JP leader Süleyman Demirel. The second National Front government was founded in July 1977 with a coalition of JP, NSP and NAP again under the Prime Ministry of Demirel.

<sup>211</sup> Cem Gökçe. 1975. *İsmail Cem Olayı*. İstanbul: Panda Yayınları.





The first parliamentary debates were about Cem's appointment. In order to make Cem's appointment, Prime Minister Ecevit on 15 February 1974 adopted a decree law and made TRT manager an exceptional employee status that did not require earlier public service experience.<sup>212</sup> JP spokesman İbrahim Göktepe interpreted this as Ecevit's plan to make TRT an ideological apparatus of the leftists.<sup>213</sup> Republican Reliance Party<sup>214</sup> spokesman Vefa Tanır read Cem's articles about the TLP in the parliament and asked for a parliamentary inquiry for Cem.<sup>215</sup> JP deputy Ahmet Buldanlı criticized TRT's expenditures for making an interview with Sophia Loren and supported the inquiry.<sup>216</sup> However, with the votes of RPP and NSP deputies, the parliamentary inquiry request was rejected. After the establishment of the National Front government, parliamentary debates about Cem and TRT became more frequent and heated. Cem responded to accusations by complaining about unjust accusations and "Byzantine intrigues" of the National Front government and tried to take the support of the media and people.<sup>217</sup> The National Front government seemed to mount a campaign against Cem. On 28 January 1975, JP senator Yiğit Köker made a speech in the Republican Senate and blamed Cem for insulting Atatürk because of the broadcasting of pictures of his chalet with Armenian originated French singer Charles Aznavour's song about homosexuality.<sup>218</sup> JP deputy İhsan Ataöv labeled Cem as a "tick that imbibes the state's budget".<sup>219</sup> The National Front government's plan was to annul Ecevit's decree law and to make TRT manager a job that requires public service experience. For Cem, his job became a matter of rule of

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<sup>212</sup> Türkiye Gazeteciler Sendikası Ankara Şubesi, *Anayasa Işığında Kanun Hükmünde Kararnameler ve İsmail Cem'in Durumu*, p. 5.

<sup>213</sup> İsmet Solak, *İsmail Cem Dosyası*, p. 40.

<sup>214</sup> Cumhuriyetçi Güven Partisi in Turkish.

<sup>215</sup> İsmet Solak, *İsmail Cem Dosyası*, pp. 41-42.

<sup>216</sup> *ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>217</sup> İsmail Cem, *TRT'de 500 Gün ... bir dönem Türkiye'sinin hikayesi*, p. 181.

<sup>218</sup> İsmet Solak, *İsmail Cem Dosyası*, p. 59.

<sup>219</sup> Cem Gökçe, *İsmail Cem Olayı*, p. 21.





law rather than his personal position.<sup>220</sup> Many syndicates and civil society organizations made press statements and supported Cem.<sup>221</sup> The National Front government passed the law for Cem's dismissal from the parliament with big disturbance. For instance, RPP deputy Yüksel Çakmur blamed JP for "being the spokesman of holdings" and "being afraid of Cem's objectivity".<sup>222</sup>

Media and syndical support of the "Cem phenomenon" had snowball effects. İsmail Cem became a heroic symbol of democracy. He received thousands of letters and messages from ordinary people showing their support and trust in Cem. Cem's dismissal decision was approved by the President of the Republic Fahri Korutürk and Nevzat Yalçıntaş replaced Cem as the new director of TRT.<sup>223</sup> The rightist press presented Cem's dismissal as the "dethronement of Sultan Cem".<sup>224</sup> From now on, Cem executed a jurisprudence struggle. Cem's case and his legal situation became a matter of various academic panels and journal articles. For instance, on 2 February 1975, the Union of Turkish Journalists organized a panel with elite lawyers of the period.<sup>225</sup> Cem appealed to the Council of State and aborted his dismissal decision.<sup>226</sup> On 5 June 1975, Cem returned to TRT building lost in the applause of workers and ordinary people.<sup>227</sup> He stated that "TRT was under the occupation of a person that

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<sup>220</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 133.

<sup>221</sup> Cem Gökçe, *İsmail Cem Olayı*, p. 25.

<sup>222</sup> İsmet Solak, *İsmail Cem Dosyası*, p. 132.

<sup>223</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 133.

<sup>224</sup> Sultan Cem (1459-1495) was an Ottoman Prince -son of Fatih Sultan Mehmet, the great conqueror of İstanbul- and pretender for the crown who engaged in a power struggle with his older brother Bayezid II but eventually lost. See; Metin Heper, *Türkiye Sözlüğü Siyaset, Toplum ve Kültür*, p. 180. "Sultan Cem" nickname was used for Cem many times. See; Cem Gökçe, *İsmail Cem Olayı*, p. 43. Years later in February 2000, the head of Bilkent University's Turkish Literature Department, Turkey's first Minister of Culture and İsmail Cem's close friend Professor Talat Halman wrote a witty poem to Cem with the title "Eulogy to Sultan Cem". See; *Hürriyet* internet archive, retrieved on 23.07.2008 from <http://arama.hurriyet.com.tr/arsivnews.aspx?id=-135128>.

<sup>225</sup> This panel was later printed. See; Türkiye Gazeteciler Sendikası Ankara Şubesi. 1975. *Anayasa Işığında Kanun Hükmünde Kararname ve İsmail Cem'in Durumu*. Ankara: Orkide 67 Basımevi.

<sup>226</sup> İsmet Solak, *İsmail Cem Dosyası*, p. 287.

<sup>227</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 141.





does not have legal rights”.<sup>228</sup> Cem was legally advantageous but after when Ecevit pulled the rug from this matter, Cem did not want to lengthen this dispute and waste his energy. Ecevit told Cem that he would return to his seat when RPP would form the government again but did not contact him when he became Prime Minister on 5 January 1978 via RPP’s coalition with the Republican Reliance Party and independent deputies.<sup>229</sup> Cem told Can Dündar that he felt disappointment for Ecevit’s attitude. Cem in 1976 wrote a memoir called *TRT’de 500 Gün* (500 Days in TRT)<sup>230</sup> about his days at TRT.

## 2.7. Back to Journalism

After a fertile but tiresome “500 days” at TRT, Cem decided to return to journalism. He was now a very popular name and a symbol on the left, but also a “persona non grata” for rightist circles and capital owners. *Milliyet* newspaper could not venture to take him on again.<sup>231</sup> Cem decided to publish his own newspaper with Ercan Arıklı and Kadri Kayabal in 1975. The name of the newspaper was *Ekonomi Politika* (Political Economy) or *Politika* (Politics) in short.<sup>232</sup> Cem was the chief editor of the newspaper and he was making efforts to make *Politika* resemble the famous leftist French journal *Le Monde*. He also became a member of RPP again and worked in the Kadıköy branch.<sup>233</sup> With his reputation and theoretical knowledge, Cem made successful works and established important contacts at RPP that would later help him a lot in his rise in party politics.<sup>234</sup> Cem also published a booklet called *Demokratik Solda Temel Kavramlar ve Sorunlar* (Main Concepts and Problems in

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<sup>228</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 142.

<sup>229</sup> Fatih Dağistanlı, *Sosyal Demokratlar*, p. 84.

<sup>230</sup> İsmail Cem. 1976. *TRT’de 500 Gün ... bir dönem Türkiye’sinin hikayesi*. İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi.

<sup>231</sup> Abdullah Muradoğlu, *Selanik’ten İstanbul’a İpekçi’ler ve İsmail Cem*, pp. 204-205.

<sup>232</sup> Aydın Engin. 2007. “Politika Gazetesi” in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce cilt 8 Sol*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.p. 282.

<sup>233</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 145.

<sup>234</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 145-146.





Democratic Left)<sup>235</sup> which consisted of his interviews with Bülent Ecevit for *Politika* newspaper in order to clarify the concept of “democratic left”. *Politika* could not become a popular newspaper and its readers consisted only of Cem’s followers and fans. Because of economic problems, *Politika* within a year was transferred to DİSK (Revolutionary Worker Syndicates Confederation).<sup>236</sup> Cem continued to write in *Politika* for another year but because of the journal’s hardliner socialist views close to the illegal Turkish Communist Party, with the pretext of engaging into politics he left the journal in 1977.<sup>237</sup> Cem also from time to time published articles in *Hürriyet* newspaper. Cem was dreaming of a democratic socialist Turkey and the 1977 general elections increased his hopes. RPP acquired 41.4 % of the votes and declared a real victory of the left.<sup>238</sup> However, Ecevit was not able to get a vote of confidence from the parliament until 17 January 1978 when he obtained support from independent and some Republican Reliance Party deputies.<sup>239</sup> Cem’s hopes on the Ecevit government ended in smoke and because of the terrible economic conditions of the country (shortages due to heavy American embargos as a response to Turkey’s Cyprus Peace Operation) and rising political violence in the streets. Ecevit did not have a chance to realize his party’s land reform<sup>240</sup>, urban village<sup>241</sup> or public sector<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>235</sup> Bülent Ecevit. 1975. *Demokratik Solda Temel Kavramlar ve Sorunlar*. Ankara: Türk Matbaacılık Sanayii.

<sup>236</sup> DİSK’s web site can be seen at; <http://www.disk.org.tr/>.

<sup>237</sup> Aydın Engin, “Politika Gazetesi”, p. 284.

<sup>238</sup> Fatin Dağıştanlı, *Sosyal Demokratlar*, p. 79.

<sup>239</sup> *ibid.*, p. 85.

<sup>240</sup> Land reform (toprak reformu in Turkish) was one of the main projects of social democratic RPP in the 1970s in order to increase agricultural production which was at those years very important for the Turkish economy and to prevent inequalities in agricultural revenue. See; Gülsüm Tütüncü Esmer, *CHP: 1965-1980 Türk Siyasal Yaşamında Ortanın Solu*, pp. 159-164.

<sup>241</sup> Urban village (köykent in Turkish) was RPP and Ecevit’s plan to industrialize villages and to enlighten people living in rural areas by establishing medium size urban villages. See; *ibid.*, pp. 164-166.

<sup>242</sup> Public sector (halk sektörü in Turkish) was RPP’s program of providing long-term but also low interest rate credits to farmers and workers in order to diffuse capital to the lower segments of the society and thus, reduce class-based inequalities. See; *ibid.*, pp. 166-170.





projects. Although he was the “conqueror of Cyprus” and “*Karaoğlan*” of people<sup>243</sup>, the RPP government failed and fell down in a few months.

On 1 January 1979, Cem was shocked and shaken by the assassination of Abdi İpekçi by ultra-nationalist groups.<sup>244</sup> He felt very sad and wanted to go away from his country that lived in anarchy.<sup>245</sup> Assassination threats towards him became a pretext for him and upon his wife’s pressures, three months before the 12 September 1980 military take-over, Cem and his family moved to Paris.<sup>246</sup> Before going to Paris he published another book *Siyaset Yazıları 1975-1980 Türkiye* (Political Writings: Turkey between 1975 and 1980)<sup>247</sup> in which he collected his articles about National Front governments. Cem in a sense felt the coming of a military coup<sup>248</sup> and temporary dictatorship that would especially target the left and chose to escape from Turkey in order to protect himself and his family. He was desperate after Ecevit government’s failure and the assassination of his cousin Abdi İpekçi. As an anti-militarist and anti-violence person, Cem was crestfallen after witnessing the death of thousands of young people and very important intellectuals because of ideological polarization. Paris was an escape to him. Moreover, beginning from the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP)<sup>249</sup>, Paris was the center of regime-opponent Turkish intellectuals.<sup>250</sup> Cem’s view on 12 September was naturally negative. However, Cem confessed that the majority of people were desperate and fed up of endless armed

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<sup>243</sup> Some of the slogans and nicknames related to Ecevit were; Kıbrıs Fatihî (Conqueror of Cyprus), Karaoğlan, Umudumuz Ecevit (Ecevit is our hope), Halkçı Ecevit (Populist Ecevit).

<sup>244</sup> Abdullah Muradoğlu, *Selanik’ten İstanbul’a İpekçi’ler ve İsmail Cem*, p. 66.

<sup>245</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 148.

<sup>246</sup> *ibid.*, p. 150.

<sup>247</sup> İsmail Cem (1980), *Siyaset Yazıları 1975-1980 Türkiye*, İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi.

<sup>248</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 158.

<sup>249</sup> The Committee of Union and Progress (İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti in Turkish) was a secret revolutionary organization that was founded by Ottoman soldiers and intellectuals in order to topple the dictatorial rule of Sultan Abdülhamid II and declare constitutional monarchy. The organization realized the 1908 Revolution, forced the Sultan to declare constitutional monarchy and then transformed into a political party. With a coup in 1913, the party, with its three major names (Enver, Talat and Cemal Pashas), began to run the show but after the Ottoman’s failure in the First World War, Unionists could not prevent the collapse of Ottoman State.

<sup>250</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 149.





clashes in the streets and the lack of politicians to reach a consensus and solutions for Turkey's problems.<sup>251</sup> The declaration of the coup was also referring to politicians' "infertile political rows and uncompromising attitudes" and the strengthening of "deviant ideologies" instead of Atatürkism.<sup>252</sup> Cem did not blame Turkish people as cowards or fascists for their support of the 12 September's junta regime and authoritarian 1982 constitution, because he knew and very well understood their desperate state of mind due to political violence.<sup>253</sup> The assassination of Abdi İpekçi and the political violence of the 1970s probably directed Cem towards refraining from his romantic revolutionary ideas and to embrace social democracy more and more. Starting from the early 1980s, although Cem continued to use historical materialism in his researches, he began to insist on a social democratic model (instead of a socialist path of development) in which capital owners (bourgeois) and wage earners (proletariat) could live in harmony.

Cem and his family were managing through Cem's book sales revenue and their families' help in Paris. But Cem soon found a research job at UNESCO with the help of his academician friend in Paris, Ali Kazancıgil.<sup>254</sup> At the age of 40, he also began to attend to the master's program of École Libre des Sciences Politiques in Paris and became a graduate student for a year.<sup>255</sup> By being a graduate student in Political Science and by witnessing the rise of French socialists and François Mitterrand<sup>256</sup>, he improved his knowledge of modern social democracy. The topic of his master's thesis was "democratic socialism" and thus, Cem had a chance to read all literature of the left, especially writings of Karl Kautsky and Eduard Bernstein.

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<sup>251</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 148.

<sup>252</sup> Full declaration can be seen at; Belge.net, retrieved on 19.07.2008 from [http://www.belgenet.com/12eylul/12091980\\_01.html](http://www.belgenet.com/12eylul/12091980_01.html).

<sup>253</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 159.

<sup>254</sup> *ibid.*, p. 151.

<sup>255</sup> *ibid.*, p. 152.

<sup>256</sup> François Mitterrand (1916-1996) was the leader of French Socialist Party and the President of the Republic of France from 1981 to 1995.





He was busy since he was both finishing a master's degree and working in UNESCO's research programs. Another important memory of Cem from those days was ASALA's<sup>257</sup> attack on Turkey's Paris Consulate.<sup>258</sup> Cem finished his master's thesis and together with his family he returned to Turkey in the fall of 1981. On his return he met with all of the negative consequences and practices of the 12 September regime. The National Security Council on 16 October 1981 abolished with its 52<sup>nd</sup> declaration<sup>259</sup> all political parties including Atatürk's RPP.<sup>260</sup> Nearly all important politicians were imprisoned and outlawed from politics. In 1982, Cem obtained an offer from a well-known and respected journalist Güneri Cıvaoglu. Cıvaoglu was preparing a new newspaper called *Güneş* (Sun)<sup>261</sup> and he wanted Cem to become assistant editor-in-chief and columnist in the newspaper.<sup>262</sup> Cem accepted the offer and began to write in *Güneş*.

## 2.8. Time for Politics

1983 was a turning point for Turkey because after the military intervention for the first time general elections were about to take place. With the approval of the 12 September regime and the President of the Republic -the leading general of the coup- Kenan Evren, a center-right political party called the Nationalist Democracy Party (NDP)<sup>263</sup> (its leader was a retired soldier Turgut Sunalp) and a center-left

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<sup>257</sup> The Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA in short) was an Armenian terrorist organization that targeted Turkish diplomats and people because of 1915 events.

<sup>258</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 156.

<sup>259</sup> Full text can be seen at; Belge.net, retrieved on 19.07.2008 from <http://www.belgenet.com/12eylul/mgk52.html>.

<sup>260</sup> Hikmet Bila, *CHP 1919-1999*, pp. 354-357.

<sup>261</sup> *Güneş* newspaper was owned by Mehmet Ali Yılmaz, a famous Turkish politician, businessman and ex-president of Trabzonspor football club, who had been in the office of the Ministry of Sports. In the early 1980s important journalists such as Çetin Altan, Ahmet Altan, Cüneyt Arcayürek, Bedri Koraman, Mehmet Barlas and Haluk Şahin wrote in *Güneş* alongside İsmail Cem and Güneri Cıvaoglu.

<sup>262</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, pp. 161-162.

<sup>263</sup> Miliyetçi Demokrasi Partisi in Turkish.





political party -the Populist Party (PP)<sup>264</sup> (its leader was Necdet Calp, an experienced bureaucrat)- were founded. At the same time, the 12 September regime's Prime Minister Bülent Ulusu's Deputy Prime Minister and Economy Minister Turgut Özal<sup>265</sup> resigned from his position and established a center party called the Motherland Party<sup>266</sup>. Social democrats also were in the search of a new political party since they did not want to support the "Kenan Evren approved" Populist Party. The leader of PP, Necdet Calp, was trying to take their support by making visits to famous pre-12 September social democrat politicians and intellectuals including İsmail Cem.<sup>267</sup> Calp could not find the support he needed and most of the "old school" social democrats established the Social Democratic Party (SODEP) under the leadership of İsmet İnönü's son Erdal İnönü<sup>268</sup>. İsmail Cem was closer to SODEP but except for a few meetings with his politician friends, he did not engage in politics in the early 1980s. The 12 September regime did not allow SODEP to participate in the 1983 elections and only three parties -NDP, PP and Özal's MP- took their chances on the ballot. Before the elections, during Özal's visit to *Güneş* newspaper, İsmail Cem made an interesting guess and told Özal that he would win the

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<sup>264</sup> Halkçı Parti in Turkish.

<sup>265</sup> Turgut Özal (1927-1993) was a Turkish bureaucrat who engaged in politics after the 12 September 1980 military coup by establishing the liberal Motherland Party. Özal served as Prime Minister two terms (1983-1987 and 1987-1989) and became the 8<sup>th</sup> President of the Republic of Turkey. Özal died of a heart attack in 1993. See; Metin Heper, *Türkiye Sözlüğü Siyaset, Toplum ve Kültür*, p. 388.

<sup>266</sup> The Motherland Party (Anavatan Partisi or ANAP in Turkish) was a Turkish political party that was founded in 1983 by Turgut Özal. It merged with the Democratic Party in October 2009. The ANAP was considered a center-right party which supported restrictions on the role that government can play in the economy, which favored private capital and enterprise, and which allowed for some public expressions of religion. The ANAP maintained a majority in the government of Turkey from 1983 until 1993.

<sup>267</sup> Fatih Dağistanlı, *Sosyal Demokratlar*, p. 117.

<sup>268</sup> Erdal İnönü (1926-2007) was the son of Turkey's second President of the Republic İsmet İnönü, an academician of Physics and a social democrat politician. İnönü established and ruled the Social Democratic (Populist) Party between 1983 and 1993 and served as the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs between 1991 and 1993. See; Metin Heper, *Türkiye Sözlüğü Siyaset, Toplum ve Kültür*, p. 289.





elections.<sup>269</sup> Cem's guess came true since MP took 45.1 % of the votes, while PP took only 30.5 % and NDP garnered 23.3 % of the votes in the 1983 elections.<sup>270</sup>

Cem continued to write in *Güneş* and collected his articles in a book called *Siyaset Yazıları: Geçiş Dönemi Türkiye'si* (Political Writings: Turkey in the Transition Period)<sup>271</sup>. Another important book for Cem's writing career as a social democratic theoretician was *Sosyal Demokrasi Ya Da Demokratik Sosyalizm Nedir, Ne Değildir* (What Is, What Is Not Social Democracy or Democratic Socialism)<sup>272</sup> which was first published in 1984 and continued to make new prints. Cem in this book tried to summarize the birth and the development of the social democratic movement and to adapt social democracy to the newly emerging conditions in the world. He also published a short article in a book called *Democracy* in which politicians and intellectuals from both the left and right criticized the 12 September regime and tried to underline the advantages of democracy.<sup>273</sup> Cem's article was about the supremacy of "pluralist democracy" and its name was "The Necessity to Coexist" (*Birbirine Katlanmak Zorunluluğu*). In those days, in order to unify all social democrats under the same roof, PP's new leader Aydın Güven Gürkan and SODEP leader Erdal İnönü were making negotiations. A week before the general assembly for the union of these two parties, PP leader Aydın Güven Gürkan visited his friend İsmail Cem and asked for his participation and support of the new party.<sup>274</sup> On 26 September 1985, on the day of the union of PP and SODEP with the name Social Democratic Populist Party (SDPP) under the leadership of Aydın Güven

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<sup>269</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 163.

<sup>270</sup> Fatih Dağistanlı, *Sosyal Demokratlar*, p. 123.

<sup>271</sup> İsmail Cem. 1984. *Siyaset Yazıları: "Geçiş Dönemi Türkiye'si" (1981-1984 Yılları)*. İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi.

<sup>272</sup> First print; İsmail Cem. 1984. *Sosyal Demokrasi Ya Da Demokratik Sosyalizm Nedir, Ne Değildir... Ve Türkiye'de Olabilirliği*. İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi. Eighth print; İsmail Cem. 1998. *Sosyal Demokrasi Ya Da Demokratik Sosyalizm Nedir, Ne Değildir*. İstanbul: Can Yayınları.

<sup>273</sup> İsmail Cem. 1984. "Birbirine 'Katlanmak' zorunluluğu" in *DEMOKRASİ Ortak kitap 2*. İstanbul: YAZKO Yayınları.

<sup>274</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 167.





Gürkan, İsmail Cem became a member of the party. Later, at the first Congress of the Party Erdal İnönü became the leader of the social democrats again.<sup>275</sup> However, splits among social democrats seemed endless and as a reaction to this union, Ecevit supporters established the Democratic Left Party on 14 November 1985.<sup>276</sup> According to Cem, although the left was divided into two parties (SDPP and DLP) and many fractions, in those days social democrats were still idealist and in the belief and search of creating a more free and equal system and society.<sup>277</sup>

In 1987, by a referendum, all political bans were lifted and important politicians like Süleyman Demirel, Bülent Ecevit, Necmettin Erbakan, Alparslan Türkeş<sup>278</sup> and Deniz Baykal returned to the political scene again.<sup>279</sup> After the removal of the bans, Demirel became the president of the True Path Party (TPP) and Ecevit started to head DLP. Erbakan as the “natural leader” of political Islam returned to his post and began to command the Welfare Party. Türkeş also made his return and became the president of the Nationalist Task Party<sup>280</sup>. Baykal was not a leader but he also made a quick return to politics and re-established his faction in SDPP. In fact, Baykal during his whole political life was accused of being “factionalist-*hizipçi*”.<sup>281</sup> While old school politicians were coming back to the scene, Özal called for early elections in order not to provide time for his opponents to strengthen.<sup>282</sup> Elections were about to come and İsmail Cem was now ready for

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<sup>275</sup> Fatin Dağistanlı, *Sosyal Demokratlar*, p. 138.

<sup>276</sup> *ibid.*, p. 139.

<sup>277</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 168.

<sup>278</sup> Alparslan Türkeş (1917-1997) was the leader of the Turkish nationalist movement and Nationalist Action Party (NAP). Türkeş served two times as Deputy Prime Minister in Nationalist Front governments. After his death, Devlet Bahçeli became the new leader and the Chief (Başbuğ) of the party and Turkish nationalism. See; Metin Heper, *Türkiye Sözlüğü Siyaset, Toplum ve Kültür*, pp. 463-464.

<sup>279</sup> Political bans were removed with a 50.16 % “yes” vote against a 49.84 % “no” vote. See; Hikmet Bila, *CHP 1919-1999*, p. 379.

<sup>280</sup> Temporary name of the Nationalist Action Party. Milliyetçi Çalışma Partisi-MÇP in Turkish.

<sup>281</sup> Yücel Demirer and Levent Erçin. 2001. “Deniz Baykal Ya Çok Sevilen Ya Da Nefret Edilen” in *Lider Biyografilerindeki Türkiye*. İstanbul: Aykırı Yayıncılık, p. 331.

<sup>282</sup> Hikmet Bila, *CHP 1919-1999*, pp. 379-380.





politics. He thought that engaging in active politics now was a mission for him in order to help the recovery of the left and straighten MP's ideology of commercialization of politics.<sup>283</sup> He was a well-known and respected figure on the left and he actively engaged in SDPP's electoral works. Unlike many other politicians and similar to Bülent Ecevit and Altan Öymen, he was not entering into politics for money or privilege, two things he already had and never gave enormous emphasis.<sup>284</sup> Cem became a member of the SDPP's Central Executive Committee.<sup>285</sup> He knew that the left should renew itself and he wanted to be a part of this change process.<sup>286</sup> For instance, Cem prepared a working plan and model for his party in order to increase the party's votes in the general elections.<sup>287</sup> He analyzed leading European social democrat parties' (including the French Socialist Party, German Social Democratic Party-SPD and Spanish Socialist Workers' Party-PSOE) working models for elections and created a similar plan for SDPP.<sup>288</sup> Cem also published a very important book entitled *Engeller ve Çözümler Türkiye'de Sosyal Demokrasi* (Obstacles and Solutions Social Democracy in Turkey)<sup>289</sup> in 1987. This could be considered as one of the earliest books in Turkey about the principles of modern social democracy. Cem was very hard working and productive in those years. Another important work written by him was his party publication about "*Sosyal Demokrasinin Bunalımdan Çıkış Yolları*" (Solutions for Social Democracy's Escape

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<sup>283</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, pp. 168-170.

<sup>284</sup> *ibid.*, p. xi.

<sup>285</sup> Merkez Karar Yürütme Kurulu-MKYK in Turkish. See; Hikmet Bila, *CHP 1919-1999*, p. 374.

<sup>286</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 169.

<sup>287</sup> İsmail Cem. 1986. "1988 Genel Seçimine İlişkin Seçim Organizasyonu ve Çalışma Modeli". See attachments part.

<sup>288</sup> İsmail Cem, "1988 Genel Seçimine İlişkin Seçim Organizasyonu ve Çalışma Modeli", p. 1.

<sup>289</sup> İsmail Cem. 1987. *Engeller ve Çözümler Türkiye'de Sosyal Demokrasi*. İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi.





from Crisis)<sup>290</sup>. The booklet was short but Cem's arguments about the problems of social democracy were interesting.

İsmail Cem for the first time became a parliamentary candidate in 1987 and took his chance for SDPP in İstanbul. In the 1987 elections, MP kept its lead with 36.3 % of the votes, whereas SDPP garnered 24.8 % and TPP got 19.1 %. MP was still the leading party and formed the government although it lost nearly 10 % of its votes. Özal kept his place as the Prime Minister. Cem was now an İstanbul deputy for SDPP in the first constituency area which consisted of Beşiktaş and Kadıköy districts.<sup>291</sup> Kadıköy was familiar to Cem since he worked there starting from the late 1970s for RPP. He was the first ranked deputy candidate for SDPP and was elected easily. On 26 June 1988, at the second regular Congress of SDPP, İsmail Cem stepped forward and in the control struggles over the party between leader Erdal İnönü and group vice President Deniz Baykal, he courageously became a candidate for the party's leadership.<sup>292</sup> Cem was not hopeful about winning but what he wanted to do was to encourage discussions about renewal and ideological transformation of the party.<sup>293</sup> Moreover, although he was a friend of Erdal İnönü and he respected him a lot, he never thought of him as a politician who could lead masses.<sup>294</sup> Cem lost the leadership battle against İnönü but surprisingly garnered important votes. His friend Deniz Baykal became secretary-general of the party. A temporary İnönü-Baykal peace increased the SDPP's power and SDPP acquired a great success in the 27 March 1989 local elections. SDPP became the leading party with 28.8 % of the

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<sup>290</sup> İsmail Cem. 1987. "Sosyal Demokrasinin Bunalımdan Çıkış Yolları, Tanım, Kimlik, İdeoloji Sorunları".

<sup>291</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 171.

<sup>292</sup> Fatin Dağistanlı, *Sosyal Demokratlar*, pp. 154-156.

<sup>293</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 172.

<sup>294</sup> *ibid.*, p. 175.





votes, TPP followed with 25.1 % and MP with 21.8 %.<sup>295</sup> After winning the local elections, the social democrats' next target was to win the general elections. They were more hopeful especially after their success in the local elections and the weakening of MP after Turgut Özal left the prime ministry and became the 8<sup>th</sup> President of the Republic, although social democrats were completely against Özal's presidency.<sup>296</sup> In order to win the general elections, on 20 October 1990 SDPP established a shadow cabinet, a practice that was not seen in Turkish politics before although it is common among European democracies. İsmail Cem together with Hikmet Çetin assumed the role of Minister of Foreign Affairs in SDPP's shadow cabinet.<sup>297</sup> In those days, Cem attended many conferences and made important speeches about the social democratic economic model. One of these was entitled "Sosyaldemokrat Ekonomi Modelinde Emeğin Rolü ve Sorumluluğu" (The Responsibility and Role of Labor in Social Democratic Economic Model)<sup>298</sup>. Another one was entitled "*Sosyal Demokrasi Açısından Verimlilik-Eşitlik İlişkisi ve Çelişkisi*" (Efficiency-Equality Relation and Paradox in terms of Social Democracy)<sup>299</sup>. Cem's interest seemed to pass beyond social democratic theory and international relations as an intellectual. He was developing himself on all issues including economics; he was preparing for more important posts. He was also representing Turkey in the Council of Europe<sup>300</sup> in Strasbourg and developing his

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<sup>295</sup> Fatin Dağıstanlı, *Sosyal Demokratlar*, p. 162.

<sup>296</sup> *ibid.*, p. 167.

<sup>297</sup> *ibid.*, p.165.

<sup>298</sup> İsmail Cem. 1989. "Sosyaldemokrat Ekonomi Modelinde Emeğin Rolü ve Sorumluluğu" in *Sosyal Demokraside Ekonomi Politikaları: Uluslararası Konferans 11-13 Eylül 1989*. İstanbul: MOZAİK Basım ve Yayıncılık.

<sup>299</sup> İsmail Cem. 1990. "Sosyal Demokrasi Açısından Verimlilik-Eşitlik İlişkisi ve Çelişkisi" in Yurdakul Fincancı (ed.) *Sosyal Demokrat İdeoloji*. İstanbul: Anadolu Matbaa Tic. Koll. Şti.

<sup>300</sup> Established in 1949, the Council of Europe is the oldest European organization for European integration. The Council of Europe's center is Strasbourg and the European Convention on Human Rights and the European Court of Human Rights are tied to the Council. The Council of Europe has 47 member states. Turkey became a member of the Council a few months after it was founded.





relations with European social democrats.<sup>301</sup> His critical look towards the Westernization of Turkey had been changing gradually and especially concerning human rights and freedom of opinion he supported European-Western standards. At the same time, the MP government was taking position in favor of the USA and allowed the opening of American military bases in Turkey by the U.S. Army in its Gulf War against Iraq.<sup>302</sup>

The late 1980s were also very important concerning Turkey's Kurdish question. The Kurdish Institute of Paris in those years was working actively and organizing conferences for developing and familiarizing the Kurdish language and culture. Upon French President François Mitterrand's wife Danielle Mitterrand's invitation, SDPP leader Erdal İnönü was even thinking about participating in a conference on 15 October 1989.<sup>303</sup> Erdal İnönü at first perceived this organization within the lines of a cultural program for developing Turkey's democracy. But soon it was found that the program was also involved with the PKK terrorist organization. İnönü renounced his answer and did not participate in the conference. However, the SDPP's seven Kurdish deputies including Ahmet Türk, Adnan Ekmen, Salih Sümer and Mahmut Alınak attended the conference.<sup>304</sup> SDPP was in turmoil due to the Kurdish question and their Kurdish originated deputies' closeness to the PKK. Those seven deputies were expelled from the party<sup>305</sup> and they soon established the

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<sup>301</sup> Except for a short break Cem represented Turkey at the Council of Europe for ten years continuously between 1987 and 1997. He also headed the Turkish delegation between 1995 and 1997. Cem was also elected twice (1989-1991, 1993-1995) as the Vice Chairman of the Socialist Group in Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. See; Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, pp. 177-178.

<sup>302</sup> Due to this personal decision of Özal, the Chief of the General Staff Necip Torumtay resigned from his post and was replaced by Doğan Güreş. See; Fikret Bila.2007. *Komutanlar Cephesi*. İstanbul: Detay Yayıncılık pp. 34-37.

<sup>303</sup> Fatın Dağıştanlı, *Sosyal Demokratlar*, p. 171.

<sup>304</sup> *ibid.*, p. 172.

<sup>305</sup> Baykal stayed very quite during these talks but voted in favor of expelling these deputies. See; Yücel Demirer and Levent Erçin, "Deniz Baykal Ya Çok Sevilen Ya Da Nefret Edilen", p. 330.





People's Labor Party<sup>306</sup>. In order to clarify SDPP's look at the Kurdish question and its solution proposals, the party declared its famous "South-East Report" in 1990.<sup>307</sup> This report, instead of solving problems and clarifying the party's ideology, caused heavy criticism and harsh reactions towards SDPP in the public opinion. State Security Courts even tried to start investigations on SDPP after this report.<sup>308</sup> The report was in fact only defending the expansion of cultural democratic rights and the necessity of economic, cultural-educational and democratic development of the region and had no hidden political aim but reactions were very strong from rightist circles and state institutions.<sup>309</sup> Even liberal President Turgut Özal defined the report as "objectionable" (*sakıncalı*).<sup>310</sup> However, the report took support from the Socialist International which convened in June 1991 in İstanbul.<sup>311</sup> The report indicated that the ban on the speaking, learning and teaching of the Kurdish language should be removed, but the official language should always be Turkish.<sup>312</sup> Cem was in favor of democratic openings, but especially after İnönü's decision to make an electoral coalition with PLP, Cem began to criticize İnönü's policies in the Party Assembly together with Baykal's followers.<sup>313</sup> In Cem's view, PLP's candidates were linked to terrorism and he thought that this could damage the party's democratic stance and

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<sup>306</sup> The People's Labor Party (Halkın Emek Partisi-HEP) made an electoral coalition with SDPP in the 1991 elections and entered into parliament with 11 deputies. However, soon after Leyla Zana's Kurdish oath in TGNA, the party was closed down due to its links to the PKK. The Kurdish movement established the Democracy Party (DEP) which was abolished in similar fashion. The People's Democracy Party (HADEP) and later the Democratic Society Party were founded as the merger of the HEP tradition. See; Metin Heper, *Türkiye Sözlüğü Siyaset, Toplum ve Kültür*, pp. 275-276. For a detailed analysis on People's Democracy Party, see; Aylın Güney. 2002. "The People's Democracy Party" in Barry Rubin and Metin Heper (ed.) *Political Parties in Turkey*. London: Frank Cass and Company Limited.

<sup>307</sup> Fatin Dağıştanlı, *Sosyal Demokratlar*, p. 175.

<sup>308</sup> Hikmet Bila, *CHP 1919-1999*, p. 385.

<sup>309</sup> Years later, the architect of the 12 September 1980 military coup and Turkey's 7<sup>th</sup> President of the Republic Kenan Evren admitted that banning the Kurdish language was a big mistake. See; Fikret Bila, *Komutanlar Cephesi*, pp. 11-12.

<sup>310</sup> Fatin Dağıştanlı, *Sosyal Demokratlar*, p. 179.

<sup>311</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 179-180.

<sup>312</sup> *ibid.*, p. 178.

<sup>313</sup> Baykal at this period was not a member of the Party Assembly but many of his closest friends were in the Assembly. See; Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 178.





reduce its votes.<sup>314</sup> Bülent Ecevit was also in those years strongly criticizing the SDPP's electoral coalition with PLP and claimed that this would encourage terrorism.<sup>315</sup> Baykal and his faction resigned from the SDPP's Central Decision Execution Committee on 10 September 1990. İnönü and Baykal's temporary peace was very short and soon Baykal began to criticize İnönü for his passivism. İsmail Cem seemed at first closer to İnönü<sup>316</sup> but after assaults made towards Baykal during his İzmir visit, he decided to support his friend Deniz Baykal.<sup>317</sup> Baykal declared his candidacy for party leadership on 21 September 1990 together with İsmail Cem at a press conference. İnönü responded to the Baykal-Cem coalition by saying "they could not compete with me on their own".<sup>318</sup> On 29 September 1990, İnönü defeated Baykal and preserved his place.<sup>319</sup>

The struggle between İnönü and Baykal did not seem to have ended. So, on 27 July 1991 at the third regular Congress of SDPP, Baykal tried to pass İnönü again but failed a second time.<sup>320</sup> At the 1991 general elections, Demirel's TPP took the lead with 27 % of the votes whereas the others followed as such; MP 24 %, SDPP-PLP 20.8 %, Erbakan's Welfare Party (WP) 16.9 % and Ecevit's DLP 10.8 %.<sup>321</sup> It was not a success for social democrats since their votes decreased. Moreover, the quick rise of the Islamist WP was alarming for social democrats who gave great emphasis to secularism. İsmail Cem considered this as the success of WP's clever but fake leftist rhetoric that was mixed with Islamism and that took support from millions of "low-income earning people living in peripheral settlements of big

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<sup>314</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 179.

<sup>315</sup> Hamit Bozarıslan. 2004. "Bülent Ecevit" in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce cilt 2 Kemalizm*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, p. 459.

<sup>316</sup> Fatın Dağıstanlı, *Sosyal Demokratlar*, p. 182.

<sup>317</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 180.

<sup>318</sup> Fatın Dağıstanlı, *Sosyal Demokratlar*, p. 185.

<sup>319</sup> Hikmet Bila, *CHP 1919-1999*, p. 386.

<sup>320</sup> *ibid.*, p. 387.

<sup>321</sup> Fatın Dağıstanlı, *Sosyal Demokratlar*, p. 201.





cities”.<sup>322</sup> Moreover, electoral coalition with the PLP seemed unsuccessful in the western villages as Cem predicted. In addition, PLP deputies created a scandal in the opening oath ceremony of TGNA and they were dismissed from the parliament soon. Demirel’s TPP made a coalition with the SDPP and social democrats were able to become a part of the government and get rid of the MP trouble. Baykal and Cem (again İstanbul deputy) were in the parliament but as İnönü opponents they did not have a chance for the ministry. Although İnönü was the Deputy Prime Minister and SDPP was a coalition partner, SDPP’s internal struggles continued and Baykal challenged İnönü again on 25 January 1992. İnönü declared that he would resign if he lost and Baykal said that “now it’s his turn”.<sup>323</sup> Baykal and Cem published a booklet called “Değişim” (Change)<sup>324</sup> and displayed their program to everyone. They were very pretentious but İnönü was again able to defeat Baykal although by a small margin. Baykal and Cem were making a new plan for realizing their “new left” project.<sup>325</sup> Cem was also writing articles about Turkish politics and especially about Turkish foreign policy in *Sabah* (Morning) newspaper in the early 1990s.

After three defeats against İnönü, Baykal and Cem did not give up and published a book called *Yeni Sol* (New Left) in order to put forward their program for social democracy’s transformation.<sup>326</sup> The book became influential with Baykal and Cem’s arguments similar to “third-way”<sup>327</sup> politics of the British Labor Party leader and British Premier Tony Blair. Cem was criticizing İnönü for being too passive and

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<sup>322</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 181.

<sup>323</sup> Hikmet Bila, *CHP 1919-1999*, p. 390.

<sup>324</sup> İsmail Cem and Deniz Baykal. 1992. “SHP’de YENİ SOL’un Türkiye Programı - DEĞİŞİM”.

<sup>325</sup> The New Left is also called “Anatolian Left” in some publications. See; Ayşe Güneş Ayata. 2002. “The Republican People’s Party” in Barry Rubin and Metin Heper (ed.) *Political Parties in Turkey*. London: Frank Cass and Company Limited, p. 111.

<sup>326</sup> İsmail Cem and Deniz Baykal. 1992. *Yeni Sol*. İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi.

<sup>327</sup> Term used for new social democratic programs trying to mix socialist ideas into free-market economics after the failure and fall of the socialist model and USSR. British sociologist Anthony Giddens, with his namesake book, was the leading ideologue of third way politics.





SDPP for not making the necessities of a modern social democratic party.<sup>328</sup> Cem and Baykal did not have the chance to realize their project in SDPP so, they decided to re-establish the Republican People's Party in 1992. On 9 September 1992, the RPP Congress convened and Baykal became the fourth leader of RPP after Atatürk, İnönü and Ecevit.<sup>329</sup> İsmail Cem became a member of the Party Assembly and the Central Decision Execution Committee and also assumed the role of Vice President.<sup>330</sup> The Republican People's Party and Baykal and Cem duo was the new hope of the social democrats. Cem confirmed this idea by saying "every beginning is a new hope".<sup>331</sup> Comparing these two young social democrat figures to each other, socialist writer Cemal Süreya claimed that Cem was the "Istanbulite and cleaner version of Baykal" and Cem represented ideas and theory whereas Baykal represented action and practice<sup>332</sup>. In a sense, these two figures completed each other and galvanized younger social democratic generations. However, Süreya was pessimistic about Cem's success in politics due to his "extreme optimism"<sup>333</sup> and "naïve politician" image.<sup>334</sup> Baykal and Cem's RPP acquired twenty deputies in the parliament quickly after its foundation which allowed the party to found a formal group in the parliament and play a key role in the continuation of the TPP-SDPP coalition. They prepared a new program and constitution for the party by considering the changing realities of Turkey and universal principles of social democracy.<sup>335</sup> In 1993, the positive atmosphere after RPP's re-birth was overshadowed by the assassination of

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<sup>328</sup> Ahmet Taner Kışlalı, *Atatürk'e Saldırmanın Dayanılmaz Hafifliği*, p. 168.

<sup>329</sup> Hikmet Bila, *CHP 1919-1999*, p. 394.

<sup>330</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 181.

<sup>331</sup> *ibid.*, p. 182.

<sup>332</sup> Cemal Süreya. 1991. *99-Yüz*. İstanbul: Sistem Yayıncılık, p. 28.

<sup>333</sup> *ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>334</sup> *ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>335</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 182.





journalist Uğur Mumcu and the horrifying “Sivas massacre”<sup>336</sup>. İnönü and SDPP were losing power and all social democrats blamed İnönü for observing the massacres passively.<sup>337</sup> The discovery of İSKİ (Istanbul Municipality Waterworks) corruption was a final blow for SDPP. SDPP municipalities and the party in total lost enormous prestige and the “honest” image of social democrats was soiled.<sup>338</sup> In 1993, after the unexpected death of Turgut Özal, TPP leader Süleyman Demirel became the ninth President of the Republic and his place was replaced by Tansu Çiller<sup>339</sup>. İsmail Cem unexpectedly and courageously became a candidate for the Presidency, but he could not find the support he needed. This was the second time (the first one was for SDPP leadership against İnönü) Cem was trying to step forward and this surely indicated that behind his very tolerant and gentle personality, Cem was a self-confident and ambitious man especially in politics. In those days, SDPP leader Erdal İnönü could not resist criticisms and the troublesome life of politics and resigned from his office.<sup>340</sup> The Demirel-İnönü combination was replaced by Tansu Çiller and SDPP’s new leader Murat Karayalçın. Çiller and Karayalçın took the decision of Turkey’s membership to the Customs Union, a controversial but important step for Turkey’s EU membership dream.<sup>341</sup> SDPP-RPP negotiations for union increased after Karayalçın’s leadership but the two parties wanted to see first their own power in the 1994 local elections and delayed the union talks.

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<sup>336</sup> The Sivas Massacre or Sivas Events took place in Sivas on 2 July 1993. The event refers to the burning of Madımak Hotel and the killing of 37 Alevi intellectuals and artists by radical Islamist groups. See; Metin Heper, *Türkiye Sözlüğü Siyaset, Toplum ve Kültür*, p. 424.

<sup>337</sup> Fatın Dağistanlı, *Sosyal Demokratlar*, p. 218.

<sup>338</sup> Ercan Karakaş, “Sosyal Demokrasi Arayışları”, p. 260.

<sup>339</sup> Tansu Çiller (1946-) is an academician of economics and a right-wing politician. She is Turkey’s first and only female Prime Minister. Çiller became Prime Minister after Demirel’s Presidency in the TPP-SDPP coalition (1993-1996) and assumed the role of Foreign Minister in the WP-TPP coalition (1996-1997). See; Metin Heper, *Türkiye Sözlüğü Siyaset, Toplum ve Kültür*, p. 194.

<sup>340</sup> Fatın Dağistanlı, *Sosyal Demokratlar*, p. 239.

<sup>341</sup> On 1 January 1996, the Customs Union between the European Union and Turkey came into effect. By the agreement, goods can travel between the two entities without any custom limitations. See; Metin Heper, *Türkiye Sözlüğü Siyaset, Toplum ve Kültür*, p. 264.





1994 local elections were a turning point for Turkey considering the rise of political Islam. Although TPP was the leading party with 21.4 % of the votes and MP was in second with 21 %, the rise of WP to 19.1 % of the votes, the fall of SDPP to 13.6 % and the failure of Ecevit's DLP with 8.8 % and Baykal's RPP 4.6 % votes shocked all social democrats.<sup>342</sup> WP was able to win municipalities in İstanbul with Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and in Ankara with Melih Gökçek. Social democrats were in panic and the union of all social democratic parties seemed to be the only way to gain power. However, Bülent Ecevit was against this project and he closed the door for union in the first day of union talks. RPP leader Baykal and SDPP leader Karayalçın reached a consensus for the temporary leadership of the experienced and moderate Hikmet Çetin after the union of two parties under the Republican People's Party's roof.<sup>343</sup> On 18 February 1995, Hikmet Çetin was elected the fifth President of RPP and assumed the role of Deputy Prime Minister by replacing Murat Karayalçın.<sup>344</sup> Cem was the impulsive force in RPP for realizing this union.<sup>345</sup> He also published two important books in 1994: *Gelecek İçin Denemeler* (Essays for the Future)<sup>346</sup> and *Sol'daki Arayış* (Search in the Left)<sup>347</sup>. Especially *Sol'daki Arayış* was an interesting book because on the one hand Cem defended a new pluralist social democratic model, but on the other hand he criticized Turkey's asymmetrical relations with the EU<sup>348</sup> and defined the current EU process as a way to the Sevres

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<sup>342</sup> Fatin Dağıstanlı, *Sosyal Demokratlar*, pp. 260-262.

<sup>343</sup> Hikmet Bila, *CHP 1919-1999*, p. 401.

<sup>344</sup> *ibid.*, p. 402.

<sup>345</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 183.

<sup>346</sup> İsmail Cem. 1994. *Gelecek İçin Denemeler*, İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi.

<sup>347</sup> İsmail Cem. 1994. *Sol'daki Arayış*, İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi.

<sup>348</sup> İsmail Cem, *Sol'daki Arayış*, p. 152. Later hardliner Kemalist and the former Chief Prosecutor of the Supreme Court Vural Savaş also pointed out Cem's transformation regarding the EU membership process. See; Vural Savaş. 2003. *Atatürk'ün Kemiklerini Sızlatan Parti CHP*. Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, p. 95.





Treaty<sup>349</sup>. While Baykal was preparing to finally realize his dreams, Cem unexpectedly became the Minister of Culture on 7 July 1995 after Ercan Karakaş's resignation and Hikmet Çetin's offer.<sup>350</sup>

İsmail Cem stayed in the office of the Minister of Culture only a few months until 6 October 1995, but made important contributions with his assistant secretary Prof. Emre Kongar. In his early days in office, instead of defaming previous Ministers, Cem stated that he took over a giant institution and praised Kongar for his works.<sup>351</sup> Kongar remembers Cem as a star, a true gentleman, a successful manager and a hard-working politician having principles.<sup>352</sup> Especially, Cem's effective management preventing bureaucratic delays and innovative personality<sup>353</sup> impressed Kongar. Kongar thought that the TRT days helped Cem a lot to learn the difficulties about the workings of the state and made him a great manager and minister.<sup>354</sup> The earliest deed of Cem was to sign a protocol for the establishment of a new "culture house" in İstanbul with the help of the İstanbul Stock Exchange.<sup>355</sup> The second important project that Cem organized was a trip with 1.000 artists to the eastern and south-eastern villages of Turkey in order to strengthen Kurdish people's ties to the state and to introduce them the beauties of theatre and music.<sup>356</sup> Cem also brought the 700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of the Ottoman Empire to the Ministry's agenda and made some preparations for 1999.<sup>357</sup> As the Minister of Culture Cem made another important deed and tried to refresh state choirs in Sivas, Diyarbakır

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<sup>349</sup> Treaty signed between the Ottoman State and Allies on 10 August 1920 for the partition of Anatolia.

<sup>350</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 184.

<sup>351</sup> Emre Kongar. 1996. *Ben Müsteşarken*. İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, p. 335.

<sup>352</sup> *ibid.*, p. 68.

<sup>353</sup> Cem at those years was maybe the only Minister using laptop computer. See; *ibid.*, p. 71.

<sup>354</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 69-70.

<sup>355</sup> *ibid.*, p. 71.

<sup>356</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 184.

<sup>357</sup> *ibid.*, p. 185.





and Şanlıurfa.<sup>358</sup> Cem also tried to organize a biographical movie of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk together with his friend and famous director Halit Refiğ but the project could not be realized.<sup>359</sup> His days in the office of the Ministry of Culture ended in a few months and Cem could not realize his dream of organizing a mass pop concert to benefit survivors of the Bosnian conflict.<sup>360</sup> Cem was popular and successful but he had a personal disagreement with Baykal although in his view ideologically they did not have many differences.<sup>361</sup> There were different rumors about the Baykal-Cem disagreement; some people believed that Baykal was offended by Cem after Cem's choice of temporary leader Hikmet Çetin's ministry offer. Some others believed that Cem's leadership ambitions disturbed Baykal.

On 9 September 1995, the real power struggle took place between Baykal and Karayalçın at the 27<sup>th</sup> Congress of the party and Baykal finally won the battle.<sup>362</sup> Baykal was now a key man for the continuation of the coalition and he was forcing Çiller to do what he wanted. The coalition was dispersed after Baykal's insistence and a provisional government was founded between TPP and RPP again until the 24 December 1995 general elections.<sup>363</sup> Baykal appointed Fikri Sağlar in Cem's place as the Minister of Culture in order to show his disappointment. The Baykal-Cem friendship and partnership was eroding and Cem declared that he would not be a candidate for RPP in the 1995 elections due to his personal problems with Baykal.

## 2.9. Cem and Ecevit Together

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<sup>358</sup> Emre Kongar, *Ben Müsteşarken*, p. 71.

<sup>359</sup> Şengün Kılıç Hristidis, *Sinemada Ulusal Tavrı "Halit Refiğ Kitabı"*, p. 315.

<sup>360</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, 25.01.2007, "İsmail Cem, 67; former Turkish foreign minister", retrieved on 14.10.2008 from <http://articles.latimes.com/2007/jan/25/local/me-cem25>.

<sup>361</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 186.

<sup>362</sup> Hikmet Bila, *CHP 1919-1999*, pp. 403-405.

<sup>363</sup> *ibid.*, p. 407.





After the collapse of the Cem-Baykal coalition, Cem was thinking of a temporary retirement from politics and was willing to teach classes at university and write new books. However, Cem was a popular name and his success as the Minister of Culture directed Bülent Ecevit to offer him deputyship for the DLP. But DLP's candidate list was nearly fully-prepared and Ecevit wanted Cem to prove himself. So, Ecevit offered him the first rank for three difficult cities; Kastamonu, Sinop and Kayseri. Cem chose Kayseri because he thought that the presence of an airport in this city could facilitate his electoral works.<sup>364</sup> His chance seemed very low since Kayseri was the castle of the WP and conservative parties in general and RPP was DLP's strong adversary in the left. WP's Kayseri deputy Abdullah Gül was also telling the same to his friend İsmail Cem.<sup>365</sup> Together with his son Kerim and his friends, Cem initiated a very successful electoral campaign and learned many new things about Anatolia. He thought that if he was not elected, his political life would end.<sup>366</sup> Cem took 11 % of the votes in Kayseri and was elected as Kayseri deputy from DLP.<sup>367</sup> This was his third term in the TGNA. However, he was at first disappointed because of the lack of intra-party democracy in DLP.<sup>368</sup> Cem was checking Ecevit's speeches before a party congress<sup>369</sup>, but at the same time Ecevit was trying to keep Cem outside of intraparty politics. In Cem's view, DLP was ruled by three people; Bülent Ecevit, his wife Raĥsan Ecevit and Hüsamettin Özkan.<sup>370</sup> In the elections, WP took 21.4 % of the votes and became the leading party for the first time. MP followed WP with 19.6 % and TPP with 19.2 % of the votes. Ecevit's DLP made an important

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<sup>364</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, pp. 186-187.

<sup>365</sup> *ibid.*, p. 188.

<sup>366</sup> *ibid.*, p. 193.

<sup>367</sup> *ibid.*, p. 194.

<sup>368</sup> For a detailed analysis of the DLP see; Suat Kınıkliođlu. 2002. "The Democratic Left Party: Kapıkulu Politics Par Excellence" in Barry Rubin and Metin Heper (ed.) *Political Parties in Turkey*. London: Frank Cass and Company Limited.

<sup>369</sup> Can Dündar and Rıdvan Akar. 2008. *Ecevit ve Gizli Arşivi*. Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, p. 150.

<sup>370</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 195.





attack and acquired 14.6 % of the votes, whereas Baykal's RPP had only 10.7 % of the votes and had a terrible defeat.<sup>371</sup> After the elections, the TPP-MP coalition was established but it lived only for three months due to personal problems with MP leader Mesut Yılmaz<sup>372</sup> and TPP leader Çiller.<sup>373</sup> Finally, the scenario happened and Erbakan made a coalition with Çiller and on 28 June 1996 Refahiyol (WP-TPP coalition) was established under the Prime Ministry of Necmettin Erbakan.<sup>374</sup>

The Refahiyol government, with its hostile attitude towards the Western world and anti-secular practices and declarations, created many crises in its short governmental term. The government and Prime Minister Erbakan were perceived as a serious menace to Turkey's secular regime by many in the secular establishment, especially by the military officers. In spite of having strong suspicions about WP's secular as well as democratic credentials, military officers adopted a strategy of "wait-and-see" policy.<sup>375</sup> WP was refraining "from challenging the basic promises of democracy" but its interpretation of democracy was "more majoritarian than liberal or pluralistic".<sup>376</sup> Regarding the economy, WP proposed an "Islamic-inspired" anti-liberal "just order". Thus, in a sense the party combined "religious and class appeals".<sup>377</sup> WP's policies disturbed not only the Turkish regime but also international public opinion. Especially Erbakan's scandalous visit to Libya<sup>378</sup> and his controversial dinner organized in the residential estate of the Prime Ministry in

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<sup>371</sup> Fatin Dağıştanlı, *Sosyal Demokratlar*, p. 327.

<sup>372</sup> Mesut Yılmaz (1947-) was the former leader of Motherland Party as the successor of Turgut Özal who served once as Minister of Foreign Affairs (1987-1990) and three times as Prime Minister (1991, 1996, 1997-1999).

<sup>373</sup> Hikmet Bila, *CHP 1919-1999*, p. 409.

<sup>374</sup> Fatin Dağıştanlı, *Sosyal Demokratlar*, p. 331.

<sup>375</sup> Ergun Özbudun. 2000. *Contemporary Turkish Politics: Challenges to Democratic Consolidation*. London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, p. 120.

<sup>376</sup> *ibid.*, p. 88.

<sup>377</sup> *ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>378</sup> Fikret Bila. 2001. *Phoenix Ecevit'in Yeniden Doğuşu*. İstanbul: Doğan Kitapçılık AŞ, pp. 366-367.





the honor of religious brotherhoods' leaders<sup>379</sup> exasperated secular segments of the society. At the 26 December 1996 meeting of the National Security Council, the commanders noted that since August of 1996, the Islamic threat had become greater, and retained their request that this matter be placed on the agenda of the NSC. At the same time, the commanders set up the so-called West Study Group (*Bati Çalışma Grubu*) in the General Staff headquarters.<sup>380</sup> WSG aimed at monitoring the activities threatening the secular republic and planning appropriate measures for the threats. Also, a new organ called the Prime Ministerial Crisis Management Center (*Başbakanlık Kriz Yönetim Merkezi*) was formed within the NSC secretariat to observe and report on crises caused by Islamic reactionism and formulate responses to them. With this organ, the secretary general of the NSC was given the charge of control whether the NSC decisions were implemented by the parliament. In these circumstances, the historical February 28, 1997 NSC took place.

The 28 February process was named after the date of the historical National Security Council meeting on 28 February 1997. In the NSC meeting on 28 February 1997, a declaration similar to a military memorandum was issued. NSC decisions were strict and clear. The declaration was asking for the “careful protection of secularism”, handing over of the schools and dormitories of religious brotherhood to the Ministry of Education, putting into practice eight-year compulsory education, abolishing religious brotherhoods, banning the use of religious dressing in public sphere, etc.<sup>381</sup> The Refahyol government's only chance was to implement these decisions but Erbakan was resisting. In order to reduce tension, Erbakan and Çiller agreed on Çiller's Prime Ministry and the continuation of the coalition government. However, Çiller was losing her control over TPP and a group of TPP deputies led by

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<sup>379</sup> Fikret Bila, *Phoenix Ecevit'in Yeniden Doğuşu*, pp. 370-371.

<sup>380</sup> Hikmet Bila, *CHP 1919-1999*, p. 410.

<sup>381</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 411-413.





the experienced politician and Demirel's right-hand Hüsametdin Cindoruk left TPP and established the Democrat Turkey Party (DTP) on 7 January 1997.<sup>382</sup> Turkey also made a new intelligence sharing treaty with Israel during the 28 February process.<sup>383</sup> In those days, the "Susurluk scandal" was another important issue on the agenda. The Susurluk scandal emerged after a car accident on 3 November 1996 near Susurluk. In this accident, former Deputy Chief of Istanbul Police Hüseyin Kocadağ, the ex-leader of the Grey Wolves (Nationalist Action Party's youth organization) Abdullah Çatlı<sup>384</sup> and Çatlı's girlfriend Gonca Us died, and TPP Şanlıurfa deputy Sedat Bucak was injured. This group of people soon exposed "deep" connections between the security forces, politicians and organized crime.<sup>385</sup> Leftist-social democratic circles initiated campaigns and organized big demonstrations against the "deep state". However, the Refahiyol government tried to veil the scandal and took harsh reactions from the media. A party closure case against WP was also opened by the Chief Prosecutor of the Supreme Court Vural Savaş during this process.<sup>386</sup> Eventually, President Demirel nominated Mesut Yılmaz for making coalition negotiations instead of Çiller or Erbakan. Yılmaz after making efforts established MP-DLP-DTP (ANASOL-D coalition) by taking the support of RPP.<sup>387</sup> Baykal's only condition for supporting the ANASOL-D coalition was to take election decision as soon as possible. The ANASOL-D government put into action quickly eight-year compulsory education and a new tax bill.<sup>388</sup> This coalition was a turning point for

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<sup>382</sup> Fikret Bila, *Phoenix Ecevit'in Yeniden Doğuşu*, p. 370.

<sup>383</sup> Meltem Müftüler Baç, *Türkiye ve AB: Soğuk Savaş Sonrası İlişkiler*, p. 118.

<sup>384</sup> For a detailed biography of Çatlı see; Soner Yalçın. 1999. *Reis Gladio'nun Türk Tetikçisi*. İstanbul: Su Yayınları.

<sup>385</sup> Soner Yalçın, *Reis Gladio'nun Türk Tetikçisi*, pp. 360-375.

<sup>386</sup> The WP was eventually closed down on 16 January 1998 by the Turkish Constitutional Court. The decision was later approved by the European Court of Human Rights. See; Hikmet Bila, *CHP 1919-1999*, p. 414.

<sup>387</sup> Fatih Dağistanlı, *Sosyal Demokratlar*, pp. 345-346.

<sup>388</sup> Hikmet Bila, *CHP 1919-1999*, p. 415.





İsmail Cem, because he was now entering the office of the Foreign Ministry to stay for a long period of time.

## 2.10. In Office

İsmail Cem expected a ministry role in the ANASOL-D coalition government, but he was not sure about the Foreign Ministry. Rumors stated that Cem could be Minister of Culture again.<sup>389</sup> Later, Cem learned that Prime Minister Ecevit wanted him as the Minister of Culture<sup>390</sup> but President Süleyman Demirel insisted on Cem's Foreign Ministry and Ecevit finally accepted this offer.<sup>391</sup> Cem admitted that Ecevit had always tried to keep Cem's place at middle-range distance in order not to lose control over him, but also not to be too close.<sup>392</sup> Retired diplomat Yaman Başkut on the other hand wrote that Cem was very respectful towards Ecevit but as Foreign Minister he wanted to be very active and independent in shaping Turkey's foreign policy.<sup>393</sup> The coalition government was established on 12 July 1997 and Cem entered the office of Foreign Ministry. However, the effects of the 28 February process were still in force and upon Prime Minister Yılmaz's criticism towards the military, on 20 March 1998 Turkish Armed Forces made a declaration and showed its sensitivity about secularism.<sup>394</sup> Yılmaz's only problem was not the military's warnings; he had to deal with Baykal as well. Baykal was bombarding the government for elections and threatening to pull his party's support from the coalition. Finally, Yılmaz had to accept Baykal's wishes and elections were decided to be held in April 1999. Moreover, Baykal forced Yılmaz to resign from the Prime

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<sup>389</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 197.

<sup>390</sup> *ibid.*, p. 198.

<sup>391</sup> *ibid.*, p. 200.

<sup>392</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 196-197.

<sup>393</sup> Yaman Başkut. 2004. *Aferin İyiydin... Bir Diplomatın Anıları*. Ankara: İnkılâp Kitabevi, p. 136.

<sup>394</sup> Hikmet Bila, *CHP 1919-1999*, p. 416.





Ministry at the end of 1998 and to accept the formation of an electoral minority government in January 1999, a few months before the elections.<sup>395</sup> Baykal was smiling but his insistence on elections and his “naughty child” image was reducing RPP’s votes while the Prime Minister of the minority government Bülent Ecevit and his Foreign Minister İsmail Cem were working hard for the capture of PKK leader Öcalan.<sup>396</sup>

While Baykal was trying to force the government to call for early elections, all actors of the National Security Council and especially the new Foreign Minister Cem were working on how to prevent Syrian support to PKK terrorism which was on the rise again. Finally, Land Forces Commander General Atilla Ateş on 16 September 1998 made an important speech at the Syrian border in Hatay and warned Syria for the last time about not supporting and hiding PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan.<sup>397</sup> In Cem’s view, the warning came under the cognizance of all NSC members and made a very positive effect on Turkey’s struggle against PKK terrorism.<sup>398</sup> The cooperation between the military, the Presidency, the government and the Foreign Ministry and Turkey’s firm stance against terrorism softened Syria and finally with the “Adana agreement”<sup>399</sup> on 20 October 1998, Syria had to stop supporting the PKK and Öcalan. Öcalan was deported from Syria but this time appeared first in Russia and later in Italy.<sup>400</sup> Finally, he was caught on 15 February 1999 by the Turkish intelligence service near the Greek Embassy of Kenya.<sup>401</sup> On the

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<sup>395</sup> Fatin Dağıstanlı, *Sosyal Demokratlar*, pp. 350-351.

<sup>396</sup> Fikret Bila, *Phoenix Ecevit’in Yeniden Doğuşu*, p. 422.

<sup>397</sup> Fikret Bila. 2004. *Satranç Tahtasındaki Yeni Hamleler HANGİ PKK?*. Ankara: Ümit Yayıncılık, pp. 73-74.

<sup>398</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 226.

<sup>399</sup> After the Adana agreement, Syria stopped supporting the PKK and cultural exchange programs started between Turkey and Syria. See; Fikret Bila, *Komutanlar Cephesi*, p. 210.

<sup>400</sup> Can Dündar and Rıdvan Akar, *Ecevit ve Gizli Arşivi*, pp. 406-432.

<sup>401</sup> According to retired General Aytaç Yalman, Öcalan’s capture was made by American intelligence and it was related to the USA’s new plan of invading Iraq with the help of Kurdish groups in northern Iraq who are in a power struggle with the PKK. See; Fikret Bila, *Komutanlar Cephesi*, pp. 204-207.





morning of 16 February 1999, Prime Minister Ecevit gave the good news to the Turkish people.<sup>402</sup> From this event in a sense, Greece was caught red handed and Cem was ready to use this issue for straightening out Turkey and Greece's relations.<sup>403</sup> This success was surely an important factor in the elections, too.

In the general elections held on 18 April 1999, DLP became the leading the party with 21.71 % of the votes. This was the result of Öcalan's capture and Cem as the Minister of Foreign Affairs was one of the architects of the victory. The Nationalist Action Party with its new leader Devlet Bahçeli made a surprise attack and became the second party with 18.03 % of the votes. The Virtue Party-VP, the successor of the Welfare Party, got only 15.41 % whereas center-right parties created disappointment with MP's 13.42 % and TPP's 12.26 % of the votes. The real shock occurred with RPP's 8.37 % of the votes.<sup>404</sup> Baykal resigned from his office on 22 April 1999, but returned to his place again after a short period of time. İsmail Cem was again elected from Kayseri but this time in an easier manner. TGNA was opened in a sensational way again because of VP deputy Merve Kavakçı's insistence on entering into Parliament with her headscarf.<sup>405</sup> Ecevit here made an important speech and reminded the VP deputies that the Parliament was not a place for "defying the state".<sup>406</sup> Eventually, Kavakçı's deputyship was cancelled. On 28 May 1999, the DLP-NAP-MP coalition was established and Ecevit became the Prime Minister again.<sup>407</sup> İsmail Cem preserved his position as Foreign Minister. He had now more

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For details about Öcalan's capture see; Miron Varouhakis, "Fiasco in Nairobi", retrieved on 09.10.2010 from <https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/vol53no1/fiasco-in-nairobi.html>.

<sup>402</sup> Fikret Bila, *Satranç Tahtasındaki Yeni Hamleler HANGİ PKK?*, pp. 85-86.

<sup>403</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 228.

<sup>404</sup> Fikret Bila, *Phoenix Ecevit'in Yeniden Doğuşu*, p. 440.

<sup>405</sup> *ibid.*, p. 445.

<sup>406</sup> *ibid.*, p. 446.

<sup>407</sup> For analysis of Ecevit's political transformation from the 1970s to the 1990s, see; Frank Tachau. 2002. "Bülent Ecevit: From Idealist to Pragmatist" in Metin Heper and Sabri Sayarı (ed.) *Political Leaders and Democracy in Turkey*. New York: Lexington Books.





chance to prove himself because this time his party was the biggest partner of the coalition and normally had five years of governmental power. He was establishing his own working group in the Foreign Ministry.<sup>408</sup> His only problem was being unable to walk in the streets and take pictures freely.<sup>409</sup>

Cem continued to produce and write during his tenure in office. The Foreign Ministry published a book compromising his speeches and declarations.<sup>410</sup> He also published a book entitled *Turkey in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*<sup>411</sup> in order to explain his approach to Turkish foreign policy and tell more about his deeds in the office. The next year, with a few additional articles he published *Turkey in the New Century*<sup>412</sup>. In these books, Cem tried to make an analysis of classical Turkish foreign policy and create a new vision for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. One of Cem's earliest deeds was to change Turkey's classical EU policy which considered Turkey a weak, second-class country that should always give concessions in negotiations with the EU since it could contribute nothing to Europe by its membership to Union.<sup>413</sup> Cem was in favor of the EU process but he was certainly against secondary class membership or a privileged partnership. Moreover, his basic aim was to make Turkey an important "world state" and the EU process was only a part of it.<sup>414</sup> For instance, he always underlined the importance of becoming an influential state in the Eurasian zone by using Turkey's historical and cultural advantages.<sup>415</sup> The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline project was concrete proof of Cem's emphasis towards Eurasia and his efforts to bring

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<sup>408</sup> Yaman Başkut, *Aferin İyiydin... Bir Diplomatın Anıları*, p. 137.

<sup>409</sup> Cüneyt Özdemir, *Reytingsiz Sohbetler*, p. 100.

<sup>410</sup> İsmail Cem. 1999. *Dış İşleri Bakanı İsmail Cem Konuşmalar Demeçler Açıklamalar*. Ankara: Dışişleri Bakanlığı Enformasyon Dairesi Başkanlığı.

<sup>411</sup> İsmail Cem. 2000. *Turkey in the 21st Century*. Mersin: Rustem Bookshop.

<sup>412</sup> İsmail Cem. 2001. *Turkey in the New Century*. Mersin: Rustem Bookshop.

<sup>413</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 201.

<sup>414</sup> *ibid.*, p. 205.

<sup>415</sup> *ibid.*, p. 206.





Turkey to a more advantageous position considering energy.<sup>416</sup> By this project Turkey aimed at becoming a terminal of energy and thus, increasing its international geopolitical importance. Turkey did not forget to take the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) seriously in Cem's period and actively attended all conferences.<sup>417</sup> Cem even brought EU and OIC member countries together (EU-OIC Joint Forum) in İstanbul after the 9/11 incident and tried to give a peace message to world.<sup>418</sup> In addition, Cem was courageous enough to tell EU officials that if at the 1999 Helsinki Summit, Turkish candidacy for full membership to the EU was not accepted, he would reconsider Turkey's relations with the EU.<sup>419</sup> Finally, Cem achieved what he wanted and Turkey was accepted as a candidate country at the Helsinki Summit on 11 December 1999.<sup>420</sup> This was followed by the EU Commission's preparation of "Accession Partnership for Turkey" in 2001. The coalition government announced its own National Program for the Adoption of the EU acquis on 19 March 2001.<sup>421</sup> The media and people in Turkey perceived these developments as Cem's great successes. However, Kemalist and nationalist circles criticized Cem for allowing the Cyprus Republic's entry into the EU and not defending the rights of Northern Cypriot Turks.<sup>422</sup>

İsmail Cem attracted the attention of the global media mostly when he made enormous efforts to improve the relations between Turkey and Greece with his counterpart Mr. Yorgo Papandreou (junior). With his personal charm and peaceful language, he took the support of the European and Greek media. A booklet about

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<sup>416</sup> Yaman Başkut, *Aferin İyiydin... Bir Diplomatın Anıları*, pp. 141-143.

<sup>417</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 238.

<sup>418</sup> Abdullah Muradoğlu, *Selanik'ten İstanbul'a İpekçi'ler ve İsmail Cem*, p. 230.

<sup>419</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 208.

<sup>420</sup> ABGS web site, retrieved on 22.07.2008 from <http://www.abgs.gov.tr/index.php?p=111&l=2>.

<sup>421</sup> ABGS web site, retrieved on 22.07.2008 from <http://www.abgs.gov.tr/index.php?p=111&l=2>.

<sup>422</sup> Erol Manisalı. 2003. *Avrupa Çıkmazı*. İstanbul: Otopsi Yayınları, p. 180.





media reactions to his visit to Greece<sup>423</sup> and his counterpart Mr. Papandreou's visit to Turkey<sup>424</sup> was published by the Turkish Prime Ministry. Turkey and Greece signed many important treaties in Cem's period and began to cooperate in many areas by erasing the bad memories of the Kardak crisis<sup>425</sup> and Öcalan's capture. While Turkish-Greek rapprochement took positive critics from the international media, in Turkey Cem was criticized for not driving Greece into the corner when he had the chance. Cem also wanted Turkey to step forward in some international problems by making shuttle diplomacy between opposing countries. For instance, he prepared a plan for the peaceful partition of Jerusalem by taking the example of the Ottoman model.<sup>426</sup> The plan was not implemented but Turkey's efforts were praised both by the Palestinian and Israeli sides. Together with Papandreou, Cem also visited Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat<sup>427</sup> when he was kept under house-arrest by the Israeli military and attracted the world's attention to Arafat's poor conditions.<sup>428</sup> Cem also visited Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and tried to warn him about possible American aggression.<sup>429</sup> Due to his works for world peace, Cem was awarded together with Yorgo Papandreou the "Statesman of the Year" in 2000 by the East West Institute. Cem also took the Turkish Heart Foundation's "Sakıp Sabancı Good Heart Award" and Bilkent University's honorary doctorate.<sup>430</sup> Thanks to Cem,

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<sup>423</sup> T.C. Başbakanlık. 2000. *Dış Basında Dışişleri Bakanı İsmail Cem'in Atina Ziyareti (2-7 Şubat 2000)*. Ankara.

<sup>424</sup> T.C. Başbakanlık. 2000. *Dış Basında Yunanistan Dışişleri Bakanı Papandreou'nun Türkiye Ziyareti (17-24 Ocak 2000)*. Ankara.

<sup>425</sup> Kardak is the name of a small island situated between the Dodecanese islands chain and the Turkish mainland. The Kardak crisis is a part of larger Aegean dispute between Turkey and Greece. The dispute over Kardak appeared on 25 December 1995 due to a naval accident. In December 1995 and January 1996, the two countries almost started a war with each other but the crisis was eventually prevented.

<sup>426</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, pp. 214-215.

<sup>427</sup> Yasser Arafat (1929-2004) was the President of Palestinian National Authority and the leader of the Palestinian Liberation Organization and secular al-Fatah political party. Arafat spent much of his life fighting against Israel with the aim of Palestinian self-determination.

<sup>428</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, pp. 215-217.

<sup>429</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 224-225.

<sup>430</sup> Abdullah Muradoğlu, *Selanik'ten İstanbul'a İpekçi'ler ve İsmail Cem*, p. 244.





during these years Turkey appeared as a very influential actor in international relations considering its important responsibilities in NATO missions and new energy agreements made in the Eurasian zone. Furthermore, after the 9/11<sup>431</sup> tragedy, Cem tried to orientate his Western counterparts to not use the term “Islamic terrorism”.<sup>432</sup> His efforts were not wasted since Turkey became a much more influential and respectable actor in international relations during and after his tenure in office. According to retired diplomat Yaman Başkut, Cem’s success was caused by his cordial dialogue with Turkish diplomats, intellectual accumulation and humble personality that affected all people including foreign countries’ leaders.<sup>433</sup> Cem also praised Turkish diplomats for their courage<sup>434</sup> but added they should be more self-confident and contentious.<sup>435</sup> However, there were some people who criticized Cem for always trying to step forward and not being hawkish enough.<sup>436</sup> In addition, his close relation to USA Foreign Minister Madeleine Albright was presented as a “Jewish coalition” in some publications.<sup>437</sup> Another important event during Cem’s ministry was the hacking of EU Commissioner for Turkish enlargement Karen Fogg’s e-mails and the discovery of her private relations with some Turkish journalists in addition to her strange idiom that was perceived as a humiliation to Turkish state officials.<sup>438</sup> Cem tried to defend Fogg and Turkish journalists close to her by claiming that this hacking was against the freedom of information but the event created huge reactions against Fogg and the EU in Turkey and damaged Cem’s

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<sup>431</sup> On 11 September 2001, two planes hijacked by Osama Bin Laden’s terrorist organization al-Qaeda’s militants, crashed into the Twin Towers of New York City and caused the death of about 5.000 innocent civilians.

<sup>432</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 240.

<sup>433</sup> Yaman Başkut, *Aferin İyiydin... Bir Diplomatın Anıları*, p. 138.

<sup>434</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 229.

<sup>435</sup> *ibid.*, p. 235.

<sup>436</sup> For a few examples see; Erol Manisalı, *Avrupa Çıkmazı*, p. 176 and Yalçın Küçük, *Şebeke - Network*, p. 292.

<sup>437</sup> See; Yalçın Küçük, *Şebeke - Network*, pp. 304-336 and Erol Bilbilik. 2006. *Türk Bilderbergleri*. İstanbul: Umay Yayınları, pp. 37-38.

<sup>438</sup> See; Doğu Perinçek. *Karen Fogg’un E-Postalları*. 2002. İstanbul: Kaynak Yayıncılık.





prestige. Cem and the government in general were mostly accepted as successful abroad, but the coalition government had a very unlucky destiny considering domestic politics.

The coalition government was first shaken economically and psychologically after the terrible 17 August 1999 earthquake. The DLP-NAP-MP coalition still tried to make important legislation reforms in order to accelerate Turkey's membership to the EU. Although NAP at first resisted to some of the reforms, the coalition government was able to pass a law concerning the abolition of the death penalty. One of the most important reforms made by the coalition government was the permission of "the use of local languages other than Turkish in radio and television broadcasting and their teaching by private language courses".<sup>439</sup> The coalition was working mostly in harmony and Turkey was making important steps in the EU accession process. However, some of the members of the NAP created problems and in a sense slowed down the performance of the reformist government. Prime Minister Ecevit's poor health and the terrible economic crises Turkey had in 1999 and 2001 also prevented the coalition from continuing to adopt reform packages and overshadowed Cem's victories in foreign policy. After the crisis, hundreds of thousands of people lost their jobs and Kemal Derviş, in those days the Head of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), was brought to Turkey as the new Minister for Economic Affairs. Kemal Derviş adopted harsh measures and the economy began to give better signals. However, the government was tired because of the terrible consequences of two major economic crises and Bülent Ecevit's poor health. In this situation, Cem's name began to be heard as the successor of Ecevit as the new leader of DLP. Cem previously had to leave Erdal İnönü's SDPP and Deniz Baykal's RPP and the

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<sup>439</sup> For a detailed work on reforms see; Ergun Özbudun and Serap Yazıcı. 2004. *Democratization Reforms in Turkey (1993-2004)*. İstanbul: TESEV Publications.





conditions were pushing him towards another break up. There was incredible support in the Turkish and international media for Cem's leadership and Ecevit's retirement. Polls were showing that he was maybe the most popular politician of the period in Turkey.<sup>440</sup> Cem was referring to the poor health of Ecevit by stating; "the coalition is Ecevit's but it is without Ecevit".<sup>441</sup> Cem's leadership ambitions were on the peak and he was not willingly to miss his chance finally for leadership. Events following this process were later labeled as a "civil coup" by many analysts including the journalist Fikret Bila.<sup>442</sup>

## 2.11. The New Turkey Party

In August 2001, a top ranked military official had an off-the-record talk with the journalists and declared that Ecevit's health was poor and he should leave his place to Hüsamettin Özkan or İsmail Cem.<sup>443</sup> In 2001 September, TÜSİAD<sup>444</sup> and TÜSİAD-involved mass media started a campaign against Ecevit and important columnists began to offer a solution for the continuation of the coalition government without Ecevit, with the leadership of Özkan or Cem.<sup>445</sup> The USA's plan for

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<sup>440</sup> According to a poll made by Bilkent University students, Cem was seen as the most appropriate person for President of the Republic. See; Cüneyt Özdemir, *Reytingsiz Sohbetler*, p. 102. Cem's name was also very popular during the Presidential elections after the end of Demirel's tenure in office in Çankaya in the year 2000. Cem first took negative reactions from the Islamist press. See; Süleyman Kocabaş. 2006. *Dönmelik ve Dönmeler*. İstanbul: Vatan Yayınları, p. 85. However, some conservative figures such as writer Süleyman Kocabaş praised Cem for his insistence on democracy and pluralism See; ibid, pp. 72-73. Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit did not want to nominate Cem as candidate for the Presidency and the former President of the Constitutional Court Ahmet Necdet Sezer was elected as the tenth President of the Republic of Turkey. Later writer Yalçın Küçük said that he brought into agenda Sabetaism discussions again in order to prevent İsmail Cem from becoming the President of the Republic in 2000 since he considered Cem as a pro-American and pro-Israeli politician. See; Cenk Ağcabay. 2008. *Megalomania*. İstanbul: Sosyal İnsan Yayınları, pp. 163-168.

<sup>441</sup> Can Dündar and Rıdvan Akar, *Ecevit ve Gizli Arşivi*, p. 488.

<sup>442</sup> Fikret Bila, *Ankara'da Irak Savaşları Sivil Darbe Girişimi ve Gizli Belgelerde 1 Mart Tezkeresi*, p. 139.

<sup>443</sup> ibid., pp. 27-28.

<sup>444</sup> TÜSİAD refers to Turkish Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association which was established in 1971. With Turkey's liberalization in the 1980s, TÜSİAD became an important political and civil societal actor in the country.

<sup>445</sup> Fikret Bila, *Ankara'da Irak Savaşları Sivil Darbe Girişimi ve Gizli Belgelerde 1 Mart Tezkeresi*, pp. 33-36.





attacking Iraq and Ecevit's negative opinion about this operation was another issue mentioned by journalists in those days.<sup>446</sup> NAP's opposition to the EU process was the last important factor driving Ecevit into the corner. The harmony of the coalition seemed lost for all these issues and İsmail Cem, Hüsamettin Özkan and Kemal Derviş's names began to be used by journalists for the establishment of a new pro-Western liberal party.<sup>447</sup> All of these names rejected this plan but they were also thinking about the after-Ecevit period. Ecevit was resisting but he had to be hospitalized because of his walking and speaking problems related to this poor health. After Hüsamettin Özkan's resignation from the Vice Presidency, İsmail Cem decided to wait for Ecevit's move. Ecevit appointed Şükrü Sina Gürel to Özkan's place.<sup>448</sup> This was surely a message to Cem and Ecevit was showing that he would not leave his place to Cem. After this decision Cem resigned from DLP and together with Özkan and Derviş they began to make plans for a new political party. Politics was a draconian game and Cem seemed to learn it well during his years in politics. However, Cem's departure from DLP during Ecevit's extremely difficult days, shook his image as a trustworthy politician and especially after the failure of the New Turkey Party, Cem was blamed for taking part in the plot against the coalition government. The media labeled the Özkan-Derviş-Cem trio as the "troika movement"<sup>449</sup> and many important intellectuals, journalists and academicians declared that they would support this movement. Cem was thought to be the leader of

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<sup>446</sup> Fikret Bila, *Ankara'da Irak Savaşları Sivil Darbe Girişimi ve Gizli Belgelerde 1 Mart Tezkeresi*, p. 43.

<sup>447</sup> *ibid.*, p. 118.

<sup>448</sup> *ibid.*, p. 130.

<sup>449</sup> Can Dündar and Rıdvan Akar, *Ecevit ve Gizli Arşivi*, p. 497.





the movement, Derviş as the Minister of Economics and Özkan as the Interior Affairs Minister.<sup>450</sup> On paper, the plan seemed well-thought, but in reality?..

On 12 July 2002, İsmail Cem held a press conference and declared that the troika movement would transform into a political party of the “modern majority” that would lead Turkey to full accession to the EU.<sup>451</sup> The name of the party was the “New Turkey Party-NTP”, a name very convenient for Cem’s insistence of change and innovation for long years. The next day, the *Washington Post* praised the troika movement and indicated that this party could help Turkey to get along better with the Western world.<sup>452</sup> In his interview with journalist Can Dündar, Cem told that as Foreign Minister he always tried to prevent the arrival of American soldiers onto Turkish soil to invade Iraq since it would have terrible consequences both for Turkey and the USA.<sup>453</sup> He also added that the Justice and Development Party’s sudden rise and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s contacts in Washington gave him the impression that JDP’s sudden rise was related to the 1 March memorandum.<sup>454</sup> A similar interpretation was also made by journalist Fikret Bila, but Bila was relating the coup to Ecevit’s pacification and illness, whereas Cem was focusing on the role of Kemal Derviş and the rise of JDP and Tayyip Erdoğan. Cem, as a fresh leader, was excited and hopeful for the future. However, Kemal Derviş’s late decision of joining RPP instead of NTP shocked Cem and decreased the NTP’s vote rates in the polls suddenly.<sup>455</sup> Ecevit, Özkan and Cem were all feeling like they were betrayed by Derviş<sup>456</sup> because Derviş deliberately or not was able to divide and destroy DLP and

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<sup>450</sup> Fikret Bila, *Ankara’da Irak Savaşları Sivil Darbe Girişimi ve Gizli Belgelerde 1 Mart Tezkeresi*, p. 137.

<sup>451</sup> *ibid.*, p. 138.

<sup>452</sup> Vural Savaş, *Atatürk’ün Kemiklerini Sızlatan Parti CHP*, pp. 71-72.

<sup>453</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 242.

<sup>454</sup> *ibid.*, p. 242.

<sup>455</sup> *ibid.*, p. 244.

<sup>456</sup> Can Dündar and Rıdvan Akar, *Ecevit ve Gizli Arşivi*, p. 499.





make NTP “stillborn”.<sup>457</sup> However, Cem continued to establish his party and make visits to different cities of Turkey before the elections. He published *Yeni Bir Türkiye İçin* (For a New Turkey)<sup>458</sup> in order to explain basic principles of NTP. Because of his positive image as the friendly, tolerant politician and his successes as the Foreign Minister, Cem was welcomed with great hospitality and amity everywhere during his electoral campaign.<sup>459</sup> However, people said that because of their fears against the Islamist JDP they would vote for RPP instead of NTP.<sup>460</sup> Cem with his friends prepared a new party program<sup>461</sup>, party constitution<sup>462</sup> and party regulations<sup>463</sup> book for the NTP.

In the 3 November 2002 elections, Cem’s NTP could get only 1.15 % of the votes. Cem felt very sorry for hundreds, thousands of people who worked with him in the electoral campaigns and also for Turkey since he was feeling the coming of very intense days in the near future. In the elections, only two parties (JDP with 34.29 %, RPP with 19.38%) were able to pass the 10 % electoral threshold. In other words, Turkish people were punishing all parties (DLP, MP, NAP and NTP) because of two terrible economic crises and were giving chances to new parties. JDP was able to establish its single party government and rule the country easily without searching for consensus because of its high majority in TGNA. Cem and NTP took their chance also in the 2004 local elections. Before the elections, Cem prepared a short book called *Sosyal Demokrasinin Geleceği* (The Future of Social Democracy)<sup>464</sup>. However, NTP had only 0.32 % in local elections and due to party’s failure,

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<sup>457</sup> Fikret Bila, *Ankara’da Irak Savaşları Sivil Darbe Girişimi ve Gizli Belgelerde 1 Mart Tezkeresi*, p. 139.

<sup>458</sup> İsmail Cem. 2003. *Yeni Bir Türkiye İçin...* . İstanbul: Cem Ofset Matbaacılık Sanayi AŞ.

<sup>459</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 249.

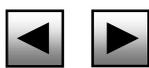
<sup>460</sup> *ibid.*, p. 248.

<sup>461</sup> YTP. 2002. *Yeni Türkiye (YTP) Parti Programı*.

<sup>462</sup> YTP. 2002. *Yeni Türkiye Partisi (YTP) Tüzüğü*.

<sup>463</sup> YTP. 2003. *Yeni Türkiye Yönetmelikler*.

<sup>464</sup> İsmail Cem. 2004. *Sosyal Demokrasinin Geleceği*, İstanbul: Cem Ofset Matbaacılık Sanayi AŞ.





economic problems and Cem's health problems the party decided to merge with RPP on 24 October 2004.<sup>465</sup> Cem continued to work as the advisor of RPP leader Deniz Baykal and became a member of RPP's Parliament<sup>466</sup> but because of his health problems, he later drew away from active politics. Cem witnessed like many other observers a division on the left after JDP's take-over between liberal leftists and national leftists (ulusalcı in Turkish) and tried to point to RPP as the center for all leftists.

## 2.12. The Last Years

İsmail Cem, in his own words, was a bit "disordered" and careless considering his health.<sup>467</sup> He did not have the discipline or habit to have a check-up. He did not spare time to exercise. He also smoked cigarettes when he was young. After his retirement from politics, it was discovered by his doctor friends that he had lung cancer. He went to New York for his treatment. However, neither NTP's failure, nor his health problems prevented him from working and writing as "a man of letters". After his death, his daughter İpek Cem Taha said that her father had "ink blots" all over his hands.<sup>468</sup> He wrote two very important books; *Strateji Yunanistan Kıbrıs* (Strategy Greece Cyprus)<sup>469</sup> and *Avrupa'nın "Birliği" ve Türkiye* (Europe's Union and Turkey)<sup>470</sup> which consisted of his memories in the office of the Foreign Ministry and his analysis about Turkey's foreign policy and future. He was writing the third volume of this series which was related to the Middle East before his death. He also gave lectures at İstanbul Bilgi University. He criticized the JDP

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<sup>465</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, pp. 250-251.

<sup>466</sup> *ibid.*, p. 287.

<sup>467</sup> *ibid.*, p. 279.

<sup>468</sup> *ibid.*, p. x.

<sup>469</sup> İsmail Cem. 2004. *Türkiye, Avrupa, Avrasya Birinci cilt: Strateji Yunanistan Kıbrıs*. İstanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları.

<sup>470</sup> İsmail Cem. 2005. *Türkiye, Avrupa, Avrasya İkinci cilt: Avrupa'nın "Birliği" ve Türkiye*. İstanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları.





government's way of handling EU politics and foreign policy in general and blamed JDP for being "submissive".<sup>471</sup> He also mentioned that full accession to the EU seemed difficult for the moment but the process would be beneficial for Turkey to develop its democratic standards.<sup>472</sup> Cem also made it clear that nationalism is very dangerous within a country between different ethnic groups, but it is very necessary and useful in international relations if a country tries to defend itself.<sup>473</sup> He made detailed interviews with journalist Can Dündar and at the first anniversary of his death Dündar published a best-seller book derived from these interviews called "*Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim* (This is How I Should Say Goodbye)".

During his retirement, Cem had the chance to watch his favorite football team Galatasaray's games comfortably. He remembered Galatasaray's UEFA Cup championship as one of his happiest days in life. He continued to take pictures and to be interested in photography. Even in his bed, he took pictures of animals from the television screen.<sup>474</sup> Without heavy duties on his shoulders anymore, he had the chance to listen to his favorite music genres; classical Turkish music such as Dede Efendi and classical Western music including Vivaldi and Mozart. When Dündar asked about his regrets, Cem gave a single answer and said "not being able to spend more time with my family".<sup>475</sup> He also said that he had a happy life and lived "a good adventure" on earth. He gave a message to Turkish people about trusting in Turkey's future and believing in themselves. He also wrote the lines of his "farewell" himself and said goodbye to this world similarly to how he thought and wanted...

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<sup>471</sup> "Teslimiyetçi" in Turkish. See; Can Dündar, "Filleri Tepeye Taşıyan Adam", *Milliyet* on 18 October 2006.

<sup>472</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 209.

<sup>473</sup> Can Dündar, "Filleri Tepeye Taşıyan Adam", *Milliyet* on 18 October 2006.

<sup>474</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 267.

<sup>475</sup> *ibid.*, p. 286.





## FAREWELL

On a date at remote future  
As being very old  
I should leave quietly  
Not seen by anyone  
And not disturbing anybody.

On my table  
Works that remained from yesterday  
Articles unfinished  
Books waiting to be read  
And memories and hopes.

By pulling the elephants from their tails  
My mission was to pass the hills  
Days are over but not the elephants  
I tried my best  
You should finish the rest.

I did not waste my life  
I could have done much more  
But I still should say thank "Thank God"  
And my dearest friends,  
This is How I Should Say Goodbye.<sup>476</sup>

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<sup>476</sup> VEDA

Çok ileri bir tarihte  
Çok yaşlı olarak  
Sessizce ayrılmalıyım  
Kimseye pek gözükmeyen  
Ve kimseyi rahatsız etmeden.

Masamın üzerinde  
Dünden kalan işler  
Tamamlanmamış yazılar  
Okunmayı bekleyen kitaplar  
Ve anılar ve umutlar.

Filleri kuyruğundan çekerek  
Tepeleri aştırmaktı görevim  
Günler bitti filler tükenmedi  
Ben elimden geleni yaptım  
Gerisini siz tamamlayın.

Boşa geçmedi hayatım  
Daha fazlası olabilirdi ama  
Buna da şükür demeliyim  
İşte sevgili dostlar  
Ben böyle veda etmeliyim.

See; Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 289.





İsmail Cem died on 24 January 2007 in İstanbul. He was honored with a state funeral, at which the President of Turkey's Grand National Assembly Bülent Arınç, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, current and former leaders of the political parties (including RPP's leader Deniz Baykal and many others) and his close friend the former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Greece, Yorgo Papandreou, attended. Cem was interred at the Zincirlikuyu Cemetery. Papandreou laid on his grave a branch from the olive tree they both had planted in 2000 in Greece as a symbol of peace between the two countries. At Cem's funeral, Papandreou said "İsmail was a very good friend and I am saddened by this (news) ... İsmail was a man with whom I shared a vision, we worked hard together for this vision of peace".<sup>477</sup> Following his passing, Cem's close friend and owner of the Cem Publishing Company Oktay Duran published a book called *İsmail Cem'in Ardından* (After İsmail Cem)<sup>478</sup> consisting of articles and notes written on Cem by distinguished statesmen (including the former President of the Republic of Turkey Ahmet Necdet Sezer and the former President of the Republic of Turkey of Northern Cyprus Rauf Denktaş), politicians (including Turkish Prime Minister and JDP leader Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, RPP leader Deniz Baykal, PASOK leader Yorgo Papandreou), journalists (including Altan Öymen, Çetin Altan, Cüneyt Arcayürek, Emin Çölaşan, Fikret Bila, Hasan Cemal, Hıncal Uluç, Mehmet Ali Birand) and intellectuals (including Prof. Talat Halman, Prof. Orhan Güvenen, Zülfi Livaneli). His close friend Prof. Güvenen's words represented the sadness of a man after the death of a brilliant person and friend; "Achievements and deeds of great men always become a model after their passing in increasing dimensions. Young people who would grow up with your breath and your

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<sup>477</sup> *International Herald Tribune*, 24.01.2007, "Ex-Turkish Foreign Minister İsmail Cem, who sought to improve relations with Greece, dies", retrieved on 14.10.2008 from <http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2007/01/24/europe/EU-GEN-Turkey-Obit-Cem.php>.

<sup>478</sup> Oktay Duran. 2007. *İsmail Cem'in Ardından*. İstanbul: Cem Ofset.





model personality; will take responsibilities and learn that even politics could be done by wisdom, humanity, justice, honesty, good manners, culture and nobility just like you did”<sup>479</sup>.

As a consequence of his gentle-humanist personality, democratic-libertarian political views and his successful deeds as a statesman, Cem’s name has not been forgotten after his passing and does not seem in danger of being forgotten in the near future. After his death, the RPP Karşıyaka municipality built a cultural house with Cem’s name in Karşıyaka, İzmir. The RPP Çankaya municipality on the other hand built a public park carrying Cem’s name and having Cem’s bust in Çankaya, Ankara. Cem’s books still continue to print new editions and his deeds and personality constitute a respected and special place in Turkish politics. Recently, Antalya municipality organized a television awards contest that will take place each year with the name “İsmail Cem Television Awards” in order to commemorate Cem and to reward successful television programmes<sup>480</sup>.

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<sup>479</sup> “Büyük insanların eseri, Kendilerinden sonra çoğalan boyutlarda örnek olur. Sizin, soluğunuzla, örnek kişiliğinizle, büyüyecek çocuklar, sorumluluk alacak gençler, çok zor olan siyasetin de bilgi, insanlık, adalet, dürüstlük, görgü, kültür ve soylulukla yapılabildiğini, sizde görecekler”. See; Oktay Duran, *İsmail Cem’in Ardından*, pp. 111-112.

<sup>480</sup> For details see; İsmail Cem Televizyon Ödülleri web site, <http://www.ismailcemodulleri.com/>.





## CHAPTER III

### CEM AS A PUBLIC INTELLECTUAL

Although İsmail Cem is often remembered as a social democratic politician and Foreign Minister of Turkey, in fact he was an influential public intellectual in the 1970s and 1980s. In the 1970s, İsmail Cem gained a reputation as a young and peculiar Marxist who had a special interest in Ottoman history and became influential in leftist but also in conservative-rightist circles. In this era, Cem's main problem was the underdevelopment of Turkey and he envisaged a state-led developmental model from a Marxist class-based perspective in order to solve Turkey's backwardness problem. He was one of the earliest Turkish leftists who tried to adapt Marxism to Turkey's conditions and find roots for Turkish socialism in the Ottoman past. In the 1980s, Cem was recognized in Turkish intelligentsia as one of the rare social democracy theoreticians in the country. Instead of underdevelopment, his main motive this time was the necessity of pluralism and the need to develop democratic culture in Turkey. He had a shy but visible change of opinion about free-market economics. In the 1990s, Cem appeared as the creator of the "New Left" or the "Anatolian Left" together with Deniz Baykal and put forward a comprehensive





political project in order to solve Turkey's political and socioeconomic problems and reconcile leftist-Kemalist segments with the rest of the society.

### 3.1. Account of History and Model of Underdevelopment

İsmail Cem, unlike many intellectuals from the leftist tradition in Turkey, showed a great deal of interest and sympathy towards Ottoman-Turkish political history. Starting from the 1970s, Cem explained Turkish history from a historical materialist perspective. His famous book entitled *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi* (The History of Underdevelopment in Turkey) is the best example of Cem's account of history from a socialist perspective. Although Cem passed through a transformation process from socialist to social democrat from the 1970s to the 1990s and his critical attitude towards Westernization softened during this time, his account of history mostly remained the same. *The History of Underdevelopment in Turkey* presents Cem's views on history best and in a plausible and total form. Cem, with this book, gained a special place in the leftist tradition and it will be best to analyze this book in order to comprehend Cem's account of history.

According to İsmail Cem, there are two main stages for societies during history. The first stage is called "old equilibrium society (*eski denge toplumu*)" in which a society has a self-sufficient subsistence economy in addition to strong conservatism and great emphasis on traditions.<sup>1</sup> Old equilibrium societies have great prejudices and fears against the unknown and new things since they can not risk their lives, which depend on a perfect balance of the allocation of limited natural resources. Old equilibrium societies do not consider themselves as underdeveloped or backward since they do not have relations with the outside world as it was

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<sup>1</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, pp. 21-22.





observed by Pierre Bourdieu in his research on Algeria.<sup>2</sup> Old equilibrium societies are completely static and innovative activities are almost non-existent. The stagnation but also continuation of the economy and social life is provided by the sensitive balance between needs and resources, population and resources and technique (technology) and resources.<sup>3</sup> Technique here is used for referring to devices and instruments that are used in the agricultural and stockbreeding activities. So, old equilibrium societies' economies are completely based on agriculture, stockbreeding and hunting-gathering activities. People are mostly nomadic in old equilibrium societies and this helps them to get rid of the negative effects of climate change and epidemic diseases.<sup>4</sup> In order to prevent dissipation, waste of time and energy, old equilibrium societies create hierarchical and static orders for themselves and they try to cooperate and make division of tasks.<sup>5</sup>

In İsmail Cem's view, societies (Western societies) that were able to change the old equilibrium by their own internal dynamics and make progress considering their needs, population and technique, become developed societies whereas societies (Eastern societies) who were forced to contravene to the old equilibrium by an outside effect were directed towards underdevelopment. The abolition of the old equilibrium takes place by the change in needs, population and technique of that society.<sup>6</sup> Undeveloped societies' old equilibrium is destroyed due to three conditions; sight effect (*gözlem etkeni*), health effect (*sağlık etkeni*) and outside coercion (*zorlama etkeni*). Sight effect refers to relations and interactions with more developed societies that force a society to change its consumption habit and imitate the developed society. This causes an imbalance in the resource-need equation of that

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<sup>2</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, p. 23.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 26-27.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 28-29.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*, p. 30.





society and also a socio-cultural change and dualism. It also creates a kind of comprador class that becomes the advantageous group of the new equilibrium.<sup>7</sup> Trade, colonialism and imperialism played a great role in Cem's view in the emergence of new underdevelopment equilibrium in Eastern societies. Slight effect leads to increasing poverty due to an imbalance between the production-consumption equation and the emergence of a comprador class and also the commercial failure of internal industries due to their weakness against technologically developed and cheaper foreign goods.<sup>8</sup> The new equilibrium also destroys old social relations and cultural values and increases individualism and solidarity among the society.<sup>9</sup> While for the developed societies who were able to establish a new equilibrium by their own internal social dynamics, this process becomes a way of increasing their profit by trade, colonialism or imperialism, for underdeveloped societies this becomes a permanent way of staying in the underdeveloped position and becoming more and more dependent on the Western countries. Health effect may be the only positive consequence of this process in Cem's view, since developed societies care indirectly about underdeveloped societies' workers' and people's health with the aim of protecting their market (by keeping consumers alive) and acquiring cheap labor.<sup>10</sup> So, colonial periods were beneficial for underdeveloped societies considering a visible fall in death percentage rates and a sudden rise in the average life span. The third effect, outside coercion, takes place when developed societies made social and political engineering for undeveloped countries in order to increase their profit. So, individual and property rights in addition to some other sociopolitical practices completely abolished the old equilibrium of these societies and in a sense prevented

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<sup>7</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, p. 33.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 34-35.

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*, p. 36.

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*, p. 38.





their own progress in time by making them dependent on the West.<sup>11</sup> Market system and increasing individualism corrupted old traditions and societal values which also led to a social and moral decay in the underdeveloped societies. Western societies regulated underdeveloped societies according to their own needs and established countries based on single crop economies (sugar from Cuba, coffee from Brazil, grapes from Algeria or tea from Sri Lanka).<sup>12</sup> Single crop economies imposed by Western societies prevented underdeveloped societies to develop in other industries and as soon as their natural resources were consumed, they became a completely backward society.<sup>13</sup>

In Cem's view, old equilibrium societies are not backward considering their harmonious social relations and developed cultural activities but when their balance is destroyed and a new equilibrium is imposed from outside, they are born as undeveloped due to their dependency on the West.<sup>14</sup> Cem calls this situation as "backwardness" or "underdevelopment" and thinks that it is not a natural process. Underdevelopment increases conflicts and contradictions within a society, for instance an African society or clan could spend millions of dollars for Western made weapons in order to destroy the rival clan although most of its inhabitants could not find food.<sup>15</sup> Class-based inequalities become much more visible and heavier and new comprador segments or classes begin to take power in these societies. Cem thought that even if this society acquires its political independence, this situation may remain because of the presence of this privileged comprador class and socio-cultural dualism that emerged in the underdevelopment process.<sup>16</sup> According to Cem, the only

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<sup>11</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, p. 39.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*, p. 46.





solution to get rid of underdevelopment is to produce social emancipation plans and implement developmental economic models.

İsmail Cem's account of history and his model of underdevelopment also constitute the basis of his explanations about Ottoman and Turkish Republican history which will be analyzed in the following parts. Cem, in a sense, tried to unify his theory of history of underdevelopment with classical Marxist based class-conflict analyses and present a model to explain the underdevelopment or backwardness case for Eastern societies and especially for Turkey. In that sense, Cem -by using history-determined some communitarian aspects of the Ottoman state system and analyzed the semi-colonization of the Ottoman state in order to strengthen his socialist and anti-imperialist political and economic model. It must be also added that Cem's account of history and model of underdevelopment were heavily shaped by French economist René Gendarme's views that became popular in the 1960s with his work *La Pauvreté des Nations* (Poverty of Nations). Cem quoted Gendarme very often in his book and tried to enrich his theory by using Gendarme's explanations. It must be also noted that Cem's account of old equilibrium societies has also similarities with the Marxist stage of primitive or tribal communism.<sup>17</sup> One difference from Marxism was Cem's peculiar effort to adapt the Marxist method of historical materialism to an Eastern country like Turkey similar to neo-Marxist movements.

The effect of neo-Marxism (Dependency School and Immanuel Wallerstein's<sup>18</sup> World System Theory) was also visible in the writings of İsmail Cem. Dependency Theory is an ideological school that appeared in Latin America in

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<sup>17</sup> German philosopher Karl Marx, via his historical materialism method, categorized human history into six main stages; primitive (tribal) communism, slave society, feudalism, capitalism, socialism and communism. The first one of these stages -primitive communism- refers to cooperative tribal societies which have many similarities with Cem's old equilibrium societies. See; Ernest Mandel. 1999. *Marksizme Giriş*. İstanbul: Yazın Yayıncılık, pp. 21-23.

<sup>18</sup> Immanuel Wallerstein (1930-) is an American sociologist known for his neo-Marxist views and World System Theory.





the 1960s. Dependency theorists Samir Amin<sup>19</sup> and Ernest Mandel<sup>20</sup> criticized the Euro-centric thinking in the academic world and claimed that countries that were exposed to European imperialism in the past, stayed behind these countries and they cannot compete with these developed, industrialized countries in a liberal, capitalist world system. They offered protective policies and import substitution industrialization models for these countries and complained about European imperialism, not only in the economic sphere but also in cultural, linguistic, religious spheres. They blamed capitalism and classical modernization theory for being acultural, ahistorical and Euro-centric. Similar to Dependency School, World System Theory, which was created by Immanuel Wallerstein, pointed out the inequalities between developed and less developed countries. Wallerstein divided countries into three groups: core, periphery and semi-periphery countries. He basically claimed that core countries are Western industrialized countries that profit more from the world's capitalist order by importing cheap labor and raw materials and exporting expensive technological products. Peripheral countries are third world countries that were colonies in the past and that can only take place in the capitalist market now by selling raw materials. Semi-peripheral states are those which were not colonized in the past and they can exploit peripheral countries but still they are subjugated to the domination of core countries.<sup>21</sup> There are many common points between Cem's model of underdevelopment and neo-Marxist theories since all of them blame Western countries for confining Eastern societies to the situation of backwardness or underdevelopment due to Western imperialism and international capitalism. In addition, similar to Cem's model of underdevelopment, neo-Marxist movements

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<sup>19</sup> Samir Amin (1931-) is an Egyptian economist and one of the founders of neo-Marxist Dependency School.

<sup>20</sup> Ernest Mandel (1923-1995) is a German Marxist theorist who contributed to the development of Marxist literature and Dependency School.

<sup>21</sup> For details see; Immanuel Wallerstein. 1996. *Tarihsel Kapitalizm*. İstanbul: Metis Yayınları.





approached the Westernization process of Eastern countries skeptically and offered non-capitalist industrialization methods. Together with a few elite socialist thinkers of the 1960s, Cem was one of the first Turkish leftists who tried to adapt Marxism to the unique conditions of Turkey and the Eastern world and tried to find roots for Turkish socialism in the Ottoman past. Due to Turkey's unique position as a semi-periphery country according to Wallerstein's categorization, Cem's theory and other neo-Marxist theories became very influential especially in the 1960s and 1970s.

### 3.2. On Ottoman History

İsmail Cem defines the Ottoman state as rational, just and an expert on governing. In his view, the Ottoman state had never become completely Islamic and was able to interpret religion according to the needs of the society and economy.<sup>22</sup> Thus, in a sense İsmail Cem viewed the Ottoman state as semi-secular. Cem also did not hesitate to praise Ottomans' search for peace and rationality (later during his term as Foreign Minister Cem used this argument for increasing Turkey's effect in the region).<sup>23</sup> Cem thought that the Ottoman system is today considered as the historical model for tolerance and "Ottomans were tolerant because being tolerant was the only way of life that would permit them to be a great and strong empire and to live in peace within their own borders".<sup>24</sup> In other words, Ottomans were tolerant because "they had a huge benefit in being tolerant" and the Ottoman wisdom "was able to detect this basic reality".<sup>25</sup> Cem also made a materialistic explanation of Ottoman tolerance. He pointed out that Christian subjects of the Empire, which constituted 30

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<sup>22</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, p. 15.

<sup>23</sup> "Nowhere in the world is there another example of such diverse ethnic and confessional communities enjoying centuries of such peaceful and durable relations among themselves and with the central authority, as was the case in the Ottoman Empire". See; İsmail Cem, *Turkey in the New Century*, p. 10.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*, p. 50.

<sup>25</sup> *ibid.*, p. 50.





to 50 percent of the total population, were exempted from military service and thus were paid a special tax (*cizye*)<sup>26</sup> that counted much in the state budget.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, the Empire was trying to take the support or at least to procure the passive compliance of the Balkan peasantry in order to defeat Balkan landlords while making new conquests towards the West.<sup>28</sup> Tolerance brought no harm to the majority, caused little trouble for minorities and provided for the cultural interaction and coexistence between different segments of the society.<sup>29</sup> Ottomans also trusted and took help from the non-Muslim populations with the *Devşirme* system, which composed its bureaucracy from the converted non-Muslim Ottoman children who were given a special education in Enderun School<sup>30</sup> within the Palace.

According to İsmail Cem, the Ottoman system was based on a strong sense of statism which included the ownership of nearly all lands and territories by the Sultan and thus, by the state<sup>31</sup> and the division of society into two classes; the ruling *askeri* (military) class and *reaya* (subjects).<sup>32</sup> Since territory was the strongest means of production in the Ottoman system, strong statism in the ownership of lands provided

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<sup>26</sup> Cizye (tribute) was an important part of the Ottoman budget, taken from non-Muslim subjects of the Empire in return not to serve in the Ottoman Army. Halil İnalçık stated that in 1528, cizye revenues were constituting the 8 % of the Ottoman budget. See; Halil İnalçık. 2000. *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Ekonomik ve Sosyal Tarihi I. Cilt 1300-1600*. İstanbul: Eren Yayıncılık, pp. 105-107.

<sup>27</sup> İsmail Cem, *Turkey in the New Century*, pp. 50-51.

<sup>28</sup> *ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>29</sup> *ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>30</sup> The Enderun School, which means “inner part (*iç kısım*)” in Persian, was a special boarding school for non-Muslim children of the Ottoman society (especially for Christians). Enderun was successful in the cultural interaction and higher education of students since many successful Ottoman statesmen were products of this process. The Enderun School functioned strictly for bureaucratic purposes and that is why the graduates were permanently devoted to government service. The graduates became servants of the Sultan or other notables, to serve in the Six Divisions of Cavalry, or to serve as Janissaries. Some of the most talented Devşirmehs worked in Topkapı Palace, where they were trained for high positions within the Ottoman *Divan* (court-Council) or military. See; İlber Ortaylı, 2006. *Osmanlı'yı Yeniden Keşfetmek*. İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, pp. 173-180.

<sup>31</sup> Professor Halil İnalçık underlines that this principle originated from Islamic law and ümmet (Islamic community) understanding. See; Halil İnalçık, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Ekonomik ve Sosyal Tarihi I. Cilt 1300-1600*, p. 145.

<sup>32</sup> The military class consisted not only of soldiers but of all employers of the Sultan and the state. See; *ibid.*, p. 52.





a huge central power to the Ottoman state.<sup>33</sup> Territory was considered in three categories in the Ottoman system. The first category was *öşriyye*, the land belonging to the Muslim population. *Öşriyye* territory could be sold and inherited in conformity with Islamic law and the owners were expected to pay *öşür* tax to the state. *Haraciye* on the other hand referred to the lands owned by non-Muslim populations and owners of *Haraciye* lands were forced to pay both *öşür* or *Harac-ı Mukassem* and *Harac-ı Muvazzaf* taxes. The third category of the land was called as *Arz-ı Miri*<sup>34</sup> and constituted the very high majority of the total lands. *Arz-ı Miri* lands belonged to the state and subjects living on these lands were in the position of renters.<sup>35</sup> Owners of *Arz-ı Miri* lands were expected to feed a certain kind of soldier called *Timarlı Sipahi*. *Timarlı Sipahis* were expected to prepare themselves for the situation of war. According to Cem, the Ottoman land system prevented the emergence of a landlord class and thus posed a much more progressive system than European feudalism.<sup>36</sup> Ottoman public officers who dealt with the collection of taxes were wage earners and they did not have the chance to increase their personal power in the region.<sup>37</sup> Peasants and people living in rural areas were also pleased with the system since most of their taxes were returning as service and protection to their region. In total, Cem praised the Ottoman system for preventing feudal pressures over peasants and

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<sup>33</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, p. 53.

<sup>34</sup> Arz-ı Miri or Miri lands constituted 90 % of the total lands. See; Halil İnalçık, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Ekonomik ve Sosyal Tarihi I. Cilt 1300-1600*, p. 147.

<sup>35</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, pp. 54-56.

<sup>36</sup> See; *ibid.*, p. 58. However, in general Marxists such as Milkova thought that this situation prevented class-based conflicts and caused stability in Ottoman society unlike Western societies where class-based conflicts brought progress. See; Halil İnalçık, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Ekonomik ve Sosyal Tarihi I. Cilt 1300-1600*, pp. 149-150.

<sup>37</sup> Timar owners had some local powers such as collecting taxes by renting unrecorded, unofficial small lands in their territory to subjects, but did not have feudal autonomy like European landlords and did not have chance to exercise their own law system or to establish their own local army. See; *ibid.*, pp. 157-158.





reducing exploitation, but he also stated that peasants were not free citizens and upward social mobility was very difficult for them.<sup>38</sup>

As far as İsmail Cem was concerned, the Ottoman army was a very important factor in the well-working of the Ottoman system. The Ottoman army consisted of two main branches; Janissaries (*Yeniçeriler*) and other paid soldiers and *Timarlı Sipahis* and other provincial soldiers.<sup>39</sup> Janissaries were professional soldiers who were chosen by recruitment among non-Muslim children at young ages and specially trained. They acted like the soldiers of the palace<sup>40</sup>, but due to their autonomous power they also later engaged in political struggles in the palace. *Timarlı Sipahis* and provincial soldiers were soldiers acquired thanks to the Ottoman *miri* land system. Although Janissaries were more popular, according to İsmail Cem *Timarlı Sipahis* and the success of the *miri* land system were the main causes of Ottomans' rise and territorial enlargement.<sup>41</sup> A very high majority of the army consisted of *Timarlı Sipahis* and other provincial soldiers and Janissaries were only a small professional part of the army. According to İsmail Cem, the perfection of the Ottoman army was spoiled after problems emerged in the Ottoman land system. At the beginning, the system worked smoothly and the Ottomans made consecutive conquests. *Timarlı Sipahis* spread to all parts of the country and they were not politicized like *Alevi-Bektaşî* Janissaries. *Sipahis* lived within the society and they had interactions with ordinary people which increased the people's support for the state and the army. Unlike Janissaries who could revolt and choose not to fight if they were not paid, *Sipahis'* well-being was related to the protection of Ottoman lands and this gave them a kind of special patriotism. In addition, *Sipahis* constituted the very high

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<sup>38</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, pp. 60-61.

<sup>39</sup> *ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>40</sup> They are also called "Kapıkulu soldiers".

<sup>41</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, p. 63.





majority of the army until the 17<sup>th</sup> century and this reduced the state's military expenditures and in a sense provided a “producer-*üretici*” army instead of a “consumer-*tüketici*” one.<sup>42</sup> The *Miri* system provided both a strong patriotic army and a well-organized agricultural policy for the Ottoman State.

Cem thought that this structure of land and army was also in conformity with the Ottomans' statist economy in general. Through its officials and army system, the Ottoman state had total control of its land which was the biggest means of production. Ottomans were able to do this by interpreting Islam in accordance with society's needs in a rationalistic manner. Justice and equality were the most important Islamic concepts that shaped Ottoman politics and Islam's anti-individualist communal (*cemaatçi*) mentality helped the Ottoman state to establish a centralist regime.<sup>43</sup> Ottoman subjects were expected to be humble, patriotic, anti-egoist and anti-materialist by the “father” state.<sup>44</sup> The Ottoman state in fact had the character of a patrimonial state<sup>45</sup> which was responsible for its people's safety. According to Cem, the Ottoman state's economic duties also provided Ottomans some characteristics of a social state.<sup>46</sup> The state spent most of its tax revenues in order to increase some services in regions. Hospitals, mosques, soup kitchens (*imarethane*), madrasahs (*medrese*) and carvansarays (*kervansaray*) were established by the state regularly in order to satisfy its subjects' needs.<sup>47</sup> The state also actively determined the price of goods by making inquiries and negotiations with the

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<sup>42</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, pp. 66-67.

<sup>43</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 72-73.

<sup>44</sup> *ibid.*, p. 114.

<sup>45</sup> The Patrimonialism legacy of Ottomans also shaped politics in the Republic of Turkey. A strong state tradition continued to exist in modern Turkey. For a detailed analysis see; Metin Heper. 1985. *The State Tradition in Turkey*. Walkington: The Eothen Press or in Turkish see; Heper, Metin. 2006. *Türkiye'de Devlet Geleneği*. Ankara: Doğu Batı Yayınları.

<sup>46</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, pp. 77-78.

<sup>47</sup> *ibid.*, p. 94.





craftsmen.<sup>48</sup> Ownership of the means of production (land) and the regulatory role of the state considering prices and conditions of the market were the basic instruments the Ottoman state used in order to keep its centralized economic regime. Guilds of artisans and merchants<sup>49</sup> were other institutions that facilitated the interaction and communication between the state and its subjects. Guilds allowed the state to control the quality and the price of goods as well as to prevent unfair competition between producers and the emergence of a monopoly.<sup>50</sup> Although the Ottoman state had highly profitable tax revenues from the Silk Road (*İpek Yolu*) and Spice Trade (*Baharat Yolu*), exports and imports were under state control and the general tendency of the state was to provide for the continuation of the subsistence economy.<sup>51</sup> Charitable foundations (*vakıf*) were another important part of the Ottoman system which served to regulate the state's revenues from lands and taxes. The *vakıf* system worked perfectly at the beginning, but after the weakening of the state due to populist practices it caused the emergence of the *mürtezika* segment which consisted of people who took wages from the state but contributed nothing in return.<sup>52</sup>

The centrality of the political system of the Ottoman state which had ruled millions of people from different ethnic, religious and sectarian origins on three continents was provided by the protection of subjects against feudal landlords. The weakening of feudalism and the protection and services provided to new subjects of the state increased the legitimacy of Ottoman rule in the eyes of people.<sup>53</sup> Although the Ottoman state was a state of the Middle-Ages, it did not show the characteristics

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<sup>48</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, p. 81.

<sup>49</sup> Lonca in Turkish.

<sup>50</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, pp. 82-83.

<sup>51</sup> *ibid.*, p. 84.

<sup>52</sup> *ibid.*, p. 98.

<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*, p. 103.





of feudalism such as the aristocratic hierarchy of European states.<sup>54</sup> Religious tolerance and respect towards different religions and sects unlike other states of that period were other factors that contributed a lot to the high sense of legitimacy of the Ottoman state. Ottomans never forced their non-Muslim subjects to convert to Islam and instead took *cizye* taxes from non-Muslim populations in return for their exemption from military service and for their protection.<sup>55</sup> The centrality of the economy and the *Timarlı Sipahi* practice of the army together with the politically central state composed a well-working consistent system based on rationalism rather than dogmatism. The *miri* system of land provided a strong patriotic army which was a crucial aspect of a strong state during those centuries.

The Ottoman state expanded its territories enormously and became a vast empire. In Cem's belief, the excessive territorial enlargement brought problems to the Ottoman state and starting from the 17<sup>th</sup> century the perfect system began to spoil. First of all, the state's regulating power was reduced and feudal structure started to be ignored in some regions due to vast territories of the state which were impossible to totally control<sup>56</sup>. Cem thought that south-Eastern Anatolia was a typical example where feudalism was ignored in the Ottoman state<sup>57</sup>. It must be remembered that in 1808 by Deed of Alliance (*Sened-i İttifak*)<sup>58</sup>, the Ottoman state recognized the power of local notables.<sup>59</sup> Secondly, guilds began to lose their power and lost their place to religious brotherhoods. The distance between state and subject (center and periphery) widened due to the ineffectiveness of guilds which operated

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<sup>54</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, p. 126.

<sup>55</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 105-106.

<sup>56</sup> *ibid.*, p. 111.

<sup>57</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 125-126.

<sup>58</sup> Many historians looked at *Sened-i İttifak* as the Magna Carta Treaty of Ottoman History considering the limitation of the Sultan's power against local notables (*ayan*) and governors (*vali*) although this seems rather an exaggerated claim. See; Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw. 2006. *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Modern Türkiye Cilt 2 Reform, Devrim ve Cumhuriyet: Modern Türkiye'nin Doğuşu 1808-1975*. İstanbul: E Yayınları, p. 27.

<sup>59</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, p. 245.





somehow as civil society organizations or syndicates in the past. Artisans who were members of these guilds could not develop their economic and sociopolitical power against excessively patrimonial state. In this sense, İsmail Cem thought that the flourishing of a pre-bourgeois class was prevented by the state and Ottoman social progression was blocked.<sup>60</sup> The social dynamism lost its place to the status quo and regression. The lack of dynamism and proactive management in Ottomans strengthened the downward trend and made reformism nearly impossible. Smuggling activities and the appearance of new feudal riches reduced the state's power and subjects began to live in more difficult conditions due to heavy taxes.<sup>61</sup> State officials in time lost their honest and patriotic stance and corruption together with bribery became a source of headache for the state. In order to catch rapidly developing European economies (thanks to the Age of Discoveries and colonialism) and find a solution to its financial crisis, instead of developing a new statist economic model, the Ottoman state chose the easy way out and began to hire and sell its territories. In Cem's materialist point of view, change in the Ottoman land system was a turning point and was the real reason for the Ottoman's fall. Implementation of *iltizam*, which means the state's delegating its property rights or tax-taking authority to a person in return for money, directed state officials to use state resources ineffectively in order to get rich or take shares in newly emerged riches called *mültezim*.<sup>62</sup> According to Cem, the Ottoman state was trying to create its own riches or its own bourgeoisie against European merchants, but since this process was not natural and full of corruption and waste, it became unsuccessful.<sup>63</sup> In that sense, the system

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<sup>60</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, p. 124.

<sup>61</sup> *ibid.*, p. 141.

<sup>62</sup> *ibid.*, p. 145.

<sup>63</sup> According to Professor Akşin, the implementation of *iltizam* was a necessity for the Ottoman State related to the invention of rifle guns and other fire arms in European states. Fire arms technology required infantrymen to be able to use a rifle gun instead of horse rider *Timarlı Sipahis*. Thus, the





changed in a negative way and the process of becoming underdeveloped gradually started. The emergence of the *mültezim* class not only overshadowed the state's positive image of the father who gives justice to its subjects, but it also spoiled both the Ottoman land ownership system which was based on the state's ownership of nearly all lands and the Ottoman military system that was based on *Tımarlı Sipahis*.<sup>64</sup> So, Ottoman land became an instrument of personal benefit and *Tımarlı Sipahi* power in the Ottoman Army disappeared.<sup>65</sup> The army was left to undisciplined Janissaries and the excessive power of Janissaries also created political struggles and instability in the political system.<sup>66</sup> Cem claimed that the main reason of the Jelali (*Celali*) Revolts<sup>67</sup> was the degradation of the Ottoman land system which caused much more difficult conditions of life for Ottoman subjects, especially for peasants.<sup>68</sup> Revolts later took support of state officials (both *ehl-i örf* which consisted of flag officers-*sancakbeyi*, *beylerbeyi* and *subaşı* who regulated and secured land systems and lands and also *ehl-i şer* which consisted of *kadı*, *müderriş* and *hoca* who dealt with the judicial and religious affairs) too and weakened the central government for decades.<sup>69</sup> Together with the state's high taxes, the emergence of the *mültezim* class that had some similarities with feudal landlords in a sense forced Anatolian people to revolt against the state. Cem called this process “delayed feudalism-*geç kalmış feodalizm*” and considered it as a much more backward and unequal system than the

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Ottoman State in order to increase the number of *Janissaries* and infantrymen by taking money from *mültezim*, had to change its land and army system and tried to compete with its European rivals. See; Sina Akşin. 2007. *Kısa Türkiye Tarihi*. İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, pp. 13-14.

<sup>64</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, pp. 174-175.

<sup>65</sup> *ibid.*, p. 180.

<sup>66</sup> *ibid.*, p. 185.

<sup>67</sup> “Jelali Revolts” is a term used to refer to a series of rebellions in Anatolia initiated by unemployed previously paid soldiers against the Ottoman state in the late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> (1596-1610) centuries. See; Halil İnalcık, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Ekonomik ve Sosyal Tarihi I. Cilt 1300-1600*, p. 450.

<sup>68</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, pp. 192-193.

<sup>69</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 196-197.





traditional Ottoman system.<sup>70</sup> In Cem's view, feudalism, which is based on weak central authority and private ownership of lands in the hands of landlords, ended the Ottomans' just system and decreased its legitimacy in the newly conquered areas.<sup>71</sup> With the rising importance of personal wealth, corruption and moral degeneration became widespread in state and social life. The corrupt working of charitable foundations (*vakıf*) and the rapid population increase which caused a rise in unemployment were other important factors of the fall of the Ottoman state and the emergence of the underdevelopment process according to İsmail Cem.

İsmail Cem thought that there were also many important reasons for the Ottoman collapse originating from Europe. Due to liberating effects of the Renaissance and the emergence of an innovative bourgeois class, starting from the 15<sup>th</sup> century, European states began to send ships to different seas of the world in order to discover virgin territories in Africa and America, a period known as the Age of Discovery or Age of Exploration. The discovery of India and America was realized in this context and European countries acquired new natural resources and raw materials which helped them to accelerate their industrialization and urbanization process.<sup>72</sup> The newly flourishing bourgeoisie increased its power thanks to new discoveries and trade opportunities and rural-to-urban migration waves started in European lands. At the same time, while the bourgeoisie was gaining power, central authorities (kingdoms) were also consolidating their power and increasing their central authority by breaking the power of feudal lords and the Church with the help of the bourgeoisie.<sup>73</sup> The Age of Explorations created a boom in European capital accumulation and gold reserves, which forced European states to

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<sup>70</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, p. 195.

<sup>71</sup> *ibid.*, p. 201.

<sup>72</sup> *ibid.*, p. 152.

<sup>73</sup> *ibid.*, p. 153.





find new markets and to increase their trade. The abundance of natural resources also helped them to improve their techniques and make progress in science.<sup>74</sup> Taken together, these conditions created very dynamic societies and rapidly growing economies. The Age of Discovery also neutralized classical trade routes and caused enormous damage to European states' Eastern rival - the Ottoman state.<sup>75</sup> As European countries became richer and richer, they began to buy more of the Ottomans' resources at high prices which created inflation and a shortage in the Ottoman market. Although the state and some smugglers were earning more, compared to European progress, the Ottoman state became very weak and not even able to supply the demand in the domestic market.<sup>76</sup> These were the main outsider effects contributing to the Ottoman fall according to İsmail Cem and together with the collapse of the Ottoman land and military system, the Ottoman state began to lose its power against its European rivals.

The economic fall of the state, which was followed by the degradation of the land and military system, caused social and moral problems in the state. These problems grew after the introduction of a foreign debt-based economy. The first foreign debt was taken in the period of Abdülhamid I in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and continued consistently with growing amounts.<sup>77</sup> European states and merchants were also able to profit from their economic privileges called capitulations<sup>78</sup> which were given when Ottomans were much more powerful than European states. The weakening of the *Tımarlı Sipahi* army and territorial losses against technologically improved European states and Russia, in İsmail Cem's view, ingrained

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<sup>74</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, pp. 154-155.

<sup>75</sup> *ibid.*, p. 156.

<sup>76</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 157-158.

<sup>77</sup> *ibid.*, p. 224.

<sup>78</sup> The Ottoman State, by giving capitulations, aimed to find allies among Christian nations and to get some strategic materials easily. See; Halil İnalcık, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Ekonomik ve Sosyal Tarihi I. Cilt 1300-1600*, p. 238.





underdevelopment in the Ottomans. From now on, the Ottoman state was “sick” in the eyes of European states and a process of colonization of the Ottomans was on the European states’ agenda. While European states had gone through a process of industrialization, the Ottoman state was trying to adapt its old system to capitalism due to pressures coming from Europe. European states and merchants were disturbed by three practices in the Ottoman state. First, according to Ottoman trade regulation, European businessmen did not have the chance to engage in domestic trade in Ottoman territory and they had only the chance to sell their goods to the state. This prevented them from making more profit within the Ottoman market and acquire power in the state. Secondly, with the *yed-i vahit* principle, the Ottoman state had previously given monopoly rights to certain merchants and businessmen in some sectors and this prevented European businessmen from taking part in these sectors. Thirdly, sale of Ottoman territories to a foreigner was forbidden by the state and these three practices were the target of European capitalism.<sup>79</sup> In this situation, the 1838 Ottoman-British Trade Agreement was a turning point for Cem. By this agreement, the Ottoman state showed its desperation against European capitalism and adopted a “laissez faire, laissez passer” program by British pressure. British businessmen acquired the same rights as Ottoman businessmen and they began to control the Ottoman domestic market. The *yed-i vahit* application was removed and the agreement was followed by other agreements made with France, Spain, Belgium, Prussia, Denmark and other European countries.<sup>80</sup> İsmail Cem believed that change in the economic structure certainly had some political consequences and reforms like the *Tanzimat* (1839) and *Islahat* (1856) edicts were in fact superstructural changes made by the Ottoman state due to European pressures in order to regulate the state to

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<sup>79</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye’de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, p. 231.

<sup>80</sup> *ibid.*, p. 232.





its new colony position.<sup>81</sup> In Cem's view, Westernization reforms of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were in fact colonial steps although they brought some freedoms and security guarantees to Ottoman subjects, too. Moreover, Cem, by quoting from Professor Halil İnalcık, claimed that the so-called Ottoman modernization came together with the weakening of central authority<sup>82</sup> and the increasing power of pre-modern feudal local notables and the *mültezim* class who suppress people, which could be described as a clear contradiction compared to many other modernization movements that sought strict centralization<sup>83</sup>.

According to İsmail Cem, one of the most important steps of Ottoman colonization was the establishment of the Public Debt (*Düyun-u Umumiye*) system. By using this system, European bankers and states in a sense damped the Ottoman state in heavy debts and interests and increased their authority over Ottoman politics.<sup>84</sup> Pashas started to be classified by their closeness to other states and they began to act as the representatives of these states. The Ottoman state did not have a chance to follow policies regarding its own interests because of its dependency on other states. So, in other words, Cem thought that the Westernization of the state lost its meaning of modernization and became a tool of colonialism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>85</sup> Pashas, local notables, ethnic-religious minorities and European collaborator businessmen and bureaucrats became champions of this process and they formed a kind of comprador class defending Westernization. However, ordinary people who were discontented with their increasing poverty and the weakening of their state, opposed Westernization. This opposition was realized on the surface and the state's

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<sup>81</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, p. 233.

<sup>82</sup> For detailed research on European institutions in the Ottoman state in the early 20th century see; Adnan Şişman. 2006. *XX. Yüzyıl Başlarında Osmanlı Devletinde Yabancı Devletlerin Kültürel ve Sosyal Müesseseleri*. Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi.

<sup>83</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, p. 260.

<sup>84</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 234-236.

<sup>85</sup> *ibid.*, p. 243.





Westernization reforms became a target, but in İsmail Cem's view the problem was about the substructure and colonization of the state. Westernization was mostly supported by three segments; pashas, local notables and minority groups. Pashas supported Westernization in order to protect and increase their personal benefits and wealth and also some of them believed that there was no other alternative to save the state. Local notables supported the Westernization process in order to secure their lands by European private property laws and break the power of the central government. Minorities on the other hand were trying to acquire their independence by strengthening financially and organizing associations and paramilitary organizations.<sup>86</sup> By the Westernization process, (with *Tanzimat* and *Islahat* reforms) the security of life and wealth of the businessmen, pashas, top ranked bureaucrats and minorities was guaranteed by the Ottoman state. In addition, regulations preventing free market economics were removed and the state conceded to a foreign and minority capital dominated market.<sup>87</sup> Change in state structure and culture (new uniforms of state officials and soldiers, a new Istanbulite language dominated by French words etc.) created a dualism in the society as was explained in Cem's model of underdevelopment. These reforms were accepted only by a small elite and implemented in a forceful (from top to bottom) way. Moreover, their practice was no more than an artificial imitation of European societies and states. Exported reforms forced Anatolian people to embrace their traditional and pious life more and more enthusiastically and the Islamic fundamentalist seeds of discord were planted in this process.<sup>88</sup> Cem wrote that the problem of duality in Turkish social structure started with the Westernization process and could not be handled until today.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, pp. 245-246.

<sup>87</sup> *ibid.*, p. 247.

<sup>88</sup> *ibid.*, p. 250.

<sup>89</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 518-519.





İsmail Cem thought that the process of colonization of the Ottoman state naturally brought the process of collapse. Now, the Ottoman economy and politics were in the hands of European firms, businessmen and politicians. The Ottoman market was dominated by foreign goods and only non-Muslim minorities of the state had the chance to develop their positions by trade and close relations with Europeans. The competition between a few small Muslim Ottoman businessmen and European businessmen was like a match between heavyweight and flyweight boxers for İsmail Cem.<sup>90</sup> Soon, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the competition between European states brought them into the position of World War I and the Ottoman state was now subjected to physical imperialism in addition to its cultural and economic dependency. The period of the Committee of Union and Progress (*İttihat ve Terakki*) could not prevent the collapse of the state and the Ottoman state collapsed together with its 600 year old glorious history. İsmail Cem, while making a total critique of the Ottoman state, underlines the problematic practice of Westernization which was not based on the idea of improving people's life conditions and liberties and developing the state but rather on satisfying European states by giving them political and economic concessions. In his view, although the Westernization process brought progress in some areas (constitutionalism, increasing civil liberties etc.), it created a comprador class at the expense of exploiting the Anatolian people together with a cultural dualism which would always be a problem for Anatolia. In forming his theories and ideas about the Ottoman State, Cem referred mostly to the great works of Ömer Lütfi Barkan (*Türkiye'de Toprak Meselesi-Land Issue in Turkey*)<sup>91</sup>, Halil İnalcık (various books and articles), Mustafa Akdağ (*Celali İsyamları-Jelali*

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<sup>90</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, p. 254.

<sup>91</sup> Ömer Lütfi Barkan. 1980. *Türkiye'de Toprak Meselesi*. İstanbul: Gözlem Yayınevi.





Revolts)<sup>92</sup> and İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı. Cem's positive look towards Ottoman justice, religious tolerance, communal mentality and statist land system was a deviance from the classical Western Marxist look but it was very much in line with the Eastern socialist understanding of Asiatic type of production school (ATÜT)<sup>93</sup> that became influential in Turkey and in third world countries during the 1960s and 1970s. Cem in that sense could also be considered as one of the earliest intellectuals who brought Ottoman past discussions on the agenda in leftist intellectual circles and advocated a kind of socialist state more reconciled with the Ottoman State by focusing on some social aspects and the communitarian mentality of the Ottoman system. In that sense, Cem correctly saw the growing Ottoman past discussions that had become very popular in the country in the 2000s and wanted Turkey to become more influential in foreign policy by using historical-cultural assets coming from the Ottomans.

### 3.3. On Single-Party Rule

Following the defeat of the Ottoman Empire and its allies Germany and the Empire of Austria-Hungary in the First World War, on 30 October 1918 the Armistice of Mudros (*Mondros Mütarekesi*) was signed between the Ottoman Empire and the Allies of World War I, namely the United Kingdom and France. The treaty granted the Allies the right to occupy forts controlling the Straits of the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus, and the right to occupy -in case of disorder- any

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<sup>92</sup> Mustafa Akdağ. 1993. *Celali İsyamları*. İstanbul: Cem Yayınları.

<sup>93</sup> Asiatic type of production (*Asya tipi üretim tarzı-ATÜT*) was a term first used by Karl Marx in his work *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations*. Marx, by using this term, tried to point out the difference between historical differences of property ownership between European and Eastern societies. In the 1960s, ATÜT discussions played a significant role in the formation of socialist theories. See; Metin Heper, *Türkiye Sözlüğü Siyaset, Toplum ve Kültür*, p. 142.





territory in case of a threat to security.<sup>94</sup> Soon after, Allied powers entered Istanbul with the aim of occupying the city.<sup>95</sup> The partition of the Empire was on the agenda for Allied powers but a resistance movement was initiated by Mustafa Kemal and his friends starting from 19 May 1919 after the Greek invasion of İzmir on 15 May 1919.<sup>96</sup> Kemal and his friends, by taking support of the Anatolian people, formed a new Grand National Assembly in Ankara on 23 April 1920 and administered the Independence War from this Assembly.<sup>97</sup> The National Struggle gained power and popular support especially after the Sevres Treaty, the “peace treaty” signed between the Ottoman Empire (Istanbul government) and Allies on 10 August 1920, which imposed heavy conditions on Turkey and partitioned the Anatolian land between Greek, French, British and Italian powers.<sup>98</sup> The resistance movement was able to concentrate its power and organize an army by taking help from the USSR and finally defeated the Greek occupying army and established the Republic of Turkey on 29 October 1923.<sup>99</sup> The establishment of the Turkish national movement led to the end of the Ottoman Empire and its millet system<sup>100</sup> and with the Kemalist reforms created a modern and secular Turkish nation-state. For Professor İnalcık, the

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<sup>94</sup> It refers to the famous article 7 of the Mondros Treaty. See; Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Modern Türkiye Cilt 2 Reform, Devrim ve Cumhuriyet: Modern Türkiye'nin Doğuşu 1808-1975*, pp. 405-406.

<sup>95</sup> For a detailed study on this topic see; Nur Bilge Criss. 1999. *Istanbul: Under Allied Occupation, 1918-1923*, Leiden: Brill.

<sup>96</sup> Halil İnalcık. 2007. *Atatürk ve Demokratik Türkiye*. İstanbul: Kırmızı Yayınları, p. 11.

<sup>97</sup> Halil İnalcık, *Atatürk ve Demokratik Türkiye*, p. 16.

<sup>98</sup> Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Modern Türkiye Cilt 2 Reform, Devrim ve Cumhuriyet: Modern Türkiye'nin Doğuşu 1808-1975*, pp. 421-422.

<sup>99</sup> Previously the Republic gained international recognition by the Lausanne Treaty which was signed on 24 July 1923 and settled the Anatolian and East Thracian parts of the partitioning of the Ottoman Empire by annulment of the Treaty of Sevres as a consequence of the Turkish War of Independence between the Allies of World War I and the Ankara-based Grand National Assembly of Turkey led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. The treaty also led to the international recognition of the sovereignty of the new Republic of Turkey as the successor state of the collapsed Ottoman Empire. See; Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Modern Türkiye Cilt 2 Reform, Devrim ve Cumhuriyet: Modern Türkiye'nin Doğuşu 1808-1975*, pp. 433-436.

<sup>100</sup> The Ottoman Empire was shaped by the “millet system” understanding. According to the millet system, Ottoman State recognized differences among different social groups in the society according to religious beliefs. Ethnic or linguistic differences were ignored and the society was basically divided into two groups: Muslims and non-Muslims. Non-Muslims included Greeks, Armenians and Jewish subjects of the state and were considered as minority groups.





creation of the modern Republic was the consequence of two centuries old Ottoman modernization history and opened a new chapter in Turkish history.<sup>101</sup>

After the establishment of the Republic, the President and the “father of the Turks” Mustafa Kemal Atatürk introduced a broad range of reforms (political, social, legal, economic and cultural) and the young republic turned its face towards the West. “Unconditional, unrestricted sovereignty belongs to the nation” was one of the foremost principles of the new secular Turkish Republic and the Sultanate and Caliphate were abolished by Atatürk.<sup>102</sup> After the establishment of modern Kemalist Turkey, the country engaged in the process of creating a Turkish nation and a modern state. Although Kemalist discourse was highly anti-imperialistic, its aim was to create a Western type democracy to catch up with the contemporary civilization. The young Republic made reforms in the fields of culture and cut its ties with the ancient regime suddenly. This sudden and brutal change and the elitist Jacobinist nature of the new modern regime created problems throughout Turkish history. For instance, Professor Şerif Mardin explains this tension between the militantly secular military-bureaucratic regime and pious Anatolian people with center-periphery dichotomy.<sup>103</sup> The elite of the Republic considered itself as the vanguard of modernization and did not hesitate to impose reforms from above in order to “elevate the people to the level of contemporary civilization”. Professor Ergun Özbudun also points out the lack of social support that the Kemalist Revolution and modernization project had: “Turkish Revolution was not a social revolution; rather, it combined

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<sup>101</sup> Halil İnalçık, *Atatürk ve Demokratik Türkiye*, p. 19.

<sup>102</sup> Professor İnalçık considers the abolition of the Caliphate as a grand revolution and the most important step of secularization. See; Halil İnalçık, *Atatürk ve Demokratik Türkiye*, pp. 24-25, 67-75.

<sup>103</sup> “The new Republican ideology, by denying the place of Islam as a discourse and its role as a cement of society, increased the distance between the educated and the uneducated”. See; Şerif Mardin. 1997. “Projects as methodology: Some Thoughts on Modern Turkish Social Science” in Sibel Bozdoğan and Reşat Kasaba (ed.) *Rethinking modernity and national identity in Turkey*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, p. 71.





features of a war of national liberation and of a political revolution”.<sup>104</sup> Moreover, the Turkish Revolution was not only a political change but rather it aimed to create a new modern “Turkish man” and changed many things in the field of culture.<sup>105</sup> So, many reforms were made by the Kemalist government to cut the new regime’s ties with the “corrupt ancient regime” which was seen as the scapegoat for all problems.

Although İsmail Cem tried to analyze the single-party period and Turkish Republic in general from a critical point of view, his look towards Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and Turks’ National Struggle was overall positive. In his view, Atatürk was a genius who was able to acquire power in very difficult conditions by taking support from very different segments of the society (Islamists, nationalists, Kurds, communists<sup>106</sup> etc.) by his clever strategies during the National Struggle. Moreover, he believes that without Atatürk, the Republic of Turkey might have never existed.<sup>107</sup> According to Cem, the Turkish Independence War was a real miracle because the real difficulty was not the strength of the Greek army or the derangement of the *Kuvayi Milliye* but rather the lack of support given to the National Struggle by the Anatolian people and especially by local notables at the beginning of the war. Local notables at the beginning of the foreign invasion seemed indifferent and some of them seemed even happy since they thought they could earn more money when anarchy would stop.<sup>108</sup> Anatolian people were on the other hand very weak, crestfallen and unwilling to fight against the enemy. Cem thought that the genius of Atatürk was to use foreign soldiers’ inappropriate behaviors as propaganda material

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<sup>104</sup> Ergun Özbudun. 1981. “The nature of the Kemalist political regime” in Ali Kazancıgil and Ergun Özbudun (ed.) *Atatürk: Founder of a Modern State*. London: C. Hurst & Company, p. 83.

<sup>105</sup> Halil İnalcık, *Atatürk ve Demokratik Türkiye*, p. 78.

<sup>106</sup> Turkish communists including their leader Mustafa Suphi actively supported the Turkish Independence War. See; Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Modern Türkiye Cilt 2 Reform, Devrim ve Cumhuriyet: Modern Türkiye'nin Doğuşu 1808-1975*, p. 404.

<sup>107</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye’de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, p. 273.

<sup>108</sup> *ibid.*, p. 275.





and to motivated Anatolian people with courage and nationalism.<sup>109</sup> With Atatürk's tactical genius, pious Anatolian people and most of the local notables supported the National Struggle but the backbone of the resistance was constituted by nationalist young officers and intellectuals. However, there were also splits among officers and intellectuals. Some of them favored an American mandate or a restored monarchy whereas some of them boldly defended the necessity of establishing a Republic. In Cem's opinion, Mustafa Kemal and his friends were able to establish an independent Republic from the wreck of an empire by using Soviet help and French abstention cleverly.<sup>110</sup>

İsmail Cem thinks that although the starting principles of the new Republic were progressive, its economic and social policies were not able to reverse the underdevelopment pattern inherited from the Ottomans. The economic policy of the young Republic was a national capitalist economy (*milli iktisat*), which meant to create a national bourgeoisie by statist-seeming liberal policies.<sup>111</sup> This was Mustafa Kemal and his close friends' main choice but due to the conditions of the Great Depression<sup>112</sup>, this policy was pending in the 1930s and more statist policies and a policy of state led development were adopted.<sup>113</sup> According to the national economic program, which was first presented at the İzmir National Economy Congress on 17 February 1923, the state was conceptualized as responsible only for affairs and sectors where the private sector could not work properly. Moreover, projects that

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<sup>109</sup> Islamists have been using this argument for decades in order to emphasize the religious-Islamist character of the National Struggle which was later erased by the founders of the Republic in their view. See; İsmail Cem, *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, p. 275.

<sup>110</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, p. 277.

<sup>111</sup> *ibid.*, p. 279.

<sup>112</sup> The Great Depression was the global economic crisis that started in the USA's stock market in 1929 and soon affected the whole world economy terribly in the 1930s. The Great Depression caused the devaluation of the liberal economy and the rise of Keynesianism or more statist economic approaches in the world.

<sup>113</sup> Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Modern Türkiye Cilt 2 Reform, Devrim ve Cumhuriyet: Modern Türkiye'nin Doğuşu 1808-1975*, p. 460.





were defended by Mustafa Kemal during the National Struggle period such as land reform and the statist economic model were not even mentioned in the Congress.<sup>114</sup> Cem, by quoting from İsmet İnönü, tried to show that Atatürk was always in favor of private enterprises but he knew that in a country where nobody had capital accumulation, the state had to take the lead and during the National Struggle he had to look more sympathetic to Bolsheviks in order to take their help.<sup>115</sup> For Cem, the “national economy” or the national capitalist economic model had no other meaning than the replacement of European and minority owned capital by the Turkish and Muslim businessmen class.<sup>116</sup> What he was critical of was Mustafa Kemal and other founding figures’ liberal approach to economics, which had to be changed after the Great Depression. In addition to economic problems caused by the Great Depression, the Turkish Republic’s acceptance of paying Ottoman debts brought a heavy burden to the Turkish economy and Atatürk and other important names of the Republic decided to take control of the economy into the hands of the state. According to Cem, the first and second economic plans<sup>117</sup> prepared in accordance with the new statist economic model brought some positive aspects such as the nationalization of foreign companies and an increase in state investments.<sup>118</sup> During this process, statism showed its dominance in the intellectual world, too. So, *Kadro* magazine<sup>119</sup> became a

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<sup>114</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye’de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, p. 279.

<sup>115</sup> *ibid.*, p. 280.

<sup>116</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 285-286.

<sup>117</sup> According to the Shaws, the two five year plans that were prepared in the 1930s were inspired from the USSR’s Gosplan - State Committee for Planning. See; Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Modern Türkiye Cilt 2 Reform, Devrim ve Cumhuriyet: Modern Türkiye’nin Doğuşu 1808-1975*, p. 461.

<sup>118</sup> *ibid.*, p. 288.

<sup>119</sup> Kadro movement takes its name from the monthly Kadro journal which was published between January 1932 and December 1934 by a group of intellectuals of the early Republican period. Although the journal was politely forced to cease publication in December 1934 by the state and only thirty-six issues very limited in number were published, the movement left a deep impact on the thinking patterns of Turkish intellectuals, the character of Turkish modernity and on the interpretation of Kemalism as an ideology. Regular contributors of the magazine, except Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu and Mehmet Şevki Yazman, were ex-communists (including Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, Vedat Nedim Tör, Burhan Asaf Belge and İsmail Hüsrev Tökin) who had links with the Turkish Communist Party





very influential intellectual forum where statist views were advocated out loud. However, in İsmail Cem's view, even the adoption of a statist economic model did not abrogate the Ottoman legacy of the center-periphery dilemma and the dominance of a small "happy minority (*mutlu azınlık*)" in the country.<sup>120</sup> Moreover, the industrialization attempts of the single-party period mostly remained unsuccessful due to lack of capital accumulation.<sup>121</sup>

According to İsmail Cem the happy minority group consisted of three main segments; Istanbulite business circles and Anatolian local notables, officers that were engaged in the National Struggle and gained a special place in the new status quo and deputies and top ranked bureaucrats.<sup>122</sup> Although these three segments had internal conflicts too, their real struggle was for protecting and developing their own positions at the expense of ordinary people and honest patriotic public servants. This coalition's first job was to replace minority and European based elite and to acquire power to affect the decision-making process in the country. İş Bankası<sup>123</sup> in that sense was established by Celal Bayar<sup>124</sup> to favor this coalition and constitute a new

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(TKP) in the past and this increased both attentions and reactions on the movement. Kadro writers defended a statist autarchic economic model in addition to an authoritarian central state. For detailed information see; Mustafa Türkeş. 1999. "The Ideology of the Kadro Movement: A Patriotic Leftist Movement in Turkey" in Sylvia Kedourie (ed.) *Turkey Before and After Atatürk*. London: Frank Cass Publishers. Also see; George S. Harris. 2002. *The Communists and the Kadro Movement Shaping Ideology in Atatürk's Turkey*. Istanbul: The Isis Press and İlhan Tekeli and Selim İlkin. 2003. *Bir Cumhuriyet Öyküsü: Kadrocuları ve Kadro'yu Anlamak*. İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları 134.

<sup>120</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, p. 289.

<sup>121</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye Üzerine (Araştırmalar)*, p. 49.

<sup>122</sup> *ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>123</sup> İş Bankası or Türkiye İş Bankası was the Turkish Republic's first public bank and premiere national financial institution which dated back to 26 August 1924, mandated by Atatürk, after the first Economy Congress in İzmir. İş Bankası began to operate with two branches and 37 staff under the leadership of Celal Bayar, the first General Manager to run the bank. In addition to İş Bankası, other state banks such as Etibank, Denizcilik Bankası, Emlak Kredi Bankası and İller Bankası played major roles in the development of the Turkish economy. See; Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Modern Türkiye Cilt 2 Reform, Devrim ve Cumhuriyet: Modern Türkiye'nin Doğuşu 1808-1975*, p. 462.

<sup>124</sup> Celal Bayar (1883-1986) was a Turkish politician (ex-RPP deputy and one of the founders of Democrat Party) and the third President of the Republic (1950-1960) of the state known for his liberal economic approaches. Bayar was also the first General Manager of İş Bankası. Bayar was given the death penalty after the 27 May 1960 military coup but his punishment was commuted to life imprisonment because of his old age. Later, in 1964 he was released from prison due to his poor





bourgeois class.<sup>125</sup> This coalition's representative in the RPP was also Celal Bayar and his friends, and the *İş Bank* group<sup>126</sup> engaged in a harsh struggle against İsmet İnönü and Recep Peker's bureaucratic group (*Ülkü* group) in the 1930s and 1940s. According to Cem although the new Republic economically made little progress *İş Bank* group's reign in the party in the 1920s, after the adoption of statism and the dominance of a statist-bureaucratic group, concrete development projects flourished such as the founding of Sümerbank, Etibank and Mining Bank, the establishment of sugar, paper and textile factories and the construction of new mining foundations, harbors and highroads.<sup>127</sup> Moreover, the state had foreign trade surplus and its market was dominated by domestic goods. While Cem praised the relative success of the statist development model of the 1930s, he also pointed out critically that considering social security and syndical rights no improvements were made by the state and socialist ideology was heavily suppressed.<sup>128</sup> Workers worked in terrible conditions in state or few privately-owned factories but the situation of peasants was no different from the workers. Local notables had noncontestable authority in their villages like the representative of the state in rural areas and peasants had to obey their rules without objecting.<sup>129</sup> Because of the weakness of the state and the army after long years of Independence Wars, the new state had to take the support of local notables in order to keep its presence in the rural areas. However, this caused a statist economic model which worked against peasants and lower segments in favor of local notables. The bureaucratic segment was the most helpful servant of Istanbulite capital owners and local notables in this new system. According to Cem, this was not

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health and was pardoned in 1966. Full political rights were restored to him in 1974. See; Metin Heper, *Türkiye Sözlüğü Siyaset, Toplum ve Kültür*, pp. 162-163.

<sup>125</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, p. 290.

<sup>126</sup> *ibid.*, p. 291.

<sup>127</sup> *ibid.*, p. 295.

<sup>128</sup> *ibid.*, p. 296.

<sup>129</sup> *ibid.*, p. 299.





caused by the bureaucracy's weakness against the capital owners or local notables, but rather because of its lack of class-based approaches and ideological statism.<sup>130</sup> Top ranked bureaucrats faithfully believed in the solidarism understanding of Kemalism<sup>131</sup> which claimed that class-based inequalities could be prevented in Turkish society where no class distinctions had evolved. So, in Cem's view bureaucrats' candidness and solidarist approach to the issues was in fact no different from supporting the higher segments of the society.<sup>132</sup> Lower segments' negative attitude towards their Western lifestyle and values was also another factor that approximated bureaucracy to the bourgeoisie.<sup>133</sup> That is why the single-party period's democratic qualities remained highly limited (Cem thought of this period as authoritative) and were available only for a group of small coalition partners which was similar to other authoritarian and fascist regimes of that period.<sup>134</sup>

İsmail Cem pointed out that conditions of the Second World War (such as the conscription and nourishment of 500.000 soldiers) had very negative consequences on the Turkish economy in the 1940s - for example the inflationist policies adopted by the state<sup>135</sup>. Inflationist policies caused shortages in agricultural production and

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<sup>130</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, p. 301.

<sup>131</sup> Solidarism refers to a philosophical doctrine developed by French sociologist Emile Durkheim, based on the rejection of the Marxist class struggle thesis and on the idea of the harmonious division of labor in the society. Solidarism was very influential especially in the works of the *Ülkü* journal, which was the journal of the bureaucratic Kemalist group led by İsmet İnönü and Recep Peker, and that became dominant Kemalism in the 1930s. According to Ertan Aydın, although there are claims about *Ülkü* as a fascist movement, "*Ülkü* group was much closer to French solidarism". The *Ülkü* group aimed to initiate a cultural and social regeneration project in order to enlighten uneducated Anatolian people who were not intellectually mature enough to decide for themselves (democracy for the people not democracy of the people). Although for instance the Kadro movement was aware of class differences, *Ülkü* did not make any class analysis and was totally committed to the solidarity principle. French Solidarism, which heavily affected the Kemalist modernization project and the nature of Turkish leftist movements, was for Emile Durkheim a construct of a secular morality that had to curb a person's natural instincts and give to everyone a sense of responsibility and duty, and a set of common values. For a detailed analysis see; Ertan Aydın. 2005. "The Peculiarities of Turkish Revolutionary Ideology in the 1930s: The *Ülkü* Version Of Kemalism" in *Middle Eastern Studies*, September 2004, vol. 40, no: 5, pp. 55-82.

<sup>132</sup> İsmail Cem, *Tarih Açısından 12 Mart*, p. 24.

<sup>133</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, p. 306.

<sup>134</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye Üzerine (Araştırmalar)*, p. 109.

<sup>135</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, p. 307.





even bread was rationed. Through the National Protection Law (*Milli Korunma Kanunu*) and Wealth Tax (*Varlık Vergisi*), the state tried to reduce exports and imports and to raise funds for the state's defense expenditures especially by suppressing non-Muslim segments of the society.<sup>136</sup> However, the increasing role of bureaucracy in the economic sphere brought corruption and "war time riches". Moreover, people were very unhappy with the authoritarian rule of the single-party now in more difficult economic conditions. Increasing land taxes (*Toprak Vergisi*) collected by the state from local notables and peasants also caused a huge decrease in the legitimacy of the single-party government during these years and created a convenient condition for the emergence of populist rural-based parties such as the Democrat Party. While local notables had the chance to survive against heavy taxes, ordinary peasants' only choice was to sell all their property in order to survive. According to Cem, the increasing pressures of bureaucracy over Istanbulite bourgeois and Anatolian local notables directed them to favor a more liberal system in which bureaucracy's role would be diminished.<sup>137</sup> The socialist leaning and authoritarian policies and practices of İsmet Pasha, who led the bureaucratic group in RPP, scared the "happy minority" in the country especially after the beginning of the talks for land reform after the Second World War.<sup>138</sup> The land reform project was the final blow for the happy minority and after Turkey's transition to multi-party rule all bourgeoisie and land owner segments of the country began to strongly support the Democrat Party due to their anger towards bureaucracy and new liberal ideas that strongly flourished in the country after Turkey's rapprochement with the USA due to the Soviet threat after the Second World War.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, pp. 308-309.

<sup>137</sup> *ibid.*, p. 312.

<sup>138</sup> *ibid.*, p. 313.

<sup>139</sup> *ibid.*, p. 501.





In Cem's view, during this single-party period Turkey was an underdeveloped but independent country but after the conditions that emerged in the late 1940s by tying itself to the West in an asymmetrical way, Turkey began to lose its independence like a semi-colony.<sup>140</sup> Although the new Republic had revolutionary and progressive ideals, bureaucracy as in conformity with its nature -Cem thought that from a Marxist point of view, bureaucracy is always close to sovereign classes and higher segments of the society- retreated from its ideals day by day and could not have the chance to leave the happy minority's privileges that were against the people's benefit.<sup>141</sup> Furthermore, Cem expressed that the biggest delusion of the Republican elite was to believe in the idea that a class of bourgeoisie that would carry the class-based characteristics of a natural bourgeois class could be created by state initiative through creating businessmen having excessive capital accumulation.<sup>142</sup> However, since this process was artificial and conditions were very different from the West, "late" Turkish modernization or Westernization led to the semi-colonization of the country.<sup>143</sup> Synthetic Turkish bourgeoisie, which owed its existence to the state, did not have a progressive role like its Western counterparts and did not aim to cast down the old regime for establishing a better one.<sup>144</sup>

Cem also pointed out that the primary characteristic of Kemalism and the single-party period was radicalism, a political wave developed in France which

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<sup>140</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, p. 314.

<sup>141</sup> *ibid.*, p. 315.

<sup>142</sup> *ibid.*, p. 336.

<sup>143</sup> According to Cem, Western modernization takes its roots from the slavery culture of ancient Greece, private property protection habitude and legal framework of the Roman Empire and from Protestantism that allowed free-market economics and increasing individualism. Cem thinks that Western modernization, which is based on materialism and individualism, was a natural process and - in accordance with classical Marxist theory- class conflicts have always existed in Western societies in different forms. Since the process was natural the progressive and innovative role of bourgeoisie was also natural and beneficial for society to get rid of feudal structures. See; *ibid.*, pp. 318-335. Moreover, colonization and the early emergence of the bourgeoisie allowed for the development of a highly developed bourgeois class in Europe whereas for Turkey, being late and the lack of colonial revenues and capital accumulation led to the emergence of a weak bourgeois class. See; *ibid.*, pp. 340-346.

<sup>144</sup> *ibid.*, p. 339.





totally rejects conservatism, insists on complete secularism, positivism, republicanism, pragmatism and distrusts other ideologies.<sup>145</sup> Radicalist movements generally depended on the petty bourgeois and bureaucratic segments of the society and became very popular among the Turkish intelligentsia due to the huge French cultural influence on the Ottoman Empire.<sup>146</sup> According to Cem, the Young Ottoman (*Yeni Osmanlılar*) and Young Turk (*Jön Türkler*) movements and the Union and Progress Party and Republican People's Party (until the 1970s) were the most significant political institutions highly based on Ottoman-Turkish radicalism<sup>147</sup> which played positive roles in the Turkish modernization but also created a tradition sometimes overshadowing contemporary democratic understanding due to their monist political approaches.<sup>148</sup> For instance, the failures of transition to a multi-party system in the early years of the Republic and the banning of the Progressive Republican Party<sup>149</sup> and the Free Party<sup>150</sup> were concrete proofs of radicalist aspects of the single-party period which could not accept any other ideology than of itself.<sup>151</sup> According to Cem, two aspects of a radicalist and guardianship (*vesayet*) regime were the ability to determine the rules of the game by itself and to create taboos in

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<sup>145</sup> İsmail Cem, *Sosyal Demokrasi ya da Demokratik Sosyalizm Nedir Ne Değildir*, p. 307

<sup>146</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 307-308.

<sup>147</sup> *ibid.*, p. 308.

<sup>148</sup> İsmail Cem, *Gelecek İçin Denemeler*, p. 43.

<sup>149</sup> The Progressive Republican Party (Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Fırkası) was the second political party after the Republican People's Party in the Republic of Turkey. It was established by several National Struggle heroes and Atatürk's friends including Ali Fuat Cebesoy, Kazım Karabekir, Refet Bele, Rauf Orbay and Adnan Adıvar on 17 October 1924. The party's political activities were banned on 5 June 1925 after the Sheikh Said rebellion. See; Metin Heper, *Türkiye Sözlüğü Siyaset, Toplum ve Kültür*, p. 454. Also see; Eric Jan Zürcher. 2003. *Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Fırkası (1924-1925)*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.

<sup>150</sup> The Free Party or Liberal Party (Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası or Cumhuriyetçi Serbest Fırka) was a liberal conservative political party founded by Atatürk's close friend Ali Fethi Okyar in the early years of the Turkish Republic. Atatürk thought and requested that Okyar could create an opposition party to compete with the ruling Republican People's Party with the aim of establishing the tradition of multi-party democracy in Turkey upon the critiques made towards him in the Western press. However, after its establishment, the party was quickly filled with Islamists and conservatives who saw it as an opportunity to reverse the reforms of Atatürk, particularly regarding secularism, and dissolved itself in November 1930 by Okyar who himself was an ardent supporter of the reforms. See; Metin Heper, *Türkiye Sözlüğü Siyaset, Toplum ve Kültür*, p. 187.

<sup>151</sup> İsmail Cem, *Gelecek İçin Denemeler*, p. 191.





order to draw frontiers against freedom of thought, two aspects that could also be seen in Turkish radicalism and the single-party period.<sup>152</sup>

### 3.4. On the Democrat Party Period and the 27 May 1960 Military Intervention

İsmail Cem evaluated Turkey's transition to a multi-party system as a natural consequence of the Ottomans' and Turkey's problematic Westernization process that also brought some positive consequences. In his view, starting with Sultan Selim III<sup>153</sup>, Turks have always tried to make a Western make-up to their state to please the European powers and save their own decaying state.<sup>154</sup> The Kemalist Revolution and reforms introduced by the new Republic were also modernization-Europeanization efforts and this process naturally led to a political system close to Western liberal democracies. In addition, transition to a multi-party regime and the take-over of the DP government were natural consequences of the Turkish state's efforts to create a bourgeois class. That is why; in Cem's opinion the 1950 transformation was a kind of "bourgeois revolution"<sup>155</sup> or "democratic revolution"<sup>156</sup> that was envisaged by the state. In Cem's view, DP was a populist movement that was naturally born against the bureaucratic oppressive state and socially had a progressive character.<sup>157</sup> Cem also thought that although Democrat Party governments used religious rhetoric in the country, they always tried to look sympathetic and European to Western countries and as it was confessed by Prime Minister Adnan Menderes, they tried to transform Turkey into "little America"<sup>158</sup> and to create "a millionaire in every district".<sup>159</sup> DP

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<sup>152</sup> İsmail Cem, *Gelecek İçin Denemeler*, p. 191.

<sup>153</sup> Sultan Selim III (1761-1808) was an Ottoman Sultan who reigned between 1789 and 1807, and who is known for his modernization reforms. See; Metin Heper, *Türkiye Sözlüğü Siyaset, Toplum ve Kültür*, p. 418.

<sup>154</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi.*, p. 319.

<sup>155</sup> *ibid.*, p. 358.

<sup>156</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye Üzerine (Araştırmalar)*, p. 39.

<sup>157</sup> *ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>158</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, p. 320.





followed a pro-Western foreign policy and this tradition was maintained by the Justice Party although after the famous “Johnson’s Letter” event, Turkey began to diversify its foreign policy options. In that sense, İsmail Cem claims that the “Kâbe (Kaaba) of all Turkish governments resided in the West”.<sup>160</sup> In Cem’s view, DP period was a continuation of Turkey’s Westernization efforts. Since during the single-party period the Muslim-Turkish bourgeoisie was created by the state, now it was time for the bourgeoisie to step over and take the lead from the bureaucracy similar to European democracies. DP represented the urban bourgeoisie and rural local notables like liberal parties in Europe but Turkey had its own exceptions from Europe considering its religion, history and anti-individualist social structure. Moreover, according to Cem, the most problematic part of Turkish modernization was the false consciousness in believing that “adapting Europe’s economic, legal, political and cultural institutions would bring economic development”.<sup>161</sup>

İsmail Cem wrote that the rise of DP also meant the attack of the Turkish bourgeoisie and local notables to pacify the bureaucratic-military elite that was represented by RPP.<sup>162</sup> Ordinary people and peasants were also sympathetic towards DP because of the heavy conditions imposed by RPP during the Second World War and DP’s more tolerant approach to religious issues. Thus, anti-Westernization reactions of Anatolian people targeted RPP as their enemy and found a channel of representation in DP similar to the example of the Progressive Republican Party and Free Party. RPP elite’s and bureaucrats’ snobbish and sarcastic approach to DP voters due to cultural reasons was another factor that increased DP’s power.<sup>163</sup> According to Cem, DP ideologues were clever enough to understand people’s wishes

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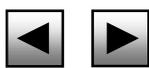
<sup>159</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye’de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, p. 349

<sup>160</sup> *ibid.*, p. 321

<sup>161</sup> *ibid.*, p. 336

<sup>162</sup> *ibid.*, p. 376.

<sup>163</sup> *ibid.*, p. 382.





and that is why they established clientelistic relations with local notables and small land owners by purchasing their products at higher prices. With the help of local notables, the DP government was able to make necessary changes without the pressure of bureaucracy or gendarmes over people and in that sense replaced the image of an “oppressive state (*ceberut devlet*)” with a “protective state (*koruyucu devlet*)”.<sup>164</sup> Although the very high majority of anti-Western Islamist reactionists were poor peasants and DP followed a liberal economic policy that favored privileged classes, DP was able to take the peasantry’s support by superstructural, cultural policies. For instance, the earliest deed of the DP government was to change the language of call to prayer into Arabic.<sup>165</sup> Prime Minister Menderes, by making a bold “successful and unsuccessful reforms” classification on Kemalist reforms, tried to consolidate the DP’s conservative voter segments.<sup>166</sup> DP, by using Marshall Aid and limiting bureaucratic obstacles, tried to practically facilitate rural people’s lives. In that sense, DP was at the beginning somehow successful at bringing some central values and concepts to the periphery such as democratic culture.<sup>167</sup> Moreover, inflationist policies that favored the bourgeoisie and local notables created a convenient environment for the emergence of new industries and new investments that created job opportunities for lower classes. Through foreign loans and inflationist policies, DP achieved to modernize and increase agricultural production and thus, Turkey had considerable economic growth rates during DP’s early years.<sup>168</sup> Considering foreign policy, DP’s earliest deed was to send Mehmetçik<sup>169</sup> to the Korean War in order to consolidate Turkey’s role in the Western bloc and to increase

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<sup>164</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye’de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, p. 385.

<sup>165</sup> *ibid.*, p. 385.

<sup>166</sup> *ibid.*, p. 386.

<sup>167</sup> *ibid.*, p. 390.

<sup>168</sup> *ibid.*, p. 391.

<sup>169</sup> A term referring to Turkish soldiers.





its chance for NATO membership. President of the Republic Celal Bayar thought that entrance to NATO would be followed by loans and credits provided to Turkey with the help of the USA.<sup>170</sup> According to İsmail Cem, DP's preference for realizing an economic development through a weak bourgeoisie was unsuccessful and that is why Turkey had to become more dependent on the Western bloc in order to take support for foreign investment, economic aid and loans and credits provided by the World Bank.<sup>171</sup>

İsmail Cem's critical approach towards DP mostly consisted of the party's economic preferences. In Cem's view, DP continued RPP's wrong economy policy that was initiated first in 1948 with the Turkish-American Economic Agreement. The plan was simple; to achieve aggressive growth rates and to facilitate people's lives by establishing new roads and establishments, but at the expense of taking serious amounts of debt and credit from the World Bank and the USA.<sup>172</sup> Turkey's weak bourgeoisie and DP elite saw foreign -especially American- domination over the Turkish economy as a chance to get rid of the bureaucratic pressures within the country. However, their plan turned out to be unsuccessful since the Turkish economy under American control favored the USA more than Turkey and dependency on the USA made Turkey a weaker state both in the economic and political arena.<sup>173</sup> According to Cem, the rhetoric of the Cold War was used by the American state to control countries within the Western bloc and expand its economy by selling its goods and weapons to these countries.<sup>174</sup> Cem thought that Turkey was one of these American victims of the Cold War. DP was the USA's political instrument in applying this policy upon Turkey and during DP rule the Turkish

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<sup>170</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, p. 393.

<sup>171</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 394-395.

<sup>172</sup> *ibid.*, p. 421.

<sup>173</sup> *ibid.*, p. 422.

<sup>174</sup> *ibid.*, p. 424.





economy was reshaped according to American interests. First of all, during DP rule the Turkish agriculture sector was modernized and supported in order to provide cheap grains and other agricultural products to Western Europe and the Western world. This policy prevented Turkey from industrializing rapidly and reduced the rate of its agriculture sector. Secondly, Turkey was transformed into a free-market country by the DP government and customs and tariffs were lowered. Laws protecting foreign capital -such as the Foreign Capital Incentive Law (*Yabancı Sermayeyi Teşvik Yasası*) and the Oil Law (*Petrol Yasası*) in 1954- were approved by the DP government. This brought the invasion of the Turkish market by American goods and companies and favored the USA more than Turkey. Thirdly, the loans and credits provided by the World Bank with American support were allocated to Turkey with the condition of making new purchases from the USA or supporting the private sector instead of making new investments by the state.<sup>175</sup> Loan policies of the World Bank were used by the USA as an instrument to control Turkey's political and economic destiny and Turkey was forced to become a country with huge debts and is reliant on the West. Industrialization and growth plans prepared by the government based on World Bank loans became unsuccessful and Turkish debts increased regularly. Turkey's export rates did not increase contrary to its import rates. The Turkish economy was prepared as a related industry assisting American and European economies by providing them cheap raw material and an assembly industry.<sup>176</sup> So, economically Turkey was designed as an assistant to the USA favoring American interests more than its own interests. In addition, Turkey had to face the risk of being a neighbor to the USSR and giving up its political independence.

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<sup>175</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, pp. 425-426.

<sup>176</sup> *ibid.*, p. 436.





Cem's other point of criticism towards DP was the party's oppressive policies towards the intellectuals and journalists, which played a significant role in legitimizing the 27 May 1960 military intervention.<sup>177</sup> Cem thought that the most important reason for the 27 May was the discomfort of the bureaucracy which had lost its power and became subjected to heavy pressures during DP rule. Although in accordance with Kemalist principles, bureaucracy (including the Turkish Armed Forces) had previously accepted the supremacy of democracy and the rule of civilians, DP rule's exclusion of the bureaucracy from the ruling coalition, its authoritarian practices that acquired legitimacy from the 1924 constitution and economic problems which emerged after inflationist policies created anger towards the DP.<sup>178</sup> That is why bureaucratic institutions and intellectuals constituted the leading force behind the intervention.<sup>179</sup> The new 1961 constitution had a "progressive character" and aimed at limiting the executive power and distributing power among bureaucratic-state institutions such as the National Security Council, Republican Senate, Constitutional Court, autonomous universities, State Planning Organization.<sup>180</sup> Cem until the 1980s politically supported the 27 May intervention since he believed that in a country where civil democratic forces were still very weak, there was no other way than a progressive military intervention that could prevent a party dictatorship which aimed to close down the opposition party (RPP) and to establish its totalitarian rule.<sup>181</sup> However, he also admitted that DP rule had some positive and progressive characteristics and that is why the majority or at least half of the people were content with DP rule.<sup>182</sup> According to Cem, DP was

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<sup>177</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye Üzerine (Araştırmalar)*, p. 40.

<sup>178</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, pp. 395-396.

<sup>179</sup> Cem considers the 27 May as the "product of urban educated people". See; *ibid.*, p. 398.

<sup>180</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 397-399.

<sup>181</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye Üzerine (Araştırmalar)*, p. 41.

<sup>182</sup> *ibid.*, p. 41.





important because it brought modernity to the peripheries of the society and in a sense initiated the process of modernization and democratization in the periphery although the party established itself not against but instead in favor of sovereign segments of the society.<sup>183</sup> Starting from the early 1980s, Cem's look towards all military interventions including the progressive 27 May became negative and he adopted a totally civilian democratic stance against military interventions by using the term "pluralist democracy"<sup>184</sup> and praising Turkish people's common sense and tolerance in politics which goes beyond Turkish intellectuals' macro ideals.<sup>185</sup>

### **3.5. On the Justice Party Period and the 12 March Regime**

İsmail Cem thought that the Justice Party government was also a continuation of Turkish modernization and a successor to the Democrat Party which had shown some different characteristics due to the conditions of the Cold War and Turkey's problematic strategic partnership with the USA after the "Johnson's Letter". According to Cem, both DP and JP governments' class preferences were in favor of sovereign segments and that is why Turkish modernization also meant the strengthening of sovereign classes.<sup>186</sup> Although the new 1961 constitution tried to limit the power of the executive in favor of the state, the "snowball effect" the segments that were against Westernization brought JP to the government as the successor of DP. The negative effects of the National Unity Committee rule and the psychological situation that emerged after the execution of Adnan Menderes were also other factors that increased JP's votes in the 1961 elections compared to DP

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<sup>183</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, p. 390.

<sup>184</sup> İsmail Cem, "Birbirine 'Katlanmak' zorunluluğu" in *DEMOKRASİ Ortak kitap 2*, p. 5.

<sup>185</sup> *ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>186</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, p. 353.





votes in 1957 elections.<sup>187</sup> Thus, the coalition between the bourgeoisie, local notables and bureaucracy was reestablished and continued to stay in power in the 1960s but this time with increasing power of the bureaucracy.

İsmail Cem thought that unlike DP, JP was very successful in making a leap forward concerning industrialization.<sup>188</sup> JP governments, headed by Demirel, were able to employ a hundreds of thousands of rural to urban migrants by making rapid industrialization led by the state.<sup>189</sup> According to Cem, JP and Demirel's great electoral success during the 1960s was dependent on the successful industrialization and employment of people more than cultural or religious reasons.<sup>190</sup> Although Demirel was recognized as a pro-liberal and pro-American politician within the country due to the influential propaganda of the left, Cem admitted that Demirel - though he was not a socialist or a revolutionary protecting that rights of lower classes- implemented a planned growth economy and dared to reduce the profits of the bourgeoisie by bringing heavy taxes in some sectors such as construction, real estate and the assembly industry.<sup>191</sup> He wrote, whether due to social developments or by its own economic perspective, the JP government implemented the most rational and clever economic model during the 1960s.<sup>192</sup> However, the Turkish economy mostly stayed dependent on the USA and the Turkish bourgeoisie could not go beyond the assembly industry (*montaj sanayii*).<sup>193</sup> JP and Demirel tried to make a new coalition between bureaucracy, bourgeoisie and local notables, but the emergence of the proletariat and socialist opposition forced Demirel to take workers into the partnership and disturb bourgeoisie and local notables in some aspects. Later

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<sup>187</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, pp. 401-403.

<sup>188</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye Üzerine (Araştırmalar)*, p. 51.

<sup>189</sup> *ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>190</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 54-55.

<sup>191</sup> İsmail Cem, *Tarih Açısından 12 Mart*, pp. 57-58.

<sup>192</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, pp. 403-404.

<sup>193</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 458-459.





the discomfort of the bourgeoisie and local notables played the dominant role in the military interventions of 1971 and 1980.

Cem thought that JP had also played a “progressive role” in foreign policy since classical pro-Western foreign policy adopted after Atatürk’s death had to be revised during Demirel’s leadership due to external conditions and internal dynamics.<sup>194</sup> That is why Demirel governments, deliberately or not, created a more independent foreign policy. Demirel’s Middle Eastern policy, such as not allowing American Forces to use military bases in Turkey in their operation against Lebanon, was progressive and not pro-American or pro-Israeli unlike DP’s foreign policy in Cem’s opinion.<sup>195</sup> The JP government also tried to diversify Turkish foreign policy by developing economic cooperation with USSR and creating links with China.<sup>196</sup> Cem, quoting İdris Küçükömer, claimed that the Demirel government, “in its search for a new balance by making new experiments, engaged in confrontations with imperialism in some areas”.<sup>197</sup> In Cem’s view, due to Cold War conditions and Turkey’s dependency on the USA in many areas including military, economic, political and intelligence affairs, Demirel government’s independent policies took harsh reactions from the pro-Western and pro-capitalist privileged segments of the Turkish state and society and these events in a sense prepared a necessary ground for the memorandum given by the Turkish Armed Forces on 12 March 1971.

As a young intellectual and journalist of the 1970s, who witnessed the chaotic atmosphere of Turkey of that period, İsmail Cem tried to make a socialistic and materialistic explanation of the 12 March memorandum in his long book *Tarih Açısından 12 Mart* (12 March in Terms of History) in detail. Cem’s perspective was

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<sup>194</sup> İsmail Cem, *Tarih Açısından 12 Mart*, p. 26.

<sup>195</sup> *ibid.*, p. 49.

<sup>196</sup> *ibid.*, p. 50.

<sup>197</sup> *ibid.*, p. 51.





primarily based on class relations but he also reserved a large place for international relations (especially the role of the USA) due to the heavy conditions of the Cold War and the excessive power of the USA and USSR in the countries belonging to their respective own camps (members of NATO<sup>198</sup> and the Warsaw Pact<sup>199</sup>). İsmail Cem, with confidence on his views based on the deterministic nature of dialectic materialism, explained the 12 March phenomenon from a socialist, class-based point of view and wrote that “that invisible hand of history was never apparent as it was in the case of 12 March”.<sup>200</sup> Cem’s first deed when writing about the 12 March was to apologize to the Turkish youth who became intensively politicized and engaged in armed clashes due to the grand ambitions of elder generations. With humanist motives, Cem complained about the political violence that was caused by anti-democratic and wrong calculations fed with grand ambitions and led to the death and imprisonment of thousands of young people (Cem probably referred to searches for leftist juntas here).<sup>201</sup>

In Cem’s view, the first and basic reason for “12 March fascism” was the Demirel government’s actions overshadowing the interests of the privileged bourgeois segments in the country. Cem pointed out that the democratic leap forward that Turkey had achieved due to the 1961 constitution which created a free environment where syndical activities and socialist views could develop within the

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<sup>198</sup> The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is a military organization that was established in 1949 under the leadership of the USA by Western countries belonging to the capitalist bloc with the aim of providing the security of these countries against Soviet expansionism. The organization sought a collective defense system whereby its member states agree to mutual defense in response to an attack by any external party. Turkey became a member of NATO in 1952 together with Greece. After the collapse of communism and the USSR, the organization continued to exist but this time focused on international terrorism especially on radical Islamist terrorism.

<sup>199</sup> The Warsaw Pact was the military alliance of communist states in the Central and Eastern Europe with the assistance of the USSR. The Soviet Union initiated the pact in response to West Germany’s entry into NATO in 1955 and that is why the Warsaw Pact was seen as counter-NATO. In 1991, the Warsaw Pact broke up after most of the Communist governments fell, and the Soviet Union disintegrated.

<sup>200</sup> İsmail Cem, *Tarih Açısından 12 Mart*, p. 15.

<sup>201</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 21-23.





country. The democratic transformation of the left by giving up revolutionary Marxism, took democratic socialism to the governments in many parts of the world and that is why sovereign classes (bourgeoisie, landowners), by making a coalition with bureaucratic institutions, established fascist regimes overthrowing socialist governments in Brazil, Greece, Chile and Turkey.<sup>202</sup> So, Cem thought that while petty bourgeois radicalism (such as the *Yön* movement) was criticizing the parliamentary regime and blaming it for being in the service of American imperialism and sovereign classes with their Aristotelian plain logic, it was not able to see that a coup or even a “progressive revolution” suspending the democratic regime would eventually end up being in the service of imperialism and would easily turn into fascism.<sup>203</sup> Fascism, in Cem’s theory, was the alliance of sovereign classes and bureaucratic institutions in the case of rising leftist movements and the risk of losing their positions and thus, Cem never approved the suspension of democracy even for “progressive movements” since he thought that especially in a newly developing country like Turkey a revolution or a coup made by progressive aims could be a toy in the hands of imperialism and sovereign classes since it could easily face isolationism at the international level.

For Cem, Turkey’s democratic transformation in the 1960s led to the strengthening of socialist views and eventually demands for collectivization, land reform and labor movements that frightened the bourgeoisie.<sup>204</sup> Especially widespread worker demonstrations such as 15-16 June events in 1970 got bourgeoisie agitated and triggered its fears about a socialist take-over.<sup>205</sup> The emergence of the Turkish Labor Party’s opposition in Turkey’s Grand National

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<sup>202</sup> İsmail Cem, *Tarih Açısından 12 Mart*, p. 327.

<sup>203</sup> *ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>204</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 329-342.

<sup>205</sup> *ibid.*, p. 337.





Assembly, the “left of the center” transformation of RPP and the intellectual domination of statist-socialist views as well as demands and discussions about nationalization of strategic sectors increased Turkish bourgeoisie’s fears.<sup>206</sup> In this situation, while some segments of the Kemalist-leftist opposition came up with “progressive ideas”, their search for adventurism and other ways than parliamentary democracy gave hope to the bourgeoisie that a fascist military regime could be established as a reaction to these movements by using their anti-democratic stances as pretext.<sup>207</sup> The bourgeoisie saw its salvation thus not in democracy, but rather in the coup which would be the consequence of escalating political violence in order to protect its privileges that came under risk due to increasing socialist demands. So, the false and anti-democratic revolutionary spirit of that time, also evoked by some intelligence people of the period such as Mahir Kaynak<sup>208</sup>, was one of the most important bases of the coup.<sup>209</sup> So, the first reason of 12 March was about the desire of the bourgeoisie not to lose its privileges in a country where socialist opposition and collectivization-nationalization demands were on the rise.

The second important reason for 12 March was the USA and its influence on Turkey but it was also triggered from rising socialist opposition in the times of the Cold War. As it was mentioned earlier, Demirel government’s populist deeds sometimes contradicted the interests of the bourgeoisie and the USA and its lack of capacity in preventing the spread of socialist ideology were the other stimuli for the 12 March fascism.<sup>210</sup> The effort of monopolies and “Istanbulite capital” to protect

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<sup>206</sup> İsmail Cem, *Tarih Açısından 12 Mart*, p. 339

<sup>207</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 344-345

<sup>208</sup> Mahir Kaynak (1934-) is a scholar of economics and writer, who was also a member of the Turkish National Intelligence Agency (Milli İstihbarat Teşkilatı-MİT) in the 1970s although he was previously known as a socialist theoretician and leader. Kaynak later confessed that as an intelligence agent, he was trying to direct the socialist opposition of the 1970s towards anti-democratic movements and political violence in order to create a convenient environment for a military coup.

<sup>209</sup> İsmail Cem, *Tarih Açısından 12 Mart*, pp. 347-350.

<sup>210</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 352-355.





their advantaged position against rising Anatolian conservative entrepreneurs and firms was also an additional factor that led to the 12 March regime.<sup>211</sup> The Turkish bourgeoisie was in favor of Turkey's dependency on the USA and the Western bloc and was ready to give up democracy in order to preserve their wealth and privileged status. That is why Turkish elite supported a pro-American foreign policy which contradicted with the Demirel government's search for autonomy and more independence in foreign policy within the conditions of the Cold War.

### 3.6. The Turkish Left in the 1960s and 1970s

İsmail Cem, both as an observer and an active participant, analyzed Turkish leftist movements in the 1960s and the 1970s very closely.<sup>212</sup> By the early 1970s, Cem thought that the Turkish left was divided into three main groups; Kemalist-leftist circles, what Cem called "petty bourgeois radicals" (the *Yön* movement and the National Democratic Revolution front), the Republican People's Party and social democratic circles and Marxist-socialist opposition (mainly Turkish Labor Party circles).<sup>213</sup> Cem himself was closer to European socialism than Kemalist left or Chinese or Soviet versions of socialism but he was also skeptical and critical about the so-called Westernization process in Turkish history. His ideas in the 1960s and early 1970s were at first closer to the TLP and then to Ecevit's democratic left movement within the RPP.

To understand the conditions in which different leftist movements were established and evolved, one should first take into account the political climate of the time. Turkey in the 1960s was radically different from how it had been in the

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<sup>211</sup> İsmail Cem, *Tarih Açısından 12 Mart*, pp. 355-363.

<sup>212</sup> For a detailed study on the Turkish left in the late Ottoman and early Republican period see; Mete Tunçay. 2009. *Türkiye'de Sol Akımlar (1908-1925) cilt 1*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları and Mete Tunçay. 2009. *Türkiye'de Sol Akımlar (1925-1936) cilt 2*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.

<sup>213</sup> İsmail Cem, *TRT'de 500 Gün ... bir dönem Türkiye'sinin hikayesi*, pp. 102-105.





1950s. Following the intervention of 27 May 1960, the decade was a period of rapid change for the country in many aspects. The intervention, as Türkkaya Ataöv claims, was “a revolution that shook but did not change Turkey’s political body”.<sup>214</sup> According to Ataöv, at the beginning the coup aimed at putting an end to the increasingly oppressive Menderes government. However, it soon became a radical movement that changed the social and political atmosphere of the country. Although the 27 May coup aimed to restrict the political elite’s power by introducing checks and balances via some state institutions (e.g. the National Security Council, Constitutional Court, Senate), the 1961 constitution is often accepted as the most liberal constitution of Turkey considering its provision for extensive basic rights and liberties for individuals as well as for democratic actors including trade unions and other non-governmental organizations. The 1961 constitution also established the State Planning Organization (*Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı*) to revive the planned development model that was harmed during the 1950s under the rule of the DP.<sup>215</sup>

For many, the 1961 constitution had a liberal and democratic component, which had never been seen in Turkey. Under the new constitution the citizens enjoyed a remarkable degree of freedom. A wider spectrum of political activity was tolerated. The new regime was to assume a social, democratic and secular character.<sup>216</sup> “Out of the new constitution’s 157 basic articles, 19 were devoted to social and economic rights and duties”.<sup>217</sup> The constitution contained guarantees of freedom of thought, expression, association and publication as well as other individual rights and liberties. Citizens enjoyed more civil rights. The universities

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<sup>214</sup> Quoted in; Jacob M. Landau. 1974. *Radical Politics in Turkey*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, p. 53.

<sup>215</sup> İlhan Akdere and Zeynep Karadeniz. 1994. *Türkiye Solu’nun Eleştirel Tarihi-1*. İstanbul: Evrensel Basım Yayın, p. 209.

<sup>216</sup> Article 2 of the new constitution stated that “the Turkish Republic is a national, secular and social state under the rule of law, based on human rights and the fundamental principles set forth in the Preamble”. See; İsmet Giritli. 1969. *Fifty Years of Turkish Political Development 1919-1969*. İstanbul: Fakülteler Matbaası, p. 168.

<sup>217</sup> Jacob M. Landau, *Radical Politics in Turkey*, p. 10.





were guaranteed greater autonomy; students were given the freedom to organize their own associations. Trade unions were given the right to strike and engage in collective bargaining. The result of the liberal constitution was the increasing leftist politicization of the press and especially universities. That is why the 27 May and 1961 constitution for a long time were welcomed by the Turkish left. Against the authoritarian rule of Menderes, nearly all socialist figures in the country including even the TKP (Turkish Communist Party) supported the coup.<sup>218</sup> Moreover, for Behice Boran the coup gave the Turkish socialist movement an important opportunity to organize itself, disseminate its ideas and bring out its publications freely within a legal framework.<sup>219</sup> However, some figures in the left, such as Mehmet Ali Aybar, were categorically against the coup.<sup>220</sup>

After the military intervention of 1960, in this kind of sociopolitical atmosphere, socialism appeared as one of the major ideological and political currents of thought and a progressive developmental model that could solve Turkey's backwardness. Indeed, in the newly liberalized atmosphere that followed the intervention and the new constitution, one of the most interesting developments was the growth of radical groups.<sup>221</sup> The involvement of these groups in domestic politics increased considerably as they were able to propagate their ideas and distribute their publications more freely. There were important international developments like the Vietnam War, Israeli aggression in the Middle East and the general anti-Americanism trend throughout the world.

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<sup>218</sup> İlhan Akdere and Zeynep Karadeniz, *Türkiye Solu'nun Eleştirel Tarihi-1*, p. 205.

<sup>219</sup> Behice Boran. 1968. *Türkiye ve Sosyalizm Sorunları*. İstanbul: Gün Yayınları, pp. 59-60.

<sup>220</sup> Uğur Mumcu. 1986. *Aybar ile Söyleşi Sosyalizm ve Bağımsızlık*. Ankara: Tekin Yayınevi, p. 36.

<sup>221</sup> For a detailed analysis and comparison of radical socialist movements of the period see; Ozan Örmeci. 2008. *İttihat ve Terakki'den AKP'ye Türk Siyasal Tarihi*. İstanbul: Güncel Yayıncılık. For some historical discussions on the Turkish left see; Ozan Örmeci. 2009. *Solda Teoriler ve Tarihsel Tartışmalar*. İstanbul: Ozan Yayıncılık.





Keynesian economics was also on the rise against the liberal economic theory.<sup>222</sup> The involvement of these political groups (intelligentsia, students, unions, civil society organizations) in domestic politics increased considerably as they were able to propagate their ideas and distribute their publications freely. The 27 May coup was followed by the dismissal of 14 junior rank officers who carried out the coup, because of their anti-democratic ideas and their unwillingness to restore democracy.<sup>223</sup> It should also be noted that socialism in the 1960s was understood and introduced primarily as an ideology and a technique of action designated to achieve rapid modernization and social justice. To reach these goals, socialism proposed “central planning based on state authority”.<sup>224</sup>

#### A-) Petty Bourgeois Radicalism (the Yön Movement and NDR groups)

*Yön* magazine was established in December 1961 by a group of leftist intellectuals. The first issue of *Yön* appeared on 20 December 1961 and its publication continued until 30 June 1967. Although there were intellectuals with different formulations of Socialism (There were Marxist pro-Soviet thinkers like Sadun Aren, Çetin Altan, Kemalist pro-military socialists like Doğan Avcıoğlu, Mihri Belli, social democrats like Mümtaz Soysal, ex-Kadroists like Şevket Süreyya Aydemir and liberal leftists like Ahmet Taner Kışlalı and Abdi İpekçi) all writers who wrote in the journal called themselves socialists. However, the main ideologue of the movement was Doğan Avcıoğlu who later became very famous with his book *Türkiye'nin Düzeni* (The System of Turkey).<sup>225</sup> The Yön group was mainly comprised of intellectuals, bureaucrats and “patriotic” officers. Yön magazine and

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<sup>222</sup> İlhan Akdere and Zeynep Karadeniz, *Türkiye Solu'nun Eleştirel Tarihi-1*, p. 229.

<sup>223</sup> Mehmet Ali Aybar. 1988. *TİP Tarihi 1*. İstanbul: Özal Matbaası, p. 72.

<sup>224</sup> Kemal Karpat. 1973. “Ideology in Turkey after the Revolution of 1960” in *Social Change and Politics in Turkey*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, p. 341.

<sup>225</sup> For a critical analysis on Avcıoğlu, see; Elçin Macar. 2004. “Doğan Avcıoğlu” in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce cilt 2 Kemalizm*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.





its movement became very influential in the 1960s simultaneously with the establishment of the first socialist party in the country, the Turkish Labor Party. The same group of intellectuals also established “The Society of Socialist Culture (*Sosyalist Kültür Derneği*)” in those years. TLP leaders such as Behice Boran and Erdoğan Başar opposed the emergence of *Yön* and the Society of Socialist Culture. They thought that this would create a split among Turkish socialists.<sup>226</sup> *Yön* typified the socialism of the 1960s in many respects. *Yön* writers claimed that they were against communism and that socialism was the “antidote of communism”<sup>227</sup> but their writings strengthened communist movements in the country. The dominant ideology of the movement was the pro-Kemalist National Democratic Revolution thesis. This was mostly defended by Doğan Avcıoğlu<sup>228</sup> and Mihri Belli in the journal.

*Yön*'s ideological leader Doğan Avcıoğlu stated that there are basically three ways of development: the communist path, the capitalist American path and the statist-national revolutionary path. He argued that this third model which became very successful in Bulgaria, Romania and Central Asia, was the most appropriate development model for Turkey.<sup>229</sup> Moreover, Avcıoğlu put forward an interesting idea about the relation between authoritarianism and democracy. He claimed that the

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<sup>226</sup> “Several of the TLP leaders, Behice Boran and Erdoğan Başar in particular, opposed the establishment of the SSC. They maintained that the Society would create a split among socialists, both organizationally and ideologically”. See; Igor Lipovsky, *The Socialist Movement in Turkey*, p. 87.

<sup>227</sup> “Aydemir explained ‘Socialism is the antidote to communism and therefore is the most effective means of struggle against communism’. *Yön*, however, noted that the threat of losing its independence was most dangerous for Turkey. As for the threat of communism, this was exploited in order to turn the country into a vassal of imperialism and to sustain the present regime”. See; Igor Lipovsky, *The Socialist Movement in Turkey*, p. 88.

<sup>228</sup> Avcıoğlu summarized *Yön*'s ideology as follows:

“- Imperialism is the chief obstacle to the social and economic progress in Turkey.

- All efforts to develop the economy with the aid of foreign capital and the stimulation of the Turkish private sector with ultimately fail.

- The development of Turkey along the capitalist path has proved unsuccessful.

- The Turkish capitalist class, which receives about one-third of the national income, and is supported by the state in every way, avoids capital investment. It expends the major part of its share of the income on private consumption.

- Social and economic contradictions are not being resolved but are deepening.

- The dominant classes stand in the way of economic development of the country, social justice, democracy and independence.” See; *ibid.*, p. 91.

<sup>229</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 91-92.





“Atatürk regime was more authoritarian than the Demirel regime but more democratic. There may exist both a multiparty dictatorship of capital, which is liberal in form but anti-democratic, and an outwardly authoritarian one-party democracy, which relies on the laboring masses. It is not the form that is important but the content”.<sup>230</sup> Avcioğlu and Mümtaz Soysal also criticized the parliamentary regime for serving the interests of the bourgeois class. In order to realize the National Democratic Revolution, they did not trust the parliamentary democracy like TLP. Rather, they trusted non-parliamentary forces by which they meant the “left-leaning section of the military and civilian intelligentsia, the trade unions, and the youth organizations”.<sup>231</sup> For the Yön circle, the backward social and economic structures and conditions of the country would not allow the progressive forces to come to power by election. Yön writers called these non-parliamentary forces “dynamic forces (*zinde kuvvetler*)”<sup>232</sup> which would bring a real Kemalist regime through a military coup or a revolution from above.<sup>233</sup>

Yön writers thought that achieving a classless society was possible by making a National Democratic Revolution. Doğan Avcioğlu thought that “there are no serious grounds for suggesting that the Kemalist patriotic intelligentsia will not adopt the goals of the national liberation front”.<sup>234</sup> While theorizing this united front, Avcioğlu avoided making a class analysis.<sup>235</sup> Doğan Avcioğlu also differentiated the anti-imperialist Kemalist Turkish Army, which consisted of young men from impoverished and poor families, from the more professional armies of the Western countries which were established to protect the interest of the bourgeois class.

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<sup>230</sup> Igor Lipovsky, *The Socialist Movement in Turkey*, p. 93.

<sup>231</sup> *ibid.*, p. 93.

<sup>232</sup> İlhan Tekeli and Selim İlkin, *Kadrocuları ve Kadro'yu Anlamak*, pp. 468-469.

<sup>233</sup> Faruk Alpkaya. 2004. “Bir 20. Yüzyıl Akımı: Sol Kemalizm” in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce cilt 2 Kemalizm*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, p. 479.

<sup>234</sup> Igor Lipovsky, *The Socialist Movement In Turkey*, p. 98.

<sup>235</sup> İlhan Akdere and Zeynep Karadeniz, *Türkiye Solu’nun Eleştirel Tarihi-1*, p. 232.





Moreover, Yön thinkers claimed that only these active, dynamic forces consisting of military, civilian and intellectual elites had the revolutionary tradition in Turkey.<sup>236</sup> These ideas became very popular in the military, too. Colonel Talat Aydemir, influenced by the ideas defended in the Yön magazine, tried to make a “Kemalist Revolution” twice in 1962 and 1963 but failed to realize the coup. He was executed after his second trial. Yön was banned for a while after Aydemir’s second attempt to make a military intervention.<sup>237</sup>

Yön writers claimed that Turkey had won political independence under Atatürk’s rule but now needed economic independence. They also mentioned the necessity of making a land reform to end the dominant political status of landowners. Avcioğlu tried to show how the land reform project could not be implemented in the single-party era and the Democrat Party used this issue to garner votes by taking support from local notables.<sup>238</sup> Moreover, Avcioğlu clearly mentioned his belief in the necessity of a planned economy and criticized the failure of the early statist (étatiste) economy.<sup>239</sup> The Yön movement was also very critical of Marxist groups of their time. Avcioğlu wrote “we believe that in the near future Turkey will move on to the socialist path of development. But the building of socialism requires a lengthy period of time. Therefore, instead of waving socialist slogans, it is necessary to work out a formula of a united front capable of attracting all forces capable of casting aside the obstacles on the way to socialism”.<sup>240</sup> Yön thinkers did not only argue about the proletariat which they thought of as a small, newly flourishing class in their theory. They gave equal emphasis to the peasantry that constituted 75% of the population.

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<sup>236</sup> İlhan Tekeli and Selim İlkin, *Kadrocuları ve Kadro’yu Anlamak*, p. 469.

<sup>237</sup> Hikmet Özdemir. 1986. *Kalkınmada Bir Strateji Arayışı Yön Hareketi*. Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, p. 57.

<sup>238</sup> Doğan Avcioğlu. 1974. *Türkiye’nin Düzeni*. İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi, p. 493.

<sup>239</sup> Doğan Avcioğlu, *Türkiye’nin Düzeni*, p. 449.

<sup>240</sup> Igor Lipovsky, *The Socialist Movement in Turkey*, p. 96.





Avcıoğlu asserted that “the national liberation movement is possible only on the basis of a union of the working class and the peasants”.<sup>241</sup> Yön writers also exalted Atatürk frequently as the founder of a politically independent Turkey. However, they added that the next mission -that was up to them- was to create an economically independent Turkey that was not realized by state and political elites after Atatürk’s death. They tried to mix Kemalist and Marxist elements and to formulate a theory very similar to the Kadro movement. They thought that Kemalism and socialism had something very important in common: statism.<sup>242</sup> The Yön group advocated a non-parliamentary strategy to seize political power similar to Baathist<sup>243</sup> regimes in the Middle East. Imperialism, feudalism, and the big comprador bourgeoisie were identified as the main obstacles to establishing a “national democracy”. So, for the Yön movement, the main revolutionary task was to construct a national democratic front in which all anti-feudal, anti-imperialist forces would unite in order to carry out the national democratic revolution. Yön’s ideology was clearly eclectic since it had elements of Kemalism, Marxism, Maoism and social democracy. Faruk Alpkaya categorized the Yön movement as a part of “Leftist Kemalism (*Sol Kemalizm*)”, a unique ideology that became very influential in Turkey in the political and intellectual sphere in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>244</sup>

Another important aspect of the Yön movement was its categorization of progressive and reactionary, independent of the political nature of the regime (parliamentary or authoritarian regime) solely based on economic based class-relations. Similar to the ideas of the Yön movement and the National Democratic

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<sup>241</sup> Igor Lipovsky, *The Socialist Movement in Turkey*, p. 98.

<sup>242</sup> İlhan Akdere and Zeynep Karadeniz, *Türkiye Solu’nun Eleştirel Tarihi-1*, p. 227.

<sup>243</sup> Ba’ath regimes refer to the Arab Socialist Ba’ath Party – which was founded in Damascus in the 1940s by Michel Aflaq, a Syrian intellectual, as the original secular Arab nationalist movement, to unify all Arab countries in one State and to combat Western colonial rule that dominated the Arab region at that time. It functioned as a pan-Arabic party with branches in different Arab countries, but was strongest in Syria and Iraq, coming to power in both countries in 1963.

<sup>244</sup> Faruk Alpkaya, “Bir 20. Yüzyıl Akımı: Sol Kemalizm”, pp. 477-478.





Revolution thesis, Cem during the 1970s thought that a parliamentary democratic regime did not necessarily mean a progressive order and even a “dictatorship could be progressive if it tries to eliminate class-based inequalities”.<sup>245</sup> However, Cem -unlike Yön and the NDR type of leftism- never approved bureaucratic from top-down projects and always underlined the importance of taking ordinary people’s support within a democratic structure. He believed that a progressive government that would eliminate inequalities and increase freedoms was indeed possible within the democratic parliamentary regime and in that sense tried to make peace between the Marxist movement and liberal democracy in Turkey similar to what Eduard Bernstein<sup>246</sup> did in Germany. In that sense, Cem was able to see that the pluralist democracy model in Western democracies was the product of the opposition of the proletariat against the limited liberal democracy of the bourgeois class and was the best regime for defending the rights of the working classes.<sup>247</sup>

As a defender of democratic socialism similar to socialist parties in Europe at that time (the German Social Democratic Party (SPD) and French Socialist Party), İsmail Cem never became too close to the Yön movement but he also admitted that *Yön* and *Devrim* magazines, published by Doğan Avcıoğlu, were very beneficial in the recognition and promotion of leftist views in Turkey.<sup>248</sup> Similarly, after Avcıoğlu’s death Cem wrote an article about Doğan Avcıoğlu and praised him as one of vanguards of the socialist movement in Turkey although he expressed that his methods were controversial.<sup>249</sup> These controversial methods were

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<sup>245</sup> İsmail Cem, *Tarih Açısından 12 Mart*, p. 81.

<sup>246</sup> Eduard Bernstein (1850-1932) was a German social democratic theoretician and politician, who is known as the founder of evolutionary socialism or reformism.

<sup>247</sup> İsmail Cem, *Tarih Açısından 12 Mart*, pp. 326-327.

<sup>248</sup> İsmail Cem, *Sol’daki Arayış*, p. 6.

<sup>249</sup> Hikmet Özdemir, *Doğan Avcıoğlu Bir Yön Türk’ün Ardından*, pp. 263-264.





about a military coup which would be undertaken by the progressive intelligentsia and officers and that would change the society from top to bottom. Cem never approved Avcıoğlu and the Yön movement's strategy of an alliance between the working masses and progressive state bureaucracy that would topple the government by a military coup.<sup>250</sup> In his view, leftist "adventurism (*maceracılık*)" (seeking a leftist junta or guerilla movement) was used as pretext for military intervention in the past and in that sense helped rightist groups.<sup>251</sup> İsmail Cem thought that the 12 March experience taught a lot to the Turkish left and primarily taught how to distinguish petty bourgeois radicalism from real socialism.<sup>252</sup> Cem was very harsh and sentimental in criticizing people who defended these views since he claimed that these people had sent young university students to death with the aim of realizing their own dreams.<sup>253</sup>

İsmail Cem's criticisms were very meaningful since after the dissolution of the leftist 9 March junta of Doğan Avcıoğlu and the declaration of the rightist 12 March memorandum, many Turkish university students who believed in the socialist take-over of the military, initiated guerilla movements both in cities and rural parts of the country and eventually were killed by the police or soldiers. These young people, including Deniz Gezmiş<sup>254</sup>, Mahir Çayan<sup>255</sup>, İbrahim

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<sup>250</sup> Murat Belge (pseudonym Ahmet Samim), "The Left" in *Turkey in Transition*, p. 154.

<sup>251</sup> İsmail Cem, *Siyaset Yazıları: 1975-1980 Türkiye*, pp. 68-69.

<sup>252</sup> İsmail Cem, *Tarih Açısından 12 Mart*, p. 16.

<sup>253</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 21-22.

<sup>254</sup> Deniz Gezmiş (1947-1972) was a leftist student leader and political activist in the late 1960s as a part of Turkey's 1968 generation. He was one of the founding members of the anti-imperialist People's Liberation Army of Turkey (Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Ordusu-THKO), an illegal student-based organization. After working few years for the youth branch of the Turkish Labor Party and becoming a student leader and a symbol of the Turkish left, Gezmiş and his friends initiated guerilla warfare upon the declaration of the 12 March memorandum that limited their constitutional rights. Although they had never killed a person, Gezmiş and two of his friends; Yusuf Aslan and Hüseyin İnan, were sentenced to death. The death sentence was carried out by hanging on 6 May 1972 in Ankara Central Prison. Gezmiş's legacy has inspired and still inspires many leftist students and artists in Turkey See; Metin Hepar, *Türkiye Sözlüğü Siyaset, Toplum ve Kültür*, p. 257. For a detailed biography see; Turhan Feyizoğlu. 2004. *Deniz: Bir İsyancının İzleri*. İstanbul: Ozan Yayıncılık. Also see; Mediapart, "Deniz Gezmiş : le révolutionnaire qui hante la Turquie", retrieved on 16.07.2010 from





Kaypakkaya<sup>256</sup> and many others, were labeled as defenders of the MDD (*Milli Demokratik Devrim*-National Democratic Revolution) thesis. The National Democratic Revolution (NDR) movement was an important leftist fraction of the Turkish left of the 1960s. This radical current formed itself first around the journal called, *Türk Solu* (Turkish Left).<sup>257</sup> The leading writer of the journal was Mihri Belli, a former member of the Turkish Communist Party and then member of the TLP. He was the leading ideologue of the NDR strategy. Under his leadership, the NDR movement became one of the most significant socialist factions in Turkey. Belli and NDR members made great efforts to spread their ideology within TLP, but especially after the take-over of Sadun Aren- Behice Boran group in TLP, they were separated from the party. There were some other important writers in the NDR movement such as Ahmet Say, Muzaffer Erdost, Vahap Erdoğan and Muvaffak Şeref. NDR was ideologically close to the Yön movement but they implemented the strategy of guerilla warfare and found followers especially among university students.

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<http://www.mediapart.fr/club/edition/istanbul-not-constantinople/article/250909/denis-gezmis-le-revolutionnaire-qui-hante-la>.

<sup>255</sup> Mahir Çayan (1946-1972) was a leftist student leader and political activist in the late 1960s as a part of Turkey's 1968 generation. He was the founder of the Front of People's Liberation Party of Turkey (Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Partisi Cephesi-THKPC), an illegal Marxist and anti-imperialist student-based terrorist organization similar to the Baader-Meinhoff gang in Germany. Çayan and his friends engaged in many crimes upon the military intervention of 12 March and finally were violently killed in an armed clash on 30 March 1972 in the Kızıldere village of Niksar, Tokat by Turkish intelligence service members and Turkish soldiers. Although Mahir Çayan unlike Deniz Gezmiş was not able to remain innocent since he engaged in terrorist activities, he is still a prominent figure in the Turkish extreme left especially because of his theoretical contributions to the Turkish Marxist movement. For a detailed biography see; Turhan Feyizoğlu. 2002. *Mahir On'ların Öyküsü*. İstanbul: Ozan Yayıncılık.

<sup>256</sup> İbrahim Kaypakkaya (1949-1973) was a leftist student leader and political activist in the late 1960s as a part of Turkey's 1968 generation. He was at the beginning a part of another student leader Doğu Perinçek's Maoist Proletarian Revolutionary Clarity (Proleter Devrimci Aydınlik) group. He later engaged in class-based analyzes of Kemalism and separated his ways from the Perinçek and Clarity (Aydınlik) faction. Kaypakkaya upon the banning of his political activities by the 12 March regime, established TKP/ML (Turkish Communist Party Maoist-Leninist) and TİKKO (Türkiye İhtilalci Köylü Kurtuluş Ordusu-Revolutionary Peasant Liberation Army of Turkey) but later was captured by the police. Kaypakkaya died in police interrogation and because of his heroic stance against torture became a symbol of the Turkish extreme left. For a detailed biography see; Turhan Feyizoğlu. 2000. *İbo İbrahim Kaypakkaya*, İstanbul: Ozan Yayıncılık.

<sup>257</sup> *Türk Solu* started publication on 17 November 1967 and continued until 14 April 1970. See; Jacob M. Landau, *Radical Politics in Turkey*, pp. 75-79.





Supporters of NDR believed that in a backward country like Turkey, the main struggle would be against imperialism and feudalism. Since the proletariat was too weak as a class, revolutionary change could only be carried out by a broad national front of all the exploited social classes and groups, including intellectuals, officers and the national bourgeoisie. This revolution directed against landowners and compradors would be of a national and democratic character, not a socialist one. NDR had an eclectic ideology which “amalgamated Kemalism and Maoism”.<sup>258</sup> NDR’s main enemy was the comprador bourgeoisie that acted against the national interests of the country.<sup>259</sup>

NDR took its roots from *Fikir Kulüpleri Federasyonu* (Federation of Idea Clubs), socialist university clubs established after 27 May and backed by the TLP. However, in the late 1960s, the Federation changed not only its name but also the very character of its political perspective. In the autumn of 1969, the *Türkiye Devrimci Gençlik Federasyonu* (Federation of the Revolutionary Youth of Turkey), shortly known as *Dev-Genç*, was established, as the ideological and political platform of NDR. From 1970 onwards, the youth groups around *Dev-Genç* decided to establish their own independent political organizations with their own student leaders and initiated an armed guerrilla struggle. Especially after the 12 March memorandum and rising violence against the leftist groups by police and ultra-nationalist militants, student leaders from *Dev-Genç* established their own illegal groups to start an armed struggle against their enemies. NDR gained much strength and popularity after the dissolution of the 9 March junta and the declaration of the 12 March regime since young students realized that they did not have a chance to make a revolution with the help of the military.

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<sup>258</sup> “Maoizmle süslenmiş Kemalizm”. See; İlhan Akdere and Zeynep Karadeniz, *Türkiye Solu’nun Eleştirel Tarihi-1*, p. 244.

<sup>259</sup> *ibid.*, p. 247.





As Cem criticized, both Yön and NDR's ideas directed young people to engage in revolutionary dreams instead of democratic electoral successes, and in that sense sent them to death. Cem never approved of these violence-based strategies and he also did not recognize them as real socialist movements. In Cem's thinking, these movements (NDR fractions and Yön movement) were based on a romantic bourgeois nationalism mixed up with Marxist-Leninist anti-imperialist ideology but were far from making healthy class-based analyses of the country.<sup>260</sup> According to Cem, a real socialist movement had to be defended within democracy and with non-violent methods by taking the support of the people instead of thinking for the people.<sup>261</sup> Cem also asserted that these romantic revolutionary movements and youth idealism prepared a convenient environment and a strong pretext for capital owners and sovereign segments of the country for an authoritarian regime that would end up in armed clashes in favor of privileged groups.<sup>262</sup> In that sense, he underlined that student activism and idealism became an instrument for the plotters and organizers of the coup.<sup>263</sup> However, Cem also felt sorry for the young, brave and idealist children of the country who were misdirected by leftist ideologues and died horribly because of their idealism and patriotism.<sup>264</sup> For Cem, blaming these children of Turkey was the easiest thing to do in order to ignore the country's own mistakes. Cem's negative approach to leftist adventurism and his insistence on democratic methods never changed and he always criticized and blamed these figures for preventing a real democracy from developing in Turkey.<sup>265</sup>

#### B-) Turkish Labor Party and Marxist circles

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<sup>260</sup> İsmail Cem, *Tarih Açısından 12 Mart*, p. 42.

<sup>261</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 42-43.

<sup>262</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 60-61.

<sup>263</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye Üzerine (Araştırmalar)*, p. 126.

<sup>264</sup> İsmail Cem, *Tarih Açısından 12 Mart*, pp. 234-235.

<sup>265</sup> İsmail Cem, *Siyaset Yazıları: 1975-1980 Türkiye'si*, p. 111.





İsmail Cem thought that the failures of the Yön movement and NDR adventurism showed that he and many other figures on the left including İdris Küçükömer, Mehmet Ali Aybar were right in promoting the democratic socialist stance of the Turkish Labor Party. In Cem's view there were three main events that shaped the Turkish left in the 1970s; 12 March, the social democratic transformation of RPP and oppressive National Front governments.<sup>266</sup> After 12 March, due to the promotion of Islamist-nationalist liberalism by the state and the emergence of National Front governments and thanks to the earlier democratic socialist legacy of TLP, RPP had to adopt a social democratic stance that was also strongly supported by the Turkish people. In Cem's view, RPP's success was based on TLP's ideology and legacy which he supported strongly starting from the mid 1960s.

In this political context mentioned before, the Turkish Labor Party was established by 40-50 unionists including İbrahim Güzelce, Kemal Türkler, Kemal Nebioğlu, Şaban Yıldız and Nuri Beşer on 14 February 1961.<sup>267</sup> TLP presented its ideology as the next step of Kemalism by preventing direct conflict with the official ideology.<sup>268</sup> TLP also presented itself as totally committed to the parliamentary system as a reformist, European type socialist party. Mehmet Ali Aybar expressed clearly that TLP was against the dictatorship of the proletariat and was committed to democratic principles.<sup>269</sup> Aybar was defining their ideology as "*güleryüzlü sosyalizm* (socialism with a smiling face)".<sup>270</sup> The distinguishing feature of the TLP, from its contemporary socialist movements like NDR and Yön, was its insistence on parliamentary methods. From its foundation, the

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<sup>266</sup> İsmail Cem, *Sol'daki Arayış*, p. 7.

<sup>267</sup> Mehmet Ali Aybar, *TİP Tarihi 1*, p. 196.

<sup>268</sup> İlhan Akdere and Zeynep Karadeniz, *Türkiye Solu'nun Eleştirel Tarihi-1*, p. 260.

<sup>269</sup> Uğur Mumcu, *Aybar ile Söyleşi Sosyalizm ve Bağımsızlık*, p. 41.

<sup>270</sup> *ibid.*, p. 193.





official policy of the party was to take power by parliamentary means within the legal framework. In various sections of the party program, it was stressed that the party would follow democratic ways and would respect the constitution. The leader of the party, Aybar, clearly supported the view of the need for the constitutional and parliamentary struggle in order to take power. He claimed that the new constitution was “open to socialism”.

For advocates of the TLP, the main task of the Turkish socialists was not a national democratic revolution but a socialist revolution which, of course, would be carried out by democratic means. And proponents of the party gave the leading role in the revolutionary movement to the Turkish working class. They did not accept the view held by Yön and the NDR circles that the proletariat of the country was politically immature. However, TLP’s linkage to the working class was very weak. TLP defines its program as a “non-capitalist path of development”.<sup>271</sup> One of its major concerns was the private sector. It was stated that the private sector would be permitted only as a secondary measure and maintained in a supplementary role to the state sector.<sup>272</sup> As such, statism (étatisme) was one of the main elements of the TLP’s program. The state sector should play a chief and leading role in the development of the national economy. Another important element was planning. The TLP envisaged centralized planning for all sectors in the economy, including the private sector; and the nationalization of all foreign companies, foreign trade, banks, credit houses, insurance companies, several transport enterprises and major means of production and industrial enterprises. Another important aspect of the program was its emphasis on the land problem. TLP demanded that land ownership should be

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<sup>271</sup> Türkiye İşçi Partisi, *Türkiye İşçi Partisi Programı*, p. 64.

<sup>272</sup> Mehmet Ali Aybar, *TİP Tarihi I*, p. 206.





limited and that large agricultural lands should be distributed to landless and poor peasants. In this way, they emphasized the importance of completing the Kemalist revolution by making land reform. TLP also had an anti-imperialist character. It proposed a more independent, peaceful foreign policy and friendly relations with Turkey's neighbors in parallel with Atatürk's "Peace at home, peace in the world" principle. Moreover, TLP was conservative about the Kurdish problem. Although TLP was often accused by Süleyman Demirel and other Justice Party members of encouraging Kurdish secessionism, in fact, TLP considered the Kurdish question as a regional economic backwardness problem and did not have a secessionist character.<sup>273</sup> TLP also offered a new taxation system (progressive taxation) which would favor the poor.

On 17 November 1963, the TLP participated in municipal elections. Despite all efforts, however, it received nearly 40.000 votes. But after the 1963 elections especially rural people and workers' interest in TLP increased.<sup>274</sup> The most important party event was the parliamentary elections held on 10 October 1965. The participation of TLP changed the very character of the 1965 election campaign and the nature of Turkish politics. TLP unexpectedly received 276.101 votes (2.83 percent of the total votes) and won fifteen seats in the parliament. The existence of TLP in the parliament led to serious discussions within the Turkish Grand National Assembly and even the Justice Party deputies' physical abuses to the TLP deputy and famous journalist Çetin Altan.<sup>275</sup> Plausibly, the shift of RPP from center to the "left of the center" was realized due to TLP's successful opposition.

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<sup>273</sup> İlhan Akdere and Zeynep Karadeniz, *Türkiye Solu'nun Eleştirel Tarihi-1*, p. 265.

<sup>274</sup> Uğur Mumcu, *Aybar ile Söyleşi Sosyalizm ve Bağımsızlık*, p. 41.

<sup>275</sup> Mehmet Ali Aybar. 1988. *TİP Tarihi 2*. İstanbul: Özal Matbaası, p. 179.





Although TLP made a very good start, the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 deepened and accelerated the political and ideological rifts within the party leadership. Aybar spoke out against the intervention of the Soviet armed forces. His protest against the invasion also gave him the chance to express his understanding of socialism.<sup>276</sup> He clearly advocated a non-authoritarian, democratic socialism similar to Euro-communism. Aybar was severely criticized by the other party leaders, like Behice Boran and Sadun Aren, of adopting new theories on socialism. The disagreements between the party leadership continued in the 1968 congress. During the debates on Aybar's theory, three factions emerged, the Aybar group, the Aren-Boran group, and the NDR group. This congress marked a turning point in the party's political life, raising the alarm for an upcoming crisis in the party. These struggles between the factions lead to a decline in the party's political activity, seen clearly in the 1969 general elections during which the TLP only received 243.631 votes (2.58 % of the total votes) and won only two seats in the parliament. Aybar was held responsible for the failure of the party in the 1969 elections and he declared his resignation from the position of party leader. After the 12 March memorandum, on 20 July 1971 TLP was closed down and most of the party leaders were arrested.

İsmail Cem did not hide his sympathy for the democratic socialist stance of TLP in his articles and books starting from the late 1960s. However, he also did not hesitate to criticize TLP. First of all, he claimed that Turkish intellectuals were not aware of Anatolian people's problems since they did not previously enter into the field and stayed only in their corners.<sup>277</sup> TLP was the product of Turkish intellectuals' first real encounter with the Anatolian people. However, according to

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<sup>276</sup> Akdere and Zeynep Karadeniz, *Türkiye Solu'nun Eleştirel Tarihi-1*, p. 271.

<sup>277</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye Üzerine (Araştırmalar)*, p. 61.





Cem, TLP's ideological basis was weak considering the weakness of the proletariat in the country but the excessive role given to the proletariat in the party programme and ideology.<sup>278</sup> Moreover, in his view some people's personal reputation and weight became heavier than the party itself and this was a sign of the party's weak ideological stance.<sup>279</sup> Concerning the struggle within the party, Cem stayed closer to Mehmet Ali Aybar and socialism with a smiling face. He wrote harshly against the USSR's invasion of Czechoslovakia and claimed that socialism with a smiling face was about humanism of the left that was absent in the Soviet or Chinese model<sup>280</sup> and did not support the resignation of Aybar from party leadership.<sup>281</sup> For him, the TLP's lack of success was not related to leadership, but rather related to the weak ideological and organizational structure of the party.

Cem thought that due to the immature nature of the Turkish proletariat, TLP had to be primarily based on intellectuals and this caused increasing individualistic attitudes instead of ideological and class-based attitudes within the party.<sup>282</sup> Cem also wrote that TLP's strong opposition within the parliament forced the Demirel government to follow a more independent foreign policy and to adopt improved social policies and also triggered RPP's social democratic transformation.<sup>283</sup> Moreover, TLP was challenging the classical bureaucratic and anti-Marxist socialist approaches of the Yön movement that were very popular in the 1960s within the Turkish intelligentsia.<sup>284</sup> Cem, in the early 1970s, advised the Turkish left to reorganize itself in accordance with the 1961 constitution, which in his view was open to a socialist government, by taking lessons from the failures of Yön and NDR,

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<sup>278</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye Üzerine (Araştırmalar)*, pp. 61-62.

<sup>279</sup> Cem here probably talks about the TLP deputy and famous writer Çetin Altan. See; *ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>280</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 98-99.

<sup>281</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 100-101.

<sup>282</sup> İsmail Cem, *Tarih Açısından 12 Mart*, p. 38.

<sup>283</sup> *ibid.*, p. 36.

<sup>284</sup> *ibid.*, p. 37.





and to establish a proletariat-based socialist party, a real working class party instead of an intellectual-based party like TLP by eliminating social democratic stances and petty bourgeois adventurism.<sup>285</sup> Cem's sympathy for TLP was primarily and most importantly caused by his belief in democracy and democratic methods instead of militarism (Yön's utopia of leftist junta) or guerilla warfare (NDR thesis).

### C-) The Republican People's Party and social democratic circles

Cem's close stance to TLP began to change after the banning of this party and the transformation of RPP into a social democratic party under the leadership of Bülent Ecevit after the 12 March memorandum. Cem interpreted the 12 March from a class-based perspective and labeled the so-called "Atatürkist" technocratic government of the 12 March for being on the verge of fascism.<sup>286</sup> Cem's opposition to the 12 March's technocratic government backed up by the military under the Prime Ministry of RPP Deputy Nihat Erim, made him a star in the media and on the left similar to the young secretary general of RPP, Bülent Ecevit.<sup>287</sup> Ecevit also criticized İsmet İnönü for supporting the technocratic government dictated by the military. Although Cem always showed his respect towards İsmet İnönü and praised him for being the champion of democratic transition he was very critical of İnönü's calm and neutral stance about 12 March.<sup>288</sup> Ecevit and Cem's rise was accelerated after their democratic stance and combative rhetoric against the military memorandum. Both fought to transform the RPP from the state's party into a people's party under the guidance of social

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<sup>285</sup> İsmail Cem, *Tarih Açısından 12 Mart*, pp. 68-69.

<sup>286</sup> İsmail Cem, *TRT'de 500 Gün ... bir dönem Türkiye'sinin hikayesi*, p. 28.

<sup>287</sup> Emin Alper claimed that although there are many different analyses about Ecevit, in fact Ecevit was a part of the anti-imperialist, third world socialist and populist leaders that appeared in Latin American and African countries especially after the Second World War. See; Emin Alper. 2007. "Bülent Ecevit" in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce cilt 8 Sol*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, p. 202.

<sup>288</sup> İsmail Cem, *Siyaset Yazıları: "Geçiş Dönemi Türkiye'si" (1981-1984 Yılları)*, pp. 40-41.





democratic principles.<sup>289</sup> In their view, 12 March was the consequence of the Demirel government's orientation towards a multi-dimensional international policy after problems that occurred with the USA. Their rhetoric was anti-imperialist, in favor of state-led economic development and more equal allocation and distribution of the state's resources. On 14 May 1972, the young and charismatic Bülent Ecevit succeeded the impossible and became the third secretary-general of RPP after Atatürk and İnönü by defeating İsmet İnönü at the Congress.<sup>290</sup> RPP was renewing and reforming itself and Cem came closer to the new social democratic RPP.

Ayşe Güneş Ayata claimed that RPP's social democratic transformation started in 1957 with the Declaration of Primary Goals (*İlk Hedefler Beyannamesi*) which in fact constituted the basis of the libertarian 1961 constitution.<sup>291</sup> For Ayata, the left of the center was based on some institutional reforms that the party proposed such as collective bargaining and striking rights, associational freedoms, a planned economy and a social welfare state.<sup>292</sup> A further search for new ideas was initiated by the intellectual circles around the party magazine *Özgür İnsan* (Free Man). *Özgür İnsan* was published 15 days after Ecevit's election as the party's leader. Ecevit was the editorial writer of the magazine and different intellectuals within and around the party published there.<sup>293</sup> According to Günay, the magazine's ideology was shaped by Ecevit and its reformist stance was close to İdris Küçükömer.<sup>294</sup> The new, young and dynamic group of intellectuals around Ecevit also pointed out the growing working class population

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<sup>289</sup> Ahmet Taner Kışlalı, *Atatürk'e Saldırmanın Dayanılmaz Hafifliği*, p. 167.

<sup>290</sup> Fatih Dağistanlı, *Sosyal Demokratlar*, p. 55.

<sup>291</sup> Ayşe Güneş Ayata. 2002. "The Republican People's Party" in Barry Rubin and Metin Heper (ed.) *Political Parties in Turkey*. London: Frank Cass and Company Limited, p. 103.

<sup>292</sup> *ibid.*, p. 103.

<sup>293</sup> Ertuğrul Günay. 2007. "Özgür İnsan Dergisi" in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce cilt 8 Sol*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, p. 239.

<sup>294</sup> *ibid.*, p. 242.





and poor living conditions on the periphery of big cities as a determining factor of elections and was tried to shape RPP's new economic program.<sup>295</sup>

According to Cem, the key to change in RPP was to criticize the single-party period and authoritarian and bureaucratic tendencies of the party which had been preventing the party from embracing people. This may not mean necessarily the negation of the past and ignorance of the positive aspects of the single-party period, but it should contain self-criticism.<sup>296</sup> Cem thought that the socialist opposition of TLP in the 1960s heavily affected RPP's classical electoral basis that consisted of civil servants and educated town people (petty bourgeois) and in this context, RPP had to accept its "left of the center" identity.<sup>297</sup> According to Özkan Ağtaş, İnönü's "left of the center" preference was related to building a barrier against the rapidly rising communist and anti-communist movements and also to establishing a social welfare state in order to satisfy the needs of millions of rural to urban migrants that had begun to work in big cities as blue-collar workers.<sup>298</sup> Cem wrote that, at the beginning, the content of this identity was not clear, but young and dynamic secretary-general of RPP, Bülent Ecevit, had many brilliant ideas about getting closer with people and filling up the content of the left of the center.<sup>299</sup> Ecevit knew that left of the center meant the transformation of the party and that is why he wrote a booklet called *Ortanın Solu* (left of the center) in 1966. In this book, Ecevit defined left of the center as a kind of humanist political consciousness and act based on social relief and charity.<sup>300</sup> He praised the single-party period of RPP for providing the

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<sup>295</sup> Ayşe Güneş Ayata, "The Republican People's Party", p. 104.

<sup>296</sup> İsmail Cem, *Sol'daki Arayış*, p. 23.

<sup>297</sup> See; *ibid.*, pp. 24-25. Özkan Ağtaş also pointed out this necessity of RPP caused by the influential opposition made within the parliament by TLP. See; Özkan Ağtaş. 2007. "Ortanın Solu: İsmet İnönü'den Bülent Ecevit'e" in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce cilt 8 Sol*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, p. 198.

<sup>298</sup> Özkan Ağtaş, "Ortanın Solu: İsmet İnönü'den Bülent Ecevit'e", p. 199.

<sup>299</sup> İsmail Cem, *Sol'daki Arayış*, p. 25

<sup>300</sup> Bülent Ecevit. 1974. *Ortanın Solu*, İstanbul: Tekin Yayınevi, p. 14.





independence of the country, but claimed that now it was time for developing the economic conditions of people in accordance with social democratic principles.<sup>301</sup> According to Ecevit, the main principles of the left of center were individual and societal freedom (independence), freedom of opinion, humanism, revolutionary spirit against the conservative right, democratic stance against the extreme left and social democratic solutions for class-based inequalities.<sup>302</sup> Ecevit was perhaps not a theoretical genius and his political ideology was largely shaped by mystic poets and heroic and libertarian characters of novels rather than social democratic and Marxist theoreticians<sup>303</sup>, but his ideas were simple, clear and gave hope to many Turkish people.

İsmail Cem believed that Ecevit's rapprochement with working classes created problems in the party especially among the classical petty bourgeois, bureaucratic and local notable supporters of the party and from the mid 1960s, a power struggle between the old, pro-İnönü RPP and young, pro-Ecevit RPP started.<sup>304</sup> In Cem's view, this changing and new RPP was not anymore a reliable partner for the privileged segments and bureaucratic institutions that were committed to Westernization.<sup>305</sup> The time for a final struggle between the two groups within the party came after the 12 March memorandum. Cem claimed that although both İnönü and Ecevit were against the 12 March memorandum and military's intervention in politics in general, İnönü's soft criticism towards 12 March as a responsible statesman and his style of politics based on compromise was highly different and less popular than Ecevit's passionate rhetoric and determinant stance against military

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<sup>301</sup> Bülent Ecevit, *Ortanın Solu*, p. 105.

<sup>302</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 109-118.

<sup>303</sup> Hamit Bozarslan. 2004. "Bülent Ecevit" in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce cilt 2 Kemalizm*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, p. 460.

<sup>304</sup> İsmail Cem, *Sol'daki Arayış*, pp. 26-27.

<sup>305</sup> *ibid.*, p. 27.





intervention.<sup>306</sup> That is why, for Cem, Ecevit's victory over legendary İsmet Pasha in the RPP Congress of 1972 was not a surprise, but rather historically inevitable.<sup>307</sup> After Ecevit's take over, the formula of "Turkish Armed Forces plus RPP equals to government (TAF + RPP = government)" was not feasible anymore.<sup>308</sup>

As far as İsmail Cem was concerned, Ecevit's new RPP continued to make openings toward the left by revising its populism (*halkçılık*) principle.<sup>309</sup> Ecevit and social democrats tried to concretize their populism by defending further democratization for the country and increasing individual freedoms. This meant the negation of classical bureaucratic ideas of the party and their replacement with democratic, populist ideas.<sup>310</sup> RPP in that sense was opening a new chapter and accepting that there should be no other source of legitimacy than electoral success (people's support). Cem praised RPP for developing democratic principles not only ideologically for the country, but also practically within the party by establishing a strong and democratic organization.<sup>311</sup> According to İsmail Cem, the new RPP's class preference was also different from the previous RPP. Ecevit's RPP was inclining to get votes from working classes, peasants, poor segments of the society in addition to its classical voter segments including the bureaucracy and petty bourgeois class and was not trying to look sympathetic to bureaucratic institutions and bourgeois segments anymore.<sup>312</sup> Cem observed that starting from the early 1970s this transformation also appealed to Islamist-conservative people and in that sense,

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<sup>306</sup> İsmail Cem, *Sol'daki Arayış*, pp. 28-29.

<sup>307</sup> *ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>308</sup> İsmail Cem, *Siyaset Yazıları: 1975-1980 Türkiye'si*, p. 138.

<sup>309</sup> Populism (*Halkçılık*) is a part of Kemalism's six arrows alongside with Nationalism (*Milliyetçilik*), Republicanism (*Cumhuriyetçilik*), Secularism (*Laiklik*), Statism (*Devletçilik*) and Reformism (*Devrimcilik*).

<sup>310</sup> İsmail Cem, *Sol'daki Arayış*, pp. 30-31.

<sup>311</sup> *ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>312</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 31-32.





prepared a convenient ground for RPP-NSP coalition.<sup>313</sup> Cem thought that RPP's electoral success in 1973 and 1977 elections were based on the party's successful ideological transformation and its careful attitude of not excluding people. In other words, Ecevit's RPP was responding to the new identities, belongings and needs of the people that became apparent after Turkey's rapid modernization and urbanization.<sup>314</sup> Left of the center was not enough for this grand metamorphosis, which is why after Ecevit's leadership RPP began to use the term "democratic left (*demokratik sol*)" instead of left of the center.

İsmail Cem made an interview with Ecevit in 1975 for *Politika* newspaper in order to substantiate the basic principles of the movement and published a booklet entitled *Demokratik Solda Temel Kavramlar ve Sorunlar* (Main Concepts and Problems on the Democratic Left). In the interview, Ecevit and Cem discussed the meaning of "*halk* (people)" and "*halkçılık* (populism)" and they stated that populism should be based on the protection of the interests of people who do not have a means of production or have small properties (small landowning peasants).<sup>315</sup> According to Ecevit, people who see themselves as parts of a privileged group could not be a part of "*halk*" and populism.<sup>316</sup> In accordance with his populism, Ecevit thought that bureaucrats and state officials could not act superciliously against people as in the times of the single-party period and as the regime became more democratic, their attitudes would also become more democratic.<sup>317</sup> For Ecevit, the main task of the democratic left movement was to create an environment of equal opportunity for everybody.<sup>318</sup> This could be achieved only through creating a party of people from

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<sup>313</sup> İsmail Cem, *Sol'daki Arayış*, pp. 32-33.

<sup>314</sup> *ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>315</sup> İsmail Cem, *Demokratik Solda Temel Kavramlar ve Sorunlar*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>316</sup> *ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>317</sup> *ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>318</sup> *ibid.*, p. 11.





the old party of the state. Against accusations of being communist, Ecevit confessed to Cem that he was using Marxist analyses in order to understand history and society, but he was not a Marxist.<sup>319</sup> Ecevit underlined that his style of leftist politics was democratic and libertarian whereas many other leftist-Marxist movements were not democratic at all.<sup>320</sup> He also stated that his insistence on the term “democratic left” was caused by the close relationship between social democracy and Marxism.<sup>321</sup> Ecevit also explained to Cem his economic model based on urban villages (*köykent*)<sup>322</sup> and the public sector (*halk sektörü*)<sup>323</sup>.

İsmail Cem actively supported the social democratic transformation of the RPP and wrote that RPP’s electoral successes in 1973 and 1977 were caused by this transformation. Cem also made a correct guess before the 1977 elections and claimed that RPP would receive more than 40 % of the votes.<sup>324</sup> In Cem’s idea, the core of the democratic left movement was industrialization, urbanization and democratization of Turkey.<sup>325</sup> In his view, the democratization task was substantiated in the party’s 1976 program and it sought increasing political participation and increasing freedom of thought and expression for all segments of the society.<sup>326</sup> However, in his view RPP was lacking this democratization task within the party due to intra-party problems related to the strong leadership and factional struggles.<sup>327</sup> Cem knew that leaving the legacy of bureaucratic-rationalist RPP (the classical role of petty bourgeoisie in the party) and accepting full-scale social democratic principles was not an easy task for RPP because of the weakness of social democratic

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<sup>319</sup> İsmail Cem, *Demokratik Solda Temel Kavramlar ve Sorunlar*, p. 28.

<sup>320</sup> *ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>321</sup> *ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>322</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 60-69.

<sup>323</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 73-77.

<sup>324</sup> İsmail Cem, *Siyaset Yazıları: 1975-1980 Türkiye’si*, p. 72.

<sup>325</sup> İsmail Cem, *Sol’daki Arayış*, p. 34.

<sup>326</sup> *ibid.*, p. 35.

<sup>327</sup> *ibid.*, p. 36.





tradition in Turkey, but this could be achieved since social democracy is a conciliatory ideology.<sup>328</sup> Cem thought that the new RPP could embrace whole segments of the society but the party should draw a leftist and rightist border. The rightist border of the party should be based on defending the interest of working classes against monopolies and monopolistic capital, whereas the leftist border of the party should be based on accepting democracy.<sup>329</sup>

In accordance with his social democratic worldview, he thought that RPP, as a social democratic party, should have internal dynamism and intra-party democracy which would allow the party not to break off from social dynamism.<sup>330</sup> He foresaw that the Turkish bourgeoisie and privileged groups in the country would try to direct RPP toward liberalism, but RPP should resist these groups if it would contradict with its social democratic principles.<sup>331</sup> Cem also thought that in order to break the effect of the petty bourgeoisie within the party, RPP should develop its links with workers and unions.<sup>332</sup> Cem knew that RPP's biggest disadvantage was the unhealthy Westernization history of the Turkish Republic, which had always favored particular groups in society and due to an increasing economic gap between privileged groups and ordinary people Turkish people supported rightist parties that were against the RPP.<sup>333</sup> That is why he wanted RPP to become a social democratic party closer to ordinary people and thought that this would correct the historical conditioning of people not supporting RPP because of cultural and lifestyle differences.<sup>334</sup> He knew that this could be only achieved by getting rid of the "ignorant people" rhetoric and trying to work for the people within the society. Cem was also critical of the RPP's

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<sup>328</sup> İsmail Cem, *Sol'daki Arayış*, p. 39.

<sup>329</sup> *ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>330</sup> *ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>331</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 42-43.

<sup>332</sup> *ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>333</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye Üzerine (Araştırmalar)*, pp. 48-49.

<sup>334</sup> *ibid.*, p. 50.





program and organization in the 1970s and thought that organization was the most important aspect for a social democratic party.<sup>335</sup> Another problematic aspect of RPP in Cem's idea was the lack of intraparty democracy that prevented the flourishing of new and better ideas.<sup>336</sup> Another important aspect of RPP's leftism in the 1970s was its populist character that gained popularity among the people. Although Cem had always prevailed among the working class and in that sense seemed anti-populist and closer to proletarian Marxism, he supported Ecevit's populist rhetoric that was full of anti-Marxist arguments.<sup>337</sup>

### 3.7. Eastern Socialism and Asiatic Mode of Production Discussions

İsmail Cem, with his peculiar critical stance against the classical bureaucratic leftism of Turkey, gained popularity both on the left and the right. This was also caused by Cem's effort to create an original Marxist interpretation and model for Eastern countries and Turkey. Cem, by studying Ottoman history, understood the historical differences between Turkey and European countries and knew that classical Marxist theses could not be applicable to Turkey and other Eastern societies. In fact, Marxist theory in its orthodox form preached that a well-developed capitalist economy was an essential prerequisite for socialism. However, Eastern societies were mostly agrarian and their social structure was very different from developed Western bourgeois societies. Thus, socialists from non-Western countries (Turkey, China, Arab countries, Latin American countries) had to realize this basic reality and try to find a new way to interpret Marxism in their own country. What were called "Third World socialism" and "Asiatic Mode of Production (AMP or

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<sup>335</sup> İsmail Cem, *Siyaset Yazıları: 1975-1980 Türkiye'si*, pp. 122-127.

<sup>336</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 158-160.

<sup>337</sup> For understanding left Populism in Turkey in the 1970s, see; Necmi Erdoğan. 2007. "Demokratik Soldan Devrimci Yol'a 1970'lerde Sol Popülizm Üzerine Notlar" in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce cilt 8 Sol*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, pp. 262-274.





*Asya Tipi Üretim Tarzı-ATÜT* in Turkish)” discussions emerged from this necessity and became very influential in the academic and political world in the 1960s and 1970s. Due to the Kemalist legacy, which could be interpreted as a pioneer ideology for Third World socialism in some aspects, Asiatic Mode of Production discussions became very influential in Turkey in the 1960’s and 1970’s.

The Asiatic Mode of Production (AMP) discussions became popular in the world after the publication of Karl Wittfogel’s<sup>338</sup> concept of *Oriental Despotism*.<sup>339</sup> In the political sphere, the existence of China and the popularity of Maoism were also important factors that fanned this discussion. In Turkey, AMP discussions became noticeable in the late 1960s with the works of Turkish economist Sencer Divitçioğlu (*Asiatic Mode of Production and Ottoman Society-Asya Üretim Tarzı ve Osmanlı Toplumunu* was Divitçioğlu’s first important book that was published in 1967), İdris Küçükömer (*Alienation of the System-Düzenin Yabancılaşması* was Küçükömer’s most popular work that was first published in 1969) and with the novels of Kemal Tahir (Tahir’s two important novels *Devlet Ana-Mother State* and *Yorgun Savaşçı-Tired Warrior* that were published in 1967 focused on the differences of Ottoman-Turkish social structure).<sup>340</sup> Intellectuals like Divitçioğlu, Küçükömer and Tahir believed that rightist-liberal parties in Turkey (Democrat Party, Justice Party tradition) were in fact real political parties of the Turkish people unlike the Turkish bureaucracy’s political party RPP and they were more leftist and

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<sup>338</sup> Karl August Wittfogel was a famous German Marxist historian known for his monumental work *Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power*, first published in 1957. Wittfogel in this work basically criticized the bureaucratic statist structure of Eastern socialist states by using Marx’s arguments on China and India. Wittfogel claimed that due to Asiatic Mode of Production and different historical-structural structures of Eastern societies, even socialist regimes ended up in despotic states. Wittfogel hated the despotic, Asiatic nature of Bolshevism and Maoism and later renounced his communist ideology.

<sup>339</sup> Suavi Aydın and Kerem Ünüvar. 2007. “ATÜT Tartışmaları ve Sol” in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce cilt 8 Sol*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, p. 1082.

<sup>340</sup> *ibid.*, p. 1083.





populist in their essence.<sup>341</sup> According to these intellectuals, due to its statist-bureaucratic stance, RPP was more of a rightist party but for cultural reasons the perception of the people was the opposite in Turkey. Doğan Avcıoğlu and some writers of the Yön movement also underlined Turkish exceptionalism and the importance of Asiatic Mode of Production discussions but their political and ideological programme was completely different from other AMP writers.<sup>342</sup> İsmail Cem while forming his theory, was also largely affected by this discussion similar to all intellectuals of that period. AMP discussions focused on the uniqueness and exception of Turkish society compared to European societies and were based on a critical approach towards Westernization.

İsmail Cem's view related to the Ottoman land system resembled Divitçioğlu's analysis<sup>343</sup> since they were both praising the Ottoman State from the left because of its anti-feudal and anti-exploitative characteristic in the past. This understanding also coincided with Kemal Tahir's notion of a generous mother state (*Kerim Devlet, Devlet Ana*) that was expressed in his novels.<sup>344</sup> Although Tahir was only a novelist, according to Kayalı the most accurate class-based analyses of Ottoman society were made in Tahir's novels.<sup>345</sup> Later in the 1970s, AMP discussions became very popular and new scientific researches were made in Turkey. For instance, Çağlar Keyder analyzed the Ottoman land system in a more systematized way and claimed that until the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Ottoman State was a typical representative of AMP and starting from the 17<sup>th</sup> century its feudal aspects

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<sup>341</sup> Suavi Aydın and Kerem Ünüvar, "ATÜT Tartışmaları ve Sol", p. 1085.

<sup>342</sup> *ibid.*, p. 1084.

<sup>343</sup> *ibid.*, p. 1085.

<sup>344</sup> *ibid.*, p. 1086.

<sup>345</sup> Kurtuluş Kayalı, 2007. "ATÜT Tartışmalarının Hafife Alınmasının Nedenleri ve Bu Tartışmaların Atlanan Ruhu" in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce cilt 8 Sol*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, p. 1090.





began to increase.<sup>346</sup> AMP referred to a statist and anti-feudal system but some writers' exaggerated appraisal of AMP as an egalitarian socialist system, later was heavily criticized by leftist intellectuals like Mehmet Ali Kılıçbay. Kılıçbay pointed out that the relatively low exploitation of the Ottoman peasantry did not change the Ottoman State's despotic character.<sup>347</sup> Şerif Mardin also, starting from the 1970s, made in depth analyses of Ottoman society and supported the AMP thesis while criticizing the center-periphery cleavage of Ottoman-Turkish society.<sup>348</sup>

AMP discussions influenced Cem especially through the works of Kemal Tahir and İdris Küçükömer. Kemal Tahir was a unique figure in the Turkish left with his admiration of the Ottoman system and novelist identity. İsmail Cem's devotion to Kemal Tahir was a determining factor in his political stance.<sup>349</sup> In fact, Cem was near Kemal Tahir a day before his death in 1973 in Mehmet Barlas' house for a meeting among some intellectuals of the period including Mete Tunçay, Ali Sirmen and Afşin Germen.<sup>350</sup> After his death, Cem in his article defined Kemal Tahir as the man who first confronted Turkey with its past.<sup>351</sup> Kemal Tahir had always been a controversial figure on the left because of his sympathetic and curious look towards Ottoman society and especially towards village. As a writer and a political activist, Tahir saw a contradiction between the socio-cultural and political structure of Turkey and solutions that Marxism offered. Because of his belief that Westernization was not suited for Turkish society, he began to find Marxism to be also inefficient. Marxist

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<sup>346</sup> Suavi Aydın and Kerem Ünüvar, "ATÜT Tartışmaları ve Sol", p. 1086.

<sup>347</sup> *ibid.*, p. 1087.

<sup>348</sup> Kurtuluş Kayalı, "ATÜT Tartışmalarının Hafife Alınmasının Nedenleri ve Bu Tartışmaların Atlanan Ruhu", p. 1091.

<sup>349</sup> Kemal Tahir heavily affected Turkish intellectuals of the 1960s and 1970s. Famous director Halit Refiğ was just one of these intellectuals. For details see; Şengün Kılıç Hristidis. 2007. *Sinemada Ulusal Tavrı "Halit Refiğ Kitabı"*. İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları.

<sup>350</sup> See; Abdullah Muradoğlu, *Selanik'ten İstanbul'a İpekçi'ler ve İsmail Cem*, pp. 162-163, Mehmet Barlas, *Rüzgar Gibi Geçti*, pp. 153-154 and Şengün Kılıç Hristidis, *Sinemada Ulusal Tavrı "Halit Refiğ Kitabı"*, p. 213.

<sup>351</sup> Abdullah Muradoğlu, *Selanik'ten İstanbul'a İpekçi'ler ve İsmail Cem*, p. 164.





historical theory was based on existence of a bourgeois class but there was no such class in Ottoman-Turkish history. So, Tahir began to search for alternative development models. Because of the Turkish left's nourishment from Kemalist tradition and urban intellectuals, Tahir's ideological positioning created problems in the left.<sup>352</sup> Kemal Tahir at first focused on problems of peasants in his novels. Then, he dealt with Turkish history, especially events of recent history. In his novel *Devlet Ana (Mother State)* he described governmental and social structure of Ottoman society at its beginnings. Tahir was courageous enough to question trials after İzmir assassination<sup>353</sup> in his novel *Kurt Kanunu (Law of Wolf)*, which were in fact the disposal of ex-Unionist staff and to analyze the closure of Free Party in his novel *Yol Ayrımı (Turnout)*.<sup>354</sup>

İdris Küçükömer was the other important name that gained a place in AMP discussions and contributed to the evolution of İsmail Cem's ideas. Küçükömer was defending revolution from below and was very critical of the state's dominant role in Turkish modernization. Küçükömer also approached pious Anatolian people with sympathy. His most influential work was *Düzenin Yabancılaşması (Alienation of the System)*. Küçükömer was a member of Turkish Labor Party but his ideas were very different from the party's overall socialist stance.<sup>355</sup> Küçükömer's ideas began to be influential especially before and during the RPP-NSP coalition in the early 1970's. He claimed that history necessitated such a coalition and political Islam was kind of

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<sup>352</sup> Kurtuluş Kayalı. 2007. "Solda Kemal Tahir Tartışmaları" in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce cilt 8 Sol*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, p. 1098.

<sup>353</sup> İzmir Assassination was about an assassination attempt organized against Mustafa Kemal by ex-Union and Progress Party members during his visit to İzmir on June 1926. Many historians agreed that Mustafa Kemal used this event as a pretext for the disposal of ex-Unionists. See; Yücel Özkaya. "İzmir Suikasti". *Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Dergisi*, Sayı 22, Cilt: VIII, Kasım 1991.

<sup>354</sup> Kurtuluş Kayalı, "Solda Kemal Tahir Tartışmaları", p. 1100.

<sup>355</sup> Kurtuluş Kayalı. 2007. "Solda İdris Küçükömer Tartışmaları" in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce cilt 8 Sol*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, p. 1102.





a metaphysical reaction of suppressed classes.<sup>356</sup> İsmail Cem also saw the growing Islamic movement in the 1970s as a “metaphysical reaction of suppressed masses”.<sup>357</sup> For Küçükömer, the superstructural clash in Turkey was between secular and Islamist groups, but the real structural clash was between the capital owners-bureaucratic oligarchy coalition and ordinary people.<sup>358</sup> Although he was presented as supporting rightist-liberal parties because of his criticism towards bureaucratic tendencies in RPP, he was in fact defending a social democratic or democratic socialist programme in TLP, RPP and later in SDPP.<sup>359</sup> While he was defending populism and civil society against statism, he was also a hardliner anti-imperialist.<sup>360</sup> Küçükömer was extremely critical of the Union and Progress and Republican People’s Party tradition and thought that the bureaucratic segment in Ottoman-Turkish political history had always been alienated from the people.<sup>361</sup> Küçükömer, similar to Cem, analyzed Ottoman social structure and concluded that Ottomans had never become feudal or capitalist like Western countries.<sup>362</sup> In that sense, he was using AMP to explain Ottoman stagnation and claiming that the real revolutionary segment of Turkey was Islamist populist segments against Unionists and Kemalists.<sup>363</sup>

İsmail Cem’s perception of the left was largely influenced by AMP discussions in addition to the classical Kemalist and Marxist theses. Although Cem defended Western type socialism against Soviet and Chinese models, praised state-led economic development and advocated a modern democratic lifestyle, he was critical of Turkish modernization’s statist and top-to-down character. Similar to

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<sup>356</sup> Kurtuluş Kayalı, “Solda İdris Küçükömer Tartışmaları”, p. 1103.

<sup>357</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 91.

<sup>358</sup> Kurtuluş Kayalı, “Solda İdris Küçükömer Tartışmaları”, p. 1104.

<sup>359</sup> *ibid.*, p. 1106.

<sup>360</sup> *ibid.*, p. 1107.

<sup>361</sup> İdris Küçükömer, *Düzenin Yabancılaşması*, pp. 14-15.

<sup>362</sup> *ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>363</sup> *ibid.*, p. 72.





Küçükömer, Divitçioğlu and Tahir, he wanted pious Anatolian people to make peace with the state and thus he supported Ecevit in his efforts to transform RPP into a populist party. In that sense, Cem's understanding of secularism was not hard as classical Kemalist-leftist stance (This will be explained in detail in the fifth chapter). Cem was very well aware of Turkey's difference from Western countries and he thought that Turkey should be industrialized, modernized, urbanized and democratized in its unique way based on economic statism (socialism) and in this way it would reach contemporary Western civilization. However, Cem starting from the 1980s began to claim that Turkish socioeconomic structure was not very different from European states and thus, Turkey should become a part of Europe along the lines with European bourgeois democratic model. In that sense, Cem began to be transformed into a European social democrat from an Eastern socialist starting from the 1980s. During his political career, Cem was not stuck to AMP discussions or his theory on Turkey's underdevelopment and he revised his views about Westernization and Turkey's place in the Europe, although he kept his criticism towards single-party period and Kemalist legacy because of its radical modernist aspects and anti-populist tendencies.

### **3.8. The 12 September 1980 Military Coup**

İsmail Cem witnessed and in a sense predicted the coming of 12 September 1980 military coup very closely. He tried to analyze National Front governments and the increasing political violence atmosphere of the late 1970s within the perspective of class-based analyses and international relations formed due to Cold War conditions. In Cem's view, the rise of fascist militant right was not coincidental after the huge success of RPP in the 1973 elections and had some reasons related to class-





based conflicts and international politics.<sup>364</sup> In Cem's view the first reason of the rise of extreme right was class-based conflicts in the country. Cem thought that the privileged segments (bourgeoisie) of the country that are backed up by the military-political establishment supported or at least tolerated the rise of fascism and Nationalistic Action Party's anti-democratic tendencies with the idea of protecting themselves against the rising socialism threat.<sup>365</sup> Thus, Cem thought there was a convenient atmosphere for National Front governments under the leadership of Justice Party leader Süleyman Demirel with the participation of former RPP deputy Turhan Feyzioğlu (leader of Republican Reliance Party and a reliable name in the eyes of bourgeoisie), Türkeş's NAP and Erbakan's NSP. Cem noticed that Demirel was able to unify all rightist tendencies with his exaggerated anti-communist rhetoric but was also getting away from democracy.<sup>366</sup> In Cem's view, Turkey was also getting away from democracy since politicians had begun to blame their rivals "traitor".<sup>367</sup> The anti-democratic tendencies were becoming stronger due to the distorted education system of the country that produced violence among youth<sup>368</sup> and did not allow democratic pluralism and tolerance for alternative views.<sup>369</sup> Cem foresaw the rise of the extreme right starting from the 12 March and tried to interpret this as a structural phenomenon rather than a conjectural tendency.<sup>370</sup> İsmail Cem thought that the single-party experience of Turkey and especially the "National Chief" period of İnönü created a convenient ideological atmosphere and basis for fascist and authoritarian regimes.<sup>371</sup> Moreover, due to petty bourgeois radicals and rising socialist movements, Cem thought that the bourgeoisie could try to cooperate

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<sup>364</sup> İsmail Cem, *Siyaset Yazıları: 1975-1980 Türkiye'si*, p. 11.

<sup>365</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

<sup>366</sup> *ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>367</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>368</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 18-20.

<sup>369</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 30-31.

<sup>370</sup> *ibid.*, p. 179.

<sup>371</sup> *ibid.*, p. 180.





with the bureaucracy (military) and establish an authoritarian regime in order to secure itself.<sup>372</sup> Cem believed that the gauchist<sup>373</sup> tendencies in the left and fascist, ultra-nationalist tendencies in the right was transforming the country into a battlefield and dragging the country towards a military coup.<sup>374</sup>

According to İsmail Cem, the second important reason of the rise of extreme right in Turkey was related to international relations and the preferences of USA that had serious influence in the shaping of Turkey's internal politics as the leader of Western capitalist bloc and NATO. Cem thought that although European countries, especially European leftists, supported democratization and democratic movements in Turkey<sup>375</sup>, the USA deliberately helped rightist groups to suppress leftist movements that could be dangerous for the USA because of their anti-imperialist stance. Cem, by quoting İhsan Sabri Çağlayangil, was trying to show that the USA was very active in the rise of rightist terror in Turkey.<sup>376</sup> He thought that it was leftist adventurism (seeking for junta and student guerilla movements) that created a pretext for the 12 March memorandum and that the current political violence backed up by the government could be a pretext for another intervention in the future.<sup>377</sup>

Due to these two main reasons, Cem understood that the extreme right was dangerously rising in the country and was profiting from the ethnic and sectarian cleavages in the country. Cem thought that the enmity towards the Alevi community that is supported by the religious and nationalist extreme right could be very dangerous for democratic life in Turkey.<sup>378</sup> In that sense, Cem boldly compared

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<sup>372</sup> İsmail Cem, *Siyaset Yazıları: 1975-1980 Türkiye'si*, p. 181.

<sup>373</sup> Gauchism was a term in the leftist literature which is used to criticize the hasty militant activism instead of a revolutionary plan.

<sup>374</sup> İsmail Cem, *Siyaset Yazıları: 1975-1980 Türkiye'si*, pp. 182-183.

<sup>375</sup> *ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>376</sup> *ibid.*, p. 66.

<sup>377</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 68-69.

<sup>378</sup> *ibid.*, p. 25.





National Front governments and their militants to Nazis and their SS<sup>379</sup> troops.<sup>380</sup> Cem stated that socioeconomic and political progress of working classes and the democratization of the country disturbed privileged segments and created a reaction. Cem thought that eventually democracy would prevail and RPP would gain a huge victory in the 1977 elections.<sup>381</sup> He made a correct guess and foresaw the success of RPP in the 1977 elections (RPP acquired 41.4 % of the votes and declared a real victory of the left), but he was very optimistic and naïve about the success of democracy in Turkey since international factors and political violence were dragging Turkey towards a new military intervention. Cem was also angry towards politicians and journalists that were bringing Turkey to the current polarized and violent situation and blaming them for sending young people to death.<sup>382</sup> In addition, he was trying to interpret how and why meaningless violent attacks against leftist groups (such as the 1 May 1977 massacre in which 34 people died) were happening and writing about hidden forces behind these terrorist acts.<sup>383</sup> Especially after the Iranian Revolution (later Iranian Islamic Revolution) of 1979, the Western countries were seriously disturbed by rising anti-Western tendencies in the Middle East and in that sense wanted to secure their position in Turkey by supporting an authoritarian regime.

İsmail Cem wrote that due to National Front governments, Süleyman Demirel had secured himself as the leader of the rightist wing and extreme nationalists and political Islamists had found a place in state's institutions and organizations.<sup>384</sup>

Although Cem supported Demirel in the 1960s due to his efforts to diversify

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<sup>379</sup> SS (Schutzstaffel) as a major Nazi organization under Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party. The SS grew from a small paramilitary unit to a powerful force that served as the Führer's "Praetorian Guard".

<sup>380</sup> İsmail Cem, *Siyaset Yazıları: 1975-1980 Türkiye'si*, p. 26.

<sup>381</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 28-29.

<sup>382</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 32-33.

<sup>383</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 34-35.

<sup>384</sup> *ibid.*, p. 38.





Turkey's foreign policy preferences, after the National Front governments he criticized Demirel harshly and compared his transformation to the Scottish author Robert Louis Stevenson's famous novel character Dr. Jekyll-Mr. Hyde.<sup>385</sup> Cem was also not supporting Demirel's foreign policy anymore and thought that the National Front government's Cyprus policy was scandalous.<sup>386</sup> Moreover, he thought that Demirel was pulling the military into civilian politics by not preventing but rather supporting political violence activities and polarization in the country.<sup>387</sup> Cem was defining political struggle between rightist and leftist as a struggle between clarity and darkness and did not hide his anger towards National Front governments that protected ultra-nationalist and Islamist terrorist groups.<sup>388</sup> In that sense, he was claiming that Demirel and National Front government was legalizing and giving legitimacy to rightist terror by their avoidance of these activities.<sup>389</sup> In the rising polarization atmosphere of the 1970s, Cem was harshly accusing Demirel and rightist circles but the violence was coming both from the left and the right. Thus, Cem could be claimed to lose his objectivity a bit in the late 1970s due to the high degree of polarization. İsmail Cem also sensed the coming of a military coup since he wrote that the higher segments were giving up hope with JP and RPP and leaning towards the Turkish Armed Forces.<sup>390</sup> From his Marxist point of view, Cem thought that, for the bourgeoisie, democracy and authoritarian regime are two options and the bourgeoisie would prefer a military regime if it began to feel suffocated due to leftist

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<sup>385</sup> See; İsmail Cem, *Siyaset Yazıları: 1975-1980 Türkiye'si*, pp. 40-41. *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* is a famous novel written by the Scottish author Robert Louis Stevenson and first published in 1886. It is about a London lawyer who investigates strange occurrences between his old friend, Dr. Henry Jekyll, and the misanthropic Mr. Hyde. The work is known for its vivid portrayal of a split personality, split in the sense that within the same person there is both an apparently good and an evil personality each being quite distinct from the other.

<sup>386</sup> İsmail Cem, *Siyaset Yazıları: 1975-1980 Türkiye'si*, p. 43.

<sup>387</sup> *ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>388</sup> *ibid.*, p. 58.

<sup>389</sup> *ibid.*, p. 74.

<sup>390</sup> *ibid.*, p. 101.





opposition.<sup>391</sup> That is why, Cem believed that the proletariat is the basis of a real democratic regime and that RPP should support and engage in close relationships with working classes and syndical movements.<sup>392</sup> Another problematic aspect of the 1970s was the terrible economic situation of the country especially after the heavy embargos implemented by Western countries against Turkey after the Cyprus Peace Operation. In that sense, absence of foreign currency, scarcity of raw materials, and increasing foreign debt were the main economic problems that spoiled democratic life in Turkey.<sup>393</sup> The Western economic blockade against Turkey also showed the reaction of Western countries against Turkey's unexpected Cyprus Operation and rising socialist and anti-Western movements in the country. However, the Western bloc also knew that it could not afford Turkey's radical transformation and moving away from the West.<sup>394</sup> Eventually, Cem's prediction was right and Turkey moved towards a military regime. After the assassination of his cousin Abdi İpekçi just three months before the 12 September coup Cem left Turkey and moved to Paris.<sup>395</sup>

On September 12 at 04.00 clock in the morning, the National Security Council headed by Chief of the General Staff Kenan Evren declared a coup d'état on the national channel. The NSC then declared martial law throughout the country, abolished the parliament and the government, suspended the constitution and banned all political parties and trade unions. The coup also decided to adopt a new constitution that included mechanisms to prevent what they saw as impeding the functioning of democracy. The new constitution brought clear limits and definitions. On 7 November 1982 the new Constitution was put to a referendum, which was accepted with a resounding 92 %. On 9 November 1982 Kenan Evren was appointed

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<sup>391</sup> İsmail Cem, *Siyaset Yazıları: 1975-1980 Türkiye'si*, p. 104.

<sup>392</sup> *ibid.*, p. 104.

<sup>393</sup> *ibid.*, p. 289.

<sup>394</sup> *ibid.*, p. 301.

<sup>395</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 150.





President for the next seven years. In 1983, Turkey passed to democratic civilian life again although the military kept its exit guarantees and only three parties approved by the military could run in the elections. According to Yüksel Taşkın, while the 12 September regime aimed to suppress popular class-based leftist-socialist tendencies in the country, it also created new unexpected radical movements such as political Islam and secessionist Kurdish ethnic nationalism.<sup>396</sup>

### 3.9. On Kemalism

Although Kemalism is not accepted as a total ideology but only “a technique for discovering the truth and dissolving illusions”<sup>397</sup> like that of French ideologues and a final and radical interpretation of 150 years old Ottoman modernization<sup>398</sup> for many, we see that in the 1930s there were many attempts to formulate Kemalism as a concrete, substantial ideology. The most important ones among these “competing Kemalisms” were *Ülkü* and *Kadro* movements. *Kadro* and *Ülkü* movements appeared at a time when the statist economic development model and authoritarianism were very popular in the European world especially after the Great Depression and the rise of fascism. Clashes within the Republican People’s Party, especially between the liberal *İş Bank* group led by Celal Bayar and bureaucratic group led by İsmet İnönü, created a convenient environment for *Kadro* to make

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<sup>396</sup> Yüksel Taşkın. 2004. “12 Eylül Atatürkçülüğü ya da Bir Kemalist Restorasyon Teşebbüsü Olarak 12 Eylül” in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce cilt 2 Kemalizm*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, p. 582.

<sup>397</sup> Professor Heper asserted that Atatürkism or Kemalism did not refer to a quality or type of thought, but rather as a technique for discovering truth and dissolving illusions similar to French Idéologues of the post-Enlightenment process. Heper points out that “For Atatürk too, the efforts to discover the direction in which society was moving entailed resorting to a scientific approach”. See; Metin, Heper, *The State Tradition In Turkey*, p. 63. Heper also pointed out that Atatürk never thought to establish a state based on personal rule and tried to arrange the new republic’s laws for making it as people’s state. Moreover, he thought that Atatürk always believed in scienticism in positivist manner and used rationalism in state affairs. In that sense, Heper claimed that Atatürk envisioned a transient transcendental state.

<sup>398</sup> Halil İnalcık, *Atatürk ve Demokratik Türkiye*, p. 65.





publication freely.<sup>399</sup> Alongside with *Kadro* and *Ülkü* movements, there was Republican Conservatives group that tried to formulate a Kemalist ideology that was more compatible with Islam and conservatism.<sup>400</sup> Kemalism continued to be reformulated and presented as an ideology especially after military interventions. These interpretations were different from each other and reflected Turkey's foreign policy and economic preferences. In that sense, 27 May 1960s leftist Kemalism<sup>401</sup> and 12 September 1980s nationalist-Islamist Atatürkism (Turkish-Islam synthesis) based on free-market economics<sup>402</sup> differed highly from each other. Metin Heper thought that Atatürkism was based on a strategy of creating a transient moderate transcendental state but his followers were not able to distinguish his strategy from his tactics and in that sense, even opponents of Atatürk could have presented themselves as “genuine Atatürkists” by finding a quotation from him in accordance with their real ideology.<sup>403</sup>

For many including Suna Kili, Kemalism or Atatürkism was a paradigm of modernization that rejects Islamic perspectives or foreign ideologies. “Both pragmatic and functional, Atatürkism alone is what is needed to see to it that Turkey is successful in its use of its future-oriented paradigm of national modernization.”<sup>404</sup>

Kili claimed that Western positivism and solidarism had an impact on Kemalism

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<sup>399</sup> Ertan Aydın, “The Peculiarities Of Turkish Revolutionary Ideology In The 1930s: The *Ülkü* Version Of Kemalism, 1933-36”, p. 55.

<sup>400</sup> For a detailed study see; Nazım İrem. 2002. “Turkish Conservative Modernism: Birth of a Nationalist Quest for Cultural Renewal” in *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 34, (1), February 2002, pp. 87-112.

<sup>401</sup> For Mazıcı, 27 May was the restoration of Kemalism through military invention. See; Nurşen Mazıcı. 2004. “27 Mayıs, Kemalizmin Restorasyonu mu?” in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce cilt 2 Kemalizm*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları. However, Heper claims “if the view is accepted that the 1960 revolution was really an attempt by the Kemalist centre to reimpose its hegemony, it is difficult to understand why the 1961 constitution turned out to be so liberal”. See; Metin Heper, *The State Tradition In Turkey*, p. 13.

<sup>402</sup> For a detailed analysis of 12 September’s so-called Atatürkism, see; Yüksel Taşkın, “12 Eylül Atatürkçülüğü ya da Bir Kemalist Restorasyon Teşebbüsü Olarak 12 Eylül”, pp. 570-583.

<sup>403</sup> Metin Heper, *The State Tradition In Turkey*, p. 11.

<sup>404</sup> Suna Kili. 2003. *The Atatürk Revolution A Paradigm of Modernization*. İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, p. 193.





which aimed to modernize archaic social structure, value system and lifestyle in Anatolia. Six arrows of the Republican People's Party which symbolize six principles of Kemalism form the basis of Kemalist or Atatürkist ideology. These six principles namely: Republicanism, Nationalism, Populism, Etatism (Statism), Laicism (Secularism) and Revolutionism (Reformism) earned semi-ideology status with regard to Kemalism, though these principles did not evolve as static ideological obsessions.<sup>405</sup>

İsmail Cem analyzed Kemalism as a kind of radicalism.<sup>406</sup> In his view, Kemalism was similar to the radicalist movement in France which rejected conservatism and depended on petty bourgeois segments including urban people, intellectuals, bureaucrats and local notables.<sup>407</sup> Cem thought that all radical movements including Kemalism were based on principles of republicanism, secularism and positivism and that they had a pragmatist character. Moreover, all radical movements had distrust towards macro ideologies, including widespread practice of technocracy and elitism, due to their enlightening mission in an unenlightened society.<sup>408</sup> Cem claimed that the leftist interpretation of radicalism was also possible but this would not mean a real social democratic or socialist movement. İsmail Cem wrote that this radicalism tradition began to affect Turkish intelligentsia starting from the 19<sup>th</sup> century and organizations like Young Turks and Committee of Union and Progress were radicalist movements that aimed to modernize the Ottoman

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<sup>405</sup> Suna Kili, *The Atatürk Revolution A Paradigm of Modernization*, pp. 202-258.

<sup>406</sup> Many other writers including Hakkı Uyar, Mete Tunçay and Zafer Toprak also pointed out similarities between RPP's programme European radical and democrat parties. RPP had also links with Entente Internationale des Partis Radicaux et des Partis Democratiques Similaires in the early years of the Republic. For details, see; Hakkı Uyar. "CHP'nin Avrupa'nın Radikal ve Demokrat Partileri ile İlişkileri (1926-1935)", retrieved on 15.10.2009 from <http://kisi.deu.edu.tr/hakki.uyar/yayinlar1.html>.

<sup>407</sup> İsmail Cem, *Sosyal Demokrasi Ya Da Demokratik Sosyalizm Nedir, Ne Değildir*, p. 307.

<sup>408</sup> *ibid.*, p. 307.





state and enlighten Ottoman society.<sup>409</sup> Due to Abdülhamid's despotism, many young intellectuals of the 19<sup>th</sup> century had to escape to Europe, especially France. Radicalism tradition in Turkey was strengthened after this period since young Ottoman intellectuals had the chance to closely observe French radicalism and positivism. That is why, Cem claimed the classical Turkish left was largely based on the intelligentsia and the bureaucracy instead of the proletariat and the Turkish left has had a petty bourgeois character from the beginning.<sup>410</sup> In that sense, Cem considered classical pre-Ecevit RPP of the 1960s as a leftist version of radicalism known as Kemalism in Turkey.<sup>411</sup> Except for a short period in the 1970s under Ecevit's leadership, Cem thought there had never been a real socialist or social democratic party in Turkey and RPP always kept its radical aspects. While İsmail Cem was making his criticism towards Kemalism, he was often referring to Leftist Kemalism and did not put other rightist versions of Kemalism on his agenda. Thus, it would be better to focus on Leftist Kemalism before passing to Cem's criticism of Kemalism.

Faruk Alpkaya in his research on Leftist Kemalism (*Sol Kemalizm*), concluded that Leftist Kemalism is an ideology of "Turkish exceptionalism" that has become always very influential especially in the times of breaking up.<sup>412</sup> Alpkaya thought that similar to Cem's thesis, Leftist Kemalism was nourished from the radical ideology of the French Revolution and created its own intellectuals in each period.<sup>413</sup> However, Alpkaya noted that due to 12 September's official Atatürkism, which was based on the ideology of Turkish-Islamic synthesis, Leftist Kemalists were for a while driven out into different positions (social democracy, liberalism,

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<sup>409</sup> İsmail Cem, *Sosyal Demokrasi Ya Da Demokratik Sosyalizm Nedir, Ne Değildir*, p. 308.

<sup>410</sup> *ibid.*, p. 308.

<sup>411</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 308-309.

<sup>412</sup> Faruk Alpkaya, "Bir 20. Yüzyıl Akımı: Sol Kemalizm", p. 480.

<sup>413</sup> *ibid.*, p. 481.





socialism, Maoism) in the left.<sup>414</sup> Alpkaya also pointed out that starting from the 2000s, due to Turkey's economic problems and foreign policy crisis, Leftist Kemalism again became influential in the country although he claimed that this never had a concrete economic and political programme except the aim of ruling Turkey from Turkey.<sup>415</sup> Three important names of the Leftist Kemalism ideology that İsmail Cem was affected by and had personal intimacy with were Uğur Mumcu, Attila İlhan and İlhan Selçuk.

Uğur Mumcu (1942-1993) was a bold and famous Turkish journalist who wrote for the leading Kemalist daily *Cumhuriyet*.<sup>416</sup> Mumcu was killed by a bomb placed in his car, outside his home on 24 January 1993. There are numerous hypotheses over who was responsible for his murder but the dominant view is that this assassination was related to Iran and political Islamist groups in Turkey. Mumcu is a symbolic figure in the left especially for Leftist Kemalists. Mumcu was also a close friend of İsmail Cem although they did have some differences in their political stances. Mumcu similar to Yön movement thought that the primary conflict in international capitalism was between imperialism and exploited nations.<sup>417</sup> Mumcu and other Leftist Kemalists never ignored class conflicts within Turkey but their primary focus was foreign policy and their basic motive was anti-imperialism. Starting from the 1960s Uğur Mumcu had always emphasized the anti-imperialist character of Kemalism and tried to unify different versions of the left in the line of Leftist Kemalism.<sup>418</sup> Mumcu was also important because unlike Doğan Avcıoğlu he never renounced parliamentary democracy and underlined the fact that even Turkish

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<sup>414</sup> Faruk Alpkaya, "Bir 20. Yüzyıl Akımı: Sol Kemalizm", p. 498.

<sup>415</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 498-499.

<sup>416</sup> For a research on Cumhuriyet newspaper's Leftist Kemalism, see; Erten, Bağış and Doğan, M. Görkem. 2004. "Cumhuriyet'in Cumhuriyet'i: Cumhuriyet Gazetesi" in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce cilt 2 Kemalizm*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.

<sup>417</sup> Asena Günel. 2004. "Uğur Mumcu" in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce cilt 2 Kemalizm*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, p. 482.

<sup>418</sup> *ibid.*, p. 483.





Independence War was ruled by a parliament.<sup>419</sup> His Leftist Kemalism took its roots from the *Kuvayi Milliye* movement and Turkish Independence War and was based on Western, modern, secular lifestyle and anti-imperialist independent foreign policy.<sup>420</sup> Mumcu was very sensitive about defending secularism against rising Islamism danger and also about Kemalist nationalism against growing Kurdish ethno-nationalism.<sup>421</sup> His approaches to these two issues (Kurdish question and political Islam) were also related to his perception of imperialism and he thought that foreign countries had supported PKK terrorism and tolerated religious fundamentalist movements in Turkey. Compared to İsmail Cem, Mumcu was closer to classical, more nationalist Kemalism, and he was less critical of single-party period. Cem and Mumcu shared the same views on democracy and freedom of opinion. Mumcu, especially after the 1980 coup, had always underlined the necessity of democratic parliamentary methods in politics and together with Cem they had a clean democratic record, unlike many leftist Kemalists who engaged in militarist solutions.

Attila İlhan (1925-2005) was also another important and unique figure in the Leftist Kemalism tradition, and was an acquaintance of Cem. In fact, İlhan, in the 1970s when Cem was heading TRT, praised Cem for “transforming TRT into people’s television”.<sup>422</sup> Similar to İsmail Cem, Attila İlhan had great sympathy and curiosity towards the Seljuk-Ottoman past of the Turks and in that sense he was a unique figure in Leftist Kemalism. Moreover, unlike other Leftist Kemalists, İlhan posed a harsh criticism towards single-party period, especially towards İsmet İnönü.<sup>423</sup> However, while criticizing İnönü harshly and blaming him for starting the

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<sup>419</sup> Asena Günal, “Uğur Mumcu”, p. 484.

<sup>420</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 485-486.

<sup>421</sup> *ibid.*, p. 486.

<sup>422</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 126.

<sup>423</sup> Duygu Köksal. 2004. “Attila İlhan” in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce cilt 2 Kemalizm*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, p. 488.





counter-revolution, Attila İlhan had always exalted Atatürk as the heroic leader of Turkey's anti-imperialist Independence War.<sup>424</sup> Similar to Uğur Mumcu and other Leftist Kemalists, anti-imperialism was the main motive in İlhan's novels and ideology. İlhan's anti-imperialism seemed to have turned into anti-globalism in the 1990s with the new world order.<sup>425</sup> For İlhan, İsmet İnönü was responsible for the degeneration of Kemalism and its transformation into imitation of the West.<sup>426</sup> Another aspect of İlhan's ideology was the role of Sultan Galiev<sup>427</sup> and Galievism. Galiev's theory about oppressed nations was visible in İlhan's thinking and İlhan claimed that Atatürk must have shown more interest to Galiev during the National Struggle.<sup>428</sup> Cem and İlhan had both unique figures in the left for their curiosity and admiration of Ottoman past but İlhan especially starting from the 1990s adopted a more nationalist and statist ideology (*ulusalcılık*) that gave a small place to democracy and questioned Turkey's place in the Western world. Here he differed compared to Cem, who had become more sensitive on democracy and transformed into a pro-European social democrat.

İlhan Selçuk (1925-2010) was the other symbol figure and leading theoretician of Leftist Kemalism. Although Mehmet Soydaş and Atilla Lök analyzed İlhan Selçuk from an extremely critical perspective, in Turkey Selçuk has been seen as the "Wise Man of Turkish Enlightenment (*Aydınlanma Bilgesi*)" by many leftists.<sup>429</sup> Together with Uğur Mumcu, he worked in *Yön* magazine and became the

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<sup>424</sup> Duygu Köksal, "Attila İlhan", p. 489.

<sup>425</sup> *ibid.*, p. 490.

<sup>426</sup> *ibid.*, p. 491.

<sup>427</sup> Mirza Sultan Galiev (1892-1940) was a Tatar Bolshevik who rose to prominence in the Russian Communist Party in the early 1920s. He was later executed for being an independent Muslim leader as part of the purges of former Bolsheviks in the Soviet Union. Galiev deeply affected Muslim Communists around the world and laid the foundation of a unique Eastern Socialism theory called Galievism.

<sup>428</sup> Duygu Köksal, "Attila İlhan", p. 493.

<sup>429</sup> Mehmet Soydaş and Atilla Lök. 2004. "İlhan Selçuk" in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce cilt 2 Kemalizm*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, p. 512.





right wing of Yön movement's leader Dođan Avciođlu. Together with Avciođlu, İlhan Selçuk tried to formulate a socialist version of Kemalism that would be reached by a leftist military take-over. Selçuk was imprisoned and tortured after 12 March. After being released, he began to write in *Cumhuriyet* newspaper and later became the respected editor-in-chief of the paper.<sup>430</sup> Selçuk throughout his life defended Kemalism and saw it as the basis of Turkish Enlightenment which meant the emancipation of reason from faith and science from religion.<sup>431</sup> Secularism, unitary nation state and state led rapid industrialization were his three main themes.<sup>432</sup> He thought that both Turkish Alevis and Turkish Sunnis are different from Arabs and have a tendency to adopt secularism and modernity.<sup>433</sup> Selçuk, similar to other Leftist Kemalists, never rejected class conflicts but he also never thought that a socialist revolution could be made in Turkey under the existing conditions. Selçuk has always underlined that without passing from or rather terminating the Enlightenment process, a real social democratic or liberal political ideology could not be established in Turkey. In that sense, he asserted that the aim of the Kemalist Republic was to create the free individual instead of subjects.<sup>434</sup> Selçuk starting from the 1960s was also the leading writer and ideologue of *Cumhuriyet* newspaper which can be described as the castle of Leftist Kemalism.<sup>435</sup> Although İsmail Cem and İlhan Selçuk were good friends and they shared the same ideal of establishing a modern democratic and industrialized Turkey, their understanding of democracy and secularism highly differed from each other starting from the 1960s. Cem had always sympathized with democratic parliamentary methods (TLP and Ecevit's RPP)

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<sup>430</sup> Mehmet Soydaş and Atilla Lök, "İlhan Selçuk", p. 513.

<sup>431</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 514-515.

<sup>432</sup> *ibid.*, p. 514.

<sup>433</sup> *ibid.*, p. 515.

<sup>434</sup> *ibid.*, p. 515.

<sup>435</sup> Bağış Erten and Görkem Dođan, "Cumhuriyet'in Cumhuriyet'i: Cumhuriyet Gazetesi", p. 509





whereas Selçuk did not hide his sympathy for military coups that will restore Republican ideals (Yön movement). Cem was also much more libertarian compared to Selçuk especially concerning state's attitude towards religious people. Selçuk was very critical and suspicious of Islamic groups' aims and he was in favor of state interventionism in order to suppress religious fundamentalism, whereas Cem was an unusual figure in the Turkish left who defended freedom for all segments of the society including pious people and religious groups.

İsmail Cem's criticism towards Kemalism was mostly caused by the solidarity aspect of the Republic. Cem claimed that with a naïve belief, Kemalists thought that being able to defeat imperialism would end exploitation and all segments could develop themselves in brotherhood with a national economy under the objective arbitration of the Kemalist state.<sup>436</sup> Cem accepted that this view was good-intentioned but it was also naïve and unrealistic since the interest of the bourgeoisie, land owners and local notables naturally contradicted with the interest of peasants.<sup>437</sup> In that sense, Kemalists' naïve objective stance for Cem was nothing but supporting the stronger side and naturally leads to the exploitation of lower segments. As a leftist thinker coming from Marxist tradition, Cem rejected the solidarist view of Kemalism and criticized the single-party period and Kemalist ideology in general from this class-based perspective. For Cem, this was caused by the lack of intellectual accumulation that Ottoman officers had concerning economics.<sup>438</sup> Moreover, due to its weak class-based position as a small bureaucratic group, founders of the Republic had to form a coalition with bourgeoisie and local notables at the expense of suppressing proletariat and peasants.<sup>439</sup> In that sense, Cem

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<sup>436</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, p. 302.

<sup>437</sup> *ibid.*, p. 304.

<sup>438</sup> *ibid.*, p. 305.

<sup>439</sup> *ibid.*, p. 306.





claimed that while the founders of the Republic, the military-bureaucratic intelligentsia, supported Westernization in order to catch up with the contemporary civilization by making mainly superstructural reforms, they could not realize their aims of infrastructural reforms (land reform) due to the weak social positioning and thus, they had to engage in a coalition with higher social classes.<sup>440</sup> Another aspect of Cem's criticism towards Kemalism was its superstructural character that had realized modernization only on the superstructural level and could not realize the infrastructural economic modernization. This argument was also frequently used by RPP leader Bülent Ecevit in the 1970s.<sup>441</sup> In that sense, Ecevit and Cem both advocated an economic leap forward by a statist-socialist economic model.

While defining RPP largely as a leftist-radical party, Cem never hesitated to praise the positive aspects of Kemalism. In his view, radical movements including Kemalism had some similarities with leftist movements and helped their country and society to get modernized and create the necessary conditions for transition to a democratic regime.<sup>442</sup> In that sense, Cem's views resembled Ergun Özbudun's ideas about the nature of Kemalist political regime. Özbudun also underlined that RPP had always allowed opposition in itself (*İş Bank group* led by Bayar, Republican Conservatives, *Kadro* Movement) which made transition to multi-party democracy easier for Turkey unlike in communist regimes. Özbudun, by applying Clement Moore's classification of single-party regime ideologies into four categories as totalitarian, chiliastic, tutelary and administrative, placed RPP as a tutelage party, or a party acting like a tutor and a guardian for its people which not show characteristics

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<sup>440</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, p. 306.

<sup>441</sup> Necmi Erdoğan, "Demokratik Soldan Devrimci Yol'a 1970'lerde Sol Popülizm Üzerine Notlar", p. 267.

<sup>442</sup> İsmail Cem, *Sosyal Demokrasi Ya Da Demokratik Sosyalizm Nedir, Ne Değildir*, p. 309.





of a totalitarian regime.<sup>443</sup> While Cem criticized the lack of democratic aspects shown by the single-party rule, he also praised the modernist aspects that opened a way for democracy in the coming decades. In one of his latest publications *Sosyal Demokrasinin Geleceği (The Future of Social Democracy)*, Cem defined Kemalism as the source of social democracy's progressive and innovative principles in Turkey and expressed that Turkey's social democracy takes its roots from the Republican Revolution.<sup>444</sup> In that sense, he labeled his party -NTP- as the "continuation of Republican Revolution in democracy".<sup>445</sup> Many other social democratic writers including pro-European Aydın Cıngı also agreed with Cem and thought that Turkish social democracy evolved and was nourished by Kemalism and Turkish Enlightenment (modernization movements that started in the 19<sup>th</sup> century) in addition to universal social democratic values.<sup>446</sup> Kemalism's modernistic-progressive features were also praised by many observers including Bernard Lewis<sup>447</sup>, Arnold J. Toynbee, Maurice Duverger and Suna Kili<sup>448</sup>.

Starting from 1980s and 1990s, Cem tried to formulate a moderate social democratic ideology or a kind of moderate Kemalism by erasing the radicalist aspects of classical Kemalism in order to embrace pious segments of the society, as well as Kurds in Turkey. Thus, although for many Cem could be labeled as an anti-Kemalist especially in his youth and until the 1980s because of his positive look towards Ottomans and harsh criticism of single-party period, in fact he was trying to transform Kemalism into social democracy by softening its radicalist aspects and revising it in order to weaken and prevent anti-democratic acts (military coups) and

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<sup>443</sup> For a detailed analysis, see; Ergun Özbudun. 1981. "The Nature of Kemalist Political Regime" in *Atatürk: Founder of a Modern State*, London: C. Hurst & Company.

<sup>444</sup> İsmail Cem, *Sosyal Demokrasinin Geleceği*, p. 15.

<sup>445</sup> İsmail Cem, *Yeni Bir Türkiye İçin...*, p. 14.

<sup>446</sup> Aydın Cıngı, *Sora Sora Sosyal Demokrasi*, p. 13.

<sup>447</sup> See; Bernard Lewis. 2009. *Modern Türkiye'nin Doğuşu*, Ankara: Arkadaş Yayınevi.

<sup>448</sup> See; Suna Kili. 2003. *Atatürk Revolution A Paradigm of Modernization*, İstanbul: İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, pp. 39-44, 102-108.





tendencies (gauchism) made in the name of Kemalism. Cem's criticism towards Kemalism was also noticeably softened after his engagement in active politics since considering their party grassroots RPP and DLP could not afford to censure Kemalism and Atatürk legacy.

### 3.10. On Marxism and Social Democracy

Although İsmail Cem had passed through an ideological transformation between the 1970s and 1990s, his basic approach to history has always been materialistic. Cem expressed his views on Marxism and social democracy best in his book *Social Democracy or Democratic Socialism What Is It, What It Is Not (Sosyal Demokrasi Ya Da Demokratik Sosyalizm Nedir, Ne Değildir)*<sup>449</sup> which was first published in 1984 and continued to make new prints since it has become a classical book. Cem in this book summarized the emergence and the development of the Marxist movement and its transformation into social democracy.

İsmail Cem's theoretical formulation on social democracy was similar to other leading social democratic thinkers around the world, though Cem's vision for Turkish socialism or social democracy differed from European social democracy in the 1960s and 1970s due to the different historical development of Turkey. According to Cem, social democracy or democratic socialism (Cem used these two terms interchangeably) is a political ideology that emerged in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe with the works of Eduard Bernstein's German Social Democratic Party (SPD)<sup>450</sup> and England's Fabian Society<sup>451</sup> and it had economic, social, political and

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<sup>449</sup> İsmail Cem. 1998. *Sosyal Demokrasi Ya Da Demokratik Sosyalizm Nedir, Ne Değildir*. İstanbul: Can Yayınları.

<sup>450</sup> The large role played by German Social Democratic Party in the emergence of social democratic ideology is emphasized by all scholars who wrote on social democracy. See, Haluk Özdalga. 2001. *Sosyal Demokrasinin Kuruluşu*. Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, pp. 47-94.





cultural dimensions.<sup>452</sup> In Cem's perspective, social democracy has never been a rigid ideology like Marxism and it developed its own unique and dynamic character, although it was originally derived from Marxism.<sup>453</sup> In his view, social democracy is the socialist ideology that is in conformity with the rules of pluralist democracy. Cem never accepted the simplistic formula of "middle way between capitalism and Marxism" for defining social democracy since he believed that social democratic ideology had much deeper characteristics.<sup>454</sup> For him, social democracy was the conditional pact made by the proletariat and bourgeoisie in order to achieve peaceful coexistence.<sup>455</sup> By this pact or contract, the proletariat gave up revolutionary Marxist ideals and accepted the existence of the bourgeoisie, and secured its presence with the condition of having full scale of political freedoms. Thus the proletariat was a part of the decision-making process and government by parliamentary, representative and pluralist democracy.<sup>456</sup> İsmail Cem also underlined that pluralist parliamentary democracy is not a temporary choice or the lesser of two evils situation for social democrats but rather a free-will choice that is more democratic and beneficial for workers.<sup>457</sup> Cem thought that social democratic parties should embrace all segments of the society although they are primarily parties of the worker class.<sup>458</sup> In his view, syndicates and unions are natural allies of social democratic parties and real social democratic parties should have organic links with these associations.<sup>459</sup> Cem believed that social democratic parties and movements could differ in some ways in

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<sup>451</sup> The Fabian Society is a British intellectual socialist movement emerged in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, whose purpose is to advance the principles of social democracy via gradualist and reformist, rather than revolutionary means.

<sup>452</sup> İsmail Cem, *Sosyal Demokrasi Ya Da Demokratik Sosyalizm Nedir, Ne Değildir*, p. 41.

<sup>453</sup> *ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>454</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 46-47.

<sup>455</sup> *ibid.*, p. 58.

<sup>456</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 58-59.

<sup>457</sup> *ibid.*, p. 59.

<sup>458</sup> *ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>459</sup> *ibid.*, p. 53.





different contexts since they would have been nourished with local values and they would have had different historical development process.<sup>460</sup>

As far as Cem was concerned, social democratic economic model is not based on the principle of banning private ownership of the means of production but rather preventing and reducing inequalities in the allocation of resources and power.<sup>461</sup> The social democratic economic model was developed with the works of important leaders and thinkers including Henri De Man<sup>462</sup>, Otto Bauer<sup>463</sup> and John Maynard Keynes<sup>464</sup> and does not reject the existence of a capitalist economy though it aims to revise it.<sup>465</sup> Social democracy is not about a simple reformism; rather it aimed to create a new egalitarian model of social development where political participation and life qualities would be better through planning and a new democratic and social state would be established.

İsmail Cem also tried to determine the theoretical roots of social democratic ideology. In his view, Eduard Bernstein was an underestimated theoretician who founded the basis of social democratic ideology. Cem wrote that Bernstein's ideological transformation also led to the evolution of German Social Democratic Party-SPD and the historical developments proved Bernstein's rightness in most of his theories and ideas.<sup>466</sup> İsmail Cem agreed with Peter Gay<sup>467</sup> that Bernstein was

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<sup>460</sup> İsmail Cem, *Sosyal Demokrasi Ya Da Demokratik Sosyalizm Nedir, Ne Değildir*, p. 46.

<sup>461</sup> *ibid.*, p. 54.

<sup>462</sup> Henri De Man (1885-1953) is a Belgian social democratic theoretician who is known with his planning model (De Man Plan).

<sup>463</sup> Otto Bauer (1881-1938) an Austrian social democrat thinker who is considered one of the leading theoretician of the Austrian left. Bauer is also an early inspiration for both the New Left movement and Eurocommunism in their attempt to find a "third way" to democratic socialism.

<sup>464</sup> John Maynard Keynes (1883-1946) was a British economist whose ideas had great impacts on modern economic and political theory. Keynes advocated interventionist government policy in economics, by which the government would use fiscal and monetary measures to mitigate the adverse effects of economic recessions, depressions and booms. His ideas are the basis for the school of thought known as Keynesian economics.

<sup>465</sup> İsmail Cem, *Sosyal Demokrasi Ya Da Demokratik Sosyalizm Nedir, Ne Değildir*, pp. 55-56.

<sup>466</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 67-68.

<sup>467</sup> Peter Gay is an American social scientist who had worked on democratic socialism and especially on the theories of Eduard Bernstein in the 1950s. Gay wrote the book *The Dilemma of Democratic*





more of a historical product and necessity rather than a theoretical genius who saw the problematic aspects of orthodox Marxism.<sup>468</sup> Bernstein was the earliest scholar/person who saw the democratic government potential of socialism and the transformation of SPD from cadre to mass party after the abolition of anti-socialist laws in Germany.<sup>469</sup> According to Cem there were three main reasons for this trend. First of all, starting from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, SPD was becoming a popular political party of the growing proletariat and its electoral successes were creating a convenient environment for giving up revolutionary Marxism and accepting the virtues of parliamentary democracy. Secondly, German economy was constantly growing and creating new and better job opportunities for the German people, which was another factor that reduced the power of orthodox Marxism.<sup>470</sup> Thirdly, the growing power of syndicates and unions and their democratic stance due to their aim to ameliorate the proletariat's working conditions and social rights in the short run within the parliamentary democratic regime supported the revisionism trend in the German left.<sup>471</sup>

Under these conditions, Bernstein came up with a criticism of revolutionary Marxism and a new philosophy of socialism that differed from orthodox Marxism in some ways which led to very comprehensive ideological and political consequences. According to Cem who quoted Gay, the first of these choices was to refuse or remove the dialectic method of Marxism from its center since Bernstein thought that this was caused by the effect of extreme idealism of Hegel (who made its mark on

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*Socialism: Eduard Bernstein's Challenge to Marx* in addition to many other works on different social science and intellectual history topics. İsmail Cem in his book *Sosyal Demokrasi Ya Da Demokratik Sosyalizm Nedir, Ne Değildir* benefited from Gay and his analysis on Bernstein.

<sup>468</sup> İsmail Cem, *Sosyal Demokrasi Ya Da Demokratik Sosyalizm Nedir, Ne Değildir*, p. 74.

<sup>469</sup> *ibid.*, p. 75.

<sup>470</sup> *ibid.*, p. 76.

<sup>471</sup> *ibid.*, p. 78.





Karl Marx).<sup>472</sup> Bernstein reached this point of analysis through a series of false predictions made by Marx and other orthodox Marxists including himself and concluded that this was caused because of leaving the empirical world and plunging into Hegel's world of ideals.<sup>473</sup> Thus, Bernstein tried to remove the dialectic approach from the center of socialist theory and tried to replace it with revisionism. Bernstein by rejecting the monist dialectic materialism method as the ultimate source of truth and by perceiving it only as a method and a factor similar to superstructural conditions like ideology and ethics, opened the way for revisionism among the Marxist intelligentsia.<sup>474</sup> In Cem's view, the second important choice made by Bernstein was to refuse the use of violence without any qualification or condition. Cem claimed Bernstein had realized that by analyzing whole human history as the struggle between two classes from a historical materialist perspective directed Marx and other Marxist theoreticians to see the use of power and coercion as normal and steer away from real Marxist humanism.<sup>475</sup> In his view, by the negation of dialectics and the use of force, Bernstein opened the way for himself and other Marxist philosophers to invent the peaceful evolutionary way to socialism. Bernstein did not see human history solely as the struggle of classes and he pointed out that there are also situations of cooperation between different classes. In that sense, Bernstein saw the state not as the personal instrument of sovereign classes but a mechanism controlled and shared by different classes up to different degrees.<sup>476</sup> Thirdly, İsmail Cem pointed out that Eduard Bernstein, by giving up the historical inevitability thesis of dialectic materialism, increased the role of will and ethics in Marxist politics.<sup>477</sup>

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<sup>472</sup> İsmail Cem, *Sosyal Demokrasi Ya Da Demokratik Sosyalizm Nedir, Ne Değildir*, pp. 79-80.

<sup>473</sup> *ibid.*, p. 80.

<sup>474</sup> Haluk Özdalga, *Sosyal Demokrasinin Kuruluşu*, p. 60.

<sup>475</sup> İsmail Cem, *Sosyal Demokrasi Ya Da Demokratik Sosyalizm Nedir, Ne Değildir*, p. 81.

<sup>476</sup> *ibid.*, p. 82.

<sup>477</sup> *ibid.*, p. 82.





Unlike orthodox Marxists like Rosa Luxemburg<sup>478</sup> who totally rejected the role of free will in the take-over of socialist governments and based her whole theory on historical materialism, Bernstein never ignored the role of historical class struggles and tried to make a new explanation by using both the role of history and will.<sup>479</sup> Cem, by quoting Peter Gay, explained this situation as the “replacement of scientific socialism’s certainty with the optimism of moralist socialism”.<sup>480</sup> Fourthly, Cem similar to other Bernstein analysts underlined that Bernstein was very affected by Immanuel Kant<sup>481</sup> and his skeptic and critical approach to pure rationalism and pure empiricism. He thought Hegelian dialectics directed Marxists to intellectual idleness because of the lack of skepticism. He tried to apply Kant’s criticism towards rationalism and Enlightenment to Marxism and to test Marxist truths in real life by an empiricist motive in order to measure their validity and criticized Marxism when he noticed that there are some differences between theory and practice.<sup>482</sup>

One of the earliest problems Bernstein observed was that unlike classical Marxist claims German capitalism was able to increase the ratio of small and middle size enterprises in the economy and thus, reducing the gap between rich and poor through the enlargement of middle class and the prevention of monopolies. Bernstein by giving statistics was able to prove that in addition to a growing middle class, the proletariat’s life conditions were also getting better unlike orthodox Marxist theory

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<sup>478</sup> Rosa Luxemburg (1871-1919) was a Polish originated German Marxist theorist and a member of the Social Democratic Party of Germany. Because of her tragic death, opposition to Bolshevik leader Lenin and female leadership position Luxemburg has become a symbol of socialism.

<sup>479</sup> İsmail Cem, *Sosyal Demokrasi Ya Da Demokratik Sosyalizm Nedir, Ne Değildir*, p. 83.

<sup>480</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 83-84.

<sup>481</sup> Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) was an 18<sup>th</sup> century German philosopher who is regarded as one of the most influential thinkers of modern Europe. Kant believed himself to be making a compromise between empiricism and rationalism. The empiricists believed that knowledge is acquired through experience alone, but the rationalists argued that such knowledge is open to Cartesian doubt and that reason alone provides us with true knowledge. However, Kant argued that using reason without applying it to experience will only lead to illusions, while experience will be purely subjective without first being subsumed under pure reason.

<sup>482</sup> İsmail Cem, *Sosyal Demokrasi Ya Da Demokratik Sosyalizm Nedir, Ne Değildir*, pp. 84-85.





had sought. İsmail Cem also observed that Bernstein never believed in the collapse of capitalism unlike many other Marxists since he detected that the welfare of European societies had been increasing and with the new credit and finance system a global crisis that would end in the collapse of capitalism was nearly impossible. Cem thought that Bernstein's views were proven to be correct after the Great Depression since this huge crisis did not end in the collapse of capitalism but brought Keynesianism and socialist practices to the agenda of world states.<sup>483</sup> Moreover, Cem praised Bernstein's idea of transforming SDP into a mass party since he also believed that a party which solely represents the working class cannot embrace the whole society and could not find solutions to many problems.<sup>484</sup> Likewise, İsmail Cem adopted Bernstein's constructive attitude in politics and criticized the destructive aspects of revolutionary Marxism.<sup>485</sup> Another similarity between the two thinkers was that they both saw democracy as a means and an end in itself in order to realize a democratic socialist government which could be developed in an evolutionary way within a capitalist regime.<sup>486</sup>

According to İsmail Cem, the second important source of social democratic ideology was Karl Kautsky<sup>487</sup>. Although Kautsky was at the beginning known as an ardent opponent of Bernstein's revisionism and called himself a consistent orthodox Marxist during his whole political-intellectual life<sup>488</sup>, following the 1905 Russian Revolution<sup>489</sup> Kautsky became closer to social democracy and struggled against

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<sup>483</sup> İsmail Cem, *Sosyal Demokrasi Ya Da Demokratik Sosyalizm Nedir, Ne Değildir*, 88.

<sup>484</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 90-91.

<sup>485</sup> *ibid.*, p. 92.

<sup>486</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 94-96.

<sup>487</sup> Karl Kautsky (1854-1938) was an important ideologue of socialism and social democracy who became a leading figure in the Marxist intelligentsia and German Social Democratic Party especially after the death of Friedrich Engels.

<sup>488</sup> Deniz Kavukçuoğlu, *Sosyal Demokraside Temel Eğilimler*, p. 37.

<sup>489</sup> The 1905 Russian Revolution was a wave of mass political demonstrations that took place in the Russian Empire. These demonstrations also included terrorism and armed clashes. 1905 events led to the establishment of a limited constitutional monarchy in Russia as well as the creation of a multi-





orthodox Marxist views defended by Rosa Luxemburg and many others.<sup>490</sup> In fact, Karl Kautsky represented the middle way in SPD between Bernstein and revisionists, and Luxemburg and radicals, and tried to reconcile these two wings.<sup>491</sup> Kautsky during his whole life never supported Lenin and Bolshevism and in that sense became the second important base of democratic socialism or social democracy. Kautsky's main motive that separated his way from Lenin and Bolshevism was that he was not in favor of terrorism and terroristic methods. In his view, terrorism degenerated socialism and this could be prevented only through the rejection of terrorist methods and the acceptance of democracy.<sup>492</sup> His views became so influential in the left that Lenin wrote a book called *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky* with the aim of humiliating him.

İsmail Cem thought that Karl Kautsky's most important contribution to Marxist theory was his idea that a proletarian government could be established not as a result of the increasing alienation (estrangement) and impoverishment of the working class but rather through their increasing wealth, political consciousness and political power.<sup>493</sup> In that sense, Kautsky saw emancipation not in the radicalization of the proletariat but rather in its progress and revised the basic revolutionary motive of orthodox Marxism. For Kautsky, revolution was not about street clashes and political demonstrations; it was about the replacement of a class by another. Reformation, on the other hand, was about the legal changes by the sovereign class.<sup>494</sup> Kautsky's definition of the working class was also broader than many other Marxist thinkers who only insisted on factory workers using their physical labor.

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party system and a Russian Constitution in 1906. However, the tsar would close down the Duma 16 times between 1906 and 1914.

<sup>490</sup> İsmail Cem, *Sosyal Demokrasi Ya Da Demokratik Sosyalizm Nedir, Ne Değildir*, p. 99.

<sup>491</sup> Haluk Özdalga, *Sosyal Demokrasinin Kuruluşu*, p. 51.

<sup>492</sup> İsmail Cem, *Sosyal Demokrasi Ya Da Demokratik Sosyalizm Nedir, Ne Değildir*, p. 101.

<sup>493</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 102-103.

<sup>494</sup> Haluk Özdalga, *Sosyal Demokrasinin Kuruluşu*, p. 72





Kautsky thought that all employees who do not own the means of production, could be considered as workers and physical activity was not a necessity.<sup>495</sup> In Cem's view, another contribution of Kautsky was related to his ideas on the role of intelligentsia. Kautsky unlike Lenin (who thought that he could replace intellectuals with bureaucrats in the new system), believed that the intelligentsia as a separate class could be added to the struggle of workers and without the support of the intelligentsia a socialist regime could only establish its hegemony through the creation of a new extremely powerful bureaucratic class.<sup>496</sup> Kautsky believed that Bolshevism's biggest mistake was to underestimate the role of intelligentsia as a separate class and to have tried to replace it with terroristic methods and bureaucratic institutions.<sup>497</sup> Another important criticism point of Kautsky was related to the terror methods of Bolshevism. İsmail Cem underlined Kautsky's ideas that violence could be used as a political means when a weak government backed up by a minority was trying to take control.<sup>498</sup> In Kautsky's perspective, terror methods belonged to bourgeois revolutions and a government based on working class (all people not having the means of production) would not need to use such methods if it were backed up by the majority.<sup>499</sup> Similarly, he believed that a government of the proletariat could provide extensive freedoms to other segments of society since it would only expect other segments to accept the decision of the majority of the people.<sup>500</sup> In that sense, he rejected Bolshevik revanchism in addition to terror methods defended by Lenin.<sup>501</sup>

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<sup>495</sup> İsmail Cem, *Sosyal Demokrasi Ya Da Demokratik Sosyalizm Nedir Ne Değildir*, p. 103.

<sup>496</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 104-105.

<sup>497</sup> *ibid.*, p. 105.

<sup>498</sup> *ibid.*, p. 108.

<sup>499</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 108-109.

<sup>500</sup> *ibid.*, p. 110.

<sup>501</sup> *ibid.*, p. 111.





What made Kautsky come closer to social democracy was his idea that a government of workers should accept and respect the existence of its historical anti-thesis -that is the bourgeois class- because otherwise it would soon transform itself into a regime of terror that would always create and destroy its opposition.<sup>502</sup> This meant the acceptance of the bourgeoisie and separated Kautsky's ways from those of some other Marxists.<sup>503</sup> İsmail Cem points out that this approach directed Kautsky to embrace representative and parliamentary democracy which was often labeled as the classical or bourgeois democracy by orthodox Marxists.<sup>504</sup> Kautsky's only condition for this was the establishment of a political party truly representing the interests of the working class with full scale democratic political rights.<sup>505</sup> In that sense, Kautsky supported pluralist representative and parliamentary democracy and thought that a developed, highly conscious working class would easily take over the government since it constituted the majority of the society. By choosing democracy and parliamentary methods instead of political violence, Kautsky declared himself as an evolutionary socialist (it was also in conformity with his Darwinist understanding in science) rather than revolutionary one and opened a way for social democracy.<sup>506</sup>

İsmail Cem tried to formulate and base his social democratic ideas basically on Kautsky and Bernstein, two founding names of the social democratic ideology. However, Cem followed the European social democratic and socialist parties very closely during his entire life and was especially affected by the success of French socialists in the early 1980s under the leadership of François Mitterrand. In the 1990s, Cem this time seemed to be affected by the British Labor Party and its successful and charismatic leader Tony Blair and his ideology known as the "third

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<sup>502</sup> İsmail Cem, *Sosyal Demokrasi Ya Da Demokratik Sosyalizm Nedir, Ne Değildir*, p. 112.

<sup>503</sup> *ibid.*, p. 113.

<sup>504</sup> *ibid.*, p. 113.

<sup>505</sup> *ibid.*, p. 114.

<sup>506</sup> *ibid.*, p. 116.





way” or “Blairism”. While liberals were celebrating the fall of Berlin Wall and the collapse of USSR as the ultimate victory of liberalism, social democrats including İsmail Cem and Ercan Karakaş were claiming that the neo-liberal world order could not be successful and the role of social democracy had increased in this new context.<sup>507</sup> Cem also knew and accepted that social democracy was a historical product of European class struggles and these ideologies should be adapted and reformulated when applied to Turkish society. While criticizing radicalist aspects of Kemalism and praising social democracy, Cem in fact wanted to formulate a moderate social democratic-Kemalist synthesis that would embrace Turkish society and that would be convenient to democracy and current political realities.

### **3.11. Contributions**

As a public intellectual, İsmail Cem deserves to be analyzed closely mostly because of his peculiar position and original views that are not part of classical Kemalist or leftist views in Turkey. Cem’s important and original position in Turkish intellectual life could be categorized under five main headings.

First of all, Cem’s curiosity and admiration of the Ottoman system was a kind of revolution in the Turkish left since the Ottoman past was a taboo for decades in Turkey, especially in the leftist-Kemalist intellectual circles. Thus, Cem made an important contribution by analyzing and praising the Ottoman past and trying to reconcile Kemalist-leftist segments with their history. In that sense, Cem tried to counter balance the radicalist aspects of the early Republican period and to realize an intellectual peace between the Republic and the Ottoman State. While doing this, he was thinking beyond predetermined patterns (such as a leftist and Republican

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<sup>507</sup> Ercan Karakaş, “Sosyal Demokrasi Arayışları”, p. 252.





intellectual could not have interest in Ottoman past) and breaking the intellectual routine. This mentality also constituted the basis of Cem's understanding of social peace between intellectual elite and ordinary pious masses. His interest and sympathy towards Turkey's Ottoman past and system later helped Cem a lot when he became Foreign Minister in developing a macro-strategy of expanding Turkey's political, economical and cultural power through Ottoman historical and cultural assets and becoming a regional power (this will be explained in Chapter 6).

Secondly, Cem tried to find a leftist-socialist vein or root in the Ottoman past and focused on the solidarist and communitarian aspects of the Ottoman system instead of solely focusing on the characteristics of Marxism, which he thought as a product of harsh class struggles in Europe. In that sense, Cem tried to adapt Marxism and later social democracy to Turkish society and made efforts to create a synthesis. Cem's efforts for a synthesis and his creativity were very valuable since Turkish intelligentsia for many years had worked only as a translation agency and copied what they had saw and read in Europe. Moreover, Ottoman studies for long decades stayed as an area reserved for Turkish nationalists and Islamists and Cem's interest in the Ottoman system and his search for a peculiar Turkish left taking with roots in the Ottoman system was a pioneering effort.

Thirdly, although he was from a modern, wealthy Istanbulite family, in his personal and intellectual life Cem had always tried to use empathy and understand people who are different from himself as well as political views that were different from his ideas. That is why, although leftism was his primary identity starting from the 1970s, Cem has always been a trustworthy democrat and believed in the necessity of pluralism in politics. Humanism and making efforts to understand the other were not ordinary qualities that had been seen in Turkish intellectuals





especially during the conditions of the Cold War, at a time when intellectuals (similar to political parties and masses) were strongly polarized as leftist or rightist.

Fourthly, although İsmail Cem was coming from a Westernized family and he had a Western type education in Robert College and Lausanne University, during his whole intellectual and political life he tried to base his ideas on local and national values and tried to take Islamist and nationalist groups' advantage of being native. In fact, Cem's interest in the Ottoman system or his political project of the Anatolian Left (together with Baykal) were in conformity with his political stance and were aiming to demolish the walls between ordinary people and RPP and intellectuals.

Fifthly, İsmail Cem especially starting from the 1980s, began to focus on Turkey's political culture and never solely equated electoralism with democracy. As a believer of democracy, he always defended free and fair elections and never supported or approved methods that were outside of democracy in politics (political violence, coups etc.), but Cem underlined that democracy is more of a lifestyle and a political cultural model whose implementation in an economically poor and poorly educated society is not an easy task just by making democratic laws and creating democratic institutions. In that sense, he defended popular vote but not populism.

İsmail Cem's main problematic in the 1970s was the backwardness of Turkey similar to nearly all intellectuals of that period. Cem, as young Turkish intellectual educated in USA and Europe, was probably affected by America's and Europe's development and began to feel sorry for his country's underdevelopment. Similar to many intellectuals of the period, he believed that a state-led socialist leaning economy would help Turkey to develop and grow rapidly and catch up with the developed countries. However, while defending statism, he never advocated a Soviet or Chinese model and stayed closer to European socialism that envisaged a mixed





Keynesian economy similar to the economic policy of the early Republican period in Turkey. But Cem, unlike the single-party period's economic policy, wanted both growth and equal distribution and defended labor classes' rights by criticizing the Kemalist economics for creating a "happy minority". Unlike many intellectuals of this period who advocated a leftist military coup favoring socialism or a student-based revolution from villages or from cities, Cem stayed legal, believing in democratic parliamentary struggle. His ideas resembled Turkish Labor Party's programme about democratic socialism. Cem never believed in adventurism or gauchism and wanted democratic socialist Turkey to be established by parliamentarian methods.

Ismail Cem saw the rise of center-right in Turkey as a natural reaction to bureaucratic modernization of the single-party period that opposed Anatolian people's traditions in some ways. Thus, Cem, contrary to counter-revolution argument of Kemalist-leftist circles, celebrated 1950 elections as a bourgeois revolution or a kind of democratic revolution; however he never approved of DP's economic policy since he thought it favored higher segments of the society such as landowners and bourgeoisie. That DP's foreign policy fully committed to the USA and the West was also a source of problems for Cem. Cem admitted that although the 27 May intervention brought some positive consequences such as the making of 1961 constitution, it started the tradition of military coup in Turkey that harmed Turkish democracy and led to many other military coups. Cem supported stated-led development projects of the JP government and also pointed out that Demirel and Çağlayangil's efforts to create a new multi-dimensional foreign policy were appropriate. Cem also thought that the rise of anti-imperialism and anti-Americanism as well as labor-based socialist and unionist movements in Turkey, frightened





Turkish bourgeoisie and led to the escalation of political violence in the 1970s. Cem was extremely critical of the 12 September regime since that the regime used political violence as a tool to shape the society and the state, suspended or limited all democratic freedoms and rights and also worked in favor of the bourgeoisie.

Starting from the 1980s, Cem's main problem became democracy and democratic culture instead of development. After witnessing the 12 September regime's violent deeds, Cem began to underline the necessity of coexistence and a pluralist model for Turkey in all of his articles and books. This was because there were many different political views because of ethnic, religious and sectarian groups in Turkish society. He tried to show that democracy is not only about institutions and procedures, but also about the flourishing of democratic culture in all parts and institutions of the society. He also had a shy but visible change of opinion about nature of free-market economics. He tried to formulate a social democratic economic policy in conformity with the new world order. In the 1990s, both as a public intellectual and a politician, Cem began to defend "new left" and put forward a comprehensive political project in order to solve Turkey's democracy problems related to civil-military relations, the Kurdish question and political Islam-secularism discussions (these topics will be explained in the fifth chapter). Cem was also one of the rare figures in the Turkish left that tried to unify academic knowledge with societal realities and had always used the term "social democracy" in order to unite very different segments of the society. While criticizing the single-party period, Cem tried to use a moderate and peaceful language and praised some positive aspects of Kemalism such as to provide a smooth transition to pluralist democracy unlike many political Islamists or Kurdish nationalists that denied the positive aspects of the Republic and rejected it as a whole. While criticizing Kemalism and single-party era,





Cem was constructive rather than destructive and that allowed Cem to be better understood and suffer less from prejudices. Although Cem took harsh reactions from Kemalist segment especially in the 1970s, in a sense he advocated a moderate social democratic Kemalism and aimed to reconcile the regime with its opponents at the point of democracy. In that sense, his aim was to glamorize the Republic with full scale democracy and to create a literate, libertarian, productive and egalitarian society by the means of social democracy.





## CHAPTER IV

### CEM AS A POLITICIAN

Although İsmail Cem, a leftist intellectual coming from a wealthy family, was an unusual politician figure for Turkey, his democratic stance and moderate views for Turkey's democratic problems allowed him to attract attentions and gain sympathy from all segments of the Turkish society. Cem's political career started in the 1980s and reached its peak in the late 1990s and early 2000s as the Foreign Minister of Turkey. However, Cem's leadership and Prime Ministry ideals could not be realized and he said farewell to politics after the failure of his New Turkey Party.

#### **4.1. Understanding of Democracy and the “New Left”**

Although İsmail Cem became famous and gained popularity as a young leftist journalist and public intellectual and also the innovative director of TRT in the 1970s, today he is remembered most as a social democratic politician. In fact, İsmail Cem had always been in politics and previously became a member of RPP first in the late 1950s and later 1970s and organized some activities for the party. However, Cem's





professional political career started in the 1980s and he became a member of SDPP in 1985. He was elected İstanbul deputy from SDPP in 1987 and 1991. Cem's active political career coincided with the liberal transformation of the country after 12 September 1980 military coup.

Following the 12 September 1980 military coup and the transformation of Turkey from above which sought a more liberalized and internationalized economy, İsmail Cem also had to reconsider his "leftism" and embraced a new social democratic understanding based on pluralism and an economy based on free-market economics. His understanding of democracy was weakened with regards to economic democracy and he embraced free-market economics but with the addition of the necessity of a social state and equality of opportunity for everyone. In addition, Cem began to emphasize the positive qualities of a democratic regime much more often than before and tried to define democracy. Turkish transformation and Cem's personal transformation also coincided with the weakening and the collapse of USSR and the newly established hegemony of Western type democracy and free-market economics as the only and ultimate truth all around the world. The Western left was reconsidering itself and trying to create middle roads between capitalism and socialism as the "third way" and Cem was following these developments very closely. By being a graduate student in Political Science in Paris and by witnessing the take-over of government by French socialists and François Mitterrand, Cem improved his knowledge on modern social democracy. The topic of his master's thesis was "democratic socialism" and thus, Cem had the chance to read the whole social democracy literature especially the writings of Karl Kautsky and Eduard Bernstein. He was renewing himself and forming the basis of his social democratic ideology and he studied new theoretical outlooks on modern social





democracy and also prepared himself for active politics. Meanwhile, the deeds of the authoritarian military regime in Turkey created a strong support for increasing civil democratic liberties and also brought people from different political views closer. That is why Cem, along with people from very different worldviews, published a short article in a book entitled *Democracy* and criticized the 12 September regime and tried to underline the advantages of democracy after his return to Turkey.<sup>1</sup> Cem's article was about the supremacy of "pluralist democracy" and its name was "The Necessity to Coexist" (*Birbirine Katlanmak Zorunluluğu*). Alongside Cem, there were articles by intellectuals from both left and right such as Erdal İnönü, Cemil Meriç, İhsan Sabri Çağlayangil, Cahit Tanyol, Mehmet Ali Aybar praising the virtues of democracy. Cem underlined and criticized the monist ultimate truth understanding in Turkish politics which was making a pluralist democracy very difficult in Turkey.<sup>2</sup>

The new position of Cem was primarily caused by his understanding of democracy. Cem, unlike many of its other definitions, had always highlighted democracy as a lifestyle.<sup>3</sup> He thought that in order to consolidate a democratic regime, democratic practices should be adopted in all institutions and democratic norms should be internalized by all segments of the society. In that sense, Cem refused to define democracy solely as electoral procedures and underlined that democratic norms should be spread everywhere, to families, to political parties, to schools, to mosques and to barracks.<sup>4</sup> Cem's particular approach to democracy and his insistence on democratic culture made his views closer to the cultural approach in democratization studies. In

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<sup>1</sup> İsmail Cem. 1984. "Birbirine 'Katlanmak' zorunluluğu" in *DEMOKRASİ Ortak kitap 2*. İstanbul: YAZKO Yayınları.

<sup>2</sup> İsmail Cem, "Birbirine 'Katlanmak' zorunluluğu" in *DEMOKRASİ Ortak kitap 2*, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> İsmail Cem, *Siyaset Yazıları: "Geçiş Dönemi Türkiye'si" (1981-1984 Yılları)*, p. 13.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, p. 17.





addition to classical modernization theory (Seymour Martin Lipset), structural, class-based analysis (Barrington Moore) and transition approach (Dankwart Rustow), the fourth approach in comparative democratization studies is related to political culture. This approach was first used by Gabriel Abraham Almond and Sidney Verba in their work *The Civic Culture*<sup>5</sup>. Almond and Verba argued that there was a positive correlation between civil society organizations and people's participation into civil society organizations and a country's democratic consolidation. In that sense, Almond and Verba categorized societies into three groups as parochial, subject and participant societies. Scholars including Ronald Inglehart, Valery Bunce and Robert Putnam maintained Almond and Verba's approach and developed the cultural approach in democratization studies. Cem's peculiar approach in Turkish politics as defining democracy as a lifestyle and aiming to create a participant society is similar to the cultural approach in democratization studies. Throughout his political career, Cem had always exalted democracy and aimed to spread democratic values everywhere in his country.

Secondly, İsmail Cem thought that in a country like Turkey where statist-bureaucratic tendencies are very strong, the state should support civil society initiatives and present this as a lifestyle and as a requirement of participatory democracy.<sup>6</sup> He supported Professor Şerif Mardin's thesis of center-periphery cleavage in Turkish society but did not blame the Turkish Republic for this dichotomy and pointed out that the Republic inherited this from the Ottoman State.<sup>7</sup> According to Cem, the center-

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<sup>5</sup> Gabriel Abraham Almond and Sidney Verba. 1963. *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

<sup>6</sup> İsmail Cem, *Sol'daki Arayış*, p. 57.

<sup>7</sup> İsmail Cem, *Siyaset Yazıları: "Geçiş Dönemi Türkiye" (1981-1984 Yılları)*, p. 13.





periphery cleavage and this indifference of the periphery was the most important factor that prevented a healthy democratic regime in Turkey. That is why political struggles in Turkey were often the product of intra-elite disputes and bureaucratic groupings.<sup>8</sup> In that sense, Cem wrote that Turkish democratic history was not a product of class struggles like in Western societies, but rather the consequence of the dominance of a new Westernized bureaucratic group and the lack of democratic understanding in many institutions including political parties.<sup>9</sup> Cem believed that this situation was consolidated by the education system especially with regard to the teaching of history which is based on the struggle between good and bad and ultimate truth.<sup>10</sup> He also asserted that thanks to the transformation of the country that started in 1946, Turkey is now more similar to a Western country considering its class-based relations unlike its different social history and Turkey is now obliged to a democratic regime.<sup>11</sup> According to Cem, in order to improve and consolidate Turkish democracy, we have to change our habits and characteristics that are not in conformity with modern democracy.<sup>12</sup> For Cem, the leftist border of the new left was to accept pluralist democracy not as a means but as an end in itself, whereas the rightist border was to be at least democratic.<sup>13</sup>

Thirdly, similar to the Marxist revisionism, Cem's leftist stance after 1980 was built upon pluralist democracy and peaceful coexistence. In his view, first of all, democracy was a regime that could be successfully processed only if political struggles were made within democratic borders without violence.<sup>14</sup> Secondly, a democratic regime

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<sup>8</sup> İsmail Cem, *Siyaset Yazıları: "Geçiş Dönemi Türkiye'si" (1981-1984 Yılları)*, p. 14.

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>13</sup> Cem, İsmail, *Sosyal Demokrasinin Bunalımdan Çıkış Yolları, Tanım, Kimlik, İdeoloji Sorunları*, p. 4.

<sup>14</sup> İsmail Cem, *Siyaset Yazıları: "Geçiş Dönemi Türkiye'si" (1981-1984 Yılları)*, pp. 19-20.





necessitates a kind of cooperation and accord in certain issues about the characteristics and procedures of the regime between the real representatives of different social forces.<sup>15</sup> Cem thought that what made democracy desirable and legitimate was also its ability to perpetuate the peaceful coexistence of rival forces.<sup>16</sup> In that sense, democracy was the free struggle of rival forces within a legal and peaceful perspective, where trying to destroy a rival force would mean nothing but renouncing the democratic presence of another force.<sup>17</sup> That is why a democratic regime should represent the balance of social forces and should not favor a particular segment or a social group.<sup>18</sup>

Cem also tried to classify the problems of Turkish democracy into four headings. In his view, the first and the most important problem was the lack of participation.<sup>19</sup> In Cem's opinion, this was caused because people saw politics as a sporting match between different teams and did not internalize democracy as a means to change the conditions of their lives.<sup>20</sup> The second problem Cem determined was the lack of compromise and accord (*uzlaşma*) in Turkish politics. Cem thought this could be achieved through dialogue and empathy.<sup>21</sup> Thirdly, Cem thought that in Turkish democracy there is a problem of representation since political parties do not have strong links with people (such as social democratic parties' links with syndicates in Western democracies) and a very low intra-party democracy which do not allow politics to address the real issues and problems of ordinary people.<sup>22</sup> The fourth problem Cem stated was the low level of internalization of democracy by Turkish people and Turkey's institutions, which could

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<sup>15</sup> İsmail Cem, *Siyaset Yazıları: "Geçiş Dönemi Türkiye'si" (1981-1984 Yılları)*, p. 20.

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 26-27.

<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*, p. 27.





be surpassed only with the spread of democratic lifestyles everywhere.<sup>23</sup> Cem also underlined that democracy is the only thing that does not have an alternative in a democratic regime and it should be carefully protected and developed.<sup>24</sup> For all these reasons, Cem and Baykal underlined the importance of tolerance and empathy in their Anatolian Left (*Anadolu Solu*) or New Left ideology, which meant tolerance for Sunni religious piety but also at the same time tolerance for Alevi community.<sup>25</sup>

The fourth aspect of Cem's new ideological stance was related to the underdevelopment issue. While starting from the 1970s İsmail Cem had always emphasized Turkey's backwardness and supported state led development models, after the 12 September coup Cem began to support the view that Turkey could reach the standards of European democracy through the EU process.<sup>26</sup> Cem probably witnessed and was encouraged by the quick transformation and democratization of some European countries including Portugal, Spain and Greece in the 1980s but did not explain in detail how materialistic conditions had changed in Turkey from the 1970s to 1990s. In that sense, Cem's transformation from an Eastern socialist to Western social democrat was concretized on his change of stance about Turkey's underdevelopment.

İsmail Cem also tried to explain why democracy is the best regime and why people should accept, internalize and carefully protect democracy in his book *Siyaset Yazıları: "Geçiş Dönemi Türkiye'si" (1981-1984 Yılları)*. He claimed that if Turkey had not transformed into a democratic regime in 1950, there would be still villages without electricity and no infrastructure in the country because democracy allowed the Anatolian

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<sup>23</sup> İsmail Cem, *Siyaset Yazıları: "Geçiş Dönemi Türkiye'si" (1981-1984 Yılları)*, p. 27.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>25</sup> Ayşe Güneş Ayata, "Republican People's Party", p. 111.

<sup>26</sup> Kurtuluş Kayalı also criticized Cem's sudden transformation about Turkey's backwardness. See; Kurtuluş Kayalı, "ATÜT Tartışmalarının Hafife Alınmasının Nedenleri ve Bu Tartışmaların Atlanan Ruhunu", p. 1093.





people, especially the peasants, to be considered important for the center because of populism to attract votes.<sup>27</sup> Democracy for Cem was a means to provide better life conditions and improved chance for people to develop themselves.<sup>28</sup> This could be achieved only through spreading democratic culture and giving people messages of peace, tolerance and understanding to each other.<sup>29</sup> For Cem, there was no such thing as second class democracy or less developed democracy and democracy should be achieved totally as a whole. Thus, political struggles should be made within the borders of democratic pluralism and Turkey should make peace with different lifestyles and its past.<sup>30</sup> Since democracy is a universal regime, Turkey also should adopt democracy with universal principles.<sup>31</sup> At this point, we can easily notice that Cem's critical approach towards Westernization and Western type democracy had changed in time and Cem began to embrace Western democratic ideals as universal norms.

İsmail Cem wrote that the democratic transformation of Turkey forced the state to become a regulatory state (*düzenleyici devlet*) by giving up some of its authority of the past. This meant a transition to regulatory state from banning state (*yasakçı devlet*).<sup>32</sup> While this transformation meant increasing political freedoms and the promotion of liberal democracy in the political sphere, in the economic sphere it also promoted free-market economics. Cem knew that liberal economics (free-market economics) could be implemented in two ways; either within an authoritarian regime such as in the Philippines, South Korea and Chili or within democratic regimes such as in Western

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<sup>27</sup> İsmail Cem, *Siyaset Yazıları: "Geçiş Dönemi Türkiye'si" (1981-1984 Yılları)*, p. 35.

<sup>28</sup> *ibid.*, p. 36.

<sup>29</sup> *ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>30</sup> *ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>31</sup> *ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*, p. 30.





European countries.<sup>33</sup> Cem wanted Turkey to become a democratic free-market country like Western democracies and that is why he always emphasized the necessity of democracy. He claimed that the new left would be based on the new social democratic economic model. This model would embrace whole segments, social classes of the society but would be based primarily on working classes similar to European social democratic parties including the French Socialist Party, Swedish Social Democratic Party and Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE).<sup>34</sup> Cem insisted that neo-liberalism tried to present economics purely as a technical matter and suppress all alternative projects, but in fact in economics there have always been ideological preferences.<sup>35</sup> In his view, new left projects should be prepared from a macro perspective and economic preferences should be congruent with general ideological and social-cultural preferences.<sup>36</sup> Cem thought that in time the neo-liberal attacks that started in the 1970s became very strong and elitism began to be perceived as normal. That is why he thought that the left should make a new leap forward and save humanity from the egoistic, elitist approaches of neo-liberalism.<sup>37</sup> In his perspective, the new left should be based primarily on freedom and secondly on equality but if it only promotes freedom, equality would not be desirable if it limits freedom.<sup>38</sup> In that sense, Cem criticized the Soviet model and its bureaucratic structure that promotes inequalities and limits freedoms.<sup>39</sup> According to Cem, the lack of freedom and equality obsession caused in the end the

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<sup>33</sup> İsmail Cem, *Siyaset Yazıları: "Geçiş Dönemi Türkiye'si" (1981-1984 Yılları)*, p. 46.

<sup>34</sup> İsmail Cem, "Sosyaldemokrat Ekonomi Modelinde Emeğin Rolü ve Sorumluluğu", p. 54.

<sup>35</sup> *ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>37</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 56-57.

<sup>38</sup> *ibid.*, p. 57.

<sup>39</sup> *ibid.*, p. 58.





collapse of the Soviet model.<sup>40</sup> Unlike social democratic movements, Cem thought that communist and Soviet models looked at freedom as an instrumental concept whereas for the European left freedom was an end and objection in itself (Cem says that social democrats should seek freedom for freedom's sake).<sup>41</sup> The new left economic model, unlike the Soviet model, should try to expand private property and richness for the whole society but not at the expense of freedom.<sup>42</sup> In that sense, Cem was advocating free-market economics that would work positively for everyone and tried to orient the Turkish left to give up from its statist economic and political obsessions.<sup>43</sup> In his view, the role of the state in economics should be to make necessary organizations for the equally and well-balanced allocation of resources.<sup>44</sup> In order to achieve this goal, privatizations or nationalizations could be made according to social needs.

In the early 1980s Cem was still claiming that he was defending classical European socialism and not a “third way”, but in time he began to use the terms “third way” and “new left” more frequently. Together with Deniz Baykal, İsmail Cem tried to explain what he meant by “new left” and wrote a booklet<sup>45</sup> and a book<sup>46</sup>. Baykal and Cem stated the aim of the new left as a renewal in the left and in Social Democratic Populist Party (SDPP) by initiating a theoretical debate about the essence of social democracy.<sup>47</sup> The first point they criticized was the presence of nationalism and statism (étatisme) in Kemalism's “six arrows” which constituted the basis of RPP and SDPP.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> İsmail Cem, “Sosyal Demokrasi Açısından Verimlilik-Eşitlik İlişkisi ve Çelişkisi”, p. 48.

<sup>41</sup> *ibid.*, p. 49.

<sup>42</sup> İsmail Cem, “Sosyaldemokrat Ekonomi Modelinde Emeğin Rolü ve Sorumluluğu”, p. 59.

<sup>43</sup> İsmail Cem, *Sosyal Demokrasinin Bunalımdan Çıkış Yolları, Tanım, Kimlik, İdeoloji Sorunları*, p. 5.

<sup>44</sup> İsmail Cem, “Sosyaldemokrat Ekonomi Modelinde Emeğin Rolü ve Sorumluluğu”, p. 60.

<sup>45</sup> İsmail Cem and Deniz Baykal. 1992. *SHP'de “YENİ SOL”un Türkiye Programı “DEĞİŞİM”*.

<sup>46</sup> İsmail Cem and Deniz Baykal. 1992. *Yeni Sol*. İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi.

<sup>47</sup> İsmail Cem and Deniz Baykal, *SHP'de “YENİ SOL”un Türkiye Programı “DEĞİŞİM”*, p. 5.

<sup>48</sup> *ibid.*, p. 5.





They also tried to determine the problems of Turkish democracy and offer their solution proposals. The first problem they underlined was the low legitimacy and prestige of the parliament in general and the institution of politics due to widespread corruption. Baykal and Cem claimed that the working of the parliament should be more transparent and open to the participation of the people and nongovernmental organizations.<sup>49</sup> The second important problem of Turkey was poor economic performance in their view. What they offered in order to correct Turkey's economic performance was to end clandestine unregistered economy (*kayıtdışı ekonomi*) and to increase state's tax revenues in order to spend more on infrastructural investments.<sup>50</sup> They also complained about the lack of success of the state enterprises and offered privatization or autonomization (*özerkleşme*) for unproductive enterprises.<sup>51</sup> They claimed that the state's first aim in economics was to reduce the unemployment rate and to create a growing and more equally shared economy.<sup>52</sup> The third problem expressed by Baykal and Cem was the lack of equality of opportunity in Turkey and the presence of elite privileged groups in all sectors and parts of the country.<sup>53</sup> In their view, equality of opportunity could be provided for everyone by developing underdeveloped regions and segments of the society and improving the education, health and social security system of the country. The fourth problem in their perspective was the existence of weak civil society in Turkey. In order to overcome this problem, they offered a participatory democracy where nongovernmental organizations would actively engage in the decision-making process and a peaceful, democratic

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<sup>49</sup> İsmail Cem and Deniz Baykal, *SHP'de "YENİ SOL"un Türkiye Programı "DEĞİŞİM"*, p. 6.

<sup>50</sup> *ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>51</sup> *ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>52</sup> *ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*, p. 9.





country in which all lifestyles could freely live, would be created.<sup>54</sup> The fifth issue they stated was the new and more democratic and tolerant interpretation of laicism or secularism which would end polarization between different lifestyles and social groups.<sup>55</sup> In that sense, Baykal and Cem showed a tolerant approach to the headscarf (*türban*) issue and aimed to make a revision of classical statist secularism. Sixthly, they aimed to overcome the Kurdish question by offering land reform, economic development and individual cultural-democratic freedoms for ethnic identities.<sup>56</sup> Lastly, they offered to revise the classical foreign policy of Turkey and wanted Turkey to become a more influential actor in international relations by using its historical-cultural ties with different countries. They stated that EU membership is a main goal for the country but this should not be the only aim of Turkish foreign policy.<sup>57</sup>

#### 4. 2. Contemporary Turkey

After his two terms in the TGNA as SDPP's İstanbul deputy and his short Ministry of Culture, Cem was elected Kayseri deputy twice from DLP in 1995 and 1999. After 28 February process, he entered into the office of Foreign Ministry. With his successful foreign policy strategies, Turkey took important steps concerning struggle against terrorism and became a full member candidate for European Union (Cem's foreign policy will be explained in Chapter 6). He was the star of the coalition government and he enjoyed a great support from European media and political circles. In Turkey too, he had media support and public sympathy for his political successes and

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<sup>54</sup> İsmail Cem and Deniz Baykal, *SHP'de "YENİ SOL"un Türkiye Programı "DEĞİŞİM"*, p. 10.

<sup>55</sup> *ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>56</sup> *ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>57</sup> *ibid.*, p. 12.





personality. So, just before the dissolution of coalition government in 2002, İsmail Cem took his chances with the new party he established; the New Turkey Party (NTP).

İsmail Cem took a lot of support from the media and liberal and leftist intelligentsia due to his successes in the office of Foreign Ministry. Cem claimed that his party would constitute the government of contemporary majority and would be a party that would solve problems by change instead of creating new problems.<sup>58</sup> He underlined that Turkey should “fear nothing but its fears” and should become a world state in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>59</sup> He presented his party as a center-left party that could embrace everyone, all segments of the society.<sup>60</sup> Cem praised the Kemalist legacy of the left but also added that modern social democracy’s aspects should be added to classical Kemalist principles in order to create the government of 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>61</sup> He presented a leftism based on pluralism instead of statism, libertarianism instead of authoritarianism.<sup>62</sup> His social democratic project was based on seven main principles: equality of opportunity for everyone, job opportunity and employment for everyone, social security for those who need it, abolition of privileges in the country, freedom, democracy and peace within the country, a developing-growing economy, and security for all alternative lifestyles.<sup>63</sup> He defined his party’s mission as “renovate Turkey” and like the name of the party tried to create a new and democratic Turkey.<sup>64</sup>

After the failure of New Turkey Party in the 2002 general elections, İsmail Cem did not resign from active politics until his party’s merge with RPP on 24 October 2004

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<sup>58</sup> İsmail Cem, *Yeni Bir Türkiye İçin...*, p. 5.

<sup>59</sup> *ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>60</sup> *ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>61</sup> İsmail Cem, *Sosyal Demokrasinin Geleceği*, p. 15.

<sup>62</sup> *ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>63</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

<sup>64</sup> YTP, *Yeni Türkiye (YTP) Parti Programı*, p. 7.





and continued to head NTP.<sup>65</sup> He underlined that his party would keep major social democratic principles, unlike the neo-liberal transformation of European social democrats that led to failure of Tony Blair and decaying British social democracy, but it will also try new methods in order to reach people.<sup>66</sup> Cem thought that social democracy's classical voters consisted of middle-class segments and working class and that his party should primarily embrace these segments.<sup>67</sup> He admitted that social democracy could not get over the collapse of USSR and rising neo-liberal hegemony but it should face the new conditions of the century and especially globalization as soon as possible.<sup>68</sup> He promised political ethic law and a reform in the judicial system in order to democratize Turkey and bring it closer to European standards.<sup>69</sup> Environmentalism and environmental policies were also a new aspect of NTP similar to the Green parties of European countries.<sup>70</sup> Cem also followed the Justice and Development Party's performance very closely and brought harsh criticism to the JDP on some issues including foreign policy, economics and secularism.

According to Cem, the secularism-Islamism clash in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century (after 9/11 and the American invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq) brought a dangerous polarization in Turkey and created a false dichotomy between the RPP and the JDP.<sup>71</sup> He analyzed the 2002 elections as the race of fears since pious people were afraid of RPP's harsh secularism rhetoric and secularist segments were afraid of JDP's Islamist slogans

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<sup>65</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, pp. 250-251.

<sup>66</sup> İsmail Cem, *Sosyal Demokrasinin Geleceği*, pp. 20-21.

<sup>67</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 26-27.

<sup>68</sup> *ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>69</sup> YTP, *Yeni Türkiye (YTP) Parti Programı*, p. 18.

<sup>70</sup> *ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>71</sup> İsmail Cem, *Yeni Bir Türkiye İçin...*, p. 11.





and policies.<sup>72</sup> Similar to his thesis of the 1970s, he criticized bureaucratic approaches in the left and asserted that rightist and Islamist parties (JDP in 2002 elections) gathered leftist votes due to their close stance to people.<sup>73</sup> He criticized RPP for being the defender of status quo unlike his party the NTP, which was innovative and reformist.<sup>74</sup> He argued that the NTP would not be a party that would continue the old feuds but rather it would unify and embrace different segments of the society.<sup>75</sup> He also expressed his fears about the JDP although he stated that he did not approach the JDP with prejudice. Cem basically defined the JDP as the party of grand capital.<sup>76</sup> However, he supported the JDP's reforms about Turkey's full accession to EU.<sup>77</sup> In his view, full accession to EU was very important for Turkey but it should not be turned into an obsession and if it was not realized, it would not mean the end of the world.<sup>78</sup>

İsmail Cem also blamed the JDP for making secret agreements with USA about helping the U.S. invasion of Iraq.<sup>79</sup> He warned the government not to be involved in invasion of Iraq unless a decision was made under the roof of the United Nations.<sup>80</sup> In his view, Turkey should keep its close relationship with the USA but this did not mean accepting all American proposals.<sup>81</sup> He criticized the JDP government's disrespectful approach to the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus' President of the Republic Rauf Denktaş.<sup>82</sup> Considering some of its practices in foreign policy and economics, he labeled

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<sup>72</sup> İsmail Cem, *Yeni Bir Türkiye İçin...*, p. 12.

<sup>73</sup> *ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>74</sup> *ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>75</sup> YTP, *Yeni Türkiye (YTP) Parti Programı*, p. 9.

<sup>76</sup> İsmail Cem, *Yeni Bir Türkiye İçin...*, p. 40.

<sup>77</sup> *ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>78</sup> İsmail Cem, *Sosyal Demokrasinin Geleceği*, p. 17.

<sup>79</sup> İsmail Cem, *Yeni Bir Türkiye İçin...*, pp. 44-45, 49, 57.

<sup>80</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 45-46.

<sup>81</sup> *ibid.*, p. 54.

<sup>82</sup> *ibid.*, p. 47.





the JDP as a party having the mentality of a colony (*müstemleke zihniyeti*)<sup>83</sup> and wrote that self-respect (*haysiyet*) is very necessary in foreign policy.<sup>84</sup> He encouraged the JDP officials for being more courageous and self-respectful in international relations for being respected and powerful.<sup>85</sup> By praising himself, he thought that he handled a Turkey on the peak of foreign policy in 2002 but the JDP soon lost this position and transformed Turkey into a weaker actor.<sup>86</sup> Especially, the JDP's weak reaction after the capture and hooding of Turkish soldiers by the American army was a scandal in Cem's perspective.<sup>87</sup> In his view, the JDP economically favored grand capital instead of the people on the street, was acting without any backbone in foreign policy, was defending some policies that were not in conformity with the secular principles of the Republic and was spreading corruption and immorality.<sup>88</sup> He also found the JDP dissimulative (*takiyyeci*) in some issues and thought that it was a marginal and highly ideological party that forcefully dictated its program from above.<sup>89</sup>

Cem also made a self-criticism of Turkish social democracy's legacy of three decades. He primarily stated that Turkish social democracy began to move away from social democratic principles and embraced neo-liberalism starting from the 1980s.<sup>90</sup> Secondly, he thought that the left was not successful in renewing itself and reaching the dynamism of the society.<sup>91</sup> Third, he asserted that the left has turned into its bureaucratic-elitist structure before 1972 due to the erroneous policies of RPP and

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<sup>83</sup> İsmail Cem, *Yeni Bir Türkiye İçin...*, pp. 48-50.

<sup>84</sup> *ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>85</sup> *ibid.*, p. 58.

<sup>86</sup> *ibid.*, p. 64.

<sup>87</sup> İsmail Cem, *Sosyal Demokrasinin Geleceği*, p. 59.

<sup>88</sup> *ibid.*, p. 54.

<sup>89</sup> *ibid.*, p. 58.

<sup>90</sup> *ibid.*, p. 50.

<sup>91</sup> *ibid.*, p. 51.





fourth, the left has distanced itself from its classical proletarian voters.<sup>92</sup> Fifth, he believed that the left could not reach people's sensitivities and their internal world.<sup>93</sup> Sixth, Turkish social democracy in his view was not able to develop solutions to macro problems of Turkey such as unemployment.<sup>94</sup> Moreover, he criticized the Turkish left for not being democratic in itself while trying to be social.<sup>95</sup> Also, he thought that the left did not aim to expand its voters and always tried to keep what was in his hands, forgetting its aim of being in power. Lastly, the Turkish left could not spread hope and enthusiasm to Turkish people and in a sense left poor people and lower segments of the society to the justice of Islamist parties.<sup>96</sup> İsmail Cem also tried to summarize the principles and the aims of new Turkish social democracy as a reconciled, peaceful, libertarian, growing, getting richer, renewing, fairly managed, non-feudal, clean and green Turkey where female-male equality and social solidarity is provided for.<sup>97</sup> He made efforts to create a real social democratic party like the European social democratic parties and gave enormous emphasis to intraparty democracy in NTP's charter (*tüzük*). For instance, NTP charter necessitated a presidential election at a maximum of three years and limited a person's presidency with four terms.<sup>98</sup>

### 4.3. Contributions

İsmail Cem had four terms and 15 years in Turkish Parliament and had a very fruitful political career. Especially during his Foreign Ministry, Cem became a star and

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<sup>92</sup> İsmail Cem, *Sosyal Demokrasinin Geleceği*, p. 51.

<sup>93</sup> *ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>94</sup> *ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>95</sup> *ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>96</sup> *ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>97</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 37-40.

<sup>98</sup> YTP, *Yeni Türkiye Partisi (YTP) Tüzüğü*, p. 33.





was largely credited with Turkey's declaration as a full member candidate during the Helsinki summit in 1999. The capture of PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan and Turkish-Greek rapprochement were other important achievements in Cem's career. However, in addition to Cem's political and international successes, today he is probably remembered most with his humane qualities and kind rhetoric in politics. Coming from a wealthy and well-rooted family, İsmail Cem with his intellectual capacity, mild political debating style and humanistic approach to politics in a sense brought courtesy to Turkish politics. Cem's kind political style was in fact a reflection of his humanist social democratic worldview. After his passing, all columnists and politicians were underlining Cem's humane personality and mild manners. For instance, *Milliyet* newspaper columnist Fikret Bila wrote that "Cem was the closest politician to Ecevit in terms of courtesy" and another *Milliyet* writer Melih Aşık stated that "Cem was friendly to all political analysts and journalists even to those who harshly criticize him".<sup>99</sup> DLP leader Zeki Sezer also stated that Cem's most important legacy in politics was his courtesy and ability to reach consensus.<sup>100</sup> During his whole political career, Cem got positive reactions from different political circles because of his democratic, humanist stance and polite debating style. Cem's courtesy brought prestige to Turkish politics especially compared to later ill-mannered political discussions and polemics. Cem's style in politics in fact resembled the skills of a successful diplomat with a determinate but elegant debating style<sup>101</sup>. In that sense, Cem could be labeled as a diplomat politician

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<sup>99</sup> *Hürriyet* newspaper internet archive, retrieved on 05.05.2010 from <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/5828913.asp?m=1&gid=112&srld=3428&oid=1>.

<sup>100</sup> *Hürriyet* newspaper internet archive, retrieved on 05.05.2010 from <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/5828913.asp?m=1&gid=112&srld=3428&oid=1>.

<sup>101</sup> His cousin Abdi İpekçi also defined Cem as "stubbornness enclosed with soft material (yumuşak malzeme içine sarılmış inat)" in order to explain his tolerant but also determinate personality. See; Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 70.





rather than charismatic populist or demagogue type of politician. He could be also described as an iron fist in velvet gloves because of his gentle but not retreating debating and negotiating style. These qualities also helped Turkey to develop stronger cooperative relations with countries that have political problems or historical conflicts with Turkey. When he was Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cem's friendship with his counterpart Mr. Papandreou and his peaceful and kind rhetoric allowed two countries to get over their historical struggles and recent political crisis. Cem's diplomat politician qualities might also have played a role in Turkish people's perception of him as a great man of duty, but not as a political leader since he was not successful at elections with his NTP. As a consequence of his gentle-humanist personality, democratic-libertarian political views and his successful deeds as a statesman, Cem's name has not been forgotten after his passing and probably will not be in the near future.

Another important legacy of İsmail Cem in Turkish politics is related to his innovative personality. Starting from his visit to USA when he was 16, Cem has always had interest in high technology and he wanted his country to become as technologically developed as the USA.<sup>102</sup> As the innovative young director of TRT in 1974, he made a technological leap forward in order to add all parts and cities of Turkey to the service area. Following the construction of TRT studios in İstanbul, new broadcasting stations opened in Antalya, İstanbul, İzmir, Kayseri and Mudanya.<sup>103</sup> Preparations for the opening of new broadcasting stations in Samsun, Gaziantep and Diyarbakır were terminated.<sup>104</sup> TRT was broadcasting five days and twenty hours per week before Cem's take over. Cem increased TRT's broadcasting to seven days and fifty-two hours per

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<sup>102</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, pp. 37-38.

<sup>103</sup> Abdullah Muradoğlu, "Selanik'ten İstanbul'a İpekçi'ler ve İsmail Cem", p. 146.

<sup>104</sup> İsmail Cem, "TRT'de 500 Gün ... bir dönem Türkiye'sinin hikayesi", p. 93.





week.<sup>105</sup> Moreover, in his tenure in office as the Minister of Culture in the mid 1990s, Cem was the only Minister who used a laptop computer.<sup>106</sup>

Another important contribution made by İsmail Cem was the use of the notion of change and dynamism in Turkish politics. Although Turkey has always been a country with social dynamism and a large-scale of youth population, dynamism and the notion of change was not effectively underlined in Turkish politics before Cem. In their intraparty opposition against SDPP leader Erdal İnönü, Cem together with Baykal had always emphasized change and published a booklet entitled “*Değişim*” (Change)<sup>107</sup> in order to display their program to everyone. After three defeats against İnönü, Baykal and Cem did not give up and published a book called *Yeni Sol* (New Left) in order to put forward their program for social democracy’s transformation and change.<sup>108</sup> One of the earliest deed of Cem as the Minister of Foreign Affairs was to change the classical passive Turkish foreign policy understanding and replace it with a dynamic foreign policy mentality. After the dissolution of the coalition government, Cem finally established his own party NTP and became the leader of the party in 2002. The name of the party was “New Turkey Party”, a name very convenient for Cem’s insistence of change and innovation for long years. The party had a reformist character and Cem’s rhetoric was again mostly based on change.

İsmail Cem was also a self-confident and ambitious man, a quality to be found in all successful politicians. Although he was a gentle man, Cem never hesitated to step forward and take initiative in politics. For instance, on 26 June 1988, at the second

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<sup>105</sup> İsmail Cem, “TRT’de 500 Gün ... bir dönem Türkiye’sinin hikayesi”, p. 91.

<sup>106</sup> Emre Kongar, *Ben Müsteşarken*, p. 71.

<sup>107</sup> İsmail Cem and Deniz Baykal. 1992. “SHP’de YENİ SOL’un Türkiye Programı - DEĞİŞİM”.

<sup>108</sup> İsmail Cem and Deniz Baykal. 1992. *Yeni Sol*. İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi.





regular Congress of SDPP, İsmail Cem stepped forward and in the control struggles over the party between leader Erdal İnönü and group vice President Deniz Baykal, he courageously became a candidate for party's leadership.<sup>109</sup> Cem later said that he was not hopeful about winning, but what he wanted to boost dynamism and discussions about renewal and the ideological transformation about the party.<sup>110</sup> However, his surprise candidacy shows his motivation and ambitions for leadership and political success. In 1993, after the unexpected death of Turgut Özal, TPP leader Süleyman Demirel became the ninth President of the Republic. İsmail Cem unexpectedly became a candidate for the Presidency, but he could not find the support he needed. This was the second time Cem was trying to step forward and this was surely indicating that behind his very tolerant and gentle personality, Cem was a self-confident and ambitious man, especially in politics. Cem's ambitious and courageous personality appeared third time in 2002. When Ecevit was hospitalized due to his poor health, the media started a campaign against his government and all journalists underlined the necessity of a pro-Western liberal or social democratic party that would be ruled by a healthy leader. Although Cem was very respectful towards Ecevit, he resigned from DLP and together with Hüsamettin Özkan and Kemal Derviş they began to make plans for a new political party. The media was labeling Özkan-Derviş-Cem trio as the "troika movement"<sup>111</sup> and many important intellectuals, journalists and academicians were declaring that they would support this movement. Cem was thought to be the leader of the movement,

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<sup>109</sup> Fatin Dağıstanlı, *Sosyal Demokratlar*, pp. 154-156.

<sup>110</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 172.

<sup>111</sup> Can Dündar and Rıdvan Akar, *Ecevit ve Gizli Arşivi*, p. 497.





Derviş as the Minister of Economics and Özkan as the Interior Affairs Minister.<sup>112</sup> On 12 July 2002, İsmail Cem held a press conference and declared that the troika movement would transform into a political party of the “modern majority” that would lead Turkey to the full accession to EU.<sup>113</sup> This was the third time he was taking risks and stepping forward for his political ambitions although the results were not satisfactory in all of these three cases. In that sense, İsmail Cem’s leadership ambition was finally realized in 2002 but he could not be successful with his NTP and had to be contended with Foreign Ministry. Moreover, although everybody know that politics is a ruthless game and conditions forced Cem to step forward, Cem’s last efforts to become a leader during Ecevit’s poor health conditions damaged his honest and trustworthy image in the eyes of some people since many people believe that this period was not that natural and normal. This image might also have led to the failure of Cem’s New Turkey Party in 2002 general and 2004 local elections.

Another important contribution and characteristic of İsmail Cem as a social democratic politician was his insistence on localness, a rarely seen attitude in the Turkish left which has a long tradition of from top to down modernization due to its Kemalist legacy. Both as a public intellectual and a politician, İsmail Cem tried to base his model of social democracy on native and national historical and cultural values and showed a great deal of interest towards Ottoman-Turkish history. Although Cem was coming from a rich and westernized family, his effort to understand pious people’s internal worlds and moral values was very valuable and it helped and encouraged Turkish left to embrace people and internalize democracy more and more. At this point,

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<sup>112</sup> Fikret Bila, *Ankara’da Irak Savaşları Sivil Darbe Girişimi ve Gizli Belgelerde 1 Mart Tezkeresi*, p. 137.

<sup>113</sup> *ibid.*, p. 138.





Cem's identities as a public intellectual and as a politician were unified at the point of non-conditional democracy. Cem and Baykal tried to formulate the "Anatolian Left" in order to eliminate the strong prejudices of pious people towards the RPP and towards the left in general. Unlike some radical figures of the left during his whole intellectual and political life Cem never disrespected people's values and religious sentiments and acted as a good role model.

Maybe the most important contribution made by İsmail Cem in Turkish political life was intellectual depth. İsmail Cem, with his intellectual personality and depth, brought an academic quality to Turkish politics. Compared to other political figures who had a lower education level and less intellectual accumulation over Turkish political history, Cem raised the bar in political discussions. In many political debates and polemics within the country and on the international level, Cem had chance to show his superior knowledge of history and political science. For instance, before Turkish-Greek rapprochement, Cem was criticizing Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs Theodoros Pangalos harshly for his country's support for terrorism and blamed it for making racism by referencing the fascist Greek government during the Second World War that delivered 58.000 Jews to Nazi government in Germany, a statement that stirred the pot in Europe, the USA and Israel.<sup>114</sup> In addition, when violence broke out between players and officials (policemen) at the end of a European Champions League match between Galatasaray and their Italian rivals AS Roma football clubs in 2002, Cem warned international community and said "This is very serious. The Italian police showed no mercy, striking our players with their sticks. Watching from television and looking at the newspapers, I thought I was watching the time of fascist Mussolini, not Europe in 2002"

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<sup>114</sup> İsmail Cem, *Dış İşleri Bakanı İsmail Cem Konuşmalar Demeçler Açıklamalar*, p. 245.





by referencing fascist past of Italy.<sup>115</sup> During his Foreign Ministry, Cem's cultural accumulation and intellectual personality helped him to establish good relations with his counterparts. After his passing away, *Milliyet* columnist Taha Akyol was stating that he was one of the most important intellectuals of the country and his works, especially his famous book *The History of Underdevelopment in Turkey*, which related the Ottoman State to the Turkish Republic, is no less valuable than important professional historians' classical books.<sup>116</sup>

İsmail Cem also deserves to be remembered for his colorful and versatile personality. Unlike typical boring politician figures in Turkey who seem to have been born and have been living solely for politics, Cem had always been an exciting person and had other many skills and hobbies other than politics. Photography was Cem's most widely recognized hobby and skill. Cem published two photographic album books and arranged five exhibitions. In photography, Cem adopted an artistic style and produced photographs based on the color harmony of picturesque landscapes rather than a social realist perspective.<sup>117</sup> Even when he was bedridden in his last days, he was taking pictures of animals from the television screen.<sup>118</sup> He wrote poems and read many literary books throughout his life. He visited many parts of the world and took pictures. Cem was also devoted to animals and cared for a canary and dogs in addition to his aquarium hobby. Cem was also a sports lover and he especially loved football (soccer). He was a good fan of the Galatasaray football club and he sometimes went to football matches.

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<sup>115</sup> *BBC News*, retrieved on 23.12.2010 from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/1872964.stm>.

<sup>116</sup> *Hürriyet* newspaper internet archive, retrieved on 05.05.2010 from <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/5828913.asp?m=1&gid=112&srld=3428&oid=1>.

<sup>117</sup> Cüneyt Özdemir, *Reytingsiz Sohbetler*, pp. 99-100.

<sup>118</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 267.





The last important aspect that can be shown as an example of İsmail Cem's contributions to Turkish politics is related to moral values. İsmail Cem had always underlined the importance of morality and criticized Turkish system for not producing basic moral values such as the supremacy of honesty and prevention of corruption.<sup>119</sup> For Cem, Turkey needed to back up its Islamic moral values with secular morality (ethics) in order to get rid of corruption problem similar to the synthesis of Christian and humanist morality in Europe. He admitted that although the necessity of good morality was understood and somehow achieved in the early years of the Republic, after the decline of earlier republican enthusiasm, Turkey has become a country without culture and morality.<sup>120</sup> In accordance with his views on the necessity of high morality, Cem had always been an honest and clean politician and unlike many Turkish politicians hiding behind their legislative immunity, Cem's name was never involved in a scandal or criminal event. After his death, the JDP deputy and Minister of Social Security Murat Başesgioğlu was also pointing out Cem's honesty and high morality unlike many other politicians in Turkey.<sup>121</sup> Cem's insistence on secular morality was also very important in a country having Muslim population, since morality can be easily equated with religious fundamentalism and dogmatism.

The most important criticism made towards Cem was related to his decision of leaving Ecevit alone in his difficult days. Cem also seemed sentimental and a bit regretful while talking about this period to journalist Can Dündar. He had a similar type of experience when he was offered his position in the Ministry of Culture and had to

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<sup>119</sup> İsmail Cem, *Gelecek İçin Denemeler*, pp. 174-178.

<sup>120</sup> *ibid.*, p. 179.

<sup>121</sup> *Hürriyet* newspaper internet archive, retrieved on 05.05.2010 from <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/5828913.asp?m=1&gid=112&srid=3428&oid=1>.





leave his friend Deniz Baykal in 1995. However, it should be noted that these are very common behaviors in politics all over the world and many people had only found Cem's attitude strange because of Cem's honest and reliable personality and image.

Another point of criticism towards Cem could be made in terms of leadership charisma. Although Cem was a good-looking and sympathetic politician having a trustworthy image in the eyes of Turkish people, it should be noted that he was not that successful in creating bonds with ordinary people unlike charismatic leaders in Turkish political history such as Bülent Ecevit or Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. In that sense, Cem's leadership ideal was not realistic and he was better off as a second and wise man behind a charismatic leader.





## CHAPTER V

### VIEWS ON CHALLENGES TO CONTEMPORARY DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION

İsmail Cem, starting from the beginning of his writing-journalism career, did not hesitate to write on controversial topics and take responsibility for contributing to the democratization and democratic consolidation of his own country. In this chapter, İsmail Cem's views on three main problems related to Turkish democratic consolidation: namely, civil-military relations, the Kurdish question and political Islam - secularism discussions will be analyzed by focusing on Cem's own writings on these issues.

#### 5.1. Civil-Military Relations

Civil-military relations have been a controversial and vital topic in Turkish politics. There were four major military interventions (the 27 May 1960 and 12 September 1980 military coups, the 12 March 1971 memorandum and the 28 February 1997 National Security Council meeting) and many other open and hidden intervention attempts in Turkish political history (most familiar attempts were two failed revolts





made by Colonel Talat Aydemir in the early 1960s). Professor Ergun Özbudun stated that although unlike Latin American countries' armies, Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) did not stay in power for a long a period and restored democracy within a reasonably short period after each intervention, and on each occasion the military also “gained important exit guarantees that enhanced its role in the subsequent democratic regime”.<sup>1</sup> While TAF acquired large civilian support for its interventions due to extreme political polarization and violence in the country, in recent years there has been growing reaction (both from leftist and rightist circles) against past military interventions and current attempts to shape the civilian political sphere. The military's weight in Turkish politics has been reasonably diminished by the EU full integration process but the TAF's unique and important position in Turkish political system (due to historical, cultural, political factors and the state tradition<sup>2</sup>) still continues albeit at a lower degree. Frank Tachau and Metin Heper in their article “The State, Politics, and the Military in Turkey” by using Eric Nordlinger's classification of different roles of military as moderator, guardian and ruler types, analyzed the TAF's role in Turkish politics and claimed that during Cold War conditions the TAF hesitated between its moderator and guardianship roles.<sup>3</sup> It could be asserted that following Turkey's transition to democracy after 12 September 1980 (in which the military could be claimed to have assumed the ruler role), TAF began to accept the conditions of a European type democracy while still trying to keep its moderator role.

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<sup>1</sup> Ergun Özbudun, *Contemporary Turkish Politics: Challenges to Democratic Consolidation*, p. 105.

<sup>2</sup> For Professor Heper, Ottoman-Turkish state elites' perception of civil society remained largely Hegelian and thus, “civil society was for the most part conceived as a sphere of universal egoism”. So, Heper thought that Ottoman-Turkish political history tells us that the Turkish state tradition is based on a strong state and a weak civil society formulation, a patrimonial and monist tradition of the state. See; Metin Heper, *The State Tradition In Turkey*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>3</sup> For a detailed analysis, see; Frank Tachau and Metin Heper. “The State, Politics, and the Military in Turkey” in *Comparative Politics*, 16, No. 1, October 1983, pp. 17-33.





The first military intervention took place on 27 May 1960 as a reaction to increasing Democrat Party authoritarianism. The coup is still interpreted as a revolution by many Kemalist and leftist thinkers because it happened as a consequence of protest demonstrations organized by students and citizens in İstanbul and Ankara. Especially the demonstration known as “555 K”<sup>4</sup> showed that the DP authoritarianism against opposition journalists and students created a strong reaction in urban elite and provided for a convenient environment for military intervention. The “555 K” meeting was followed by the unprecedented protest demonstration of military cadets on 21 May 1960 in Ankara.<sup>5</sup> On 27 May 1960, the government was taken over by the National Unity Committee composed by lower-ranked military officers who later invited support of retired and respected general Cemal Gürsel.<sup>6</sup> İsmail Cem thought that the DP’s oppressive policies towards the intellectuals and journalists played a significant role in the legitimacy of 27 May 1960 military intervention.<sup>7</sup> In Cem’s view, the most important reason of the 27 May intervention was the discomfort of the bureaucracy which had lost its power and became subjected to arbitrary pressures during DP rule. Although in accordance with Kemalist principles, bureaucracy (including the Turkish Armed Forces) had previously accepted the supremacy of democracy and the rule of civilians, the DP rule’s exclusion of the bureaucracy from the ruling coalition, its authoritarian practices that acquired legitimacy from the 1924 constitution and economic problems due to their inflationist policies created anger towards the DP.<sup>8</sup> That is why, bureaucratic institutions

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<sup>4</sup> It is a symbol referring to the date and place of the demonstration as the 5<sup>th</sup> day of the 5<sup>th</sup> month at 5 o’clock pm in Ankara’s Kızılay district (5 May 1960 at 17.00 in Kızılay).

<sup>5</sup> Andrew Mango. 2004. *The Turks Today*. London: John Murray Publishers, p. 52.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 52-53.

<sup>7</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye Üzerine (Araştırmalar)*, p. 40.

<sup>8</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye’de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, pp. 395-396.





and intellectuals constituted the leading force behind the intervention.<sup>9</sup> The new 1961 constitution aimed at limiting executive power and distributing power among bureaucratic-state institutions such as the National Security Council, Republican Senate, Constitutional Court, autonomous universities and State Planning Organization, and for many it had a democratic character.<sup>10</sup> Cem until the 1980s politically supported the 27 May intervention<sup>11</sup> since he believed that in a country where civil democratic forces are still very weak, there is no other way except for a progressive military intervention that could prevent a party dictatorship which aimed to close down the opposition party (RPP) and to establish its authoritarian rule.<sup>12</sup> Some other writers, especially from liberal and Islamist tradition, also blamed the USA for the 27 May intervention since they claimed that Prime Minister Adnan Menderes was searching for Soviet help and credits due to the economic crisis and new industrial investments just a few months before the coup.<sup>13</sup>

The second intervention occurred on 12 March 1971 when Turkish Armed Forces issued a memorandum against the Demirel government which could not prevent rising student demonstrations and self-styled guerilla movements. In Cem's view, the first and basic reason of 12 March fascism was about some deeds of the Demirel government overshadowing the interests of the privileged bourgeois segments in the country. Cem pointed out that the democratic leap forward that Turkey had achieved due to the 1961 constitution created a free environment where syndical activities and

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<sup>9</sup> Cem considers the 27 May as the "product of urban educated people". See; *ibid.*, p. 398.

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 397-399.

<sup>11</sup> 27 May 1960 intervention is still widely seen as a revolution in the Kemalist-leftist tradition. See; "27 Mayıs İhtilali", *Cumhuriyet*, retrieved on 30.10.2009 from <http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/?im=yhs&hn=59104>.

<sup>12</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye Üzerine (Araştırmalar)*, p. 41.

<sup>13</sup> See Cengiz, Çandar, "Amerika, bu "darbe"nin neresinde?", *Hürriyet*, retrieved on 30.10.2009 from <http://arama.hurriyet.com.tr/arsivnews.aspx?id=8561783>. For many others, this may be a turning point of conspiracy theories in Turkish political life.





socialist views could develop freely within the country. The democratic transformation of the left by giving up revolutionary Marxism brought democratic socialism to the governments in many parts of the world and that is why sovereign classes (bourgeoisie, landowners), by making a coalition with bureaucratic institutions, established fascist regimes, overthrowing socialist governments in Brazil, Greece, Chile and Turkey.<sup>14</sup> For Cem, Turkey's democratic transformation in the 1960s led to the strengthening of socialist views and eventually demands for collectivization, land reform and labor movements that frightened the bourgeoisie.<sup>15</sup> Especially big worker demonstrations such as the 15-16 June events in 1970 agitated the bourgeoisie and triggered its fears about a socialist take-over.<sup>16</sup> The emergence of the Turkish Labor Party's opposition in Turkey's Grand National Assembly, the "left of the center" transformation of the RPP and the intellectual domination of statist-socialist views as well as demands and discussions about nationalization of strategic sectors increased Turkish bourgeoisie's fears.<sup>17</sup> The second important cause of 12 March was the USA and its effect on Turkey during the Cold War. Demirel government's populist deeds sometimes contradicted with the interests of the bourgeoisie and the USA, and its lack of capacity to prevent the widespread socialist ideology was the other stimulus for the 12 March fascism.<sup>18</sup> The efforts of monopolies and "Istanbulite capital" to protect their advantaged position against rising Anatolian conservative entrepreneurs and firms were also additional factors that led to the 12 March regime.<sup>19</sup> The Turkish bourgeoisie was in favor of Turkey's dependency on the USA and the Western bloc and was ready to give up

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<sup>14</sup> İsmail Cem, *Tarih Açısından 12 Mart*, p. 327.

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 329-342.

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*, p. 337.

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*, p. 339.

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 352-355.

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 355-363.





democracy in order to preserve their wealth and privileged status. That is why, the Turkish elite was supporting a pro-American foreign policy which contradicted with Demirel government's search for autonomy and more independence under the conditions of the Cold War.<sup>20</sup>

The third military intervention came on 12 September 1980 as a reaction to Turkey's terrible economic and political situation and armed clashes on the streets between leftist and rightist groups that led to the death of thousands of people throughout the 1970s. For İsmail Cem, there were two main reasons for the 12 September coup. In Cem's view the first reason of the rise of extreme right was class-based conflicts in the country. Cem thought that the privileged segments (bourgeoisie) of the country that were backed up by the military-political establishment supported or at least tolerated the rise of fascism and Nationalist Action Party's anti-democratic tendencies with the idea of protecting themselves against the threat of rising socialism.<sup>21</sup> According to İsmail Cem, the second important reason of the rise of extreme right in Turkey was related to international relations and the preferences of USA that had serious influence in the shaping of Turkey's internal politics as the leader of Western capitalist bloc and NATO. Cem thought that although European countries, especially European leftists supported democratization and democratic movements in Turkey<sup>22</sup>, the USA deliberately helped rightist groups to suppress leftist movements that could be dangerous for the USA because of their anti-imperialistic stance. The U.S. support of the coup was also acknowledged by the CIA Ankara station chief Paul Henze. After the government

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<sup>20</sup> It must be stated that after the famous Johnson Letter, Demirel governments tried to develop a multi-dimensional foreign policy -for instance Turkey became a member of Organization of the Islamic Conference- and their policies sometimes contradicted American foreign policy preferences.

<sup>21</sup> İsmail Cem, *Tarih Açısından 12 Mart*, pp. 12-13.

<sup>22</sup> *ibid*, p. 22.





was overthrown, Henze cabled Washington, saying, “Our boys in Ankara did it”.<sup>23</sup> This has created the impression that the USA stood behind the coup. Henze denied this during a June 2003 interview on CNN Türk’s *Manşet*, but two days later Birand presented an interview with Henze recorded in 1997 in which he basically confirmed Mehmet Ali Birand’s story.

The generals who came to power on 12 September took their time to lay the foundations of a new order.<sup>24</sup> On September 12 at 04.00 clock in the morning, the National Security Council headed by Chief of the General Staff Kenan Evren declared the coup d'état on the national channel. The NSC then declared martial law throughout the country, abolished the Parliament and the government, suspended the constitution and banned all political parties and trade unions. Within a very short time, 650.000 people were detained. Among these, nearly 230.000 were imprisoned, 30.000 escaped from the country, 14.000 were stripped of citizenship and 50 were executed.<sup>25</sup> All important political figures of the period including Bülent Ecevit, Süleyman Demirel, Alparslan Türkeş, Deniz Baykal and Necmettin Erbakan were also incarcerated and temporarily suspended from politics. NSC regime made administrative reforms against terrorism, which included organizational changes and adaptations. The administrative reforms established coordination agencies, state of emergency (OHAL) rule, and a specialized section under police department. Meanwhile, a large arsenal of illegal arms was confiscated, including 7.000 machine-guns, 48.000 rifles, 640.000 handguns and 26

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<sup>23</sup> Mehmet Ali Birand, *12 Eylül Saat: 04.00*, p. 1.

<sup>24</sup> Andrew Mango, *The Turks Today*, p. 81.

<sup>25</sup> See; Ozan Örmeci, *İttihat ve Terakki'den AKP'ye Türk Siyasal Tarihi*, pp 85. One notable victim of the hangings was a 17-year-old Erdal Eren, who later became a symbol of 12 September opposition.





rocket launchers.<sup>26</sup> The coup also decided to adopt a new constitution that included mechanisms to prevent what they saw as impeding the functioning of democracy. On 29 June 1981 the military junta appointed 160 people as members of an Advisory Assembly to draft a new constitution. The new constitution brought clear limits and definitions, such as on the rules of election of the President of the Republic, which was stated as a factor for the coup d'état.<sup>27</sup> On 7 November 1982 the new constitution was put to a referendum, which was accepted with a resounding 92% majority (some say due to pressure). On 9 November 1982 Kenan Evren was appointed President for the next seven years. In 1983, Turkey passed to democratic civilian life again although the military kept its exit guarantees and only three parties approved by the military could run in the elections.

Although starting from 1983, civil-military relations began to be normalized gradually, Professor Ergun Özbudun claimed that the TAF provided and kept its weight in civilian politics using five instruments. The first way was referring to “tutelary powers” which have been used by incorporating certain substantive values (territorial integrity, national sovereignty, secularism, Kemalist principles) cherished by the military into the constitution, by creating military-dominated formal institutions entrusted with the constitutional duty of preserving such values (National Security Council) or through ambiguous constitutional references to the role of military as guarantor of the constitution.<sup>28</sup> The second way used by militaries in general and TAF in particular was reference to reserved domains (again National Security Council could be

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<sup>26</sup> Andrew Mango, *The Turks Today*, p. 81.

<sup>27</sup> Before 12 September, Turkish Parliament was unable to elect a President of the Republic which was another factor increasing the legitimacy of the coup.

<sup>28</sup> Ergun Özbudun, *Contemporary Turkish Politics: Challenges to Democratic Consolidation*, pp. 106-110.





given as an example) which meant a high degree of military autonomy in certain policy areas such as in defense policy.<sup>29</sup> Thirdly, military regimes may attempt to manipulate electoral processes to preserve themselves a larger share of power in the upcoming democratic regime as it was seen in Turkey's 1983 general elections in which only three parties approved by the military could be run.<sup>30</sup> Fourthly, departing military regimes may try to make some of their actions irreversible such as the transitional article 15 of Turkey's 1982 constitution which stated that the laws passed by the ruling military council could not be challenged for unconstitutionality before the Constitutional Court even after transition to democracy.<sup>31</sup> Lastly, military regimes may try to declare amnesty laws on crimes committed by the military regime which was implemented by the transitional article 15 in the 1982 constitution.<sup>32</sup>

Professor Ergun Özbudun underlines that the 1983 Turkish democratic transition was “almost a textbook example of the degree to which a departing military regime can dictate the conditions of its departure” and only 25 years after transition a very significant degree of civilianization could occur.<sup>33</sup> In that sense, Özbudun claimed that the “post-1983 period led many observers to think that a satisfactory degree of civilian control over the military had been achieved and that Turkey was no longer fundamentally different from established Western democracies”.<sup>34</sup> Especially after the election of first civilian president (Turgut Özal) since the 1950s, Heper and Güney concluded that “as the Third Turkish Republic entered its second decade, civil-military

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<sup>29</sup> Ergun Özbudun, *Contemporary Turkish Politics: Challenges to Democratic Consolidation*, pp. 110-112.

<sup>30</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 112-114.

<sup>31</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 114-115.

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 115-116.

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*, p. 117.

<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*, p. 119.





relations came close to the liberal-democratic model”.<sup>35</sup> Two exceptions to this view can be stated as the 28 February 1997 process and the recent e-memorandum crisis. The February 28 process is named after the date of the historical National Security Council meeting on 28 February 1997 in which the TAF dictated some conditions to the government such as eight-year compulsory secular education and eventually led to the dissolution of Refahyol government (coalition of Necmettin Erbakan’s Virtue Party and Tansu Çiller’s True Path Party). Although the process was not totally convenient for a civil-democratic regime, at least the military and secular segments used media and democratic institutions (such as the National Security Council and the post of President of Republic by Süleyman Demirel) which led many observers to define this process as a “post-modern coup”. Özbudun stated that the 28 February process demonstrated the limits of the military’s tolerance for civilian leadership which means two core values - indivisible integrity of the state and the secular character of the Republic- could not be surpassed.<sup>36</sup> More recently, on 27 April 2007, TAF declared from its website an “e-memorandum” targeting the JDP government and again emphasized the military’s limits concerning secularism and nation-state which shows that civil-military relations in Turkey are still problematic. The e-memorandum is claimed to have caused the JDP’s landslide electoral success in the July 22, 2007 general elections and in a sense seemed to weaken military’s weight in politics but it also increased polarization in the country.

İsmail Cem naturally wrote and developed his theories about this most important and controversial issue of Turkish democracy. Although he admitted that he had

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<sup>35</sup> Metin Heper and Aylin Güney. 1996. “The Military and Democracy in the Third Turkish Republic” in *Armed Forces and Society*, no: 22, Summer 1996, p. 636.

<sup>36</sup> Ergun Özbudun, *Contemporary Turkish Politics: Challenges to Democratic Consolidation*, p. 121.





welcomed the 27 May 1960 intervention when he was young<sup>37</sup>, Cem as a social democrat never approved or supported military interventions even at the expense of coming up against some important figures in the left that engaged in search for leftist junta in the 1960s. Cem's ideas about the nature of civil-military relations were formed in accordance with his theories about international relations and class-based analyses. First of all, Cem pointed out that the TAF as the founder of Turkish Republic considered itself as the vanguard of modernization and did not hesitate to intervene in Turkish political life after the passing of Atatürk especially after transition to multi-party regime with the help of Cold War conditions. During single party rule, Cem thought that there was a coalition organized by the Republican elite and formed between the military (bureaucracy in general), Istanbulite business circles and Anatolian local notables.<sup>38</sup> This structure was somehow protected with the help of Cold War mostly due to American support of the status quo in Turkey which was functioning as the gendarme station of NATO and Western bloc in those years.

Cem as a young Marxist thought that bureaucracy and bureaucratic institutions (such as the military) was always close to sovereign classes and higher segments of the society. In that sense, Cem aimed to explain military interventions from a class-based materialistic point of view. Especially for 12 March and 12 September, Cem always underlined Turkish bourgeoisie's provocative efforts for military interventions against the rising leftist-socialist movements in the country that had threatened Turkish bourgeoisie's privileged status and wealth. Cem, with great confidence on his views based on the deterministic nature of dialectic materialism, explained the 12 March

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<sup>37</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 56.

<sup>38</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye Üzerine (Araştırmalar)*, p. 56.





phenomenon from a socialist, class-based point of view and wrote “that invisible hand of history was never apparent as it was in the case of 12 March”.<sup>39</sup> For Cem, Turkey’s democratic transformation in the 1960s led to the strengthening of socialist views and eventually demands for collectivization, land reform and labor movements that frightened the bourgeoisie.<sup>40</sup> The emergence of Turkish Labor Party’s opposition with the Turkey’s Grand National Assembly, the “left of the center” transformation of RPP and the intellectual domination of statist-socialist views as well as demands and discussions about nationalization of strategic sectors increased Turkish bourgeoisie’s fears.<sup>41</sup> Similar to his views on 12 March, Cem thought that the coming of the 12 September coup was also not a coincidence and a shock for a conscious person who could make class-based analysis. Cem thought that the privileged segments (bourgeoisie) of the country that were backed up by the military-political establishment supported or at least tolerated the rise of fascism and Nationalist Action Party’s anti-democratic tendencies with the idea of protecting themselves against the rising threat of socialism before 12 September coup.<sup>42</sup> In other words, İsmail Cem had always underlined the role of Turkish bourgeoisie’s fear of rising leftist movements in the formation of 12 March and 12 September coups.

The second important aspect of military coups in Turkey that was argued by İsmail Cem was the role of the USA and NATO. Cem pointed that starting from the mid-1960s Turkey’s search for a more independent foreign policy (closer relations with the USSR, becoming a member of the Organization of the Islamic Conference) disturbed

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<sup>39</sup> İsmail Cem, *Tarih Açısından 12 Mart*, p. 15.

<sup>40</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 329-342.

<sup>41</sup> *ibid.*, p. 339.

<sup>42</sup> İsmail Cem, *Siyaset Yazıları: 1975-1980 Türkiye’si*, p. 11.





the USA and Washington actively supported the rise of extreme right and escalating political violence in Turkey. Cem, by quoting from former Foreign Minister of Justice Party governments İhsan Sabri Çağlayangil, tried to show that the USA (via its intelligence service CIA) was very active in the rise of rightist terror in Turkey.<sup>43</sup>

İsmail Cem has always supported the gradual civilianization of the Turkish regime after transition to democracy in 1983. However, unlike many radical figures from the leftist tradition, Cem supported the pioneering and progressive role of the Turkish Armed Forces in Turkish modernization and refrained from making provocative statements that could weaken the TAF and thus could create security problems for country. He developed a democratic, civilian and pluralist social democratic language in accordance with his political views and adopted a well-balanced rhetoric while criticizing the heavy role of military in Turkish politics in order not to erode the prestige of Turkish military, an important strategic element of Turkish state.

## 5.2. The Kurdish Question

Although the “Kurdish question” has been a central issue in both the domestic and foreign policy of the Republic from its foundation, in fact Kurdish ethno-nationalism has become one of the biggest challenges to the Turkish state and democracy only in the last two or three decades. The Kurdish question has always been a controversial and problematic issue in Turkey since the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923 both on national and international levels. The question of Kurds in Turkey is not an easy-to-solve problem mostly because of the legal status of Kurds in Turkey. According to the Lausanne Treaty of 1923, Kurds, who now constitute 10 to

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<sup>43</sup> İsmail Cem, *Siyaset Yazıları: 1975-1980 Türkiye'si*, p. 66.





15<sup>44</sup> or 13.2 to 15.6<sup>45</sup> percent of the total population, are not accepted as a minority group but rather as principal elements, first-class citizens of the republic. Secondly, the concept of minority has been very different in different time periods and in different contexts. Thirdly, although Kurds are not accepted as a minority group and some of them are strongly against the idea of defining themselves as a minority group, their demands to take advantage of minority group rights in accordance with European Union criterion, make the situation even more complex.

In order to understand the Kurdish question in Turkish Republic, we must first analyze the situation of Kurds in the Ottoman Empire. Ottoman State was formed by Turkic Muslim tribes in the late 13<sup>th</sup> and early 14<sup>th</sup> century and soon began to expand its territories. The Ottoman Empire was an expansionist, multi-ethnic empire and Turks were only a part of Ottoman population. Roderic Davison gives the statistical proof about the heterogeneity of Ottoman population in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. “In the Empire, Turkish population was only around 35 percent of the total population whereas Arabs constituted 13.8 percent, Romanians 11.4 percent, Bulgarians 7.8 percent, Serbo-Croatians 7 percent, Armenians 6.5 percent, Greeks 5.5 percent, Albanians 3.1 percent, Kurds 2.6 percent and Circassians 2.6 percent”.<sup>46</sup> People were separated as Muslim or non-Muslim and rather than Turk or Kurd. This structure of the Ottoman Empire was shaped by the “millet system” understanding. According to the millet system, the Ottoman State recognized differences among different social groups in the society according to religious beliefs. Ethnic or linguistic differences were ignored and the

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<sup>44</sup> Ergun Özbudun, *Contemporary Turkish Politics: Challenges to Democratic Consolidation*, p. 143.

<sup>45</sup> Metin Heper. 2008. *Devlet ve Kürtler*. İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, p. 13.

<sup>46</sup> Roderic Davison. 1979. “Nationalism as an Ottoman Problem and the Ottoman Response” in William W. Haddad & William Ochsenwald (ed.) *Nationalism in a Non-national State: The Dissolution of the Ottoman Empire*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, p. 31.





society was basically divided into two groups: Muslims and non-Muslims. Non-Muslims including Greeks, Armenians and Jewish subjects of the state, were considered as minority groups. The protection of non-Muslim minority groups' rights in the Ottoman Empire was undertaken by European imperial powers and used as an issue to weaken the state. Starting from 1839, with the Edict of Administrative Reforms (Gülhane Hatt-ı Hümayunu or Tanzimat Fermanı in Turkish), the Ottoman State tried to make necessary reforms to satisfy European countries and prevent them from engaging in the Ottoman State's internal affairs. Except for non-Muslim groups, the Muslim population was considered as first-class citizens and did not acquire the status of minority. Kurds were also part of the Muslim population and like all other Muslim groups was not considered as a minority group. They had relative autonomy (İsmail Cem thought that Ottomans were not successful in eroding feudalism in south-eastern villages of Anatolia unlike many other regions<sup>47</sup>) but were still tied to the central authority. Professor Heper points out that Ottomans' interest in the areas where the Kurds lived "was derived from the need to defend the eastern boundaries of their empire, not necessarily from a desire to subjugate and eventually assimilate the Kurds. Consequently, the chieftains in high mountain ranges were not only granted autonomy - in the internal affairs of their people, but they were also given timar in return for policing the border areas and maintaining their tranquility".<sup>48</sup>

Kemalist state's attitude towards Kurds is a highly controversial but important issue for us to understand the Kurdish opposition. Atatürk's restrictive attitude towards Kurds has been generally criticized under today's norms and rules. In fact, Atatürk had

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<sup>47</sup> İsmail Cem, *Gelecek İçin Denemeler*, p. 143.

<sup>48</sup> Metin Heper, *Devlet ve Kürtler*, pp. 70-72.





always recognized the distinctiveness of Kurds. He called Turks and Kurds “irk kardeş (brothers-in-race)”<sup>49</sup> because in his mind Turks and Kurds had many things in common and their cultures were very much alike. Mustafa Kemal did not have contact with Kurdish people until 1916, the time when he was promoted as Brigadier-General in Diyarbakır. Mustafa Kemal’s diary written in those years proves to us his lack of knowledge and the sense of difference he had about Kurds. “Mustafa Kemal’s tone is remarkably detached: he observes his surroundings with the curiosity of an outsider. He does not express any views on the Kurds”.<sup>50</sup> Mango claims Mustafa Kemal also once said that “I am in favor of granting all manner of rights and privileges in order to ensure the attachment and the prosperity and progress of our Kurdish brothers, on condition that the Ottoman State is not split up”.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, in his speeches before the establishment of the Republic, he used the term “people of Turkey (Türkiye halkı)” instead of Turks. In fact, Mango claimed that Atatürk in the early 1920s even toyed with the idea of giving local autonomy to Kurds. “As for areas inhabited by Kurds, we consider it a necessity both of our domestic and of our foreign policy to set up a local government gradually”.<sup>52</sup> “As a result, wherever the population of a district is Kurdish, it will govern itself automatically”.<sup>53</sup> During the years of Independence War, Mustafa Kemal did not act harshly towards Kurds because the very high majority of Kurdish tribes were supporting the National Struggle and Atatürk was not willing to lose Kurdish support. Özbudun also points out this tolerant attitude of Kemalism towards Kurds in the early

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<sup>49</sup> Andrew Mango. 1999. “Atatürk and the Kurds” in Sylvia Kedourie (ed.) *Seventy-five Years of the Turkish Republic*. London: Frank Cass, p. 6.

<sup>50</sup> Andrew Mango, “Atatürk and the Kurds”, p. 2.

<sup>51</sup> *ibid.*, p. 7 .

<sup>52</sup> *ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*, p. 15.





years of the Republic.<sup>54</sup> İsmail Cem thought that the Kemalist Republic, by not making land reform, tried to sustain the Ottoman mentality on the south-eastern villages.<sup>55</sup>

Kurdish nationalism appeared very lately during the last years of the Ottoman Empire. Kurdistan Promotion Association (*Kürt Teali Cemiyeti* or *Kürdistan Teali Cemiyeti*) was established with the help of Britain in 1918 but it was banned later by Mustafa Kemal.<sup>56</sup> During the years of National Struggle, Kurds fought against imperial powers alongside with Turks. The Kurdish problem showed itself seriously for first time in 1925 with the Sheikh Said Revolt. Sheikh Said was a religious Kurdish landowner who had good connections and reputation in the eastern and southeastern parts of Anatolia. By taking help from Britain<sup>57</sup> and making agreements with Kurdish landowners of the region who wanted to establish an independent Kurdistan state, Said started a huge revolt and became a headache for the young republic for a few months. The Sheikh Said Revolt is often introduced as an Islamic revolt but in reality there are many other reasons behind Said's rebellion such as the desires of Kurdish people to create an independent state, the reaction of Kurdish landowners to the probable land reform project of the Republic and their fears of losing their privileged status<sup>58</sup>, the plan

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<sup>54</sup> “Atatürk’ün 1 Mayıs 1920 günü TBMM’de yaptığı konuşma da, kendisinin bu konudaki duyarlılığını çok iyi ifade etmektedir. Burada maksut olan ve Meclis-i âlinizi teşkil eden zevat yalnız Türk değildir, yalnız Çerkes değildir, yalnız Kürt değildir, yalnız Laz değildir.”. See; Ergun Özbudun. 1998. “Milli Mücadele ve Cumhuriyet’in Resmi Belgelerinde Yurttaşlık ve Kimlik Sorunu” in *75 Yılda Tebaa’dan Yurttaş’a Doğru*. İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, p. 153.

<sup>55</sup> İsmail Cem, *Gelecek İçin Denemeler*, p. 144 .

<sup>56</sup> For details see; Bilal Şimşir. 2007. *Kürtçülük / 1787-1923*. Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi.

<sup>57</sup> Although this is a controversial claim and we do not have any concrete evidence many Turkish historians and writers support this argument. See; Mim Kemal Öke. 1987. *Musul Meselesi Kronolojisi (1918-1926)*. İstanbul: Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları Vakfı, Uğur Mumcu. 1991. *Kürt İslam Ayaklanması*. İstanbul: Tekin Yayınevi and Bilal Şimşir. 1975. *İngiliz Belgeleriyle Türkiye’de Kürt Sorunu (1924-1938)*. Ankara: Dış İşleri Bakanlığı Basımevi. Also see; Durmuş Yılmaz. 2003. *Musul Meselesi Tarihi*, Konya: Çizgi Kitabevi and Doğu Perinçek. 2010. *Toprak Ağalığı ve Kürt Sorunu*. İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları.

<sup>58</sup> Professor Heper also pointed out the feudal characteristic of the revolt. See; Metin Heper, *Devlet ve Kürtler*, p. 231.





of Britain to create problems in Turkey to decrease Turkish influence in Mosul and Kirkuk and reactionary groups' anger towards the Western, secular new Turkish state. Sheikh Said Revolt was suppressed by the state in few months and by Maintenance of Order Law (*Takrir-i Sükun Kanunu*) harsh punishments were given to people who were engaged in the revolt.<sup>59</sup> Atatürk's relatively tolerant attitude towards Kurds began to change after the Sheikh Said rebellion. Although Kemalist Turkish state never adopted a racist approach and defined Turkishness as a civic identity<sup>60</sup>, the Turkish Republic did not act in conformity with the conditions of the Lausanne Peace Treaty.<sup>61</sup> However, authoritarian tendencies of the 1930s could be analyzed within the conditions of the period which led to rise of the authoritarian and totalitarian regimes everywhere in the world.<sup>62</sup> Following the Sheikh Said revolt, 16 other Kurdish revolts took place in south-eastern Anatolia and the Kurdish question persisted.<sup>63</sup> However, within the conditions of the Cold War, the Kurdish question was forgotten or postponed due to prior international

<sup>59</sup> Sina Akşin, *Kısa Türkiye Tarihi*, pp. 195-196.

<sup>60</sup> One of the main characteristics of Kemalist nationalism is its insistence of Turkishness as a cultural civic identity, rather than ethnic identity. Kili claims; "Atatürkist nationalism placed a high value on Turkish citizenship. Nevertheless, at the same time, it was not racist or persecuting nationalism. According to Kemalist ideology, Turkishness was not necessarily determined by one's race or religion but by the degree to which a person associated himself with the ideas, ideals and goals of the Turkish nation and by determination to protect all that had been won as a result of great hardships; and also by commitment to Turkish modernization". See; Suna Kili, *The Atatürk Revolution A Paradigm of Modernization*, p. 208.

<sup>61</sup> Article 39 of the Lausanne Peace Treaty is as follows: "No restrictions shall be imposed on the free use by any Turkish national of any language in private intercourse, in commerce, religion, in the press, or in publications of any kind or at public meetings. Notwithstanding the existence of the official language, adequate facilities shall be given to Turkish nationals of non-Turkish speech for the oral use of their own language before the Courts". We know that especially in the 1930s when fascism and ultra-nationalism was the rising trend all over the world, Kurdish speaking citizens were punished and no adequate facilities were shown to non-Turkish speaking people in the courts.

<sup>62</sup> Professor Özbudun also points the relatively democratic stance of Kemalism against European fascist regimes of the period. "Üstelik, 1930'lu yıllar gibi Avrupa'nın çok büyük bölümüne otoriter, ırkçı milliyetçilik anlayışının egemen olduğu bir dönemde, bunun bizce tali bazı yönlerinin Türkiye'de görülmesi değil, bu etkinin bu kadar sınırlı kalmış olması hayret edilecek bir husustur. Bir siyasal söylemin sağlıklı olarak değerlendirilmesi, o söylemin bir bütün olarak ve dönemin şartları içinde incelenmesini, ana doğrultularıyla geçici ve tali sapmaların birbirinden ayrılmasını gerektirir. Kemalizmin milliyetçilik söylemi bir kül halinde ele alındığında, onun hukuki ve kültürel cephesinin çok daha ağır bastığına kuşku yoktur". See; Ergun Özbudun, "Milli Mücadele ve Cumhuriyet'in Resmi Belgelerinde Yurttaşlık ve Kimlik Sorunu", p. 158.

<sup>63</sup> Metin Heper, *Devlet ve Kürtler*, p. 13.





problems. The Kurdish question came on the agenda again in the 1980s with the emergence of PKK<sup>64</sup> terrorism as a part of the radical left in Turkey.<sup>65</sup> According to Heper, Turks and Kurds during history have gone through a process of acculturation and Ottoman and Turkish states never officially adopted a forceful assimilation policy though there were some state officials who believed in the necessity of assimilation.<sup>66</sup> Heper also claims that in accordance with the democratic pressures and principles of European Union, the Turkish state began to grant cultural rights to Kurds although group rights and federalism claims have always been considered too risky by the state.<sup>67</sup>

Turkish intelligentsia after the transition to multi-party democracy began to show interest towards the Kurdish question. Until the 1990s, Kurdish question had generally been an issue of the Turkish left and mostly seen as a problem related to feudalism. However, the recognition of Kurdish identity by the Turkish left later led to the emergence of Kurdish leftist movements which led to the emergence of PKK. In the academic world, the works of İsmail Beşikçi<sup>68</sup> on the socioeconomic structure of Eastern

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<sup>64</sup> The Kurdistan Workers' Party (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan) is a Kurdish terrorist organization which was founded in the 1970s and led by Abdullah Öcalan until his capture in 1999. PKK's ideology is based on a kind of synthesis of Marxism-Leninism and Kurdish nationalism.

<sup>65</sup> Metin Heper, *Devlet ve Kürtler*, p. 233.

<sup>66</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 267-268.

<sup>67</sup> *ibid.*, p. 268.

<sup>68</sup> İsmail Beşikçi (1939-) is a Turkish scholar and writer known with his writings on Kurdish question. He has served 17 years in prison on propaganda charges stemming from his writings about the Kurdish population in Turkey. Beşikçi studied at the Faculty of Political Sciences of Ankara University, and graduated in 1962. After his military duty he became an assistant professor at Atatürk University in Erzurum. He prepared his first anthropological study, an investigation of one of the last nomadic Kurdish tribes, the Alikan, here, which he submitted in 1967 to the Ankara Faculty of Political Sciences. His second encounter with the Kurds was during his military service when he served in Bitlis and Hakkâri where he first saw the nomadic Alikan tribe pass through Bitlis on their migrations from winter to summer meadows and back. His book *Doğu Anadolu'nun Düzeni* (The order of East Anatolia), which was first published in 1969 where he tried to adapt and apply Marxist concepts to the analysis of Kurdish society and to the processes of socio-economic and political change taking place made him a public enemy. While the book did not cause much debate either in academic or left intellectual circles in the beginning, the university took disciplinary measures against him which lead to a trial after the 1971 coup. He was detained and put on trial for communist and anti-national propaganda and sentenced to 13 years imprisonment for violating the indivisibility of the Turkish nation. Beşikçi did not have to serve his full 13





Anatolia may be accepted as the first example of the Kurdish left (although Beşikçi himself was not Kurdish).<sup>69</sup> In that sense, the Kurdish left was largely affected by Turkish left's modernist-Kemalist tendencies and showed a reaction towards feudal-religious socio-economic structure of the south-eastern region.<sup>70</sup> In addition to Beşikçi's works, the political activities of some Kurdish politicians in the Turkish Labor Party (including Tarık Ziya Ekinci, Mehmet Ali Aslan and Kemal Burkay<sup>71</sup>) strengthened the Kurdish nationalist consciousness and the Kurdish left.<sup>72</sup> In that sense, Turkey's Kurdish left was nourished from the Turkish left and adopted a more modernist stance compared to the Iraqi Kurdish movement which was supported by the Barzani family and some other Kurdish tribes and remained largely feudal.<sup>73</sup>

In addition to the leftist-Marxist interest towards the Kurdish question, pro-Islamic and socio-economic approaches towards the Kurdish question have existed in the academic-intellectual world and political arena in Turkey. [Zeki Sarıgil tried to make an empirical assessment of pro-Islamic and socio-economic approaches<sup>74</sup>.] The pro-Islamic assessment basically emphasizes strengthening religious attachments and values (i.e. empowering an Islamic brotherhood understanding between Turks and Kurds) in

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years and benefited from the amnesty in late 1974. He unsuccessfully applied for a position at the Faculty of Political Sciences in Ankara, which in 1970 had appeared willing to employ him. He never found academic employment again and was henceforth to do his research as an independent scholar, in economically precarious circumstances. For many years, Ismail Beşikçi was the only non-Kurdish person in Turkey to speak out loud and clearly in defense of the rights of the Kurds. Continuing to write and speak in spite of all attempts to silence him, Beşikçi has become a powerful and important symbol for the Kurds and for the human rights movement of Turkey. He was charged for over 100 years but released from jail in 1999. He was a candidate of Nobel Peace Prize in 1987.

<sup>69</sup> Hamit Bozarıslan. 2007. "Türkiye'de Kürt Sol Hareketi" in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce cilt 8 Sol*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, p. 1170.

<sup>70</sup> *ibid.*, p. 1172.

<sup>71</sup> Kemal Burkay (1937-) was a Kurdish originated socialist who established Kurdish Socialist Party and wrote many books on the Kurdish question. For a detailed analysis see; Azat Zana Gündoğan. 2007. "Kemal Burkay" in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce cilt 8 Sol*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.

<sup>72</sup> Hamit Bozarıslan, "Türkiye'de Kürt Sol Hareketi", p. 1175.

<sup>73</sup> *ibid.*, p. 1176.

<sup>74</sup> Sarıgil, Zeki (forthcoming), "Curbing Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey: An empirical assessment of pro-Islamic and socio-economic approaches", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*.





order to curb Kurdish ethno-nationalism. The socio-economic approach on the other hand, draws attention to improving the socio-economic status of individuals, especially in the impoverished southeast, which is populated mostly by Kurds. Sarigil notes out that in order to see which one of these approaches or policies might curb Kurdish ethno-nationalism, a better grasp of the factors and dynamics behind pro-Kurdish tendencies in society is needed. However, although there is more open debate and an increasing number of scholarly studies on various aspects of Turkey's Kurdish issue in the last decades the sources of Kurdish ethno-nationalism in society remain relatively under-investigated. Thus, Sarigil argues that we have rather limited empirical knowledge of the factors, which hinder or accelerate the appeal of Kurdish ethno-nationalist ideas and movements in society. Sarigil by using World Values Survey data, investigates the impact of religiosity and socio-economic factors (i.e. the level of income and education) on support for Kurdish ethno-nationalist movements and formations (i.e. Kurdish ethno-nationalism). Sarigil concludes that statistical results indicate that religiosity does not really matter in terms of the likelihood of Kurdish ethno-nationalism; in other words, increases in religiosity do not necessarily reduce ethnic awareness. Interestingly, however, as the level of education and income increases, the likelihood of Kurdish ethno-nationalism decreases. These findings raise doubts about the validity of the pro-Islamic approach but they do provide some support for the socio-economic approach in constraining Kurdish ethno-nationalism.

Starting from his first book, İsmail Cem showed a great deal of interest towards the Kurdish question. However, Cem had always used a well-balanced rhetoric and never declared sympathy for the political violence unlike many people in the leftist tradition that approached PKK terrorism with sympathy. In the early 1990s while Cem





was about to leave the SDPP together with Baykal they criticized İnönü and other leading members of the SDPP for bringing the People's Labor Party (HEP) deputies into the Parliament who were engaged with PKK and made clear his view that terrorism could not be accepted or sympathized with.<sup>75</sup> Cem, in the early days of his journalism career, published a series of news and articles about social problems in the south-eastern part of Anatolia where the population mostly consisted of Kurdish citizens. “*Acılı Doğu* (East in Pain)” was published between 12 June and 18 June 1970 in *Milliyet* and became a sensation in the media. Cem published this series in his first book *Türkiye Üzerine Araştırmalar* (Researches on Turkey). The book was journalistic and far from showing Cem's theoretical knowledge, but it was still very important because it was one of the earliest books written on the Kurdish question. Cem was writing about his observations and analyses about his trip to south-eastern villages of Turkey.

The first issue he noticed and heard from the local people was the extreme pressures made by soldiers and policemen towards Kurdish people. People were saying that the soldiers were insulting them for their Kurdish identity by saying “dogs of Barzani” and the state's oppressive attitudes were forcing them to hate the state.<sup>76</sup> These officials, especially soldiers, were hurting people's feelings and their inappropriate behaviors caused by secessionism fears were in fact strengthening secessionist thoughts.<sup>77</sup> Cem thought that these behaviors of the public employees were also strengthening the feudal structure of the region since oppressed by the state; peasants were becoming thankful to their feudal lords.<sup>78</sup> Cem predicted that an armed revolt

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<sup>75</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, pp. 178-179.

<sup>76</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye Üzerine (Araştırmalar)*, pp. 9-10.

<sup>77</sup> İsmail Cem, *Tarih Açısından 12 Mart*, p. 34.

<sup>78</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye Üzerine (Araştırmalar)*, p. 31.





based on Kurdish nationalism could easily begin in the future because of the terrible deeds of the state officials especially commandos and soldiers.<sup>79</sup> In that sense, Cem foresaw the emergence of PKK correctly. In the mid-1990s, Cem, by looking at the findings of Piar-Gallup research company's inquiry on the Kurdish question, wrote that 35 % of Kurdish people see the reason of the Kurdish problem mainly as a consequence of state's oppressive policies in the region and 25 % of the people likewise pointed out state officials' harsh and violent behavior towards the people as the main reason of the problem.<sup>80</sup> In that sense; Cem believed that creating a well-working democratic state mechanism and better educating state officials could solve many problems related to the Kurdish question. He thought that first of all the state should be able to make Kurdish people primary citizens of the state by abolishing the state of emergency and backward lifestyle<sup>81</sup>. For Cem, the state of emergency was nothing but a limit on people's basic rights and freedoms and it forced them into terrorism.<sup>82</sup>

İsmail Cem admitted that the only problem in the south-eastern villages was not the restrictive, oppressive and discriminatory behavior of state officials. There was a more important materialistic problem and this was the feudal structure of the region. In Cem's opinion, this was caused by the Ottoman and Turkish states' erroneous policy of leaving the region to its status quo by sustaining the privileges of the landowners of the region.<sup>83</sup> For Cem, this meant state within the state and a local feudal authority who could keep its hegemony over the local people. Cem focused mostly on the feudal structure of the region and approached the Kurdish issue in the 1960s and 1970s

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<sup>79</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye Üzerine (Araştırmalar)*, p. 33.

<sup>80</sup> İsmail Cem, *Gelecek İçin Denemeler*, p. 122.

<sup>81</sup> *ibid.*, p. 132.

<sup>82</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 138-142.

<sup>83</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye Üzerine (Araştırmalar)*, p. 11.





primarily as a class-based and economic problem. The terrible income distribution in the region (feudal lords constituting 7.5 % of the population owned 70 % of the total lands)<sup>84</sup> was the concrete proof of this non-egalitarian social structure. For him, the real problem was not between Turkishness and Kurdishness, but rather between local notables and landless peasants.<sup>85</sup> Cem was against Kurdish nationalism and secessionism but he also argued that defending the rights of Kurdish people who were oppressed by the state because of Kurdish identity is not equal to Kurdish nationalism.<sup>86</sup> In his view, Kurdish nationalism and support of Barzani was related to the local notables and feudal lords not to the ordinary peasants.<sup>87</sup> Cem thought that if this feudal structure would remain, local notables would soon or later support Kurdish nationalism and Barzani but through a social reform, the state could gain the support of ordinary peasants.<sup>88</sup> Cem complained about the state's support to local notables that seemed to have a willingness and tendency to support Kurdish nationalism more than the peasants. Cem also noticed that by the early 1970s, peasants were on the eve of awakening since they were complaining about feudal lords and local notables' pressures and claiming that "the mission of the feudal lord is to rob peasants".<sup>89</sup> Small riots in the region and land reform claims of the some peasants were also signs of growing class-based consciousness in Cem's view.<sup>90</sup> Moreover, Cem thought that rapid population growth in the region could easily change the social structure and power struggles.<sup>91</sup> Due to feudalism, there were

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<sup>84</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, pp. 496-497.

<sup>85</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye Üzerine (Araştırmalar)*, p. 12.

<sup>86</sup> *ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>87</sup> *ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>88</sup> *ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>89</sup> *ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>90</sup> *ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>91</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, p. 497.





some other problems including blood feuds (kan davası), patriarchy and armament.<sup>92</sup> Cem's insistence on problems of the feudal structure of the region never disappeared and he continued to write about the effect of feudalism on the emergence of PKK racism and secessionism.<sup>93</sup> But starting from the 1990s, with the demise of socialism Cem focused more on other problems especially economic problems, identity politics and cultural rights.

The third main problem was the state's policy of not developing and improving the infrastructural and social capabilities of the region. For Cem, this was a fascist approach and all these reasons contributed a lot to the birth of Kurdish nationalism.<sup>94</sup> Cem wrote that the economic and technological condition of the region was very backward and people were struggling against the natural problems such as famine and eurygaster (*süne*).<sup>95</sup> Due to terrible economic conditions, people had to engage in smuggling activities and the state was allowing this. People did not have education and some of them could not even speak Turkish properly.<sup>96</sup> The lack of interest shown by the state to the social problems of the people living in this region was creating anger towards the state and the technological and economic gap between modern cities and south-eastern villages show that the Republic was not successful in creating a "classless, non-privileged, mixed society"<sup>97</sup> as it was stated by Atatürk. Cem thought that in the early years of the Republic, this mentality emerged from the fear of Russian invasion and the

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<sup>92</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye Üzerine (Araştırmalar)*, p. 16.

<sup>93</sup> İsmail Cem, *Gelecek İçin Denemeler*, p. 144.

<sup>94</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye Üzerine (Araştırmalar)*, p. 11.

<sup>95</sup> *ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>96</sup> *ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>97</sup> "Sınıfsız, imtiyazsız, kaynaşmış kitle". See; İsmail Cem, *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, p. 499.





state did not want to develop the infrastructure of the region, but continuing with this mentality now seems nonsensical.<sup>98</sup>

The fourth issue and problem related to the Kurdish question was about the policies of foreign imperialist states. For instance, in the early 1970s Cem wrote that due to the close relationship between Iraq and the USSR, the United Kingdom was providing armament support to Barzani.<sup>99</sup> He also wrote that foreign intelligence service agents were very active in the region.<sup>100</sup> In the mid 1990s, Cem wrote that 45 % of non-Kurdish people saw the Kurdish question primarily as a consequence of PKK terrorism that was supported by foreign countries.<sup>101</sup> As foreign minister, Cem showed great efforts to cut foreign support to PKK terrorism and he became very successful (this will explained in detail in the chapter 6). Cem never refrained from stating that the foreign support encouraged the emergence and strengthening of terrorism and wanted Turkey to be bold in foreign policy.<sup>102</sup>

İsmail Cem's proposal for the solution to this problem was first dealt with the acceptance of the problem. In his view, there was a problem in the region that should be first seriously accepted by the state.<sup>103</sup> Cem analyzed this problem on four aspects (restrictive, oppressive and discriminatory behavior of state officials, feudal structure of the region<sup>104</sup>, state's erroneous policy of not developing and improving the infrastructural and social capabilities of the region, policies of imperialist states) and the

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<sup>98</sup> İsmail Cem, *Gelecek İçin Denemeler*, p. 145.

<sup>99</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye Üzerine (Araştırmalar)*, p. 26.

<sup>100</sup> *ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>101</sup> İsmail Cem, *Gelecek İçin Denemeler*, p. 123.

<sup>102</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 143-146.

<sup>103</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye Üzerine (Araştırmalar)*, p. 34.

<sup>104</sup> Research shows that urbanization level in the south-eastern region is lower than the Turkish average. See; Abdülkadir Çevik. 2009. *Politik Psikoloji*. Ankara: Dost Kitabevi Yayınları, p. 81.





first thing to do was to accept the problem. Cem also heavily criticized the ostrich policy (*devekuşu politikası*)<sup>105</sup> of the state in the past.<sup>106</sup>

Secondly, Cem knew that Kurdish question is a gigantic issue where the balance of power in international relations and the history of the problem should also be known very well and placed on the agenda.<sup>107</sup> For instance, Cem heavily criticized unwarranted declarations of Turkish state officials that dealt with preventing the emergence of a Kurdish state in northern Iraq in the past and claimed that these declarations were not prepared by looking at power relations in international relations.<sup>108</sup> Cem thought that Turkish state officials had been so naïve in the past that they believed in the guarantees of Turkey's so-called allies in the West (primarily the USA), because a Kurdish state had already been established in northern Iraq due to the Provide Comfort<sup>109</sup> mechanism.<sup>110</sup> For Cem, accepting Provide Comfort mechanism was nothing but supporting the division of Iraq into two or three parts and allowing the emergence of a Kurdish state, and Turkish state officials' declarations about *casus belli*<sup>111</sup> were not realistic.<sup>112</sup> Cem also underlined that the emergence of a Kurdish state may not cause a problem for Turkey but it is controversial for many people and it is risky for Turkey to both help and also officially ignore the emergence of a new state in northern Iraq.<sup>113</sup> For Cem, the Provide Comfort laid the foundation of a Kurdish state but also linked Turkey

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<sup>105</sup> Acting as something does not exist by ignoring its presence.

<sup>106</sup> İsmail Cem, *Gelecek İçin Denemeler*, p. 126.

<sup>107</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye Üzerine (Araştırmalar)*, pp. 36-37.

<sup>108</sup> İsmail Cem, *Gelecek İçin Denemeler*, p. 127.

<sup>109</sup> Provide Comfort was the term used for referring to several military operations and humanitarian aid campaigns organized by USA with the help of Turkey in order to secure Iraqi Kurds from Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein's aggression.

<sup>110</sup> İsmail Cem, *Gelecek İçin Denemeler*, pp. 127-128.

<sup>111</sup> *Casus belli* is a term in international relations originated from Latin, meaning the justification for acts of war.

<sup>112</sup> İsmail Cem, *Gelecek İçin Denemeler*, p. 129.

<sup>113</sup> *ibid.*, p. 157.





to its Western allies with strong ties.<sup>114</sup> However, Turkey's position in the West has always been second-class in Cem's opinion and that is why Cem seemed to oppose the Provide Comfort mechanism and Turkey's current position in the West.<sup>115</sup> He thought that due to Provide Comfort, Turkey was subjected to increasing PKK terrorism and the emergence of a Kurdish state might harm Turkey's social peace.<sup>116</sup> During his tenure in office as Foreign Minister, Cem by his deeds showed the importance of international relations in the solution of PKK terrorism and the Kurdish question. Cem also wrote that Turkey should be confident of itself and whether a Kurdish state would be established or not, Turkey should not fear being divided.<sup>117</sup> Cem underlined that the Kurdish question is primarily Turkey's problem and although international conditions are very important, first of all, Turkey should handle its internal problem.<sup>118</sup> In that sense, Cem both acknowledged foreign support to PKK terrorism (in his tenure in office Cem and Ecevit's coalition government was successful in capturing PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan) but also rejected nationalist views pointing the sole reason of the problem as foreign countries' plans.<sup>119</sup>

Thirdly, as a requirement of basic definition of the state<sup>120</sup>, Turkey should be able to protect its citizens, its employees, its borders and stop terrorism in the region.<sup>121</sup> Cem claimed that the solution should be citizen-oriented and the Kurdish question

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<sup>114</sup> İsmail Cem, *Gelecek İçin Denemeler*, p. 158.

<sup>115</sup> *ibid.*, p. 159.

<sup>116</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 159-160.

<sup>117</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 130-131.

<sup>118</sup> *ibid.*, p. 132.

<sup>119</sup> *ibid.* p. 150.

<sup>120</sup> Cem was probably referring to German sociologist Max Weber's definition of the state as the institution having the "monopoly of the legitimate use of violence in the enforcement of its order".

<sup>121</sup> İsmail Cem, *Gelecek İçin Denemeler*, p. 125.





would never be solved unless the state took the support of the local people.<sup>122</sup> For Cem, a state that could not control its borders is a weak state and Turkish state seemed very weak because of its inability to control its borders.<sup>123</sup> Cem never approved or supported the rural guard (korucu) system and thought that this was similar to American policy against Vietcong in the past.<sup>124</sup> In his view, Turkey's failure at protecting its borders was weakening its prestige in international relations.<sup>125</sup> In that sense, Turkey's weak image due to its inability to control its borders and prevent terrorism was facilitating its loss of prestige in international affairs.<sup>126</sup>

Fourthly, Turkey should handle rising domestic nationalist and racist tendencies due to PKK terrorism. Cem claimed that nationalism in a country shown against imperialism is positive whereas ethnic or micro nationalism within a state is divisive and dangerous.<sup>127</sup> PKK terrorism due to its racist essence, created a racist reaction against itself and Cem thought that the state should control these reactions. Fifthly, Turkey should handle its struggle against violent terrorism within the borders of legal-democratic state and should not resort to illegality or extra-legal means since this could be used by Western states against Turkey.<sup>128</sup> Sixthly, the Turkish state should immediately accept democratic cultural rights of Kurdish people and should not fear cultural pluralism.<sup>129</sup>

Seventhly, Cem offered the Ministry of National Defense (Milli Savunma Bakanlığı) to be transformed into a more authorized and qualified department where

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<sup>122</sup> İsmail Cem, *Gelecek İçin Denemeler*, p. 147.

<sup>123</sup> *ibid.*, p. 150.

<sup>124</sup> *ibid.*, p. 151.

<sup>125</sup> *ibid.*, p. 152.

<sup>126</sup> *ibid.*, p. 153.

<sup>127</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 135-136.

<sup>128</sup> *ibid.*, p. 137.

<sup>129</sup> *ibid.*, p. 148.





theories about preventing PKK terrorism should be discussed and detailed plans would be made in coordination with the Prime Ministry and General Staff of the Turkish Armed Forces.<sup>130</sup> Cem asserted that the classically weak positioning of National Defense Ministry made struggle against terrorism more difficult concerning coordination between different branches of the state.

### 5.3. Political Islam - Secularism Discussions

Secularism and the state's secular practice has always been a controversial topic in Turkey especially after the rise of political Islam starting from the 1980s. Secularism in Turkey was introduced first time with the 1924 constitution and later Atatürk's reforms set the administrative and political requirements to create a modern, democratic, secular state aligned with the Kemalist ideology. After thirteen years of its introduction, laicism was explicitly stated in the second article of the Turkish constitution in 1937. Turkish constitutions starting from this date never recognized an official religion or promoted any. This includes also Islam, to which at least nominally more than 90 % of its citizens subscribe. Turkey's secularism (laicism) does not call for a strict separation of religion and the state, but describes the state's stance as one of "active neutrality" and tries to regulate the religious domain through the Directorate of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı*).<sup>131</sup> The duties of the Directorate of Religious Affairs are to publish the works concerning the beliefs, worship, and ethics of Islam, enlighten the

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<sup>130</sup> İsmail Cem, *Gelecek İçin Denemeler*, p. 154.

<sup>131</sup> Some observers including Baskın Oran claims that the presence of Directorate of Religious Affairs shows that Turkish laicism is closer to Byzantinism than secularism. Byzantinism is a term used in political science and philosophy to denote the political system and culture of the Byzantine Empire which includes the control of religious affairs by the state. See; Baskın Oran and Elçin Aktoprak, "İslamcılar daha hızlı değişiyor", retrieved on 16.05.2010 from *Radikal* newspaper web site, <http://www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=190309&tarih=16/06/2006>.





public about their religion, and administer the sacred worshipping places. The secular practices of the Turkish state have not been totally welcomed; from the first days of the Republic many uprisings (such as the Sheikh Said revolt or the Menemen Incident) occurred against secularism and center-right and political Islamist parties showed their importance at elections after transition to multi-party regime. There is no denying that Islam especially starting from the 1990s has become the most important component of Turkish politics. The rise of Welfare Party reached its peak in the 1995 general elections and the natural leader of the “National View” Necmettin Erbakan became the Prime Minister of the secular Turkish Republic. After the 28 February crisis, Islamist extremism seemed to have been suppressed by Turkish democracy backed up by the Turkish military and eventually Welfare Party was banned by the Constitutional Court.<sup>132</sup> However the sudden rise of the JDP in 2002 elections, a liberal-conservative (Muslim democratic) party which takes its roots from the National View (*Milli Görüş*) movement, showed again that Islam is still very important for Turkish citizens considering their lives even their political behaviors.<sup>133</sup>

It must be noted that JDP represented a breakdown from classical Turkish political Islam tradition and there are many differences between the WP and the JDP. While comparing the two important Islamic parties, it is worth to take into account some concepts defined by Daniel Brumberg. Brumberg mainly distinguishes the types of Islamism into three categories namely, “radical or militant fundamentalism, reformist

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<sup>132</sup> “In June 1998, the Constitutional Court closed down the WP on the grounds that the party had resorted to action against the secular Republic and banned Erbakan and other leading members of the party from politics for five years”. See; Elizabeth Özdalga. 2002. “Necmettin Erbakan: Democracy for the Sake of Power” in Metin Heper and Sabri Sayarı (ed.) *Political Leaders and Democracy in Turkey*. New York: Lexington Books, p. 134.

<sup>133</sup> JDP’s success is also associated with the widespread corruption and poor economic performance of center-right parties in the country.





fundamentalism and strategic modernism or Islamic liberalism”.<sup>134</sup> Accordingly, parties who pursue radical fundamentalism aimed at changing the system of the country through force and at the end form a regime based on Islamic laws. In reformist fundamentalism, the parties have the same aim with the radical fundamentalist that is establishing a state based on Islamic laws; however, these parties pursue moderate policies and continuously reject violence. In other words, through establishing mass electoral support they try to win the elections and construct a hidden agenda. This is also called dissimulation (*takiyye*). On the other hand, “Islamic liberals, which are quite rare in the Middle East, seek to extend religious freedoms in a broadly democratic environment”.<sup>135</sup> Unlike the radical and reformist fundamentals, Islamic liberals do not aim at forming an Islamic state. Instead of doing this they try to co-exist with the secular establishment of the state. In this sense, there is no doubt that we can call the WP a reformist fundamentalist party and JDP an Islamic liberal party (at least considering its policies in its first term) by looking at and analyzing their policies and the deeds of their leaders. Secularism-Islamism clash is still very visible and strong in Turkish political life and in a sense it creates a convenient environment for the TAF to possess extra powers and a special status of protecting the regime in the eyes of the secular urban population.

Professor Ergun Özbudun points out that with the rise of identity politics as a reaction to the culturally homogenizing effects of globalization, the nation-state has weakened and with the decline of social welfare state and the erosion of some social rights, political Islamist parties seemed to have filled the vacuum created by social

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<sup>134</sup> Ziya Öniş, 2001. “Political Islam at the crossroads: from hegemony to co-existence”. *Contemporary Politics*, Vol. 7, no: 4 (2001), p. 283.

<sup>135</sup> *ibid.*, p. 283.





democratic parties that could not get in touch with lower classes.<sup>136</sup> Binnaz Toprak also claims that the rise of Islamic movement in Turkey can be considered as a response to the life of metropolis which is “not only the financial-industrial center of the country but also the pivot of an alien culture in terms of its cosmopolitan mix”.<sup>137</sup> According to Toprak, enormous rural to urban migration, which was the cause of rapid industrialization of the country, created a large rural population living in the periphery of big cities consisting of pious Anatolian people who are not familiar with urban values or lifestyles. Accordingly, “ruralization of city life” took place when these people felt alienated from the city life both because of their different cultural background and their economic deprivation. It was Welfare Party in the 1980s and 1990s for the first time which was able to create links with these people. These people were mostly workers having economic difficulties and Welfare Party was very successful in organizing people by helping them economically. Moreover, due to their economic problems and religious beliefs, these people were reactive against the official ideology of the state and they saw the Welfare Party as their savior. This process was strengthened by the rising neo-conservative movement around the world even in the USA. Toprak also mentions the role of the state’s more tolerant approach towards Islam and religious parties as an antidote to socialist ideas in the rise of Islamic movements.

İsmail Cem as a social democrat journalist-writer and politician spent much time on analyzing and solving this issue and wrote many articles on this topic. İsmail Cem, with his peculiar stance on this topic and more tolerant approach to pious masses, received positive responses from Islamist-conservative circles and symbolized a new

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<sup>136</sup> Ergun Özbudun, *Contemporary Turkish Politics: Challenges to Democratic Consolidation*, p. 141.

<sup>137</sup> Binnaz Toprak. 1991. “Surviving Modernization: Islam as Communal Means of Adaptation” in *Il Politico*, no: 1/1991, p. 147.





perspective in the left. In accordance with his account of history and the model of underdevelopment, İsmail Cem thought that Ottoman and Turkish history of Westernization created cultural duality and a privileged Westernized segment in the country. In that sense, he explained Islamist movements as the “metaphysical reaction of suppressed masses”<sup>138</sup> caused by the presence of an Westernized elite group that has evolved culturally different from the ordinary people. Moreover, unlike classical Kemalist claims, in his view, the Ottoman state had never become completely Islamic and was able to interpret religion according to the needs of society and economy.<sup>139</sup> Thus, in a sense İsmail Cem viewed the Ottoman state as semi-secular. Cem also did not hesitate to praise Ottomans’ search for peace and rationality.<sup>140</sup> Cem claimed that the Islamic movement in Turkey was a reaction to bureaucratic-statist Westernization of the state starting from the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>141</sup> Westernization was dictated by European states and coincided with the weakening of the Empire. Thus, for many people Westernization and getting away from Islam meant the weakening of the Empire.<sup>142</sup> In that sense, Cem thought that political Islam and Islamic reactionism had a populist character although it was not progressive.<sup>143</sup> Cem also pointed out that Islamic reactionism always increased in the years of economic crises and difficulties.<sup>144</sup>

İsmail Cem’s peculiar stance in the left for his empathy for Islamist groups was not only in theory but also in practice since Cem actively supported the establishment of

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<sup>138</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 91.

<sup>139</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye’de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, p. 15.

<sup>140</sup> “Nowhere in the world is there another example of such diverse ethnic and confessional communities enjoying centuries of such peaceful and durable relations among themselves and with the central authority, as was the case in the Ottoman Empire”. See; İsmail Cem, *Turkey in the New Century*, p. 10.

<sup>141</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye’de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, p. 364.

<sup>142</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 364-365.

<sup>143</sup> *ibid.*, p. 366.

<sup>144</sup> *ibid.*, p. 367.





the RPP-NSP coalition in 1973. Cem saw this coalition as a chance to get over Islamist-secularist clash which he identified as “historical mistake (*tarihi yanılğı*)”.<sup>145</sup> In Cem’s view, Turkey’s social problems were not related to superstructural secularism discussions but were rather related to class-based economic inequalities. Similar to Mümtaz Soysal, he saw the growing Islamic movement as a “metaphysical reaction of suppressed masses”.<sup>146</sup> For Cem, the Islamic movement in Turkey was nothing but unconscious class-based reaction.<sup>147</sup> In his view, it was the bourgeoisie who directed petty bourgeois radicals in the RPP to prevent the unification of all suppressed people by evoking the secularist-Islamist clash in the 1970s.<sup>148</sup> Cem criticized the Turkish left for focusing mostly on superstructural aspects (lifestyle, dressing etc.) and asserted that privileged segments in Turkey used the Islamist-secularism clash very well in order to weaken leftist movements.<sup>149</sup> However, Cem especially in the 1970s defined progressiveness in terms of infrastructural aspects and class-based politics instead of superstructural conditions.<sup>150</sup>

İsmail Cem after the 12 September 1980 military coup and against the rising political Islamist (National View) movement in Turkey, revised his views on secularism and Westernization although he kept his core views. He defined secularism as a guarantee for believers from different sects, religions and non-believers.<sup>151</sup> In his view, secularism resided at the core of democracy and without secularism democracy could

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<sup>145</sup> İsmail Cem, *TRT’de 500 Gün ... bir dönem Türkiye’sinin hikayesi*, p. 12.

<sup>146</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 91.

<sup>147</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye’de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, pp. 362-363.

<sup>148</sup> İsmail Cem, *Siyaset Yazıları: 1975-1980 Türkiye’si*, p. 120.

<sup>149</sup> İsmail Cem, *Türkiye’de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, p. 372.

<sup>150</sup> *ibid.*, p. 374.

<sup>151</sup> İsmail Cem, *Sol’daki Arayış*, p. 168.





not be established.<sup>152</sup> He wanted the Directorate of Religious Affairs to contain and provide services for all sects (he refers to the Alevi community's problems and exclusion from state's official stance) and religions in the country.<sup>153</sup> He also pointed out that in the long run the aim of secularism was to transfer state power and authority over religion to civil society and congregations (*cemaat*).<sup>154</sup> He also boldly stated that a more libertarian, pluralist and democratic interpretation of secularism should be developed in Turkey in order to create social peace.<sup>155</sup> He believed that thanks to the Ottoman legacy of religious tolerance, Turkey has the potential to realize this dream and terminate the secularism-Islamism clash that divides the country into poles and wastes its energy.<sup>156</sup>

On the very controversial topic of headscarf or turban, İsmail Cem wrote very boldly and stated that secularism should also be a guarantee for headscarf-wearing young women.<sup>157</sup> In his view, an ideal secular state that Turkey could not establish yet, should be blind or at least objective in state affairs towards different beliefs but also should provide a free environment where all beliefs should be practiced freely.<sup>158</sup> In that sense, Cem, being aware of the strong polarization in the country on this topic, offered to take freedoms in totality (*özgürlükleri bir bütün olarak anlayabilmek*) in order to solve the secularist-Islamist clash and obliterate fears against Islamic lifestyles.<sup>159</sup> Thus, Cem never approved censorship and repressive attitudes against Islamism and defended dialogue between different groups and tolerance towards each other.<sup>160</sup> However, Cem

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<sup>152</sup> İsmail Cem, *Sol'daki Arayış*, p. 168.

<sup>153</sup> *ibid.*, p. 168.

<sup>154</sup> *ibid.*, p. 169.

<sup>155</sup> İsmail Cem, *Gelecek İçin Denemeler*, p. 189.

<sup>156</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 188-189.

<sup>157</sup> *ibid.*, p. 189.

<sup>158</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 196-197.

<sup>159</sup> *ibid.*, p. 197.

<sup>160</sup> İsmail Cem and Deniz Baykal, *Yeni Sol*, p. 93.





also wrote that commercialization and exploitation of religion for political aims is a serious problem in the country and this should not be mixed with the democratic, libertarian and pluralist version of secularism.<sup>161</sup> Cem criticized the Motherland Party (ANAP) for its exploitation of religion for political means in the 1980s.<sup>162</sup> According to Cem, defending freedom of religion was not a deviation from social democracy but rather it resided at the core of leftist libertarianism.<sup>163</sup> However, Cem did not also hesitate to criticize some of the JDP government's deeds and rhetoric in his last years because of its libertarian approach solely on religious matters. İsmail Cem's insistence on the necessity of a more democratic version of secularism also resembles Hale and Özbudun's recent argument about the revision of "assertive secularism" with "passive secularism"<sup>164</sup> and in that sense Cem correctly foresaw what was coming and what was needed more than two decades ago.

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<sup>161</sup> İsmail Cem, *Engeller ve Çözümler*, p. 343.

<sup>162</sup> *ibid.*, p. 344.

<sup>163</sup> *ibid.*, p. 349.

<sup>164</sup> For details see; William Hale and Ergun Özbudun. 2010. *Islamism, Democracy and Liberalism in Turkey The Case of AKP*. New York: Routledge.





## CHAPTER VI

### CEM'S FOREIGN POLICY (1997-2002)

İsmail Cem served as the Foreign Minister of Turkey between the years 1997 and 2002. Cem was often perceived as a peace-seeking and successful minister both within the country and on the international public through his policies. İsmail Cem was also one of the few Turkish politicians well-known outside his own country. Before his resignation, he was one of Turkey's longest-serving foreign ministers (nearly 5 years). Cem's book *Turkey in the New Century*<sup>1</sup> is a collection of Cem's speeches, interviews, comments and memoirs about his tenure in office as the Foreign Minister which can help us in understanding his vision of international relations. The book has certain aspects of an autobiography but also carries the qualities of an academic international relations book since Cem had first-hand knowledge of important details about Turkey's foreign policy. The book was first published in 2000 with the title *Turkey in 21<sup>st</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> İsmail Cem. 2001. *Turkey in the New Century*. Mersin: Rustem Bookshop.





*Century*<sup>2</sup>, but Cem later revised the book, added new parts and published with the title *Turkey in the New Century*.

In the book, Cem offers a new approach to Turkish foreign policy by criticizing certain aspects of classical Turkish foreign policy and diplomacy.<sup>3</sup> Cem believes that Turkish foreign policy had been alienated from its cultural roots and historical past and it must be replaced with a new understanding based on the awareness of Turkey's rich identity and historical assets inherited from the Ottoman state.<sup>4</sup> He assumed that the end of Cold War, the phenomena of globalization and the development of technology created many new opportunities in the foreign policy.<sup>5</sup> He wanted Turkey to be confident of itself, not ashamed of its past and bold and peace-seeking at the same time for the future. He criticized Turkish politicians' habit of perceiving foreign policy in the form of idealistic prescriptions such as friendly countries or hostile countries and offered a more flexible and rational approach to problems.<sup>6</sup> Cem defined foreign policy as "a mathematical equation of a country's interests".<sup>7</sup> He tried to create a convenient environment to be more flexible and active in foreign policy. Cem was not afraid to consider diversities in the country as richness and tried to overcome the forced alternatives.<sup>8</sup> By forced alternatives, he meant the concepts often presented as contradictions such as Islam-secularism or West-East. He thought that these dichotomies

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<sup>2</sup> İsmail Cem. 2000. *Turkey in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Mersin: Rustem Bookshop.

<sup>3</sup> For a detailed research on Turkish foreign policy see; William Hale. 2003. *Türk Dış Politikası 1774-2000*. İstanbul: Arkeoloji ve Sanat Yayınları. Also see; Mustafa Aydın. 2003. "Twenty Years Before, Twenty Years After: Turkish Foreign Policy at the Threshold of the 21st Century" in Tareq Y. Ismael and Mustafa Aydın (ed.) *Turkey's Foreign Policy in the 21st Century: A Changing Role in World Politics*. Cornwall: MPG Books Ltd.

<sup>4</sup> İsmail Cem, *Turkey in the New Century*, p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 14-15.





were exaggerated considering their relevance in both Turkey's domestic and foreign politics. He defined Turkey as both European (Western) and Asian (Eastern).<sup>9</sup>

Cem in the next chapters tried to explain his views and analyses on Turkish-American, Turkish-EU, Turkish-Eurasia and Turkish-Middle East relations and offered a new rational and multi-dimensional approach to these relations in order to increase Turkey's interests. He especially focused on Turkey's full accession to EU process and energy agreements made with Eurasian countries such as Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline project.<sup>10</sup> In his view, Turkey should develop a rational and peace-seeking multi-dimensional relationship style with all important organizations and countries based on protecting and developing Turkey's interests. Becoming totally engaged in EU or USA would be a big mistake in Cem's view. He later concentrated on the international war against terrorism and the ways through which Turkey could solve its own terrorism problem. The last parts of the book are separated into Turkish-Greece and Turkish-EU relations. In these parts, Cem gave first-hand information about Turkish-EU and Turkish-Greek relations and also shared his memories. Cem pointed out that with a liberal understanding in international politics, Turkey could never be successful and would always give concessions to the EU. He also made an analogy between Turkish-EU relations and unrequited love.<sup>11</sup> He offered a more rational, realistic and interest-based approach to EU relations and claimed that if this happened the EU would approach Turkey in a different manner. Cem also labeled the JDP officials and diplomats as inexperienced and incompetent in foreign policy. He also never hesitated to

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<sup>9</sup> İsmail Cem, *Turkey in the New Century*, p. 19.

<sup>10</sup> The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline is a 1,768 kilometers (11 long crude oil pipeline from the Azeri-Chirag-Guneshli oil field in the Caspian Sea to the Mediterranean Sea. It connects Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan; Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia; and Ceyhan, a port on the south-eastern Mediterranean coast of Turkey, hence its name.

<sup>11</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 201.





make a harsh criticism of the JDP government and blamed Gül and Erdoğan governments for giving concessions in negotiating with the European Union especially in areas concerning relations with Greece, Cyprus, Northern Iraq (Kurdish question) and the so-called Armenian genocide.

Talking about Turkish foreign policy, Cem has always underlined the importance of becoming a “world state” in 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>12</sup> For him, Turkey, as a democratic country having reached European standards of human rights in the Islamic world, should be presented to other Middle Eastern countries as a model.<sup>13</sup> Cem, in addition to his peace-seeking foreign policy, engaged in friendly relations with his counterparts including Greek foreign minister Yorgo Papandreou, French Foreign Minister Hubert Védrine, Dutch Foreign Minister Jozias van Aartsen, Arab League Secretary General Amr Musa and United States Secretary of State Madeleine Albright (whom Cem considered as the most successful and obstinate U.S. Secretary of State).<sup>14</sup> Cem admitted that his personal dealings and friendships also helped Turkey to follow an active foreign policy and get some results<sup>15</sup> and personal relationships have an important place in international relations since they could increase sympathy and reliance of both sides towards each other.<sup>16</sup> However, Cem also underlined that although for instance he was a good friend of Madeleine Albright, they engaged in serious discussions and harsh polemics since diplomacy is about countries’ national interests and these interests could sometimes intersect.<sup>17</sup> For Cem, in addition to planning and executing Turkish foreign policy, the Turkish Foreign Ministry has always carried an important historical mission of civilizing

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<sup>12</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 202.

<sup>13</sup> Cem called this as “Turkish model”. See; *ibid.*, p. 204.

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 209-210.

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*, p. 210.

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*, p. 229.

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*, p. 231.





and modernizing the country similar to that of the Turkish military.<sup>18</sup> He praised all diplomats and staff of Turkish Foreign Ministry for their hardworking and patriotic personalities and criticized the prejudiced “mon chere”<sup>19</sup> approach to Turkish diplomats due to their extreme accuracy in terms of courtesy.<sup>20</sup> He remembered that many Turkish diplomats were targeted by ASALA<sup>21</sup> and died as martyrs in the past.<sup>22</sup> However, Cem also stated that Turkish Foreign Affairs have some deficiencies in terms of reformism, innovation and defending Turkey’s interests in a more assertive manner.<sup>23</sup> In addition, Cem underlined that similar to pro-Western Turkish citizens and politicians, Turkish diplomats should have more knowledge about Turkish history and culture and should never feel an inferiority complex against Western countries.<sup>24</sup>

### 6.1. Turkish-American Relations

Historically, Turkish-American relations were very important for both countries. Although at the beginning (after the Second World War with Turkey’s accession to NATO) and particularly until the 1990s, relations largely revolved around military grounds, for the past fifteen years efforts have been made to diversify the nature of those

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<sup>18</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, pp. 232-233.

<sup>19</sup> Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has often used the term “monşer (mon chere)” in order to criticize and mock with Turkish diplomats.

<sup>20</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, pp. 234-235.

<sup>21</sup> The Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA) was a Marxist-Leninist militant organization, which operated from 1975 to 1986. The stated intention of ASALA was to compel the Turkish state to acknowledge publicly its responsibility for the deaths of Armenians in 1915, pay reparations and cede territory for an Armenian homeland. ASALA mostly targeted Turkish embassies in Europe and Turkish diplomats and their families. There had been 84 incidents involving ASALA leaving 46 dead and 299 injured.

<sup>22</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 205.

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 235-236.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*, p. 237.





relations as should be the case between two equal partners.<sup>25</sup> Turkish-American relations were shaken two times seriously; the first one after President Johnson's letter and Cyprus Peace Operation made by Turkish between 1964-1980, and second one, very recently starting from the refusal of 1 March memorandum in Turkish Parliament. Starting from 2003, Turkish-American relations were progressing in an ambiguous way mostly because of free Kurdistan<sup>26</sup> and moderate Islam<sup>27</sup> discussions emanating from Washington. The general public opinion in Turkey is concentrated on the USA's "Greater Middle East Project" and its long term plan of creating an independent Kurdish state in northern Iraq which would be enlarged into Turkey's south-eastern provinces. The anti-American feelings of the Turkish people seem to have reached its highest level<sup>28</sup> in the whole Republican history.<sup>29</sup> Although the election of new American President Barack Hussein Obama and his visit to Turkey could mark a new beginning in Turkish-American relations<sup>30</sup>, the problematic aspects between two countries'

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<sup>25</sup> For an analysis see; Nüzhet Kandemir, "Turkish-American Relations Past and Future", retrieved on 27.07.2010 from <http://www.setav.org/ups/dosya/28397.pdf>.

<sup>26</sup> Term used in Ralph Peter's "Blood Borders" article, which was published on June 2006 in *Armed Forces Journal* magazine. The article included a map showing an independent Kurdish state on northern Iraq and south-eastern provinces of Turkey. See; Ralph Peters. "Blood Borders, How A Better Middle East Would Look" in *Armed Forces Journal*, June 2006, retrieved on 10.05.2008 from <http://www.armedforcesjournal.com/2006/06/1833899/>.

<sup>27</sup> Following JDP's landslide victory in 22 July 2007 general elections, American diplomat and former Secretary of the State Richard Holbrooke defined Turkey and Malaysia as two examples of "moderate Islam" countries. See; *Today's Zaman*, retrieved on 12.05.2008 from <http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/detaylar.do?load=detay&link=123449>.

<sup>28</sup> In a survey that was made in 21 countries by British Broadcasting Corporation (*BBC*), to the question of "Is the re-election of President George W. Bush affirmative for world peace and security?" the highest no replies came from Turkey with 82 %. See; Arnaud De Borchgrave. "Extreme Anti-Americanism in Turkey", retrieved on 10.05.2008 from <http://archive.newsmax.com/archives/articles/2005/3/11/182953.shtml>.

<sup>29</sup> For a study on the reflections of anti-Americanism on Turkish popular culture, see; Ozan Örmeci. 2008. *Popüler Kültür*, Ankara: Elips Kitap.

<sup>30</sup> On 6 April 2009, US President Barack Hussein Obama in his speech in the Turkish Parliament praised Turkey's history and the role it can play today as a democratic and secular country having a very high majority of Muslim population. "They see your country at the crossroads of continents and touched by the currents of history. They know that this has been a place where civilizations meet and different peoples mingle. And they wonder whether you will be pulled in one direction or another" U.S. President Obama told Turkish deputies in his half-hour speech. See; *Turkish Daily News*, retrieved on 07.04.2009 from





relations still persist.<sup>31</sup> In addition, the decision of a U.S. congressional panel, approving a resolution on Armenian allegations regarding the incidents of 1915 and calling the events as genocide on 5 March 2010, would certainly lead to deterioration in relations between two countries.<sup>32</sup> Thus, it would not be wrong to claim that the accord between two countries during Cem's Foreign Ministry seems to have disappeared in recent years.

İsmail Cem first experienced the USA and American culture when he was young, in Robert College and during his voyage to the USA with the American Field Service exchange program for a year (1956-1957). Cem stayed with an American family (Parkhursts) in San Francisco and had the chance to observe and live the American way of life. Although Cem was impressed by the USA's technological possibilities, glorious cities and freedom of thought, his sympathy for the aggrieved side led him to find American system too draconian and disadvantageous for the weaker ones. He also felt a kind of responsibility for developing his country and aiding the poor children who do not have same opportunities as Cem did after experiencing American life. He loved American people and found them helpful and optimistic, but opposed many American policies starting from his youth.<sup>33</sup> Cem thought that due to conditions of Cold War, the USA played a negative role in the development of Turkish democracy by provoking or

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<http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/english/domestic/11378421.asp?gid=244>. Political analyst Bülent Alırza, who directs the Turkey Project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington D.C., claims that President Obama's trip to Turkey could be the beginning of new "Model Partnership" between two countries which could create "a modern international community that is respectful, secure and prosperous". See; Bülent Alırza. "President Obama's Visit to Turkey: Building a Model Partnership", *CSIS*, 08.04.2009, retrieved on 12.04.2009 from <http://www.csis.org>.

<sup>31</sup> According to a research made by Pew Research Center, Turkish people who look positive towards USA rose from 12 % to 14 % after President Obama's election but anti-Americanism continued to exist strongly. See; *Cumhuriyet Portal*, retrieved on 27.07.2009 from <http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/?im=yhs&hn=70870>.

<sup>32</sup> After the decision, Turkey's ambassador in Washington D.C. Namık Tan was recalled to Turkey for consultations. See; *Hürriyet Daily News*, retrieved on 08.03.2010 from <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=0306105111300-2010-03-06>.

<sup>33</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 38.





at least supporting military coup regimes in the past due to security preferences. However, during the strong anti-imperialist wings of the 1960s and 1970s, Cem's leftism was never close to Bolshevism or Maoism and rather resembled to European social democracy. In that sense, Cem had never been anti-American or enemy of Western civilization although he never approved of American imperialism or the high degree of American effect on Turkish politics. Cem thought that Bülent Ecevit was also similar to him and he loved USA only he was clever and bold enough to mention it when he saw a mistake that could spoil two countries' relations.<sup>34</sup> Cem also did not hesitate to make harsh criticisms of American involvement in Turkish politics<sup>35</sup> and US led military coups in Turkey and in many parts of the world during the Cold War.

İsmail Cem during his tenure in office as Turkish Foreign Minister many times stated that he shares the view that U.S. is the leading force in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century due to its internal creative dynamism and its revolutionary achievements in disseminating information and knowledge.<sup>36</sup> Cem thought that the USA would continue its leadership in the 21<sup>st</sup> century but instead of defining the USA as a "superpower", he preferred to use "super generator of knowledge and information".<sup>37</sup> He stated that during his term Turkish-American relations were progressing on solid ground although he disagreed American policies concerning Cyprus and Iraq.<sup>38</sup> Cem was aware of the fact that neither in size, nor in capacity were Turkey and United States comparable, but both countries had interests of a global nature since U.S. is a global power and Turkey is a multi-

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<sup>34</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 241.

<sup>35</sup> For a historical study on Turkish-American relations see; Çağrı Erhan. 2001. *Türk-Amerikan İlişkilerinin Tarihsel Kökenleri*. Ankara: İmge Kitabevi.

<sup>36</sup> İsmail Cem, *Turkey in the New Century*, p. 72.

<sup>37</sup> *ibid.*, p. 72.

<sup>38</sup> *ibid.*, p. 73.





regional power.<sup>39</sup> For Cem, it is possible between two sides to “see eye to eye on all issues”.<sup>40</sup> Cem had always been disturbed by the asymmetrical relationship between USA and Turkey and during his tenure in office he tried to reduce the huge deficit between Turkey’s trade with the USA.<sup>41</sup> However, Cem admitted that Turkey still had important foreign trade deficit against the USA especially when military procurement expenditures came into the scene.<sup>42</sup> Therefore, Cem as Turkish Foreign Minister, tried to lift all restrictions, quotas and barriers that prevented Turkish products to be openly compete in the American market.<sup>43</sup>

İsmail Cem considered Turkish-American relations as an example of stability in foreign relations and explained with three terms: consistency, predictability and reliability.<sup>44</sup> Cem also thought that the Turkish-American alliance was not just a matter of ideals, but rather it is “deeply rooted in realities and interests”.<sup>45</sup> Cem believed that Turkey’s inter-regional roles and the USA’s global roles intersected concerning Balkans, Bosnia, Macedonia, Kosovo, the Middle East, Arab-Israeli conflict, problems of Iraq, security of the Gulf, the Caucasus and the Central Asia, Azeri-Armenian conflict and oil and energy politics.<sup>46</sup> All these regions and countries, formerly being parts of Ottoman Empire, have important cultural, economic and political links with Turkey which could allow Turkey to be an influential actor in these regions. For Cem, Turkey’s NATO membership was also important in Turkish-American interests and although Turkey supports the development of the European Union’s defense organization, NATO is still

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<sup>39</sup> İsmail Cem, *Turkey in the New Century*, pp. 72-73.

<sup>40</sup> *ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>41</sup> *ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>42</sup> *ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>43</sup> *ibid.*, p. 74.

<sup>44</sup> *ibid.*, p. 74.

<sup>45</sup> *ibid.*, p. 74.

<sup>46</sup> *ibid.*, p. 74.





pivotal in European defense.<sup>47</sup> For all these reasons, Cem called Turkish-American relations “necessary symbiosis” due to the two countries’ common values of democracy and freedom and their overlapping interests in numerous fields.<sup>48</sup> In regards to Central Asia and Caucasus, Cem claimed that the USA and Turkey were pursuing policies that were somewhat parallel and Baku-Tblisi-Ceyhan project and the trans-Caspian natural gas pipeline<sup>49</sup> are two great projects in which both countries have interests against Russia.<sup>50</sup>

Although Cem had a bright vision for the future of Turkish-American relations, he was very disappointed by the USA’s Iraq policy which he thought to be detrimental to the USA’s image and prestige as well as to Turkish-American relations. However, Cem also stated that although as Foreign Minister of Turkey he was against the invasion of Iraq and Turkey’s involvement in the operation, he would have done the same and tried to take Turkey’s maximum support if he had been on the American side.<sup>51</sup> Cem later told journalist Can Dündar that he and Prime Minister Ecevit had meetings with Condoleezza Rice, Donald Rumsfeld and Dick Cheney before the invasion and they tried everything in order to convince Americans about the negative effects of an American attack on Iraq but could not persuade them.<sup>52</sup> In Cem’s view, for the future, Turkey should keep its close relationship with the USA, but this did not mean accepting all American proposals. In addition, Cem did not refrain to say that JDP’s relationship to USA was colony minded and damage relations between two countries since it wounds

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<sup>47</sup> İsmail Cem, *Turkey in the New Century*, p. 76.

<sup>48</sup> *ibid.*, p. 77.

<sup>49</sup> The Trans-Caspian Gas Pipeline is a proposed submarine pipeline between Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan. The Trans-Caspian Gas Pipeline project if built would transport natural gas from Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan to central Europe, circumventing both Russia and Iran.

<sup>50</sup> İsmail Cem, *Turkey in the New Century*, p. 91.

<sup>51</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 242.

<sup>52</sup> *ibid.*, p. 242.





Turkish people and thus fuels anti-Americanism. Cem also believed that the USA had an important role in the dissolution of coalition government and the take-over of JDP in 2002.<sup>53</sup>

## 6.2. Turkish-European Union Relations

Turkey's application to accede to the European Union was made on 14 April 1987.<sup>54</sup> Turkey has been an associate member of the European Union (EU) and its predecessors since 1963. After the 10 founding members, Turkey was one of the first countries to become a member of the Council of Europe in 1949 and was also a founding member of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 1961 and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in 1973. Turkey has also been an associate member of the Western European Union since 1992, and is a part of the "Western Europe" branch of the Western European and Others Group (WEOG) at the United Nations. Turkey signed a Customs Union agreement with the EU in 1995 and was officially recognized as a candidate for full membership on 12 December 1999, at the Helsinki summit of the European Council.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> İsmail Cem, *Turkey in the New Century*, pp. 242-243.

<sup>54</sup> For the chronology of Turkish-EU relations see; Özgül Erdemli. 2003. "Chronology: Turkey's Relations with the EU" in Ali Çarkoğlu and Barry Rubin (ed.) *Turkey and the European Union: Domestic Politics, Economic Integration and International Dynamics*. New York: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd.

<sup>55</sup> For details about Helsinki Summit and afterwards see; Gamze Avcı. 2003. "Turkey's Slow EU Candidacy: Insurmountable Hurdles to Membership or Simple Euro-skepticism?" in Ali Çarkoğlu and Barry Rubin (ed.) *Turkey and the European Union: Domestic Politics, Economic Integration and International Dynamics*. New York: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd. Also see; Ziya Öniş. 2003. "Domestic Politics, International Norms and Challenges to the State: Turkey-EU Relations in the post-Helsinki Era" in Ali Çarkoğlu and Barry Rubin (ed.) *Turkey and the European Union: Domestic Politics, Economic Integration and International Dynamics*. New York: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd.





Negotiations were started on 3 October 2005 but the membership bid has become a major controversy in the ongoing enlargement of the European Union.<sup>56</sup>

As Turkey takes steps towards full membership to the European Union<sup>57</sup>, skepticism of the EU countries regarding Turkish membership -due to historical, cultural, economic, political and psychological reasons- and the political conditions determined by the EU contribute to a growing ambivalence towards the idea of integration in Turkey. According to nationalist political/intellectual circles, the EU is seen as the contemporary version of European imperialism which covertly aims to weaken, divide and rule Turkey. Specifically, the EU's perspective on the Cyprus issue, the Armenian problem and the Kurdish question increases the uncertainties about European countries' intentions and sincerity about Turkey's accession. The rise of nationalism and "Islamophobia" as well as the takeover of right wing political parties instead of social democratic parties in Europe strengthen the current trend. The German

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<sup>56</sup> For details see; EurActiv - European Union information web site, retrieved on 14.06.2010 from <http://www.euractiv.com/en/enlargement/eu-turkey-relations/article-129678>.

<sup>57</sup> - On 17 December 2004, EU decided to start accession negotiations with Turkey.

- On 3 October 2005, three chapters of the Acquis Communautaire (Right of Establishment for Companies & Freedom to provide Services, Financial Services and Financial Control) were opened.

- On 12 June 2006, chapter on Science and Research was opened and provisionally closed.

- On 11 December 2006, continued dispute over Cyprus incited EU to freeze talks on eight chapters (Right of Establishment for Companies & Freedom to provide Services, Financial Services, Free Movement of Goods, Agriculture & Rural Development, Fisheries, Transport Policy, Customs Union and External Relations) and to state that no chapters would be closed until a resolution is found.

- On 29 March 2007, chapter on Enterprise and Industrial Regulations was opened.

- On 25 June 2007, chapters on Statistics and Financial Control were opened, but the opening of the chapter on Economic and Monetary Policy was blocked by French President Nicholas Sarkozy.

- On 19 December 2007, chapters on Health & Consumer Protection and on Trans-European Transport were opened.

- On 17 June 2008, chapters on Company Law and Intellectual Property Law were opened.

- On 19 December 2008, chapters on Economic & Monetary Policy and Information Society & Media were opened.

- On 30 June 2009, chapter on Taxation was opened.

- On 8 December 2009, chapter on Environment was opened.

- On 30 June 2010, chapter on Food Safety, Veterinary & Phytosanitary Policy was opened.





chancellor Angela Merkel's statements about "privileged partnership"<sup>58</sup> and the French president Nicholas Sarkozy's insistence on a "Mediterranean Union"<sup>59</sup> also contribute to the emerging downward trend in Turkish-EU relations. Turkish public opinion about EU membership seems to be focused on two extreme poles, which constantly degrade or ignore each other. Polls made in the recent years show that support for Turkey's accession to the European Union has been decreasing dramatically and Turkish people have begun to lose their faith in the success of this project. A poll conducted by a respected inquiry company KONDA in 2007 shows that only 39 % of Turkish people think that "Turkey should absolutely become a full member of EU", whereas 24 % of Turkish people are "extremely against EU membership". The other 37 % of Turkish people think that "full membership to EU does not matter for them".<sup>60</sup> Another poll by A&G Company verifies KONDA's results and shows that Turkish people who think that "Turkey should absolutely become a full member of EU" fell from 56.5 % to 30.1 % between 2002 and 2008.<sup>61</sup> The future of the Turkish-EU relationship does not seem bright in the short term because of the complexity of the problems between two sides and the hopeful and energetic situation in the days of Cem's Foreign Ministry and the JDP government's early years seem to have been lost.

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<sup>58</sup> German chancellor Angela Merkel has been promoting the idea of privileged partnership for Turkey for a long time. But after coming to power, she "pledged to abide by commitments Germany had made for Turkish membership." See; *Turkish Daily News*, retrieved on 23.05.2008 from <http://www.turkishdailynews.com.tr/article.php?enewsid=60851>.

<sup>59</sup> Before being elected the President of the Republic of France, Nicolas Sarkozy in a televised debate with his socialist rival Segolene Royal few weeks before the elections, stated that if elected president, he will start a debate on Turkey's EU membership and he will be against such membership. He also for the first time said that Turkey could only be a part of the Mediterranean Union. See; *Turkish Daily News*, retrieved on 22.05.2008 from <http://www.turkishdailynews.com.tr/article.php?enewsid=72308>.

<sup>60</sup> Tarhan Erdem. "Yeni Türkiye'yi Anlamak (Understanding New Turkey)", retrieved on 09.05.2008 from [http://www.konda.com.tr/html/dosyalar/yeni\\_turkiye.pdf](http://www.konda.com.tr/html/dosyalar/yeni_turkiye.pdf).

<sup>61</sup> A&G Araştırma Şirketi, "AB'ye Üyelik (Membership to EU)", retrieved on 10.05.2008 from [http://www.agarastirma.com.tr/arastirmalar/ab\\_uyelik.pdf](http://www.agarastirma.com.tr/arastirmalar/ab_uyelik.pdf).





Ismail Cem learned and loved European culture from his childhood since he was brought up in modern Turkish family that adopted European culture and lifestyle. Cem also studied in Lausanne University in the early 1960s and observed European culture more closely. Cem was impressed by the great European culture and became able to speak French and English perfectly. Cem's leftism and his ideal of social democracy was also heavily shaped by the European left especially that of the French Socialist Party (PS). Moreover, Cem became popular in international media mostly as the architect of Turkey's acquisition of full membership candidate status to join the European Union.<sup>62</sup> He was largely credited with Turkey's declaration as a full member candidate during the Helsinki summit in 1999, after much negotiation with the EU and a night trip by EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana and the then EU Commissioner Günter Verheugen to Ankara to iron out the last details. Cem has always loved European culture and expressed his wish for Turkey to become a full member of the European Union but he also added that this was not an obsession for Turkey.<sup>63</sup> He criticized previous Turkish governments for not believing in Turkey's place in the EU as a first-class member and settled for second-class practices<sup>64</sup> such as some disadvantageous clauses in the Customs Union agreement.<sup>65</sup> For Cem, Turkey has a mixed identity of

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<sup>62</sup> For example see; *BBC News*, "Profile: Ismail Cem - supreme diplomat", retrieved on 29.05.2010 from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/2123057.stm>.

<sup>63</sup> See; *Le Monde*, "Entrer dans l'Union n'est pas une obsession pour la Turquie", retrieved on 02.06.2010 from [http://www.lemonde.fr/cgi-bin/ACHATS/acheter.cgi?offre=ARCHIVES&type\\_item=ART\\_ARCH\\_30J&objet\\_id=140457](http://www.lemonde.fr/cgi-bin/ACHATS/acheter.cgi?offre=ARCHIVES&type_item=ART_ARCH_30J&objet_id=140457).

<sup>64</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 202.

<sup>65</sup> On 31 December 1995, the Customs Union between Turkey and the European Union came into effect. Goods can travel between the two entities without any customs restrictions. The Customs Union does not cover essential economic areas, such as agriculture, to which bilateral trade concessions apply, services or public procurement. The EU-Turkey Customs Union is one of the steps towards full Turkish membership of the European Union itself. By the Association Council Decision of 6 March 1995, the Customs Union came into force on 31 December 1995. In 1996 a free trade area was established between Turkey and the European Union for products covered by the European Coal and Steel Community. Turkey is the only country that has become a member of Customs Union before joining European Union.





being both European and Asian and both of these identities are important and historical.<sup>66</sup> In his view, Turkey's European identity has evolved in the 15<sup>th</sup> century especially after the conquest of İstanbul in 1453.<sup>67</sup> If being European is a geographical category, the large part of Turkish history has taken place in the European continent and contemporary Turkey also has important villages in the Europe. If being European is a historical category, both Turkish and European history consist of interactions between these civilizations and Turks have always been part of European history. If being European is a cultural category, Turkey is a country that has been trying to catch up contemporary European culture in terms of democracy, pluralism, secularism, human rights, men-women equality etc.<sup>68</sup>

In that sense, Cem's first aim was to change classical self-distrusted EU policy of Turkish state and to consider EU relations as an important component of Turkish foreign policy, rather than a separate and independent vision.<sup>69</sup> For him, Turkey could pursue two goals not conflicting with each other at the same time, which meant being a full member of European Union and becoming a determining state in Eurasia.<sup>70</sup> Cem knew about the negative European look towards Turkey and the serious obstacles that Turkey would face during membership process. Thus, he developed a strategy of intimidating EU countries by talking about withdrawing Turkey's membership application and not talking about Turkey's problems with EU officials on important matters including Cyprus and Turkish-Greek relations, human rights issues and Kurdish question until

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<sup>66</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, pp. 203-204.

<sup>67</sup> *ibid.*, p. 203.

<sup>68</sup> *ibid.*, p. 203.

<sup>69</sup> *ibid.*, p. 205.

<sup>70</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 205-206.





Turkey was granted full membership candidacy status.<sup>71</sup> This strategy did not work in the 1997 Luxembourg Summit but after the government and Cem's decisive stance against the EU and European countries and after Cem's bold press statements<sup>72</sup>, in the 1999 Helsinki Summit Turkey was finally given full membership candidacy status.<sup>73</sup> For Cem, this success was the result of a self-confident, not begging stance against EU, in addition to a cold and realistic profit and loss account analysis in foreign policy.<sup>74</sup>

Although he was the architect and the champion of Turkey's EU membership, İsmail Cem was realistic enough to declare that Turkey's EU full membership is very difficult to be realized because of the rising Islamophobia in European countries and European people's negative outlook towards Turkey's membership if referendums would take place after the termination accession negotiations.<sup>75</sup> Cem also knew that the Turkish public opinion was also skeptical regarding accession to EU<sup>76</sup> and the basis of this skepticism go far beyond technical problems.<sup>77</sup> However, he underlined that Turkey should continue to pursue this path and should reach EU standards for its own people's sake even if full membership to the Union would not be realized in the end.<sup>78</sup> Cem also wrote a book specifically on Turkey's relations with EU and tried to summarize the

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<sup>71</sup> İsmail Cem, *Turkey in the New Century*, p. 207.

<sup>72</sup> Few days before Helsinki Summit, Cem spoke to *Financial Times* and stated that "Turkey could give up from EU candidacy if an option like privileged partnership or conditional membership is offered". See; *ibid.*, p. 208.

<sup>73</sup> *ibid.*, p. 208.

<sup>74</sup> *ibid.*, p. 209.

<sup>75</sup> *ibid.*, p. 209.

<sup>76</sup> For details see; Ali Çarkoğlu. 2003. "Who Wants Full Membership? Characteristics of Turkish Public Support for EU Membership" in Ali Çarkoğlu and Barry Rubin (ed.) *Turkey and the European Union: Domestic Politics, Economic Integration and International Dynamics*. New York: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd.

<sup>77</sup> Prof. Barry Rubin also reached the same conclusion. See; Barry Rubin. 2003. "Introduction" in Ali Çarkoğlu and Barry Rubin (ed.) *Turkey and the European Union: Domestic Politics, Economic Integration and International Dynamics*. New York: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd.

<sup>78</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 209.





events in his tenure in office.<sup>79</sup> The book had an autobiographic characteristic but it also had important “off the record” information about the Helsinki Summit.

### 6.3. Struggle Against Terrorism

Maybe the most important event in Cem’s tenure in office as Turkish Foreign Minister was the capture of the PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan and the Adana Agreement made between Turkey and Syria. The Adana Agreement was made between Syria and Turkey on 20 October 1998 about not supporting terrorist organizations. This led to the deportation of Abdullah Öcalan from PKK camps in Syria and eventually his capture in Greek embassy in Kenya. The Adana Agreement was not easy to make.<sup>80</sup> Cem remembers that 1998 was the peak for PKK terror and there was extreme anger towards terrorism in Turkish society. In this situation, Cem thought that Turkey should do something against Syria, an obvious supporter of PKK terrorism.<sup>81</sup> In a fall National Security Committee meeting in 1998, a consensus was made and Chief of Turkish Land Forces General Atilla Ateş went to Hatay, a city on the Syrian border, and made a harsh speech against Syrian administration for its support of PKK terrorism.<sup>82</sup> Ateş said; “Some of our neighbors like Syria is misjudging and exploiting Turkey’s good intentions. They support the bandit called Apo and harmed Turkey. We are at the end of our rope. All kinds of troubles are caused by Syria. Turkey is strong enough to protect

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<sup>79</sup> İsmail Cem. 2005. *Türkiye, Avrupa, Avrasya İkinci cilt: Avrupa’nın “Birliği” ve Türkiye*, İstanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları.

<sup>80</sup> For details see; *Milliyet* (daily newspaper), 8-9-10 November 2007.

<sup>81</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 225.

<sup>82</sup> *ibid.*, p. 226.





its lands and respond to these troubles. If Turkey does not get what it wants, it would acquire the right to take any kinds of precautions".<sup>83</sup>

Ateş's speech, in which he warned Syrian government that its support for terrorism may lead to a war between Turkey and Syria, packed a punch and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak assumed a mediator role between Turkey and Syria in order to prevent a war.<sup>84</sup> Turkish Chief of General Staff of the period Hüseyin Kıvrıkoğlu later confessed that they were not completely ready for a military operation but the Turkish press played an important role in Syria's retreat by giving the image of an upcoming war.<sup>85</sup> The fear of Turkish coalition government was a military move from Greece in the Aegean islands if Turkey engages in a war situation with Syria.<sup>86</sup> In addition, Ecevit at those days correctly predicted that the terrorist organization might have settled in northern Iraq if they were driven away from Syria.<sup>87</sup> Cem, on the other hand, thought that if a military operation was made, Arab countries, China and Russia would come against Turkey and only the potential support to Turkey would come from France due to Cem's special efforts.<sup>88</sup> The USA was also against Turkey's use of military power against Syria and President Bill Clinton's letter to the President of the Republic Süleyman Demirel clearly stated that Turkey should support Mobarak's mediatorship.<sup>89</sup> Mobarak's mediation between Syria and Turkey turned out to be successful mostly because of Syria's stepping back against Turkey and events led finally to the Adana Agreement between Syria and Turkey and eventually to the capture of the PKK leader

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<sup>83</sup> *Milliyet*, 8 November 2007, p. 20.

<sup>84</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 227.

<sup>85</sup> *Milliyet*, 9 November 2010, p. 20.

<sup>86</sup> *Milliyet*, 10 November 2010, p. 22.

<sup>87</sup> *ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>88</sup> *ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>89</sup> *ibid.*, p. 22.





Abdullah Öcalan near Greek embassy in Kenya. Cem admitted that Greece was caught red handed when Öcalan was captured in Kenya and he used this scandal very well in diplomacy.<sup>90</sup> The Adana Agreement on the other hand was signed by Turkish Deputy-Undersecretary Uğur Ziyal and Syrian Major General El-Hasan on 20 October 1998 and by this protocol Syria had undertaken several commitments in regards to Turkey's security concerns.<sup>91</sup> Cem knew this did not mean that the terrorist organization in Syria had been totally annihilated, but this was a sign of good faith between two countries.<sup>92</sup>

İsmail Cem was very sensitive about terrorism since he was victimized and lost his cousin Abdi İpekçi in the late 1970s after an assassination by ultra-nationalist groups. Thus, Cem always underlined that “nothing can justify terror” and Turkey has always been at that point.<sup>93</sup> However, Cem asserted that Western political elite and media, due to their misunderstandings and prejudices, contributed to the tragedies that Turkey went through from 1987 to 1997 by supporting or at least ignoring race-based ethnic and separatist PKK terrorism.<sup>94</sup> Cem thought that Europeans were completely unaware of the realities in Turkey and their public opinion was in favor of terrorist organization's false claims but he was able to convince some of his European colleagues to look into realities and to see through different views as well.<sup>95</sup> Cem also thought that over-emphasizing ethnicity and ethnic and race-based politics led and may lead again disasters in Europe and elsewhere.<sup>96</sup> Cem gave the plight of the Balkans in general and the genocide in Bosnia-Herzegovina in particular as example of the dangers of ethnic

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<sup>90</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 228.

<sup>91</sup> İsmail Cem, *Turkey in the New Century*, p. 85.

<sup>92</sup> *ibid.*, p. 86.

<sup>93</sup> *ibid.*, p. 103.

<sup>94</sup> *ibid.*, p. 103.

<sup>95</sup> *ibid.*, p. 103.

<sup>96</sup> *ibid.*, p. 104.





based politics and warned his colleagues to be very cautious in dealing with race.<sup>97</sup> Cem knew that Turkey had a Kurdish problem but he believed that this could be solved in a fully democratic regime that Turkey has been making consistent steps to reach, whereas supporting ethnic nationalisms would lead to disasters.

Cem thought 9/11 incident was the catalyst for the increasing will for struggling against terrorism but due to the wrong steps taken by Bush administration this created polarization between Western and Muslim world<sup>98</sup> and Turkey was negatively affected.<sup>99</sup> After the 9/11 disaster, Cem tried to educate his Western counterparts in order not to use the term “Islamic terrorism” by claiming that “terrorism has no religion, nationalist or excuse”.<sup>100</sup> Cem also underlined that ethnic cleansing of Bosnian Muslims and anti-Turkish rhetoric in European Union give the impression of a newly initiated anti-Islam crusade to populations both in Turkey and in Western Europe and strengthened the fundamentalist movements in the Muslim world.<sup>101</sup>

#### 6.4. Cyprus Problem and Relations with Greece

The relations between Turkey and Greece have been marked by alternating periods of mutual hostility and reconciliation ever since Greece won its independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1821. Since then the two countries have faced each other in four major wars: the Greco-Turkish War (1897), the Balkan Wars of (1912-1913), the

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<sup>97</sup> İsmail Cem, *Turkey in the New Century*, p. 106.

<sup>98</sup> Former U.S. President George W. Bush in one his speeches after 9/11 disaster, made a reference to “crusade” against terrorism which was unnoticed by Americans, but rang alarm bells in Europe and in Muslim world due to fears of “clash of civilizations” between Western and Islamic world. See; Peter Ford, “Europe cringes at Bush ‘crusade’ against terrorists”, *The Christian Science Monitor*, retrieved on 27.07.2010 from <http://www.csmonitor.com/2001/0919/p12s2-woeu.html>.

<sup>99</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 241.

<sup>100</sup> *ibid.*, p. 240.

<sup>101</sup> İsmail Cem, *Turkey in the New Century*, p. 110.





First World War (1914-1918) and the Greco-Turkish War (1919-1922). Two powerful and visionary postwar leaders, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and Eleftherios Venizelos, were determined to establish normal relations between the two states.<sup>102</sup> After years of negotiations, a treaty was concluded in 1930 and Greece renounced all its territorial claims over Turkey. This was followed by the Balkan Pact of 1934, in which Greece and Turkey joined Kingdom of Yugoslavia and Romania in a treaty of mutual assistance and settled outstanding issues. Both countries became members of NATO and together with Yugoslavia formed a new Balkan Pact for mutual defense against the Soviet Union. Turkish-Greek relations began to spoil in the late 1950s, mostly due to problems in Cyprus, a British protectorate that became an independent federal state in 1960.

Starting from the early 1960s, Greek Cypriots desired unity with Greece (what they called “enosis”) and this desire turned into violent actions and massacres against Turkish Cypriots especially after the coup made in Greece and the take-over of a fascist Greek junta in 1967. On 15 July 1974, a band of Greek Cypriot nationalists that organized around a junta called EOKA B, staged a coup against the Cypriot President and Archbishop Makarios. EOKA B leader Nikos Sampson was appointed President. On 20 July 1974, Turkey, using its guarantor status and rights arising from the trilateral accords of the 1959-1960 Zürich and London Agreements, occupied the northern part of Cyprus lands. Years later once again war between Greece and Turkey seemed inevitable but it was averted when Sampson’s coup collapsed a few days later and Makarios returned to power. In the mean time, the Greek military junta in Athens, which failed to confront the Turkish invasion, also fell from power but the damage to Turkish-Greek

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<sup>102</sup> Atatürk was even nominated for Nobel Peace Prize by Venizelos. See; Nomination Database for Nobel Peace Prize; “Nomination Database - Peace”, retrieved on 27.07.2010 from [http://nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/peace/nomination/nomination.php?action=show&showid=2046](http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/nomination/nomination.php?action=show&showid=2046) .





relations was done and the occupation of Northern Cyprus by Turkish troops would be a sticking point in Greco-Turkish relations for decades to come. After eight years of failed negotiations with the leadership of the Greek Cypriot community, the north declared its independence on 15 November 1983 under the name of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. This unilateral declaration of independence was rejected by the UN and the Republic of Cyprus.<sup>103</sup>

In recent years the politics of reunification has dominated the island's affairs. It was hoped that Cyprus's planned accession into the European Union would act as a catalyst towards a settlement and in 2004 a United Nations-brokered peace settlement was presented in a referendum to both sides. In the referendum a majority of Turkish Cypriots accepted the proposal, but Greek Cypriots overwhelmingly rejected it. As a result, Cyprus entered the European Union as a divided island, with Northern Cyprus effectively excluded. The Cyprus issue is still a serious source of problems in Turkish-Greek relations and also an obstacle in Turkey's accession to EU.<sup>104</sup> Another important problem between the two countries is regarding sovereignty rights in the Aegean Sea. Both sides currently possess 6 nautical miles (11 km) off their shores in the Aegean Sea but Greece claims a right to a unilateral expansion to 12 nautical miles.

İsmail Cem attracted the attention of the global media mostly when he made enormous efforts to improve the relations between Turkey and Greece together with his counterpart Yorgo Papandreou. Turkey and Greece signed many important treaties in

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<sup>103</sup> For a short and useful summary of Turkish-Greek relations and Cyprus issue see; Tozun Bahcheli. 2003. "Cycles of Tension and Rapprochement: Prospects for Turkey's Relations with Greece" in Tareq Y. Ismael and Mustafa Aydın (ed.) *Turkey's Foreign Policy in the 21st Century: A Changing Role in World Politics*. Cornwall: MPG Books Ltd.

<sup>104</sup> For details see; Semin Suvarierol. 2003. "Cyprus Obstacle on Turkey's Road to Membership" in Ali Çarkoğlu and Barry Rubin (ed.) *Turkey and the European Union: Domestic Politics, Economic Integration and International Dynamics*, New York: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd.





Cem's period and began to cooperate in many areas by erasing the bad memories of Kardak crisis, Greek support to PKK terrorism and Greek treatment of the Turkish community in Western Thrace.<sup>105</sup> In February 1999, Greek Foreign Minister Theodoros Pangalos was forced to resign following the abduction of Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan. He was succeeded by his deputy Giorgios Papandreou and the former under-secretary Ioannis Kranidiotis. Just as relations between Greece and Turkey had reached rock bottom, two men who favored rapprochement came into the scene and changed the destiny of two countries according to many international observers. However, while Turkish-Greek rapprochement was viewed positively by international media, in Turkey Cem was criticized for not driving Greece into the corner when he had chance after the discovery of Greek contributions to PKK terrorism.<sup>106</sup> Due to his works for world peace, Cem was awarded together with Yorgo Papandreou as the "Statesman of the Year" in 2000 by the East West Institute. Relations between the two countries began to improve after successive earthquakes hit both countries in the summer of 1999. The so called "earthquake diplomacy" generated sympathy in both countries and was praised by the international media.<sup>107</sup> The earthquake diplomacy was followed by the warm personal

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<sup>105</sup> The situation of Turkish community in Western Thrace (numbering an estimated 125.000) who were accusing the Greek government of neglecting their economical and educational needs as well as restricting their freedom to choose their muftis was another irritant in Turkey. See; Tozun Bahcheli, "Cycles of Tension and Rapprochement: Prospects for Turkey's Relations with Greece", p. 168.

<sup>106</sup> However, Cem's speech towards Greece at that period (March 1999) was not that soft; "Unless Greece cleans herself of her new definition of a flagrant terrorist state, we do not take her as an interlocutor, for any relevant issue. We demand from this country (Greece) to put an end to the support it extends to terrorism and cut off its close links with terrorist organizations". See; İsmail Cem, *Turkey in the New Century*, pp. 126-127.

<sup>107</sup> About the success of Cem and Papandreou's earthquake diplomacy see; Niels Kadritzke. 2000. "Greece's earthquake diplomacy", *Le Monde Diplomatique*, retrieved on 28.07.2010 from <http://mondediplo.com/2000/06/06greece> and Dimitris Keridis. 2006. "Earthquakes, Diplomacy and New Thinking in Foreign Policy", *The Fletcher Forum*, retrieved on 28.07.2010 from [http://www.jura.fu-berlin.de/einrichtungen/we3/honorarprofs/bolewski\\_wilfried/dokumente/2\\_Multilateral\\_Diplomacy/Keridis\\_earthquakes\\_diplomacy\\_and\\_new\\_thinking\\_in\\_foreign\\_policy.pdf](http://www.jura.fu-berlin.de/einrichtungen/we3/honorarprofs/bolewski_wilfried/dokumente/2_Multilateral_Diplomacy/Keridis_earthquakes_diplomacy_and_new_thinking_in_foreign_policy.pdf). For an alternative view see;





relations between Cem and Papandreou. In a famous scene which made headlines in both countries, Cem and Papandreou joined in Greek dancing “sirtaki” and singing on the Greek island of Samos. This meeting was followed up with a much-photographed holiday in Turkey of the two men and their families.<sup>108</sup>

Thanks to Cem and Papandreou’s efforts, Turkey and Greece signed important treaties in Cem’s period and began to cooperate in many areas. The first visit made by Papandreou in 17 January 2000.<sup>109</sup> For Cem, Papandreou’s visit, first official visit of Greece to Ankara after 38 years, was “a new page even a new era” in the two countries’ relationships.<sup>110</sup> Cem and Papandreou signed a series of agreements covering tourism, environmental protection, investments and the fight against crime and terrorism. Papandreou’s visit was followed by Cem’s reciprocal visit to Athens in February 2, 2000. Cem’s visit was punctuated by the signing of the bilateral agreements focusing on technology and science, cooperation in sea transports, heightened economic cooperation, education and culture as well as a pact on establishing a framework to avoid customs violations.<sup>111</sup> Turkish-Greek relations starting from these 9 agreements have been showing an upward trend and relations between the two countries have been getting stronger and deeper. About the Cyprus issue, İsmail Cem declared in 2001 that “Turkey might be forced to take measures in the event of a Greek Cypriot accession prior to an

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James Ker-Lindsay. 2000. “Greek-Turkish Rapprochement: The Impact of ‘Disaster Diplomacy’?”, retrieved on 28.07.2010 from <http://www.disasterdiplomacy.org/kerlindsay2000.pdf>.

<sup>108</sup> For details see; *Ntvmsnbc.com*, “Ege’de önemli buluşma”, retrieved on 28.07.2010 from <http://arsiv.ntvmsnbc.com/news/90123.asp>. Also see; Öymen, Onur. 2007. *Silahsız Savaş Bir Mücadele Sanatı Olarak Diplomasi*. İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi.

<sup>109</sup> For all news about this visit see; T.C. Başbakanlık (2000), *Dış Basında Yunanistan Dışişleri Bakanı Papandreou’nun Türkiye Ziyareti (17-24 Ocak 2000)*, Ankara.

<sup>110</sup> *BBC News*, “Greece and Turkey strengthen ties”, retrieved on 28.07.2010 from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/612554.stm>.

<sup>111</sup> For details see; T.C. Başbakanlık. 2000. *Dış Basında Dışişleri Bakanı İsmail Cem’in Atina Ziyareti (2-7 Şubat 2000)*, Ankara. Also see; Kaşif Eryalçın. “Türkiye ile Yunanistan Arasındaki Ticari ve Ekonomik İlişkiler”, T.C. Dış İşleri Bakanlığı, retrieved on 28.07.2010 from <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye-ile-yunanistan-arasindaki-ticari-ve-ekonomik-iliskiler.tr.mfa>.





agreement on the Cyprus question”.<sup>112</sup> Cem’s speech was followed by Prime Minister Ecevit’s statement about Turkey’s annexation of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus if Cyprus becomes a member of EU before a peace settlement in Cyprus.<sup>113</sup> However, during JDP rule, Turkish policy towards Cyprus changed and Turkey did not do much against Cyprus’ entry into EU without a settlement on the island although the peace process was supported by Turkish Cypriots. İsmail Cem also wrote a book specifically on Turkey’s relations with Greece and Cyprus issue and tried to inform the public about the development of the rapprochement process and the important role of personal relations and friendship in diplomacy.<sup>114</sup>

### 6.5. Relations with Eurasia

İsmail Cem had always stated that Turkey was both a European and a Eurasian country. Thus, Cem believed that Turkish foreign policy should be multi-dimensional and Turkey should try to use of advantages of its “historical geography (*tarihi coğrafya*)” in order to increase its influence in different regions that had previously stayed under Ottoman rule.<sup>115</sup> Cem also underlined that he has a “strong belief that Turkey’s strategic future is linked with the emergence of Eurasia”.<sup>116</sup> Cem thought that the most important reason for Eurasia’s increasing role in Turkish foreign policy was the end of Cold War and the emergence of a new paradigm of power based on economic

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<sup>112</sup> Semin Suvarierol, “Cyprus Obstacle on Turkey’s Road to Membership” in Ali Çarkoğlu & Barry Rubin (ed.) *Turkey and the European Union: Domestic Politics, Economic Integration and International Dynamics*. New York: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., p. 62.

<sup>113</sup> *ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>114</sup> İsmail Cem. 2004. *Türkiye, Avrupa, Avrasya Birinci cilt: Strateji Yunanistan Kıbrıs*. İstanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları.

<sup>115</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 206.

<sup>116</sup> İsmail Cem, *Turkey in the New Century*, p. 67.





vitality and persistence rather than sheer military force.<sup>117</sup> During Cold War, due to highest priority of military issues, Turkey's relations with Western-Atlantic bloc was the major determinant of the country's foreign policy whereas contemporary Turkey has many new economic and political opportunities because of its pivoting role in the emerging Eurasian reality. Cem asserts that contemporary Turkey "aspires to be the leading economic and political actor in Eurasia".<sup>118</sup> While talking about Eurasia, Cem thought of large territory stretching from Western Europe to Western China.<sup>119</sup>

Ismail Cem tried to clarify Eurasia's importance in Turkish foreign policy for the future under three headings. The first is related to the integration of Europe and Asia in the near future in terms of production, communication and information technologies thanks to the possibilities of open-market economies. Cem wrote that "much of the next millennium's economic development will take place in Asia and the advent of new energy resources and communication corridors bears witness to this emerging reality".<sup>120</sup> Secondly, Cem thought the post-Cold War political framework provided Turkey with a new international environment of historic and cultural dimensions in Balkans, Caucasus and Central Asia as a long-standing actor in these geographies and Turkey has become a vital partner in many new countries' economic restructuring.<sup>121</sup> Thirdly, Cem believed that this strategic change also corresponded with a new consciousness in Turkey in terms of the use of shared history and parallel cultural characteristics in foreign policy.<sup>122</sup> For all these reasons, Cem thought that Turkey, having the most dynamic economy, most advanced armed forces and the longest running democracy, "has optimal conditions to

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<sup>117</sup> İsmail Cem, *Turkey in the New Century*, p. 67.

<sup>118</sup> *ibid.*, p. 67.

<sup>119</sup> *ibid.*, p. 67.

<sup>120</sup> *ibid.*, p. 67.

<sup>121</sup> *ibid.*, p. 68.

<sup>122</sup> *ibid.*, p. 68.





contribute to stability and to enjoy the opportunities presented by the new Eurasian Order”.<sup>123</sup> For Cem, “coupled with a new foreign policy combining economic progressivism with historical and cultural affinities, Turkey is riding the wave of a new economic momentum, transforming its former regional role into a global one”.<sup>124</sup> However, Cem also noted that he may not be an “objective commentator” while talking about Turkey although he believed his views are realistic aspirations.<sup>125</sup>

For Central Asian countries, Cem thought that, Turkey as a country having cultural ties with these countries that actively supported their independence, has chance to start a new phase in their relationships. Cem thought that this phase would be less intuitive and informal perhaps, but that it “will grow in its intensity and substance, in the quality of its means and mechanisms”.<sup>126</sup> This could be achieved only Cem realized if “we can now leave the over-emphasis on idealistic concepts and concentrate more on interests, on plans and details”.<sup>127</sup> Cem thought that considering Central Asia, Turkish and American interests are common against Russia, which became another important actor again in the region after Vladimir Putin’s take over compared to ex-president Boris Yeltsin times.<sup>128</sup> Cem thought that although Turkey had not got intention of pursuing a policy of hostility towards Russia or any other policy that will force the Central Asian and Caucasus countries to make a choice between Turkey and Russia, Russia and Turkey as two great civilizations of the region compete in some domains.<sup>129</sup> Cem made

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<sup>123</sup> İsmail Cem, *Turkey in the New Century*, p. 68.

<sup>124</sup> *ibid.*, p. 68.

<sup>125</sup> *ibid.*, p. 69.

<sup>126</sup> *ibid.*, p. 91.

<sup>127</sup> *ibid.*, p. 91.

<sup>128</sup> *ibid.*, p. 92.

<sup>129</sup> See; *ibid.*, p. 92. For an analysis on the relations between Turkey and Russian Federation after the Cold War see; Oktay F. Tanrısever. 2003. “Turkey and the Russian Federation: Towards a Mutual





it clear that Turkey attached highest significance to peace and stability in the Caucasus as well as the preservation and consolidation of the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the countries in that region.<sup>130</sup> In that sense, the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute and Armenian occupation of Azeri territory were two problems that worried Cem rather than Russia.<sup>131</sup>

### 6.6. Relations with Middle Eastern Countries

Although he was raised in a modern European like family, Cem always had curiosity and sympathy for Islamic culture and he tried to raise his knowledge of Islam since his youth. This quality of Cem's, which was rare in Kemalist-leftist intelligentsia, allowed him to have good relations with the pious and Islamist segments of the country and to develop a more peaceful and moderate language on the deep secular-Islamist cleavage in Turkey. In foreign policy too, Cem wanted Turkey to establish peaceful relationships with the Islamic world and to help their progress and modernization by acting as a model country that has been able live both Islam and democracy.

İsmail Cem thought that during his tenure in office, Turkey achieved peace with the Middle East and improved its relationships with the Organization of the Islamic Conference.<sup>132</sup> Cem thought that although the OIC was (and is) not an influential international actor, due to the small steps taken during his Foreign Ministry, Turkey was later able to make its candidate Eklemeddin İhsanoğlu as the Secretary General of

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Understanding?" in Tareq Y. Ismael and Mustafa Aydın (ed.) *Turkey's Foreign Policy in the 21st Century: A Changing Role in World Politics*. Cornwall: MPG Books Ltd.

<sup>130</sup> İsmail Cem, *Turkey in the New Century*, p. 94.

<sup>131</sup> *ibid.*, p. 94.

<sup>132</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 237. For an analysis on the relations between Turkey and the Arab world see; Dan Tschirgi. 2003. "Turkey and the Arab World in the New Millenium" in Tareq Y. Ismael and Mustafa Aydın (ed.) *Turkey's Foreign Policy in the 21st Century: A Changing Role in World Politics*. Cornwall: MPG Books Ltd.





OIC.<sup>133</sup> Cem also showed great efforts in order to prevent the use of the term “Islamic terror” after the 9/11 incident and was the first person to state that “terrorism has no nationality, religion or excuse”.<sup>134</sup>

İsmail Cem had also established friendship and close relationship with chairman of Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and previous Palestinian National Authority Yasser Arafat. Cem thought Arafat was a true fighter who had engaged in terrorism in the past in order to keep Palestinian liberation movement together but also at the same time was a compassionate person in his personal relations.<sup>135</sup> Cem tried to take an active mediator or conciliator role in Palestine-Israel conflict and especially after Arafat’s request in 2001, and tried to relax the tension between two camps by contacting with Israeli Foreign Minister Shlomo Ben-Ami (whom Cem found reasonable) and U.S. Secretary of the State Madeleine Albright.<sup>136</sup> Cem admitted that his efforts did not bring victory but still he had prepared a plan for the partition of Jerusalem by analyzing the Ottoman model of partition for Jerusalem and also managed to lessen the tension.<sup>137</sup> His efforts were also praised both by Shimon Peres and Yasser Arafat in the international public. Cem pointed out that Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon was the main cause of the failure of his efforts to create peace in Palestine.<sup>138</sup> Cem together with his Greek counterpart Yorgo Papandreou visited Arafat in 2002 and tried to attract world’s attention to his miserable situation in his home where he was kept nearly as a

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<sup>133</sup> For details see; Ozan Örmeci. “Turkey’s Role in the Organization of Islamic Conference, JDP Government and the Greater Middle East Project”, retrieved on 12.06.2010 from [http://www.cfr.org/publication/22373/caspian\\_weekly.html](http://www.cfr.org/publication/22373/caspian_weekly.html).

<sup>134</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, pp. 240-241.

<sup>135</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 211-212.

<sup>136</sup> *ibid.*, p. 213.

<sup>137</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 214-215.

<sup>138</sup> *ibid.*, p. 215.





prisoner.<sup>139</sup> For Cem, this was a humanitarian stance rather than an ideological-political attitude and together with Papandreou they contacted Shimon Peres to ameliorate Arafat's situation, although their efforts were prevented by Sharon.<sup>140</sup>

During Cem's tenure in office Turkish-Israeli relations had also developed in various domains. Cem thought that the Turkish and Israeli economies were of a complementary nature and this was strengthened by several agreements previously made between the two countries which constituted the basis for their economic, commercial, scientific and military cooperation.<sup>141</sup> However, Cem made it clear that the military aspect of this cooperation with Israel was of "defense industries cooperation" and "military training agreements" (Turkey had parallel agreements with some 20 countries some of which were members of the Organization of Islamic Conference) and this was not directed against any third country.<sup>142</sup> Cem supported peace in the Middle East and never compromised Turkey's good relations with Israel or the Arab world in order to be on better terms with the other side.<sup>143</sup> Cem was critical of Israeli government's extreme use of military power in the region and he knew that speaking about peace in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century was still very difficult due to escalating violence.<sup>144</sup> Thus, Cem believed only final peace settlement might bring an end to the escalation of violence and both sides should take steps for reaching peace.

Another important issue related to the Middle East during Cem's tenure in office was the situation of Iraq and its dictator Saddam Hussein. Cem was aware of American

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<sup>139</sup> See; *BBC News*, "Turkey and Greece in Mid-East effort", retrieved on 28.07.2010 from [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/1949787.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/1949787.stm).

<sup>140</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 219.

<sup>141</sup> İsmail Cem, *Turkey in the New Century*, p. 87.

<sup>142</sup> *ibid.*, p. 87.

<sup>143</sup> *ibid.*, p. 88.

<sup>144</sup> *ibid.*, p. 89.





preparations for the war and in order to prevent the war, he tried to organize a conference between Iraq and its neighboring countries. However, Cem thought that these efforts could not save Iraq and Saddam Hussein since Saddam did not trust in his efforts although many neighboring countries including Iran and especially Jordan were ready to take responsibility for preventing the war.<sup>145</sup> Cem had also personally met with Saddam Hussein and tried to convince him that this effort was not an American plan, but rather a Turkish project to prevent the war that would spoil the stability in the region.<sup>146</sup> Cem was thinking that this was a huge and also last opportunity for Saddam, but he was disappointed of Saddam's incomprehension of the seriousness of the situation.<sup>147</sup> Cem thought that what had happened and today still happens in Iraq is a tragedy and Saddam also has a huge responsibility in that.<sup>148</sup> In his interview with journalist Can Dündar, Cem told that as the Foreign Minister he always tried to prevent the coming of American soldiers onto Turkish soil for invading Iraq since it would have terrible consequences both for Turkey and the USA. He also added that the Justice and Development Party's sudden rise and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's contacts in Washington gave him the impression that the JDP's sudden rise was related to the 1 March memorandum.<sup>149</sup> A similar interpretation was also made by journalist Fikret Bila<sup>150</sup> but Bila was starting the civil coup from Ecevit's pacification and illness, whereas Cem was focusing on the role of Kemal Derviş and the sudden rise of the JDP and Tayyip Erdoğan. Cem also pointed out that actively supporting and military engagement in American invasion in Iraq

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<sup>145</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, pp. 220-221.

<sup>146</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 223-224.

<sup>147</sup> *ibid.*, p. 224.

<sup>148</sup> *ibid.*, p. 225.

<sup>149</sup> *ibid.*, p. 242.

<sup>150</sup> Fikret Bila. 2007. *Ankara'da Irak Savaşları Sivil Darbe Girişimi ve Gizli Belgelerde 1 Mart Tezkeresi*. Ankara: Güncel Yayıncılık.





would mean the loss of many hundreds of Turkish soldiers, spoiling relations with Turkey and the Arab countries and the Muslim world and also new security problems for Turcoman population in Iraq.<sup>151</sup> However, he also told Can Dündar that he understood the USA's decision after the 9/11 incident and the American government was expecting more support and help from its ally Turkey.<sup>152</sup> Adjustment of relations with Syria was the other important issue during Cem's Foreign Ministry (which was previously explained in the struggle against terrorism part).

### **6.7. Contributions**

İsmail Cem served as the Foreign Minister of Turkey between the years 1997 and 2002. Cem was often perceived as a rational, peace-seeking and successful minister both within the country and in the international public due to his policies. İsmail Cem's deeds as Turkish Foreign Minister are extremely important as they represent a breakdown from classical Turkish foreign policy. During the Cold War, starting from the 1950s, as a NATO member Turkey's foreign policy was based primarily on American preferences and focused on security issues. However, after the fall of Berlin Wall and the collapse of USSR, Turkish foreign policy in a sense began to feel existential problems but could not redefine its aims, test its limits or put forward a new vision for Turkey in the 21<sup>st</sup> century until Cem's tenure in office. In that sense, Cem's effort to make Turkey first a regional power and then a world state and to force people to think "bigger" and act more assertively in foreign policy in accordance with the imperial heritage of the Ottoman State, was a new chapter and a turning point in Turkish diplomatic history.

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<sup>151</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 242.

<sup>152</sup> *ibid.*, p. 242.





Starting from the 1970s, Cem had always praised some communitarian aspects of the Ottoman Empire and in a sense brought the Ottoman model as a preliminary example of contemporary pluralistic democratic society. In convenience with his positive views about the Ottoman model, in foreign policy also Cem defended Ottoman vision and wanted Turkey to become a more influential actor in international relations. He always underlined that Turkish foreign policy had been alienated from its cultural roots and historical past and it must be replaced with a new understanding which was based on the awareness of Turkey's rich identity and historical assets inherited from the Ottoman state. He wanted Turkey to be confident of itself, not ashamed of its past and bold and peace-seeking at the same time for the future and criticized the classical lack of pragmatism of Turkish politicians in foreign policy as well as their habitude of stigmatizing countries as friend or foe instead of thinking rationally and realistically about Turkey's interests. Cem tried to offer a multi-dimensional and realistic foreign policy and wanted Turkey to be more flexible and active in foreign policy. Imperial vision in his approach to foreign policy could be criticized since Cem was a peace-seeking leftist, but it should be noted that Cem never thought this vision as imperialism or colonialism but rather as a tool to increase his country's economic and cultural effect.

For Cem, Turkey was both an Eastern and Western, an Asian and European, a Muslim and secular country and he believed that this could be Turkey's most important advantage in foreign policy if Turkey developed a strategy of using all these identities to increase its interest. Although he was fully committed to Turkey's full accession to EU, he knew that there would be serious problems in accession talks and Turkey should never act as a lowly begging country. Cem believed in the necessity of a Turkish-American alliance for world peace but he always stated that this did not mean that





Turkey should accept all American requests. In that sense, he tried to increase Turkey's portfolio in foreign policy by developing closer relations with Eurasian and Middle Eastern countries. In his view, Turkey should develop a rational and peace-seeking multi-dimensional relationship style with all important organizations and countries based on protecting and developing Turkey's interests. He pointed out Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline project as the earliest example of Turkey's strategic energy agreements made in the Eurasian zone.

During Cem's tenure in office, Turkey had growing economic, social and diplomatic relations with its neighboring countries and became able to solve its problems with Greece and Syria. In doing this, Cem used both diplomacy and power in order to reach peace in the region. Concerning Turkish-Greek rapprochement, Cem used public diplomacy extremely well and changed negative views and prejudices about Greece in Turkey similar to his counterpart Papandreou. Cem used the media and civil society organizations (especially during the earthquake diplomacy) while trying to change the perception of enmity between Turkish and Greek people. However, concerning relations with Syria Cem used Turkey's military power as a threat and succeeded in solving the Turkish-Syrian disagreement about cooperating against terrorism. In that sense, Cem used the methods of both Realism<sup>153</sup> (against Syria) and Liberalism<sup>154</sup> (against Greece), two major schools in international relations theory. In

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<sup>153</sup> Realism in international relations theory is one of the dominant school of thinking within the international relations discipline. Realism or political realism prioritizes national interest and security over ideology, moral concerns and social reconstructions. This term is often synonymous with power politics and also with Realpolitik.

<sup>154</sup> Liberalism in international relations theory holds that state preferences, rather than state capabilities, are the primary determinant of state behavior. Unlike realism where the state is seen as a unitary actor, liberalism allows for plurality in state actions. Thus, preferences will vary from state to state, depending on factors such as culture, economic system or government type. Liberalism also holds that interaction





relations with Middle Eastern countries Cem was not afraid to mention Turkey's Muslim identity though he never had a problem with secularism or Turkey's secular state structure. He wanted Turkish diplomats to be more confident and aware of their glorious history while having relations with countries that were ruled for centuries by the Ottomans. Cem thought that this cultural heritage of the Ottomans could increase Turkey's power and sympathy in these regions if used successfully.

Cem thought that nationalism in foreign policy was a necessity (but in domestic politics Cem never approved nationalism especially ethnic kind of nationalism since it could easily turn into racism and separatism towards other ethnic groups) since foreign policy is "a mathematical equation of a country's interests" and an area of power struggles. In that sense, Cem could be classified closer to realism rather than liberalism in international relations theory. However, Cem had never been a pro-military or pro-war actor in foreign policy. He thought that a military solution was the last resort and could be made only for humanitarian reasons. In the 1970s as a young leftist intellectual and the head of TRT, he supported Cyprus Peace Operation since it was a humanitarian intervention against an illegal military junta and made in order to prevent massacres. Likewise, he thought that there should be a strong cooperation between countries against terrorist organizations and no one should support or ignore the negative aspects of terrorism. Cem wanted peace in everywhere, in his own country as well as in Palestine, in Kosovo or in Rwanda.

After Cem's tenure in office, Turkey under JDP rule tried to carry on this vision and tried to become a more influential regional and international actor during Abdullah

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between states is not limited to the political (high politics), but also economic (low politics) whether through commercial firms, organizations or individuals.





Gül's, Ali Babacan's and Ahmet Davutoğlu's Foreign Ministry periods. Thus, Cem could be labeled as the first man who opened Turkey's doors for a multi-dimensional foreign policy and broke the limits of classical Turkish foreign policy of Cold War. However, Cem's multi-dimensional foreign policy, aiming for Turkey to become a regional power, could be stated as more about cooperation and friendship with the West compared to the Justice and Development Party period, especially Davutoğlu's foreign policy since JDP's relations with the West have been more closely questioned by Western countries in recent months and JDP's multi-dimensional foreign policy was more ideological and had Islamic appeals for some observers.<sup>155</sup> Turkish-Israeli relations were especially deteriorated during JDP rule and finally the tension nearly reached the point of a state of war between Turkey and Israel after the Israeli commandos' attack towards a Turkish ship (Blue Marmara) carrying humanitarian aid to Gaza under blockade.<sup>156</sup> Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu threatened Israel that Turkey would sever ties unless Israel apologized for the deadly raid on ship.<sup>157</sup> During Cem's tenure in office, no such crisis had happened and Turkey's multi-dimensional foreign policy was perceived more in conformity with the West by international observers. In that sense, Cem's multi-dimensional foreign policy was not ideological and did not reflect Islamic aspirations, but rather it was aiming to use Turkey's historical-cultural

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<sup>155</sup> For instance, see; Mary Beth Sheridan. "Turkey's foreign policy raise concern in West and at home", *The Washington Post*, retrieved on 07.06.2010 from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/06/06/AR2010060604052.html?hpid=topnews>. Also see; Andrew Mango. "Turkey and the U.S.: Ottoman Past Shadows Turkish Present" in *Wall Street Journal*, retrieved on 19.07.2010 from <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703615104575328622438027714.html>.

<sup>156</sup> Although the ship was full of human rights activists from the world, 9 Turkish people were killed by Israeli commandos. For details see; *BBC News*, "Israeli navy storms Gaza aid ship", retrieved on 02.06.2010 from [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/world/middle\\_east/10195997.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/world/middle_east/10195997.stm).

<sup>157</sup> For details see; *The Washington Post*, "Turkey threatens to sever ties unless Israel apologizes for deadly raid on ship", retrieved on 14.07.2010 from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/07/05/AR2010070502889.html>.





assets inherited from the Ottoman State in a rational and secular manner. Some observers claim that after Cem, multi-dimensional Turkish foreign policy has changed and Islamism became an ideological instrument.<sup>158</sup> Here it should be noted that Cem in his multi-dimensional foreign policy was giving higher priority to Turkey's European identity and Western coalition since he wanted his country to become a consolidated democracy and democratic regimes are to be found only among Western-European countries.

Since İsmail Cem worked as the Foreign Minister of Bülent Ecevit, an experienced Turkish politician and an authoritarian party leader who was really interested in foreign policy and international relations, one could question whether Turkish foreign policy during Cem's tenure in office was masterminded by Ecevit or Cem. Here, many observers including Yaman Başkut claimed that although Cem was very respectful towards Ecevit, he was very active and independent in shaping Turkey's foreign policy.<sup>159</sup> Moreover, Cem was the intellectual force behind Turkish foreign policy since he tried to conceptualize his policy and deeds on the academic level and wrote books and made important speeches in order to clarify his aims. It should be also noted that Turkish Foreign Ministry has always been a well-rooted and important institution that probably guided Cem a lot in ruling Turkey's international relations. In that sense, although Cem's foreign policy was certainly guided by Turkish Foreign Ministry and was not contrary to Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit's preferences, it would

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<sup>158</sup> See; Barry Rubin. "Turkish Regime Changes Sides, West Averts Eyes", retrieved on 09.06.2010 from <http://rubinreports.blogspot.com/2010/06/turkish-regime-changes-sides-west.html>. Also see; Zvi Barel. "Sultan Erdogan", *Haaretz*, retrieved on 12.06.2010 from <http://www.haaretz.com/magazine/week-s-end/sultan-erdogan-1.295452>.

<sup>159</sup> Yaman Başkut, *Aferin İyiydin... Bir Diplomatın Anıları*, p. 136.





not be wrong to claim that he was the primary actor in determining and implementing Turkish foreign policy during his tenure in office.





## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSION

İsmail Cem (1940-2007) was a prestigious and important figure in Turkish intellectual and political life, who had spent his life investigating the characteristics and problems of Turkish modernization and social democratic solutions to these problems. İsmail Cem was a polymath person and a “Renaissance man”<sup>1</sup> who had a successful, adventurous and colorful life as it was told in the Chapter 2. Cem had many identities including a leftist journalist, a social democratic politician, Turkish Foreign Minister, an amateur but talented photographer, a devoted husband, a democratic socialist unionist, a caring father, a poet, a Galatasaray fan etc. during his life. However, Cem’s five main identities that were analyzed in the thesis were: a man of letters and romance (Chapter 2), a peculiar public intellectual in Turkish left (in Chapter 3), a popular social democratic politician (Chapter 4), an intellectual dealing with the main democratic problems of his country (Chapter 5) and a successful Foreign Minister (Chapter 6). In this chapter, main findings and important points of these chapters will be summarized.

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<sup>1</sup> The term Renaissance man is related and used to describe a person who is well educated or who excels in a wide variety of subjects or fields.





As a man of letters and romance, İsmail Cem had a colorful life with rises and falls. He came from a rich, westernized family and had a good education in Işık College, Robert College and Lausanne University. Starting from his youth, especially after his trip to the USA, Cem began to feel sorry for other people who did not have his luck and opportunities and this was Cem's fundamental feeling during his whole life. This feeling was the motive behind Cem's leftism and efforts to empathize with pious masses. Cem's career started as a journalist and soon he began to attract attentions with his theoretical knowledge and peculiar stance in the left with his articles and books. Especially in the lively times of 1960s and 1970s (at a time when democracy was not that popular), he deserved to be labeled as a real democrat in the left since he was one of the few leftists who did not favor a leftist coup or a student and guerilla based revolutionary movement in Turkey. He supported first TLP and democratic socialism and later Ecevit's social democratic RPP. Cem was shaken and lost his hopes for a democratic Turkey after the assassination of his journalist cousin Abdi İpekçi and so he went abroad. However, after few years he returned to Turkey and engaged in active politics in order to help his country to democratize and get rid of the terrible effects of the 12 September 1980 coup. Starting from the mid 1980s, his primary occupation became politics and except for an extra few years of columnist job and temporary profession as lecturer in university, Cem concentrated solely on active politics.

İsmail Cem was a nice, humanist and gentile person but this did not mean he was not an ambitious man. In fact, Cem always had a leadership potential and leadership skills including knowledge, charisma, confidence and self-esteem and he always wanted to be the leader of what he was doing. Although Cem had always wanted to be a leader, both in journalism and politics he could not be successful as a leader. His efforts to





become a boss in media failed after the unsuccessful attempts of a weekly magazine *ABC* and a daily journal *Politika*. His leadership efforts in politics also failed with his New Turkey Party. Foreign Ministry was Cem's highest position in his career and he did very important deeds as a Foreign Minister. He had a colorful life with his family. He had cheerful hobbies and activities such as photographing, watching Galatasaray matches in soccer, aquarium hobby, writing poems, reading and spending time with his family. İsmail Cem died on 24 January 2007 in İstanbul from lung cancer but his name has not been forgotten after his passing and does not seem to be forgotten in the near future.

As a social thinker, İsmail Cem deserves to be analyzed closely mostly because of his peculiar position and original views that are not part of classical Kemalist or leftist views in Turkey. To begin with, Cem's admiration and great interest of Ottoman history was an unusual stance in Turkish left that started first with the novels of Kemal Tahir. Following Tahir, some intellectuals in the 1960s and 1970s showed a great deal of interest towards Ottoman past, which could be considered as breaking a taboo created by the young Republic in order to prevent a possible decay of the new regime due 600 years old strong Ottoman legacy. Thus, Cem and some other intellectuals of the period including Mete Tunçay, Şerif Mardin, İdris Küçükömer and also to some degree the RPP's young and charismatic leader Bülent Ecevit in the political scene approached the Ottoman past with sympathy and criticized the bureaucratic modernization tradition of the Republic. Due to their unusual stance in the left, some even called Cem and Ecevit as "Tahiri -follower of Tahir-" or Ottoman socialists.

Cem defined the Ottoman state as rational, just and expert on governing. In his view, the Ottoman state had never become completely Islamic and was able to interpret





religion according to the needs of society and economy. According to Cem, the Ottoman system was based on a strong statism which included the ownership of nearly all lands and territories by the state and the division of society into two classes; the ruling *askeri* (military) class and *reaya* (subjects). Since territory was the strongest means of production, strong statism in the ownership of lands provided a huge central power to the Ottoman state. Cem thought that the Ottoman land system prevented the emerging of a landlord class and thus posed a much more progressive system than European feudalism. As far as İsmail Cem was concerned, the Ottoman army was a very important factor in the well-working of the Ottoman system. In his view, the power of the Ottomans came from the perfection of *miri* land system and *Timarli Sipahis* army that was based on this system. From Cem's perspective, Ottoman State had also the character of a patrimonial state which was responsible of its people's safety. He thought Ottoman state's economic duties were somehow similar to the characteristics of a social state. Cem claimed although this system worked perfectly for a few centuries, European states' rapid and huge progress starting from the Age of Exploration was a turning point in world history. Other important problems were the excessive territorial enlargement of the state that caused administrative problems and the spoiling of the old land system due to economic problems and the implementation of *iltizam*.

İsmail Cem tried to explain the decline and fall of the Ottoman State with Marxist theory and used the concept "underdevelopment". Cem wrote that underdevelopment was not a natural process but rather a consequence of the great advance made by European civilization that changed its classical subsistence economy by creating superior techniques and modes of production (through technological advance) as well as bringing cheap raw materials and labor force (through colonialism





and imperialism) to European states. This process was also strengthened by the liberating effects of Renaissance and Reformation and the intellectual-cultural progress of Europe. While this progress was a product of Europe's internal dynamics, after its great leap forward European states' forceful imposition and Eastern states' imitation of Western modernization spoiled the old equilibrium and balance in Eastern societies and created the situation of backwardness, a situation which was based on high class-based inequalities (presence of an elite Westernized comprador class) and a cultural duality problem that divided societies and weakened these states. According to İsmail Cem, one of the most important steps of Ottoman colonization was the establishment of Public Debt (*Düyun-u Umumiye*) system. By using this system, European bankers and states in a sense damped Ottoman state in heavy debts and interests and increased their authority in Ottoman politics. In that sense, Cem wrote that Westernization of the state lost its meaning of modernization and became a tool of colonialism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Cem's interest in the Ottoman past was a conscious choice. Starting from his youth, Cem tried to learn and absorb both Western and Eastern (Islamic) cultures and thought that Turkish identity possesses both of these cultures. In that sense, Cem tried to reconcile the Kemalist-leftist segments of Turkish society with their history and to rasp the radical aspects of Republican modernization. In the 1970s, Cem tried to find roots of Turkish socialism in Ottoman state and social structure and saw communitarian mentality and the statist land system as well as some social aspects of Ottoman state as preliminary examples of socialism. In the 1980s, Cem tried to find the preliminary conditions of a pluralist democratic regime in the religiously and ethnically diverse Ottoman society. Later, in his Foreign Ministry too, Cem based his vision of Turkey's transformation into a regional and world power on the glorious Ottoman past. One





personal reason about Cem's great interest and sympathy towards Turkey's Ottoman past and pious people unlike many of his leftists friends could be asserted as an effort to compensate for discussions about his family background (Sabetaism discussions) in his writing and political career. However, this would be rather an exaggerated claim since Cem during his whole intellectual and personal life he showed a consistent interest and respect towards Ottoman system and tried to base his views on history.

In Cem's opinion, Mustafa Kemal and his friends were able to establish an independent Republic from the wreck of an empire by using Soviet help and French abstention cleverly but they could not solve the problem of backwardness. Cem believed although the starting principles of the new Republic were progressive, its economic and social policies were not able to reverse the underdevelopment pattern inherited from the Ottomans. The economic policy of the young Republic was national capitalist economy (*milli iktisat*) which meant to create a national bourgeoisie by statist-seeming liberal policies. In Cem's view, even the adoption of a statist economic model after the Great Depression did not abrogate the Ottoman legacy of center-periphery dilemma and the dominance of a small "happy minority (*mutlu azınlık*)" in the country. The happy minority group consisted of three main segments; Istanbulite business circles and Anatolian local notables, officers that were engaged in the National Struggle and deputies and top ranked bureaucrats. Although these three segments had internal conflicts too, their real struggle was for protecting and developing their own positions at the expense of ordinary people. That is why Cem thought that the single-party period's democratic qualities remained highly limited. However, Cem also praised some modernistic aspects of the single-party period which later allowed Turkey to make a smooth transition to multi-party democracy. Cem made an important contribution to





Turkish politics and intellectual life by analyzing and praising the Ottoman past and trying to reconcile Kemalist-leftist segments with their history. In that sense, Cem tried to counter balance the radicalist aspects of the early Republican period.

In Cem's view, during this single-party period Turkey was an underdeveloped but independent country but after the conditions that emerged in the late 1940s by tying itself to the West in an asymmetrical way, Turkey also began to lose its independence like a semi-colony. Although the new Republic had revolutionary and progressive ideals, the bureaucracy retreated from its ideals day by day and could not have the chance to leave the happy minority's privileges against people. Cem evaluated Turkey's transition to a multi-party system as a natural consequence of the Ottomans' and Turkey's problematic Westernization process that also brought some positive consequences. In addition, transition to a multi-party regime and the take-over of the DP government was a natural consequence of the Turkish state's efforts to create a bourgeois class. That is why in Cem's opinion the 1950 transformation was a kind of "bourgeois revolution" that was envisaged by the state. In Cem's view, the DP was a populist movement that was naturally born against the bureaucratic oppressive state and socially had a progressive character. Cem also concluded that although Democrat Party governments used religious rhetoric in the country, they always tried to look sympathetic and European to Western countries. The DP represented the interest of urban bourgeoisie and rural local notables but also took the support of Anatolian peasantry by its conservative political discourse. Cem wrote that the rise of the DP also meant the attack of Turkish bourgeoisie and local notables to pacify bureaucratic-military elite that was represented by the RPP. Ordinary people and peasants were also sympathetic towards the DP because of the heavy conditions imposed by the RPP during the Second World War and DP's more tolerant





approach to religious issues. According to İsmail Cem, the DP's preference of realizing economic development through a weak bourgeoisie was unsuccessful and that was why Turkey had to become more dependent on the Western bloc in order to take support for foreign investment, economic aid and loans and credits provided by the World Bank. Cem's other point of criticism towards the DP was the party's oppressive policies towards the intellectuals and journalists which also played a significant role in the legitimizing the 27 May 1960 military intervention. Cem believed that the most important reason of the 27 May intervention was the discomfort of the bureaucracy which had lost its power and became subjected to heavy pressures during DP rule.

During 1970s, Cem's solution to Turkey's backwardness was planned economy favoring development (*kalkınma*) similar to other leftists of the period including Doğan Avcıoğlu and Mehmet Ali Aybar. However, Cem differed from Avcıoğlu regarding the ways of realizing this developmental model. Avcıoğlu and many other popular names wanted the state and bureaucratic institutions to be the leader of this model whereas Cem wanted to erode cultural duality and integrate the society into this development. In that sense, Cem tried to adapt Marxism into Marxism and later social democracy to Turkish conditions and was largely affected from the Asiatic type of production discussions. Cem actively supported the RPP-NSP coalition in the 1970s and tried to interpret political Islam from a class-based perspective as a metaphysical reaction of suppressed masses.<sup>2</sup> Cem also actively supported and engaged in RPP's democratic transformation from a party of the state into a people's party and sympathized with Ecevit's leadership. At this period, he also became a public figure as a young and bright journalist, writer and the manager of TRT. During the 1970s although Cem was a socialist, he never

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<sup>2</sup> Kurtuluş Kayalı, "Solda İdris Küçükömer Tartışmaları", p. 1103.





supported Bolshevism or Maoism and stayed closer to European socialism in terms of individual liberties and cultural leanings. However, he also knew that in an underdeveloped and still developing country the role of socialism should be to realize economic and social development. Cem interpreted the rise of extreme-right and street clashes in the 1970s with two basic causes: the Turkish bourgeoisie's fear against exceeding class-based politics and the USA's discomfort with Turkey's more independent foreign policy in the conditions of Cold War.

In the 1980s and 1990s, Cem's views became more moderate simultaneously with the demise of socialism and state led economics in the world. Thus, Cem began to defend social democracy louder and thought that the state should be a moderator of the market and should intervene into economy and appear as a fabricator only if it needed. As a social democrat, he wanted the state to be responsible for free health, education and social security system and defended equality of opportunity to be realized in order to be a fair race to be realized in the free-market conditions. His efforts to reconcile the state with the pious masses did not end and Cem always wanted the SDPP, RPP and later DLP to empathize with the ordinary people and find solutions to their socioeconomic problems without having prejudices against them.

İsmail Cem's contribution to Turkish intellectual life could be categorized under five headings. First of all, Cem's interest and sympathy towards Ottoman system was a kind of revolution in Turkish left since the Ottoman past was a taboo for decades in Turkey, especially in the leftist-Kemalist intellectual circles. Thus, Cem made an important contribution by analyzing and praising the Ottoman past and trying to reconcile Kemalist-leftist segments with their history. In that sense, Cem tried to counter balance the radicalist aspects of the early Republican period and to realize an intellectual





peace between the Republic and the Ottoman State. Secondly, Cem tried to find a leftist-socialist vein and a pluralist root in the Ottoman past and focused on the solidarist and communitarian aspects of Ottoman system instead of solely focusing on the characteristics of Marxism, which he thought of as a product of harsh class struggles in Europe. In that sense, Cem tried to adapt Marxism and later social democracy to Turkish society and made efforts to create a synthesis. Thirdly, although he was from a modern, wealthy Istanbulite family, in his personal and intellectual life Cem had always tried to use empathy and understand people who were different from himself as well as political views that were different from his ideas. That is why, although his leftism was his primary identity starting from the 1970s, Cem was always a trustworthy democrat, a real humanist and he believed in the necessity of pluralism in politics. Fourthly, although İsmail Cem was coming from a Westernized family and he had a Western type education in Robert College and Lausanne University, during his whole intellectual and political life he tried to base his ideas on local and national values and tried to consider Islamist and nationalist groups' advantage of being native. In fact, Cem's interest in the Ottoman system or his political project of the Anatolian Left (together with Baykal) were in conformity with his political stance and aimed to demolish the walls between ordinary people and RPP and intellectuals. Lastly, İsmail Cem, starting from the 1980s, began to focus on Turkey's political culture and never solely equated electoralism with democracy. As a believer of democracy, he always defended free and fair elections and never supported or approved methods that are out of democracy in politics (political violence, coups etc.). Cem underlined that democracy is more of a lifestyle and a political cultural model whose implementation in an economically poor and poorly





educated society is not an easy task just by making democratic laws and creating democratic institutions. In that sense, he defended popular vote but not populism.

Cem as a politician also left a strong legacy of courtesy and reformism, rare qualities to be found in classical Turkish politicians. Cem both as a public intellectual and politician also showed that an effort of empathy towards others could easily make Turkey's macro problems into small issues. Another important legacy of İsmail Cem in Turkish politics is related to his innovative personality. Starting from his visit to the USA when he was sixteen, Cem always had an interest in high technology and wanted his country to become as technologically developed as the USA. In addition, he was the leading politician in Turkey in using the notion of change and dynamism.<sup>3</sup> İsmail Cem was also a self-confident and ambitious man, a quality to be found in all successful politicians. Although he was a gentle man, Cem never hesitated to step forward and take initiative in politics. However, Cem was able to become a leader finally in 2002 but was unsuccessful with New Turkey Party. Another important contribution and characteristic of İsmail Cem as a social democratic politician was his insistence on localness, a rarely seen attitude in the Turkish left which has a long tradition of top-down modernization due to its Kemalist legacy. Both as a public intellectual and a politician, İsmail Cem tried to base his model of social democracy on native and national historical and cultural values and showed a great deal of interest towards Ottoman-Turkish history. Although Cem was coming from a rich and westernized family, his effort to understand pious people's internal worlds and moral values was very valuable and it helped and

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<sup>3</sup> According to Jost, who made important researches on the psychological bases of left and right differences in politics, innovation and the notion of change is often used and better received by people having leftist orientation. See; Jost, J. T. 2009. "Elective Affinities: On the Psychological Bases of Left-Right Differences" in *Psychological Inquiry*, 20 (2-3), pp. 129-141.





encouraged Turkish left to embrace people and internalize democracy more and more. Maybe the most important contribution made by İsmail Cem in Turkish political life was intellectual depth. İsmail Cem, with his intellectual personality and depth, brought academic quality to Turkish politics. Compared to other political figures having lower education level and intellectual accumulation, Cem raised the bar in political discussions and deserves a special place in Turkish political history. Another important quality of Cem was related to his moral stance and insistence on the necessity of secular morality that would prevent degeneration in politics and the interpretation of religion as the only code of morality. The only criticism made towards Cem was related to his decision of leaving Ecevit alone in his difficult days. He had a similar type of experience when he was offered the Ministry of Culture and had to leave his friend Deniz Baykal in 1995. However, it should be noted that these are very common behaviors in politics all over the world and many people had found Cem's attitude strange because of Cem's honest and reliable personality and image. Moreover, Cem's leadership ambitions were not realistic since he did not possess the qualities of a charismatic leader that could create special bonds with ordinary people.

As a social democratic politician, Cem's biggest contributions to Turkish politics were his invention of "new left" together with Deniz Baykal and his democratic and gentle rhetoric and stance in politics. Following the 12 September 1980 military coup and the transformation of Turkey from above which sought a more liberalized and internationalized economy, İsmail Cem also had to reconsider his 1970s model "leftism" and embrace a new social democratic understanding based on pluralism and an economy based on free-market economics instead of socialism. Cem embraced free-market economics but with the addition of the necessity of a social state and equality of





opportunity for everyone. In addition, Cem began to emphasize the positive qualities of a democratic regime much more often than before and tried to define democracy. Turkish transformation and Cem's personal transformation also coincided with the weakening and the collapse of USSR and the newly established hegemony of Western type democracy and free-market economics as the only and ultimate truth all around the world. The Western left was reconsidering itself and trying to create middle roads between capitalism and socialism as the "third way" and Cem was following these developments very closely. In the 1980s, Cem's main problem was not underdevelopment anymore. He was now underlining the importance of pluralism and democratic culture and basing his ideology on these concepts.

The new positioning of Cem was primarily caused by his understanding of democracy. Cem had always highlighted democracy as a lifestyle.<sup>4</sup> He thought that in order to consolidate a democratic regime, democratic practices should be adopted in all institutions and democratic norms should be internalized by all segments of the society. In that sense, Cem refused to define democracy solely as electoral procedures and underlined that democratic norms should be spread everywhere, to families, to political parties, to schools, to mosques and to barracks. Cem's new approach to democracy and his insistence on democratic culture made his views closer to the cultural approach in democratization studies. Secondly, Cem thought that in a country like Turkey where statist-bureaucratic tendencies are very strong, the state should support civil society initiatives and present this as a lifestyle as a requirement of participatory democracy. According to Cem, the center-periphery cleavage and this indifference of the periphery was the most important factor that prevented a healthy democratic regime in Turkey.

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<sup>4</sup> İsmail Cem, *Siyaset Yazıları: "Geçiş Dönemi Türkiye" (1981-1984 Yılları)*, p. 13.





That is why political struggles in Turkey were often products of intra-elite disputes and bureaucratic groupings. Thirdly, similar to the Marxist revisionism, Cem's leftist stance after 1980 was built upon pluralist democracy and peaceful coexistence understanding. Cem thought that what made democracy desirable and legitimate was also its ability to perpetuate the peaceful coexistence of rival forces. That is why a democratic regime should represent the balance of social forces and should not favor a particular segment or a social group. The fourth aspect of Cem's new ideological stance was related to the underdevelopment issue. While starting from the 1970s İsmail Cem had always emphasized Turkey's backwardness and supported state led development models, after the 12 September coup Cem began to support the view that Turkey could reach the standards of European democracy through the EU process and in a more liberalized and open economy. In that sense, Cem's transformation from an Eastern socialist to Western social democrat was concretized on his change of stance about Turkey's underdevelopment.

Although Cem came from a highly different tradition (some even call it Ottoman socialist), in the 1980s and 1990s, similar to European socialist intellectuals and politicians, he went through a process of democratic transformation and he embraced free-market economics with the condition of equality of opportunity. The rebirth of social democracy in Europe took place after the fall of Berlin Wall and the collapse of communism and Cem was one of the earliest leftists in Turkey who caught the wave of the "third way". Thus, Cem could also be considered as a part of the European social democratic wave similar to François Mitterrand in 1980s or Tony Blair in the 1990s.

As an intellectual aiming to solve his country's democratic problems İsmail Cem also wrote on the most important and controversial topics of Turkish politics and tried to





find peaceful social democratic solutions to Turkey's troubles. Considering civil-military relations, Cem had always supported the gradual civilization of the Turkish regime after transition to democracy in 1983. However, unlike many radical figures from the leftist tradition, Cem supported the pioneering and progressive role of the Turkish Armed Forces in Turkish modernization and refrained from making provocative statements that could weaken the TAF and thus could create security problems for country. He developed a democratic, civilian and pluralist social democratic language in accordance with his political views and adopted a well-balanced rhetoric while criticizing the heavy role of military in Turkish politics.

On Kurdish question, Cem's proposal for the solution of this problem was first about the acceptance of the problem. Cem analyzed this problem on four aspects (restrictive, oppressive and discriminatory behavior of state officials, feudal structure of the region, state's erroneous policy of not developing and improving the infrastructural and social capabilities of the region and policies of imperialist states) and the first thing to do was to acknowledge the problem. Secondly, Cem knew that Kurdish question was a gigantic issue where the balance of power in international relations and the history of the problem should also be known very well and placed on the agenda. Cem underlined that the Kurdish question is primarily Turkey's problem and although international conditions are very important, Turkey should first handle its own internal problem. In that sense, Cem both acknowledged foreign support to PKK terrorism but also rejected nationalist views pointing the sole reason of the problem as foreign countries' plans. Thirdly, as a requirement of the basic definition of the state, Turkey should be able to protect its citizens, its employees, its borders and stop terrorism in the region. Cem claimed that the solution should be citizen-oriented and the Kurdish question would





never be solved unless the state takes the support of the local people. Cem never approved or supported the rural guard system and thought that this was similar to American policy against Vietcong in the past. Fourthly, Turkey should handle rising domestic nationalist and racist tendencies due to PKK terrorism. PKK terrorism, due to its racist essence, created a racist reaction against itself and Cem thought that the state should control these reactions. Fifthly, Turkey should handle its struggle against violent terrorism within the borders of legal-democratic state and should not resort to illegality or extra-legal means since this could be used by Western states against Turkey. Sixthly, the Turkish state should immediately accept democratic cultural rights of Kurdish people and should not fear cultural pluralism. Seventhly, Cem offered the Ministry of National Defense to be transformed into a more authorized and qualified department where theories about preventing PKK terrorism should be discussed and detailed plans would be made in coordination with the Prime Ministry and General Staff of the Turkish Armed Forces.

On the issue of political Islam-secularism discussions, İsmail Cem's peculiar stance in the left for his empathy for Islamist groups began to change after the 12 September military coup and political developments in the 1980s and 1990s although Cem never used a language of hostility towards political Islamists. Cem defined secularism as a guarantee for believers from different sects, religions and non-believers. In his view, secularism resided at the core of democracy and without secularism democracy could not be established. He wanted the Directorate of Religious Affairs to contain and provide services for all sects and religions in the country. He also pointed out that in the long run the aim of secularism was to transfer state power and authority over religion to civil society and congregations. Cem also stated that (similar to the





passive secularism argument of Özbudun and Hale) a more libertarian, pluralist and democratic interpretation of secularism should be developed in Turkey in order to create social peace. He believed that thanks to the Ottoman legacy of religious tolerance, Turkey has the potential to realize this dream and terminate the secularism-Islamism clash that divides the country into poles and wastes its energy. On the very controversial topic of headscarf or turban, İsmail Cem wrote very boldly and stated that secularism should also be a guarantee for headscarf-wearing young women. In his view, an ideal secular state that Turkey could not establish yet, should be blind or at least objective in state affairs towards different beliefs and should provide a free environment where all beliefs should be practiced freely. In that sense, Cem, being aware of the strong polarization in the country on this topic, offered to take freedoms in totality in order to solve the secularist-Islamist clash and obliterate fears against Islamic lifestyles. Cem never approved censorship and repressive attitudes against Islamism and defended dialogue between different groups and tolerance towards each other. However, Cem also wrote that commercialization and exploitation of religion for political aims is also a serious problem in the country and criticized the MP, WP and JDP for their exploitation of religion for political means. According to Cem, defending freedom of religion was not a deviation from social democracy but rather it resided at the core of leftist libertarianism

As Turkish Foreign Minister, Cem was distinguished with his peace-seeking but also interest-based realist perspective. He was considered as the architect of Turkey's membership status given by the EU in the Helsinki Summit of 1999. During his term, Turkey was able to capture the PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan and for a few years seemed to solve the problem of PKK terrorism. Cem together with his Greek counterpart Yorgo





Papandreou were largely credited in Turkish and international public after the Turkish-Greek rapprochement that took place in 1999 and 2000 following a serious diplomatic crisis caused by the capture of Öcalan in a Greek embassy. So-called “earthquake diplomacy” soon turned into a personal friendship between Cem and Papandreou and the winds of peace began to blow on the both shores of the Aegean.

One of the most important contribution of Cem as Foreign Minister was his insistence on the use of Turkey’s rich identity and historical assets inherited from the Ottoman state.<sup>5</sup> Instead of a strict pro-Western or pro-Eastern foreign policy, Cem favored a multi-dimensional active foreign policy based on Turkey’s interests. He defined foreign policy as “a mathematical equation of a country’s interests” and tried to create a convenient environment to be more flexible and active in foreign policy. In that sense, Cem offered a new rational and multi-dimensional approach to international relations in order to increase Turkey’s interests. He focused on Turkey’s full accession to EU process and energy agreements made with Eurasian countries such as the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline project as two of the most important issues in Turkish foreign policy. He also frequently highlighted the importance of Turkish model as a successful example that could show the right path to countries from the Muslim world that suffer from radicalism and authoritarian regimes in addition to the negative effects of Western imperialism. In his view, Turkey should develop a rational and peace-seeking multi-dimensional relationship style with all important organizations and countries based on protecting and developing Turkey’s interests. Becoming totally engaged in the EU or the USA would be a big mistake in Cem’s view. Cem pointed out that with a liberal understanding in international politics, Turkey could never be successful and would

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<sup>5</sup> Ismail Cem, *Turkey in the New Century*, p. 3.





always give concessions to the EU. He wrote that nationalism in foreign policy is a positive aspect whereas it could be very dangerous if it used in internal politics. He also made an analogy between Turkish-EU relations and unrequited love<sup>6</sup>. He offered a more rational, realistic and interest-based approach to EU relations and claimed that if this happens the EU would approach Turkey in a different manner. Cem used the methods of both Realism and Liberalism in foreign policy and thought that this cultural heritage of the Ottomans could increase Turkey's power and sympathy in these regions if it is used successfully. After Cem's tenure in office, Turkey under JDP rule tried to carry on this vision and tried to become a more influential regional and international actor although in the last years some Western observers have begun to question Turkey's alliance to the West and neo-Ottomanism discussions have become widespread.

Looking all aspects of Cem's political life, it would not be wrong to assert that in order to deepen Turkish democracy without creating polarization in the society and fears against modernization and globalization, Turkey needs a better administration and moderate social democratic solutions to its cleavages especially on three main issues: civil-military relations, the Kurdish question and the political Islam and secularism clash. Cem offered both the protection of the Republic's ideals and the expansion of democracy and with his life and views was able to create a good model. Looking at his efforts to reconcile the Republic with its past and secularist segments with pious-Islamist masses, it would be rational to claim that he developed a kind of moderate Kemalism based on universal social democratic principles. Cem's Foreign Ministry allowed a high majority of the Turkish people to accept globalization and full accession to European Union not as a threat to secularism or independence, but as a positive process that would

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<sup>6</sup> Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 201.





complete the modernization and democratization movement of the country that started with its founder Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Cem's peculiar vision for Turkey's EU membership and his foreign policy understanding based on a kind of synthesis between protecting national interests and supporting the democratization process and globalization seems to be necessary for Turkey to be better analyzed and understood especially after witnessing the problems in the last years that triggered fears of globalization and polarized the Turkish society. Cem's gentle rhetoric and his ability to empathize with political rivals could be an example for Turkish politicians especially to Turkish left which has always suffered from the lack of people's support of its reformist projects. İsmail Cem's views in fact were proving that Turkey still has chance to develop its founding model and could make peace with its society by making some meaningful steps without a rupture like in the case of the collapse of the Ottoman State. In that sense, Turkish people deserve a better administration that would prevent the division of Turkish society into extremely polarized hostile camps such as Islamist-secular, Alevi-Sunni, leftist-rightist or Turk-Kurd. Cem's political and intellectual legacy and democratic solutions to Turkey's social and political problems could be useful in 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Lastly, it would not be wrong to assert that İsmail Cem saw his life's work as involving basically three tasks; to reconcile Turkey with its Ottoman past by softening the radical modernist mentality of the earlier Republican period both on the intellectual and social levels, finding solutions to Turkey's various political problems by making a social democratic interpretation of Kemalism and thus, achieving democratic consolidation in Turkey and finally to transform his country into a respected regional power in international relations by pursuing an active foreign policy through full





membership to European Union as well as developing relations with Middle Eastern and Eurasian countries. Both as a public intellectual and politician, he was able to take considerable steps in order to realize these three tasks. However, Cem did not have chance to complete his mission since he never reached the position of Prime Ministry. Having analyzed all aspects of his life, his personal traits, his intellectual and political identity, it would not be wrong to assert that Cem's strongest legacy was humanism and democracy and he sincerely believed that Turkey can establish its own healthy and consolidated democracy despite of its various problems by reforming its system. He believed that Turkey can become a part of Europe Union and Western civilization by keeping its own historical-cultural characteristics in addition to democratic norms and practices. Considering Turkey's ongoing sociopolitical problems and discussions related to civil-military relations, the Kurdish question and political Islam-secularism clash, it would be easy to notice and purport that Cem's vision for Turkey's social peace and democratic development is not yet very-well understood by Turkish intellectuals and politicians.





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## ATTACHMENTS (in order)

- İsmail Cem photos
- İsmail Cem (1986), “1988 Genel Seçimine İlişkin Seçim Organizasyonu ve Çalışma Modeli”
- Cem’s handwriting addressing to Prof. İhsan Doğramacı and his wife in the first page of his photographic album book “Seasons”
- (3) Trumpet Flower, İstanbul 1978
- (14) Bosporus in the Fog, İstanbul 1973
- (15) Waterfall, Japan 1975
- (16) Flowers, İstanbul 1982
- (18) Yatağan River, Muğla 1985
- (19) Scenery, Kütahya 1980
- (20) Thoughts, İstanbul 1972 (Cem’s wife Elçin Cem)
- (24) Meditation, Paris 1980 (Cem’s wife Elçin Cem)
- (32) Trees in Blue, Moda (İstanbul) 1983
- (34) Old Fishermen, İstanbul 1973
- (37) Mother and Child, İstanbul 1985
- (38) Lovers, Türkbükü (Muğla) 1983
- (39) Sunset in the Bosporus, İstanbul 1984





- (41) Autumn Colors, Ankara 1989
- (42) Rose Leaves, İstanbul 1983
- (46) Wild Berries, İstanbul 1984
- (66) The Stare, Arnavutköy 1978
- (69) Burning Sun, Bingöl 1985
- (73) Les Clochards, Paris 1981
- (74) Roots, Tenerife 1990
- (87) Bosphorus Under Snow, İstanbul 1973
- (92) Global Reality, Madeira 1991
- (111) Solitude in the Desert, Egypt 1998
- (112) Café in Isfahan, Isfahan 1998
- (135) Dawn at the Atlantic, Taken from an airplane 1978





## İSMAİL CEM PHOTOS



Cem as a young journalist in the 1960s





Cem as the manager of TRT (at left)



Cem making interview with Bülent Ecevit in the 1970s





Cem in the early 1980s



With his son Kerim





Social democrat politician



An unusual Foreign Minister





With Yasser Arafat in the early 2000s





His daughter İpek Cem Taha, İsmail Cem and his son Kerim Cem



With his wife Elçin Cem





Among people, eating simit



With his friend and Greek counterpart Yorgo Papandreou





Praying before a convention



With President Süleyman Demirel





Joking with EU commissioner for enlargement Günter Verheugen



With Kemal Derviş whom he never forgave





Ismail Cem – Mimics



A charismatic posture





New Turkey Party's meeting in blue collar



Last days

347

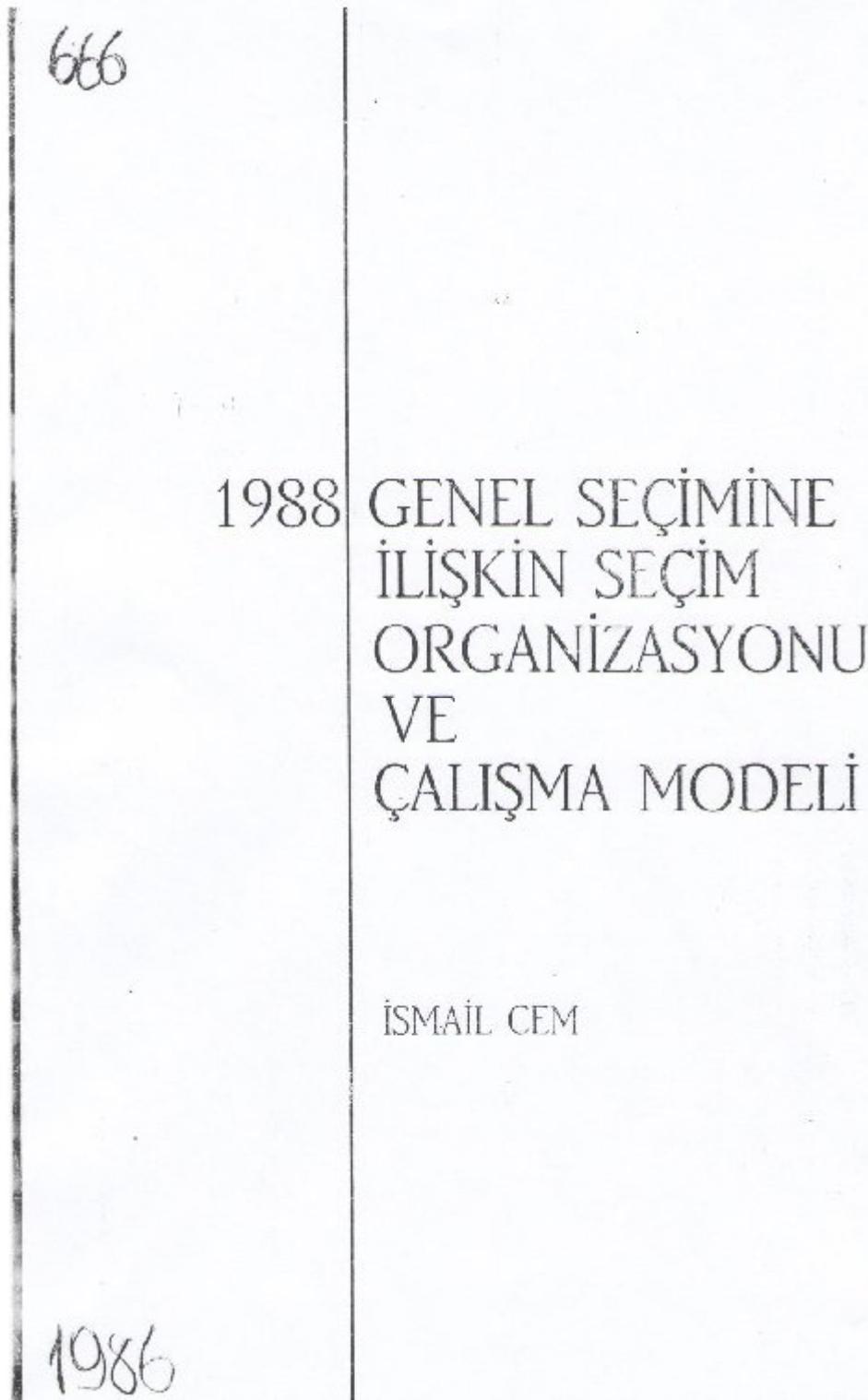




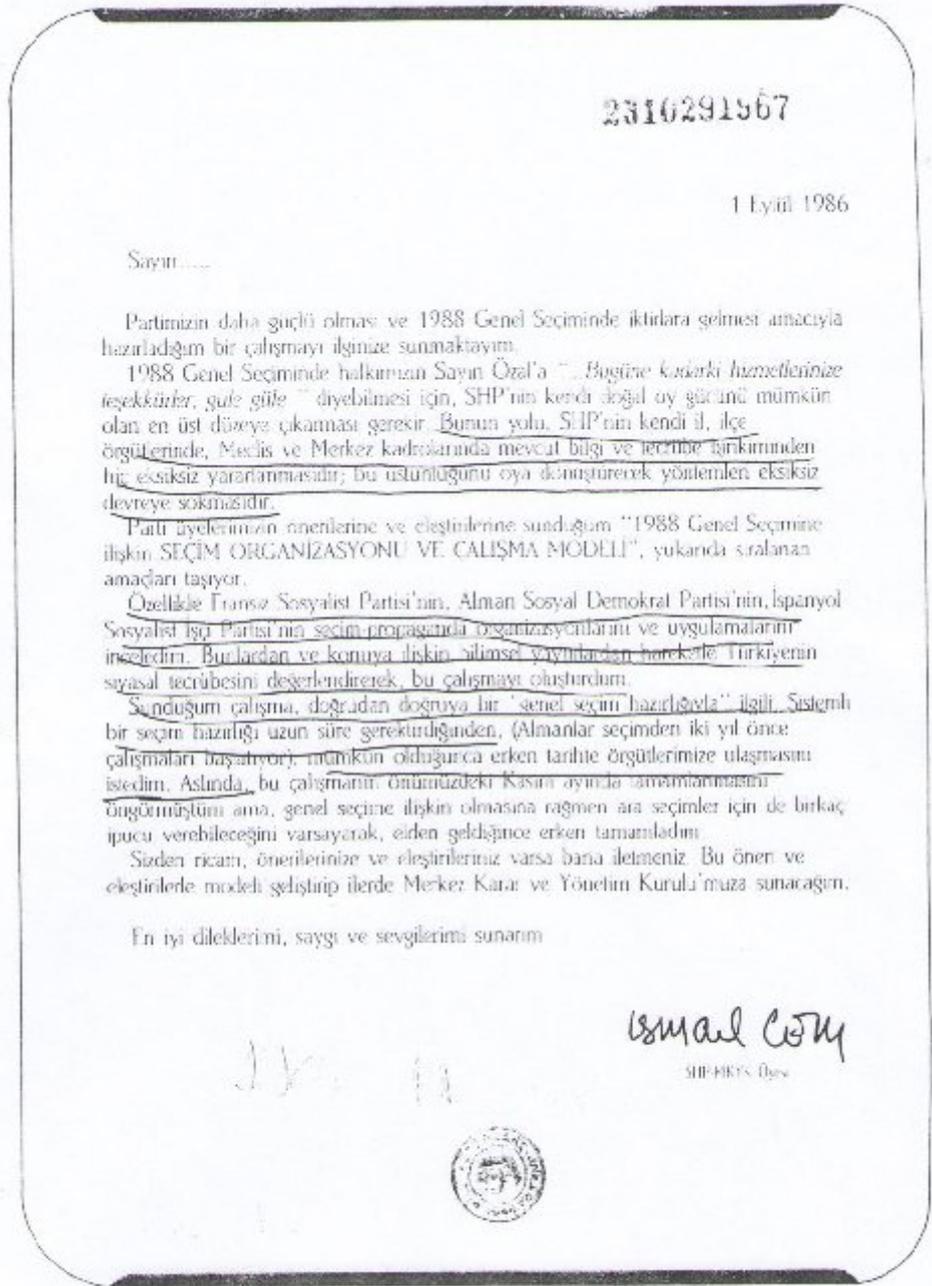
Farewell



İsmail Cem (1986), "1988 Genel Seçimine İlişkin Seçim Organizasyonu ve Çalışma Modeli"



İsmail Cem (1986), "1988 Genel Seçimine İlişkin Seçim Organizasyonu ve Çalışma Modeli"

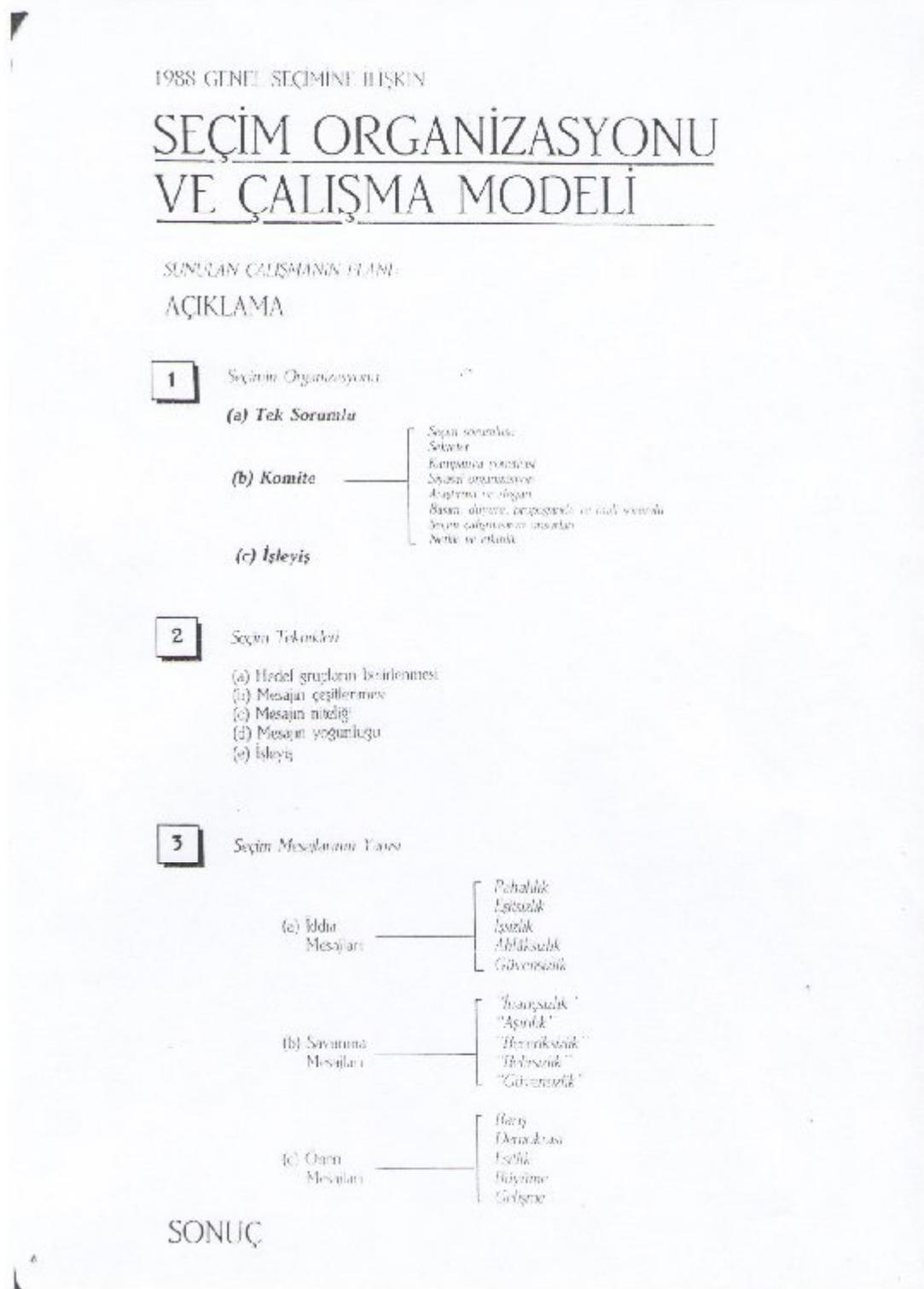


İsmail Cem  
MEYK Üyesi  
SHP Genel Merkez  
Korun Sok. Katlıy  
ANKARA  
(Bu çalışma, SHP'nin il ve ilçe örgütlerine, Milletvekillerine, MEYK üyelerine ve Kararlıy delegelerine gönderilmiştir.)

403306-86



İsmail Cem (1986), "1988 Genel Seçimine İlişkin Seçim Organizasyonu ve Çalışma Modeli"













## İsmail Cem (1986), "1988 Genel Seçimine İlişkin Seçim Organizasyonu ve Çalışma Modeli"

### SEÇİM TEKNİKLERİ

● **SEÇMENE VERİLEN MESAJLAR**, bir seçim mücadelesinin temel unsurları arasındadır. Ne var ki bir seçim mesajının etkinliğini belirleyen, sadece mesajın içermekte olduğu sözlerin ve düşüncelerin doğruluğu değildir. Başka ve çok önemli faktörlerin mesajın etkinliğinde büyük payı vardır.

- YİĞİTİMİN ENYAK SEÇMEN GRUPLARINI BELİRLEME** göre seçim mesajının yapılmak üzere sloganlar ve sloganlar belirlemek gerekir. Herhangi bir seçim gruplarının ya da adayların özelliklerini belirlemek ve buna göre mesajlara uygun ve etkili seçim mesajlarını oluşturmak büyük ölçüde önemlidir.
- DOĞRU KAVRİ KULLANIMI** Seçim mesajında bir mesajın etkili olabilmesi için doğru kavramların kullanılmasını gerektirir. Örneğin "çalışkan" kavramı, bir seçim yarışında sık sık karşı karşıya gelinir. Ancak bu kavramın kullanılmasında "çalışkan" kavramının yerine "çalışkanlık" kavramının kullanılması tercih edilmelidir.
- YERİNE LİK** Seçim mesajının etkili olabilmesi için mesajın doğru yerde ve doğru zamanda yapılması gerekir. Bu mesajın etkili olabilmesi için mesajın doğru yerde ve doğru zamanda yapılması gerekir.

#### SEÇİM MESAJININ NİHAİ AMACI

- 1) **Çekirdek (sağlam) seçmenime yeniden partime oy verdim;**
- 2) **Benden yana fakat kararlı olanların karşı partiyeye kaymasını önlemek;**
- 3) **Değişken ve kararlı, her seçim "ortada" seçmeni etkilemek;**
- 4) **Karşı düşüncede fakat benden yana olabilecekleri kendi partime çekmek;**
- 5) **Karşı düşüncede ve benden uzak olanların kendi partilerine girmelerini sağlamak** (böylece, oy sandığına gitmemeye ya da benim saydığım adayın yerine başka tercihe, örneğin bağımsızlara yönlendirmek).

#### a) Hedef Seçmen Grupları

Hedeflenen seçmen gruplarını belirlemek için farklı mesajlar kullanılmalıdır.

#### aa- OY ALIŞKANLIKLARINA GÖRE:

- 1) Her zaman sola oy verirler
- 2) Genellikle sağa oy verir, şimdi sağa kayalacaklar
- 3) Her zaman değişken oy kullanırlar
- 4) Genellikle sağa oy verir, şimdi sola kayalacaklar
- 5) Her zaman sağa oy verirler

#### ad- DEĞER YARGILARINA, KÜLTÜR KİMLİKLERİNE GÖRE:

- 1) Muhafazakar (sağ) seçmen
- 2) Muhafazakar (orta) seçmen
- 3) Ortalama seçmen
- 4) Değişken (orta) seçmen
- 5) Yıkıcılar (orta) seçmen
- 6) Düzensiz (orta) seçmen
- 7) Yeni kurtuluş (orta) seçmen

#### ab- KARARLILIK DÜZEYİNE GÖRE:

- 1) Sağa oy vererek, partinin seçmiş olduğu aday (SHP)
- 2) Sağa oy vererek, partinin benzer adayını (SHP-ÜSP)
- 3) Herhangi bir adayla oy kullanmazlar (Bağımsız)
- 4) Sağa oy vererek, partinin benzer adayını (ANAP-ÜSP)
- 5) Sağa oy vererek, partinin seçmiş olduğu aday (ANAP)

#### ae- YAŞ ÖZELLİKLERİNE GÖRE:

- 1) İlk kez oy verenecekler
- 2) 25-35 yaş
- 3) 36-45 yaş
- 4) 46-55 yaş
- 5) 56 yaş üstü

#### ac- MESLEK GRUPLARINA GÖRE:

- 1) İşçi-Memur
- 2) Emekli
- 3) Tarım
- 4) Öğretmenler
- 5) Diğer meslekler

#### ● YAKINMA LAR BEKLENTİLERİ

Bir seçim grubu, öncelikle, bir temel sonuçtan hareketle "ne kadar yakın" ve "ne beklediğini" belirlemek gerekir. Bu bir seçim grubu, diğer bir seçim mesajının yapıldığı bir yerdeki yakınma, örneğin, yakınma (yakınlık) olduğu bir yerdeki yakınma, örneğin, yakınma (yakınlık) durumunda yakınma ve beklenti "yakınlık" ve "beklenti" mesajı, seçim mesajının yapıldığı yerdeki yakınma ve beklenti.







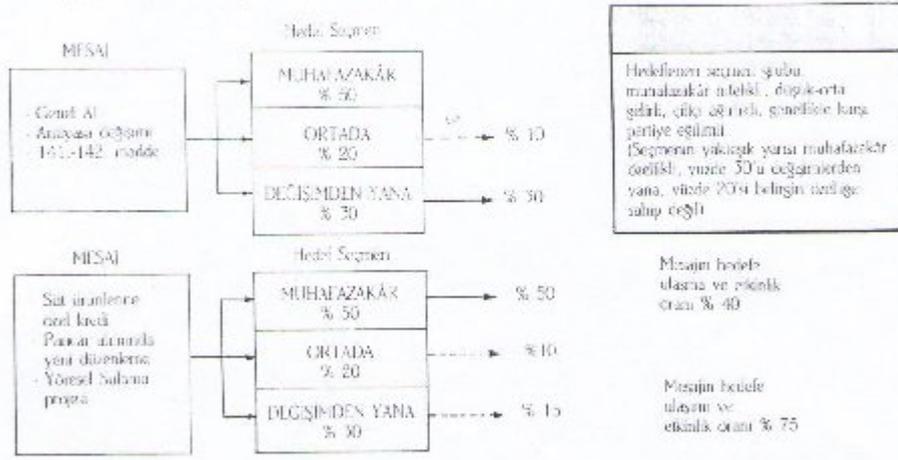
## İsmail Cem (1986), "1988 Genel Seçimine İlişkin Seçim Organizasyonu ve Çalışma Modeli"

### SEÇİM TEKNİKLERİ

#### SEÇİM MESAJINDA ETKİNLİK ÖRNEKLERİ

##### İŞLEYİŞ

Aşağıda verilen örnekler, toplumun seçilebilirliği açısından aynı ölçüde beklenebilir bir durumdur. Aslında, her siyasi propagandanın amacı, değişik mesajların bir dengesiz içinde belirli kullarıyla karşılaşmaktır. Mesajlar hedef seçmen grubunun özelliklerini doğru (belirli) seçmenin ayrılmalarını buna göre ayarlanırlar.



**SONUÇ:** Hedef seçmen grubunun özellikleri nedeniyle, "savatı ağırlık" mesajı, seçmenin büyük bölümüne ulaşmaya, buna karşılık "güven ağırlıklı" mesajı, seçmen grubunun büyük bölümünde etkili olmuştur.



Öyle mesajlar verilmelidir,

- (1) Hedefin (A) çalışıp karşı partiyeye (B) yönelebilecek seçmeninin oranını engelleyici beklentilerle karşılan (Yukarıdaki gerada birinci oranı).
- (2) Karşı partinin seçmenlerinden bize gelebilecek olanları bu kadarına indirmeye ve o partinin foruzunu bizim yakaladık (Yukarıdaki gerada ikinci durum).
- (3) Karşı partinin sağları seçmeninde ilerideki yarıttarak seçimde oy kullanılmakta, ancak salıncıya, yani karşı tarafta sağlık partilere oy vermeye neden yelteniriz. (Yukarıdaki gerada üçüncü durum).

MESAJ ÖRNEĞİ:

Bu tarzda üç derama uygun mesajlar:

- (1) "B" partisine yönelerek bir oy geçmiştiniz, kazandığınız haklarını kaybetmişsiniz."
- (2) "B" nin gerideki az sayıda oylumuzu, bir şekilde götüreceğiz."
- (3) "B" ye yeniden oy verirsiniz, kendi davranışlarınızla kazanmışsınız..."







İsmail Cem (1986), "1988 Genel Seçimine İlişkin Seçim Organizasyonu ve Çalışma Modeli"

SONUÇ

AKILLA, BİLİMLE,  
ÖRGÜTLE...

Şüphesiz ki, seçimi kazananın mirasını kendi sandığı, bir  
başarıya ulaştırır.

Seçim mücadelesini bilimsel denklilikli bir sisteme yerleştirip ve  
plandan, organizasyondan kaynaklanan yöntemler, mükemmeli olan en  
üst düzeyde gerçekleştirilmelidir.

Özellikle bir devletin seçim mücadelesinde seçilme edilebilirliği, imkanı  
ve tercihinden, mümkün olan en büyük kazanımla karşılaşmaktır. Büyük  
partiler için bir fark, toplum için yararlı bir şekilde bir başarıdır.  
Seçim sonuçlarını belirleyen en önemli faktör, yüzde 5'dir.

Bir seçim mücadelesini uzun vadede, planlı programlı ve bilimsel  
yöntemlerle hazırlamak, bir başarıya daha ulaştırılır. Düşünceli ve  
sistemli bir çalışmayı ve mükemmeli, devrimsel bir parti örgütüne  
gerekir.

Bu "sistem", aslında birim avantajıdır. Çünkü, bir zaman yüzde  
5-10'dur ve bir planlı çalışmaya, "sistem", "organizasyon", "yöntem"  
neden ve örgütün çalışması zorunlu kılınır. Böyle bir örgüt ise sadece  
büyük kazanımla kazanılmaz. Kendi avantajlarını, kendi  
üstünlüklerinden yararlanmak ve ayakta kalma bulumlarına  
başarılarını devreye sokarak, etkin ve bizzat kendi menfaatinin  
gerekidir.

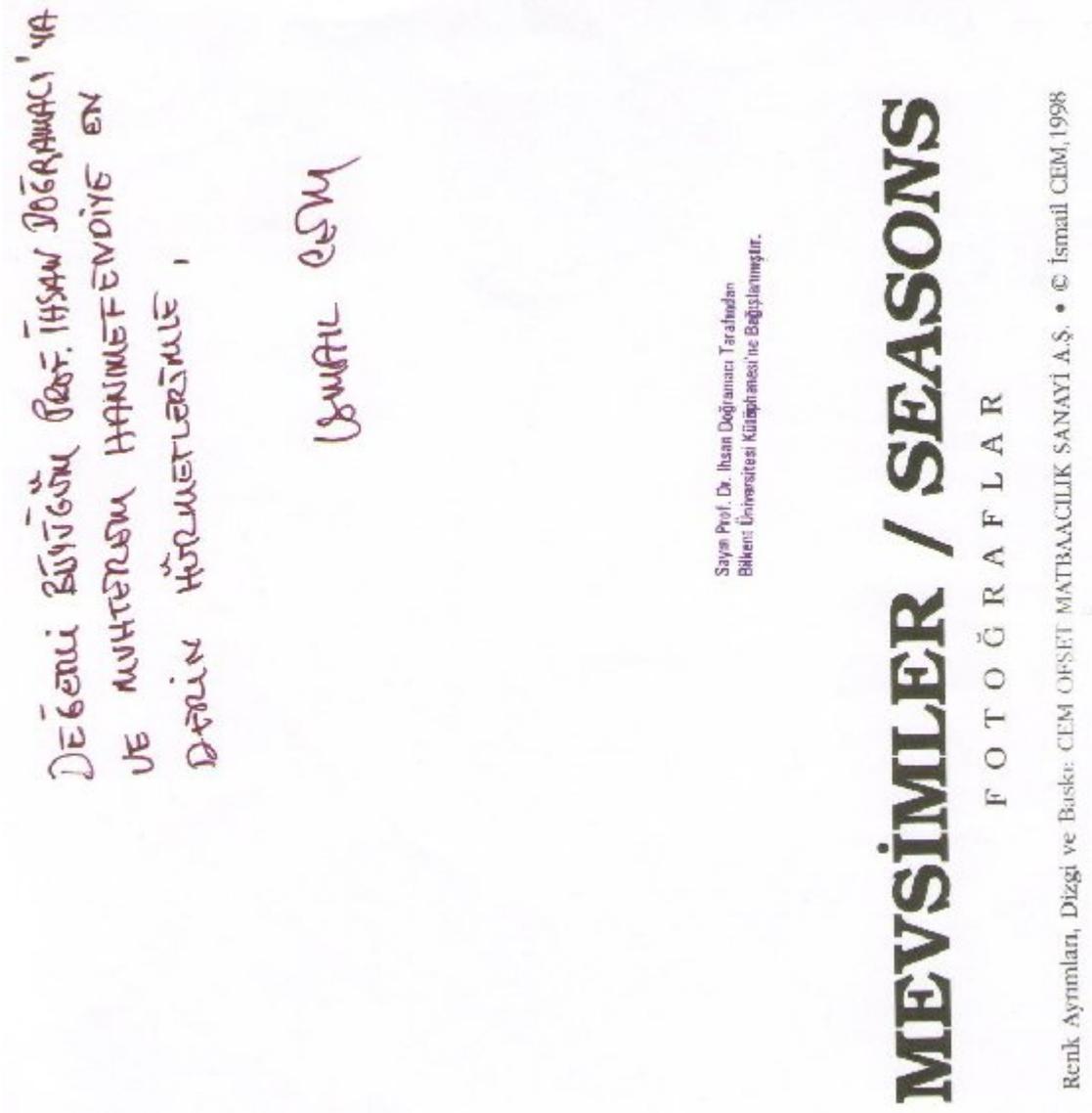
Kendimizde var olan güçü kullanmak, seçim mücadelesinde bazı yeni  
ve ek imkan sağlayarak ve ikidim yolunu bir ölçüde  
kayıp ettirmektedir.

Bir partiye seçim kazandıran temel etkenler, daha önce belirlenmiş  
gibi, o partinin genel politikaları, örgütleniş, kimlik, liderliği ve  
lesanları, televizyondan yansıyan görünümüdür.

Bu etkenlerin oranlarına % 5 bir düzeyi eğer bilimsel, planlı programlı  
seçim organizasyonu mümkün kılınmazsa, ve bu % 5, en uygun  
olanak bilgisi ve deneyimli bir parti örgütüne gerekmezse, böyle  
bir parti örgütü, de birde mevzuat, neden kendi görünümü  
kullanılmadığı ve oy oranının % 5'lik bir kazandıran neden yoksun  
brakılır?

Yeterince ikidim elbette bizimdir: Akilla, tabii, örgütle...

Cem's handwriting addressing to Prof. İhsan Dođramacı and his wife in the first page of his photographic album book "Seasons"





(3) Trumpet Flower (Borazan Çiçeđi), İstanbul 1978





(14) Bosporus in the Fog (Siste Boğaz), İstanbul 1973



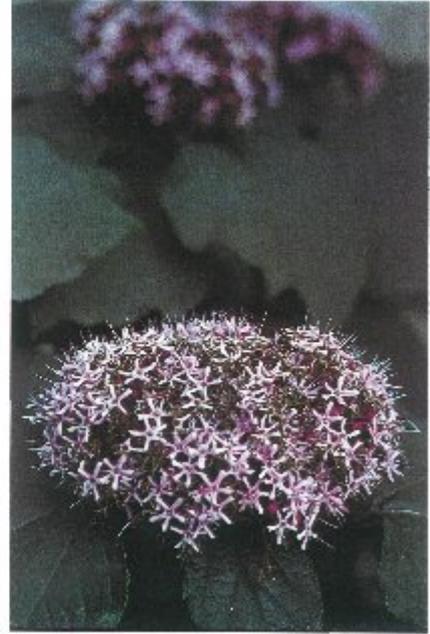
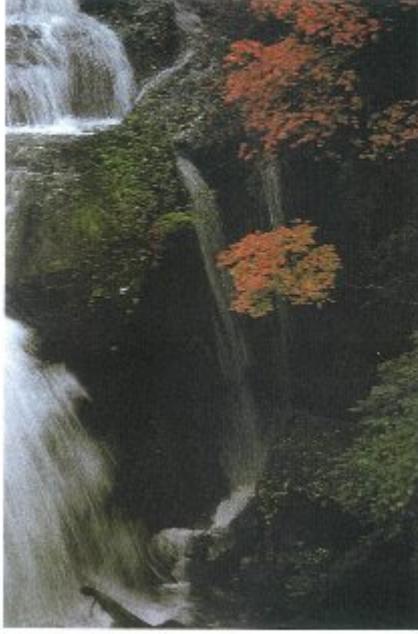
14





(15) Waterfall (Şelale), Japan 1975

(16) Flowers (Çiçekler), İstanbul 1982





(18) Yatağan River (Yatağan Nehri), Muğla 1985



18



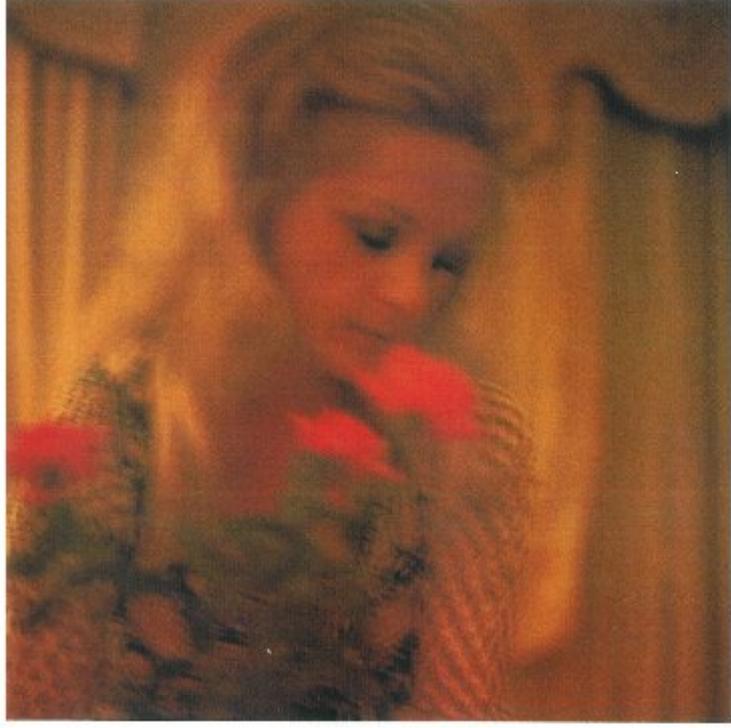


(19) Scenery (Manzara), Kütahya 1980





(20) Thoughts (Düşünceler), İstanbul 1972 (Cem's wife Elçin Cem)





(24) Meditation (Meditasyon), Paris 1980 (Cem's wife Elçin Cem)





(32) Trees in Blue (Mavilikte Ağaçlar), Moda (İstanbul) 1983





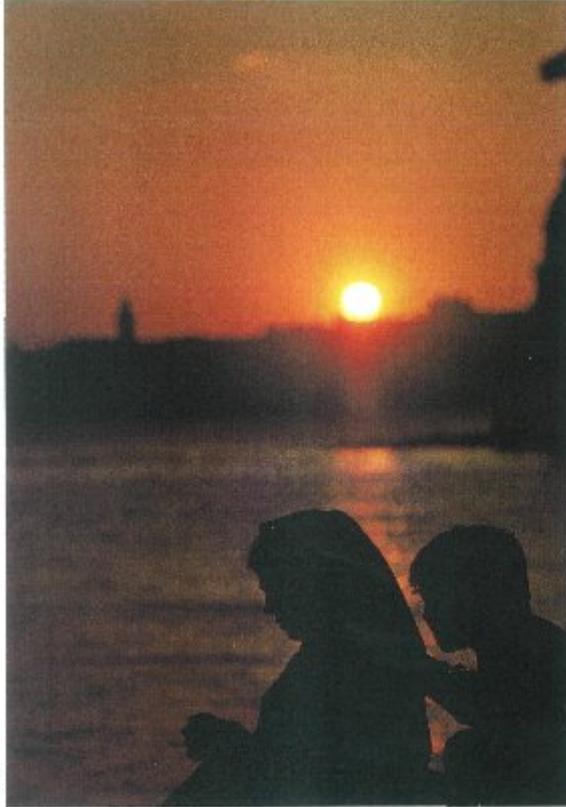
(34) Old Fishermen (Yaşlı Balıkçı), İstanbul 1973





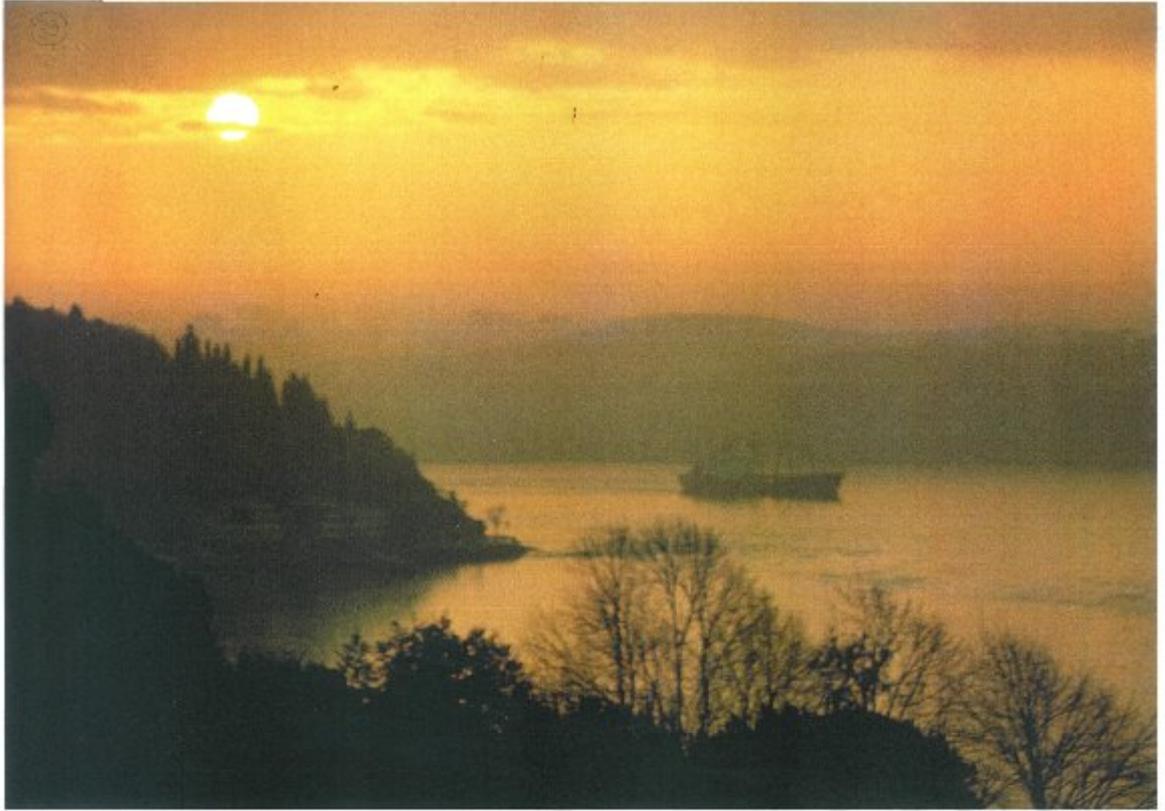
(37) Mother and Child (Anne ve Çocuk), İstanbul 1985

(38) Lovers (Âşıklar), Türkbükü (Muğla) 1983





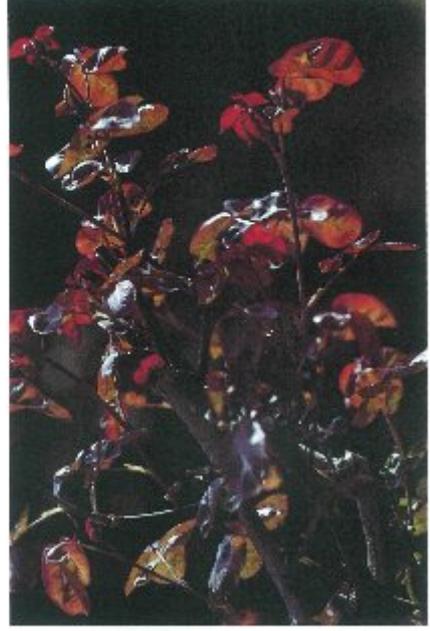
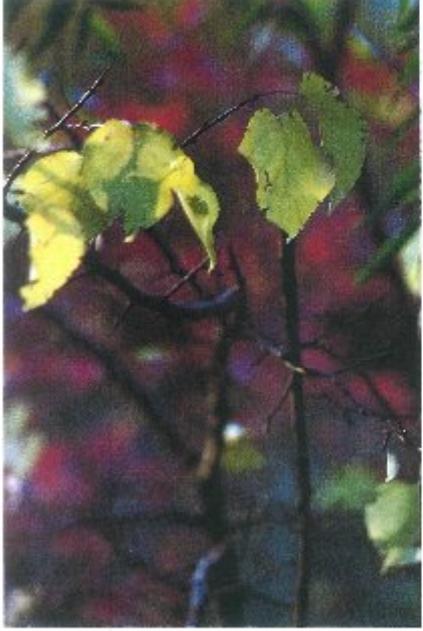
(39) Sunset in the Bosphorus (Boğazda Günbatımı), İstanbul 1984





(41) Autumn Colors (Sonbahar Renkleri), Ankara 1989

(42) Rose Leaves (Gül Yaprakları), İstanbul 1983





(46) Wild Berries (Yabani Kiraz), İstanbul 1984



16





(66) The Stare (Bakış), Arnavutköy 1978



66





(69) Burning Sun (Yakıcı Güneş), Bingöl 1985



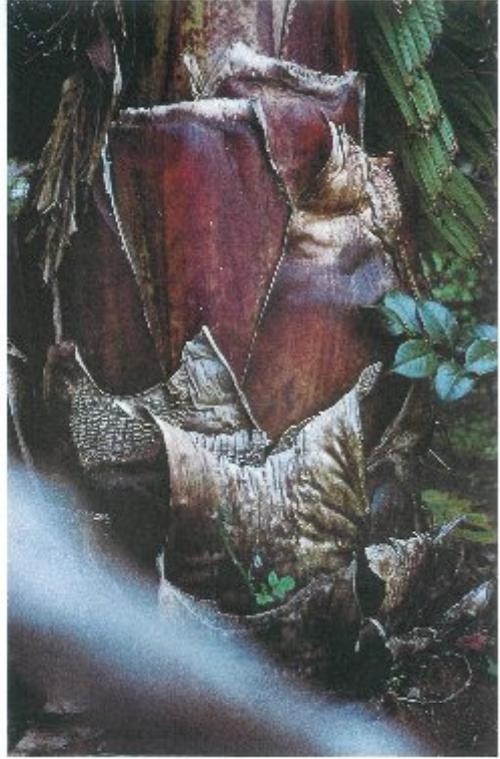


(73) Les Clochards (Dilenciler), Paris 1981

(74) Roots (Kökler), Tenerife 1990



73

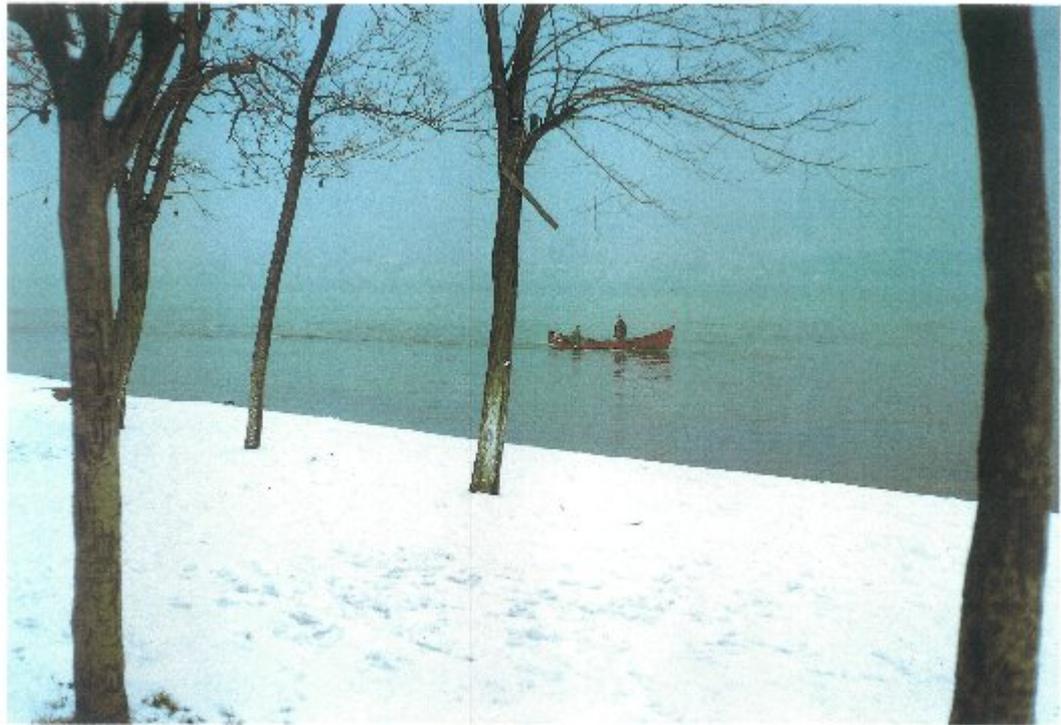


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(87) Bosporus Under Snow (Karlar Altında Boğaz), İstanbul 1973



87





(92) Global Reality (Küresel Gerçek), Madeira 1991





(111) Solitude in the Desert (Çölde Yalnızlık), Egypt 1998



111





(112) Caf  in Isfahan (İsfahan'da Bir Kafe), Isfahan 1998





(135) Dawn at the Atlantic (Atlantik'te Günbatımı), Taken from an airplane 1978

