

"SOL" SEARCHING

DILEMMAS OF THE TURKISH LEFT

A MASTER'S THESIS

BY BEN BALL

BILKENT UNIVERSITY

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TO MY SISTER, LIZ

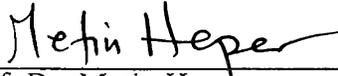
WHO KNOWS THAT THE BRIGHAM YOUNG COPPER MINE IN UTAH
IS THE LARGEST OPEN-PIT COPPER MINE IN THE WORLD

I certify that I have read this thesis, and in my opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Political Science and Public Administration.



Prof. Dr. Ergun Özbudun (Supervisor)

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Abstract

“Sol” Searching: Dilemmas of the Turkish Left

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This thesis examines the Turkish left throughout the republican period (1923-1999), with a specific focus on the period after 1965. The goal of the study is to examine why the left in Turkey has not obtained electoral success. The ultimate conclusion is that this is due not only to external factors (the right wing, foreign pressures, the Turkish electorate), but also to internal factors within the left wing itself, such as electoral strategy and ideological constraints. The study also examines the progress of extra-parliamentary groups such as militants, labor unions, and the media in an attempt to paint a more holistic picture of the many incarnations of the left in Turkey.

Keywords: Turkish Left, Militants, Electoral Politics

Özet

Bir ‘‘Sol’’ Arayış: Türkiye’de Solun Açmazları
Ben Ball
Masters, Siyasal Bölümü
Tez Yönetici: Ergun Özbudun

Haziran 1999

Bu tez özellikle 1965 sonrası döneme değinerek Cumhuriyet Dönemi boyunca (1923-1999) Türk solunun gelişimini inceliyor. Bu çalışmanın amacı Türkiye’de solun neden seçimlerde başarılı olmadığını incelemektedir. Sonuç olarak, bunun sadece dış faktörlere (sağ partiler, dış ilişkiler, Türkiye’nin seçmenler) de bağlı olduğudur. Çalışma ayrıca Türkiye’deki solun çeşitli görünümünü bütüncül bir resim oluşturma çabası ile, militanlar, sendikalar, ve basın gibi Parlamento dışı grupların gelişimini incelemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Türk Solu, Militanlar

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LIST OF MAJOR ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Turkish Name	English Name
Parties		
ANAP	Anavatan Partisi	Motherland Party
AP	Adalet Partisi	Justice Party
CGP	Cumhuriyet Güven Partisi	Republican Reliance Party
CHP	Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi	Republican People's Party
DSP	Demokratik Sol Partisi	Democratic Left Party
DYP	Doğru Yol Partisi	True Path Party
HP	Halkçı Partisi	People's Party
ÖDP	Özgürlük ve Dayanışma Partisi	Freedom and Solidarity Party
MHP	Milliyet Hareket Partisi	Nationalist Movement Party
SHP	Sosyaldemokratik Halkçı Partisi	Social-Democratic People's Party
SODEP	Sosyal Demokrat Partisi	Social Democrat Party
TİP	Türkiye İşçi Partisi	Turkish Labor Party
TKP	Türkiye Komünist Partisi	Turkish Communist Party
Organizations		
DİSK	Devrimci İşçi Sendikalar Kanunu	Federation of Revolutionary Unions
FKF	Fikir Kulüpleri Federasyonu	Federation of Thought Clubs
Türk-İş	Türk-İş	Turkish Labor
THKP-C	Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Partisi-Cephe	Turkish People's Liberation Party-Front
Concepts		
MDD	Milli Demokratik Devrim	National Democratic Revolution

Abbreviations for the smaller parties can be found in Table 3.1, page 194-196

CHAPTER ONE

A THEORETICAL BASIS FOR A STUDY OF THE LEFT

THEORY: CAN WE TALK ABOUT THE "LEFT"? •
PRACTICE: A DEFINITION OF THE "LEFT" FOR THIS STUDY

*The AP's 'future minded' leaders gave us this:
Ecevit wears a hat, Lenin wore a hat, Nazım Hikmet wore a hat.
Therefore, Ecevit is a communist... "*

*-Uğur Muncu
(Muncu 1997, p. 143)*

The theme of the Turkish left may well be always the bridesmaid, never the bride".

In the modern era of Turkish politics, the left has been a perennial also-ran, a series of institutions and parties that seem destined to be forever exiled in political Siberia. In short, the left in the modern era has not met with much electoral success. This study seeks to answer the question of why this curious state of affairs, where one side (namely, the right) of the political spectrum seemingly dominates the other, has been prevalent. The question seems at first rather simplistic. Either a cultural argument, or perhaps economic or foreign factors have been said to be responsible for this situation. Some of these reasons may be true, but when an even cursory examination of the Turkish political system and the left within it is made, it becomes apparent that the reason for the perpetual inferiority of the left in Turkish politics is actually a complex subject. It can be safely said, even in an introduction, that there is no singular reason for the situation of the left in Turkey. What this study will attempt to bring to light is the mosaic of smaller causes and effects that have made the Turkish left as it is. Through this, the left will be seen as effected by the causes listed above, but also by its own efforts.

This study will be concerned with the political left in the modern history of Turkey, focusing specifically on the period 1965 to the present. There have been several studies on why the right has most often dominated Turkish politics. This study seeks the other side, why the left has not posed a genuine challenge. Following a general theoretical discussion of what the left can be defined as and the working definition of the left that will be used in the study, several parallel trends will be observed in the hope of finding an eventual answer not only to the question of why the Turkish left is how it is, but also why the Turkish left is not what it could be. This can be observed through two parallel trends.

The first trend to be observed will be the historical trend. Without dwelling to an extensive degree in the earlier years of the republican period, a cursory examination will be necessary to set the stage for later years and also to examine the importance (or lack thereof) of the early republican period to the left in the present day. Following this, a historical narrative of the left from its genesis in the mid-1960s to the present day will follow. This narrative will be pursued on the basis of parties and personalities of the left, so as to show the dialogue between the various factions of the left and to demonstrate the degree of cohesiveness obtained by the left at different periods in its history. Both mainstream groups and those on the margin will be examined in terms of their dialogue and inputs into the Turkish political system. Admittedly, this narrative will not give much attention to foreign policy, ethnic issues, the military, and political trends on the right. It will focus mainly on the internal situation of the Turkish left.

The second trend to be observed, within the context of history, will be the electoral trend. While the historical account of the left in Turkey is significant, the results of elections will provide a concrete measure of the effectiveness of the left in Turkish politics. Observation of the electoral scheme in Turkey will also focus on where the left draws its support from at various periods, in an effort to determine who the left is in Turkey, and how that “who” has changed over the years. The results will reveal that large shifts have indeed occurred in the composition of the leftist vote in the period 1965-1999. In the conclusion, these results will be used to identify the problems in the left’s electoral strategy and prescribe new solutions that the left may be able to utilize.

As a sort of sideshow to the mainstream trend of leftist politics in Turkey, the extra-parliamentary groups will be examined. These will consist of three groups: “radical” leftist parties (both legal and illegal), leftist militant groups, and labor unions. Despite their limited membership, the first two groups had a marked impact on the

political landscape, affecting the political discourse and the train of events from outside the normal channels. The story of the unions will be one mainly of effects that could have been, but were not. The relation between the “radical” groups, mainstream political parties, and the labor unions will also be discussed.

The historical and electoral trends of the left in Turkey will lead into a final discussion of the position of the left in the present time. An account will be made for the question of the causes and effects of the left’s situation. Several hypotheses that spring from both the historical and electoral examinations will be scrutinized. The ideas of conventional wisdom will also be examined, to see what weight they have in the practical world. From this scrutiny will emerge a portrait of what the left in Turkey may do to overcome its inadequacies in the present and the future.

Theory: Can we talk about the left?

Political rhetoric is the builder and destructor of nations. With a powerful speech, with the mention of a political theme, politicians have caused peoples to go to war, rise up against their rulers, and broaden human achievement. Speech takes the surreal visions of the mind and puts them into a digestible form, conveying ideas, stirring emotions, and inciting action. Speech is the codified communication of minds, words the framework under which this communication operates. Politics is a great user (and abuser) of this communication. Politics stretches the bounds of language, using it in its utmost sense to define the boundaries under which people live, for better or for worse. But despite (or perhaps because of) this power, politicians have a bad reputation when it comes to language. They are known to twist words, to lull their audiences with placating themes that hide the true impetus for actions. It is important for this study to be able to break the code of political language, to be able to use political terms in a

useful manner. This section will explore the value of the political terms to be used in this study, and will also define how those terms will be used.

~ The most commonly used and abused language in politics is that of the political spectrum. This basic idea is usually taught in Political Science 101 courses, where the basic ideas of left, right, center, radical, and reactionary are introduced and subsequently taken for granted. If we are to truly understand what the “left” in Turkish politics in particular means, however, the very tool of the political spectrum must be seen as useful, and the term “left” honed down to a concept that can be utilized. The five labels of the political spectrum are some of the most used words in politics, and deserve a very fine-toothed examination. More than the labels themselves, the ideological tool that is the political spectrum is often taken for granted in the discipline of political studies. A magazine article will call US President Bill Clinton a member of a “center-left party”. A prestigious journal will dub the nationalist parties in Turkey “reactionary”. A television journalist will cite the “progressive” government of the new Italian Prime Minister. Are these citations adhering to the same standard? Politicians and ideas are judged on the perception of where they are and where the general will is on the political spectrum, therefore it is our task to place that tool in a useable context.

The first task of analyzing the political spectrum is to look at its origins. The idea of a political spectrum was born in 1789. As the French Estates General “met in joint session in 1789, the nobility sat on the King’s right and the representatives of the Tiers Etat (the Third Estate, i.e. the Commoners) sat on his left.” (Sparkes 1994: 227) Therefore, those who sat on the right were associated with traditional politics, preservation of the monarchy, and conservatism; with those who were on the left

associated with change, social mobility, and equality. This is all well and good, a perfect little duality that is easy to comprehend and easy to apply.

Or is it? Subsequent historical circumstances and the development of the spectrum as a political idea greatly clouded the distinctions that were made in its inception. Before looking at these subsequent circumstances, however, it is important to look at the state of the political spectrum and its fractious nature inherent even in its birth. At the first, it may be argued that the left side of the spectrum was at a distinct disadvantage etymologically. A cursory glance at the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) will show that the left lacks credibility from the start. Aside from the narrow political definition of the French Estates General, “left” also means “weak, worthless” and even “a mean, worthless person”, with citations that go back to 1377 to back up these claims. (OED Vol. VI 1933: 179) Other phrases associated with the left include “left field”, meaning “crazy or unconventional” as it is the “less favoured” side of the field for right-handed batters in baseball, and even “left-handed”, said to mean “bastard”. (Holder 1995: 218)

As if this were not enough, the label of “left” is considerably worse off when one considers the traditional meaning of “right”. The OED defines “right” as “that which is morally just or due” and “consonant with fact, correctness”. (OED Vol VIII 1933: 669-670) In politics, having these terms attached to one’s label could be considered highly profitable. However, the right does not get off so easily. The phrase “right wing”, originally a misapplication of military flanking strategies to political language, is also interpreted to mean “chauvinist and totalitarian”. (OED Vol VIII 1933: 669-670, Holder 1995: 314) Bullock and Stallybrass remark that “in general after World War II, the right wing label became more a term of opprobrium than the left-wing label (although ‘leftie’, like ‘commie’ is offensive by intention.)” (Bullock and Stallybrass,

eds. 1977: 545) It is therefore quite safe to say that the labels with which the political spectrum deals are even at the outset laden with historical and linguistic baggage.

However, this is not the end of the discussion, in fact, it is only the beginning. To the labels “left” and “right” are added the even more ambiguous “center”, “radical” and “reactionary”. The label of “center” is perhaps the slipperiest of the remaining three. The linguistic and political dictionaries are divided as to whether the center was part of the Estates General or not. The OED claims it is so, others (Bullock and Stallybrass, Holder) do not mention it explicitly whereas the origins of left and right are spelled out. The center as a political phrase initially is defined as “a point towards which things tend, move, or are attracted.” (OED Vol II 1933: 223) It is also supposed to be the place where the most political support is located, “to seize the middle ground is to be well on the way to winning the next election.” (Sparkes 1994: 231) The center is the “virtue between two extremes” of Aristotle, the peaceful “middle way” of Buddha, a moderate path that most can agree upon.

However, the center also has its political liabilities to contend with. The center is “scorned by the doctrinaire and idealist, and more concerned with finding compromises that will enable government to be carried on than with the pursuit of ideas to their logical conclusions.” (Bullock and Stallybrass 1977: 93) It can also be “dull, dreary, lacking in vision”, or even “hopelessly unfashionable”. (Sparkes 1994: 231) Robert Reich adds that “visionary leaders...have always understood that the ‘center’ is a fictitious place, lying somewhere south of thoughtless adherence to the truth.” (Reich 1997: 203) Added to all these preconceptions about the term, its practical application is dubious at best. Just where does the center begin? Can one reach a true “center”? Even more difficult is the question of hybrid terms such as “center-left” and “center-

right”. In terms of this study, the term “center” will be used as “closer to the other side of the spectrum” in terms of rhetoric and action.

The term “radical” is also a difficult term to pin down. Modern use in terms of the political spectrum has confined it to the left side, to the most extreme leftists, as it were. The word “radical” has its root in the Latin word “radix”, meaning “root”. (Sparkes 1994: 213) “Radicals”, therefore, are in favor of the most fundamental type of change. “Radicalism” can be defined as “a tendency to press political views and actions towards an extreme.” (Bullock and Stallybrass eds. 1977: 522) This definition, however, seems to preclude the application of the label “radical” solely to the “left” side of the spectrum. Can not those on the “right” side of the spectrum also favor extremes? The OED seems to dissent on this point. Its definition of “radical” states “one who holds the most advanced views of political reform on democratic lines, and thus belongs to the extreme section of the liberal [i.e. “left”] party.” (OED Vol. VIII 1933: 100) This further confuses the matter, for now the term of “radical” is indeed confined to one point on the spectrum, and may not be applied potentially anywhere on it: it seems to be restricted to democratic regimes. (There is even a term “the radical center”, which will not be pursued as it seems oxymoronic, but is worth noting.) The idea of radicalism will be returned to, but for now it may be better to move on to the final term, which may or may not clarify the situation.

“Reactionary” is the final term of the political spectrum, and is akin to “radical” in many ways. However, it is not so bound up in the problems of application.

“Reactionary” is a label that is consistently applied to those on the extreme right of the political spectrum. By definition (though oddly enough, the OED does not list “reactionary”), it is one who is “bent upon blocking change and annulling reforms already achieved.” (Bullock and Stallybrass eds 1977: 526) It is the opposite of a

“progressive”. Sparkes has also added those who have a “prejudice of change in general”, “defense of established, privileged injustice”, or “support for a change which would establish privileged injustice.” (Sparkes 1994: 207) This may even be the most clear of the labels, as most of the literature seems to agree to a fairly specific degree as to the connotation and uses of the term.

As we have already seen, however, even without a historical context, the political spectrum is loaded with ambiguity and disagreement. When the historical layer is added, this complexity will become even more apparent. The original left-right dichotomy of the French Estates General translated over to other “continental legislatures”, where it quickly became part of the accepted political language (OED Vol VIII 1933: 671). To this was added at some point center, radical, and reactionary. Through the nineteenth century, the spectrum seemed to ingrain itself, not facing many challenges or ideological shifts. Then came the twentieth century. Bullock and Stallybrass mention that after World War I the traditional left (defenders of change) and the traditional right (defenders of tradition) were muddled by several trends. Tradition itself, based on the ideas of the ancients and transmitted throughout the ages, was discredited, leaving those on both sides of the “aisle” to re-think their view of the past and its ideas. Internationalism, which was virtually unknown in the sense of global co-operation before World War I, was introduced, dividing people into “internationalists” and “isolationists”, some of each mixed in with those in the “left” and “right” columns. Finally, revolution in the social and political sphere created new classifications and labels that would fundamentally alter the spectrum, especially the left side. (Bullock and Stallybrass eds 1977: 343)

The international movement of communism, and especially the October revolution that set up the Soviet Union, had a huge impact on the idea of the political spectrum.

Suddenly, the labels “socialist” and “communist” demanded to be classified in the traditional tools of the trade of politics, a demand that caused a shake-up in the way politics was viewed. The left side of the spectrum was almost entirely liquidated in order to make room for the new occupants. Leftist “radicals” were no longer those who favored change “on democratic lines”, but came to be associated with those who were part of a specific political movement, communism. (OED Vol. VIII 1933: 99) Those who were closer to the elusive “center” were called “socialists”, and favored either a gradual change to a dictatorship of the proletariat or the democratic evolution to the people owning the means of production. The idea of the right, as well, was changed to mean “anti-communist”, or those who are firmly committed to “liberal democracy”. (This liberal should not be confused with the American term “liberal”, which since Franklin Roosevelt’s time has meant those on the left side of the spectrum.) The spectrum had to make room for these new ideas and movements that were not in existence at the time of the concept’s inception. (Bullock and Stallybrass eds 1977: 343) These were not the only changes in store, however.

After the Second World War, things got even more complicated. Political rhetoric had been quick to adopt the communist and socialist labels into its repertoire, but the political actors were not quite as certain. During and after the McCarthy era in the United States, politicians on the left became unhappy with their blanket portrayal as adherents of a narrow political movement. Many sought to avoid it altogether. Hence the birth of the phrase “new left”, which heralded the insistence of the western left wing to their own principles of social activism within the context of democracy. To this was added “new right”, in which a new generation of right-wingers unbound by the problems and ideas of their predecessors, redefined themselves as everything from

nationalists to laissez-faire economists. (Bullock and Stallybrass eds. 1977: 545, Sparkes 1994: 228)

Within the east, where Communism was the dominant ideology, separate conceptions of left and right emerged as well. Those who followed the official Communist rhetoric and party plans were called “progressives”, or leftists. Those who were against that rhetoric were “reactionaries” and “conservatives”, or rightists. Unfortunately, these terms in the Communist countries degenerated to mean incredibly different things than they did in the west. When the traditional Communist mode of governance through adherence to the party line took the form of the party looking westward, the labels switched, so that those who followed the old ways were on the right and those who looked westward were on the left. The situation was such that by the time of Gorbachev, “an old-style Stalinist is an extreme Right-winger and admirers of Lady Thatcher and Milton Friedman are on the far Left.” (Sparkes 1994: 227)

To this is now added the fall of Communism as a dominant ideology in the world, although there are some states (China, Cuba) who still proclaim their states to be Communist in orientation, and official Communist parties still exist in many countries. Many former Communists have merged into the Cold War era western idea of the “new left”. Others have added yet another term to the political spectrum, that of “social democracy”, a quasi-socialist idea that the state should be expanded to equalize conditions, but not on the communist model of state ownership or workers owning the means of production. Both sides of the political spectrum have had to cope with the fall of communism, redefining themselves and readjusting their ideology to fit the times. The political spectrum, a product of these shifting ideologies, has therefore had to adjust itself to the circumstances of those shifts. Today the left-right dichotomy formed originally at the Estates General is cross-cut by ideas such as equality, reform,

economics, ecology, feminism, libertarianism, and other such ideologies that cannot be neatly packaged into a dualistic system of political rhetoric. (Bullock and Stallybrass eds. 1977: 343, Gibbons and Youngman 1996: iii)

After all this review of what the words mean and their historical development, what can we say about the political spectrum today? In general, blanket terms, we cannot say much. This is due to the fact that in every nation, and sometimes in regions within those nations, there has evolved a different idea of a political spectrum. Labels are used and abused in different ways in different countries, precisely because the movements and ideas that were listed above in historical perspective affected different nations in different manners, producing a multiplicity of political spectra that must be viewed in context. The rightist in Great Britain may be a leftist in China. The center-left party in Poland may be a radical Socialist party in Canada. It is therefore difficult to say in general terms what the five terms of the political spectrum mean to the political observer today.

Now that the view of the political spectrum from the point of view of linguistics and political history has been put forth, it must be analyzed. Is the political spectrum a useful tool for modern politics, and more specifically for a study of the Turkish left? It is quite easy to take a deconstructionist view of the political spectrum. The immense amount of historical shifts and realignments, combined with the baggage the idea of a spectrum already came with create a situation that is undoubtedly muddy. At first glance, the political spectrum is easily written off as unusable, and therefore not appropriate for a scholarly study which attempts to categorize and analyze according to political labels.

However, *if* the political spectrum is outdated, *if* it is rendered practically useless by the constant shifts of history, *if* it has become merely a cliché of political language,

then why is it still used? Why does politics still adhere to an outdated mode of discourse? The fact is that if there were not even a slightest bit of utility in the concept of a political spectrum, it would not be used in the world of politics today. In fact, it is precisely *because* the political spectrum is murky in its distinctions, *because* it is laden with the baggage of history, *because* it is a cliché, this is why it is still in use today, and why it can be used as a tool to quantify and judge political movements and actors.

Politics is not a science. There are no hard and fast rules to cling to, only general trends that can be observed and documented. Politicians never claim that anything will definitely happen, because political cause and effect simply never align the way anyone intends. In the same way, politics is called “Political Science” at universities around the world because we would all like to think that there are universal laws of politics out there. Instead, those who study and practice politics have inserted their own political values as “laws”. In the absence of true laws in a scientific sense, all politicians must engage in some degree of deception. They must convince their voters that they, the politicians, in fact know a great deal about the “laws” of politics, and that they will act on them once in office. The only problem with this is that the “laws” of politics these politicians follow are merely their own world views. Conservatives may generally say that the “laws” of politics dictate a laissez-faire liberal state that protects freedoms and defends morality. Those who oppose the conservatives may say that the “laws” of politics require that the state should be a stabilizing, equalizing influence in society.

The political spectrum then has value, not so much for the people to distinguish one set of political values from another, but for the politicians themselves to distinguish their ideas and philosophies from each other. A voter may see a political commercial and not derive any utility from knowing for sure if the candidate is a leftist, because

such a thing as a “pure” leftist simply does not exist, and even if it did exist in empirical terms, the label is so clouded by the past that it would be impossible to use as a basis for judgment. However, the politician who is running derives much utility from calling his opponent a “reactionary”, which attaches the opponent to the vast historical disadvantages listed above. The terms, it may be said, are useful to the degree that they are insulting. It is the subjectivity of the political spectrum that gives it meaning. The Green Party USA may call Bill Clinton a “right-leaning” democrat and gain votes for themselves, while the Democratic Party may call Bill Clinton a “new-left Democrat”, and garner support in that way. Both references are allowed to be true in the political spectrum, because both are labels from a certain point of view. Utility is gained by both parties, which use the deliberate shades of gray inherent in the spectrum to their advantage. From a pessimistic point of view, the political spectrum is the perfect political tool because it maximizes the ideological mileage per deception.

There is therefore a great amount of caution with which any consumer should approach the political spectrum in this light. Buyer beware! When a label is used, the consumer of that label should always ask “from which point of view?” and “in what context?” The speaker of the label and the political/historical time and place may be just as important, if not more so, than the thing the label is attached to. Use of the political spectrum can be beneficial to the consumer in that it can define where the speaker and the spoken-to place themselves in relation to one another. The political spectrum does have utility for the consumer of politics who can place such comments in a context.

Another value that can be attached to the political spectrum because of its subjectivity is its ability to incorporate new ideas into its categorization. Earlier in this century, the political spectrum proved itself a flexible tool when it incorporated

communism into the political discourse. The subsequent incorporation of the reactions to communism, as well as the differences between the Eastern and Western conceptions of these differences, while for some pushing the political spectrum into further obscurity through its multiplicity, also prevented a stagnant model from forming. Those who decry the multiplicity of the political spectrum do have a point. The continual fracture and realignment of the political spectrum carries with it the promise of a flexible model, but also a dangerous subjectivity. However, it may be argued that this danger is inherent in all forms of political thought and action, that whenever a stand is taken for or against a particular issue, this stand will be placed in relation to something else, thereby making politics necessarily a process of relation. One must simply recognize that this relation has its benefits and its disadvantages.

The issue of context also becomes important in terms of political culture. As was mentioned before, a left-wing reformist Communist in the Gorbachev era is a right-wing liberal democrat in Margaret Thatcher's Britain. (Sparkes 1994: 227) There is a national context and a historical context that must be taken into account. Here is where special care must be taken to look at historical labels in particular. There are two layers that must be looked at in this case. First, is the speaker labelling from a modern point of view or the point of view of the time?¹ In congruence with the above analysis, labelling historical events and personages with monikers from the political spectrum are not altogether useless, but rather tell the consumer of the label where the speaker and the person spoken to are in relation to each other. The second piece of context that should always be kept in mind in terms of historical labels is the national/cultural context they are placed in. There are different ideas in each country

and culture that dictate the place of political labels. It is easy to call Ceaucescu's Romanian government "reactionary", but it must be recognized that this comes from a modern, Western, capitalist point of view. Again, the label says just as much about the one who delivers it as it does about its object.

The political spectrum is flawed, but from its flaws it derives its usefulness as a tool of modern politics. If there were no shades of gray, if the political spectrum was a true binary, there would be no room for movement on it. In short, if the political spectrum was truly a "scientific" scale whereby it could be judged that Mesut Yılmaz scores a 15.486 on the scale and is therefore a right-wing liberal, only then would it cease to be of use to the political world. Politics only deals in shades of gray, there can be no black and white. The glory of politics is its subjectivity; nobody is always right and nobody is always wrong. The labels that politics uses are merely a manifestation of this principle, to expect a measure of concreteness is to expect the impossible.

In the light of all this talk, how can we, as consumers of politics, use the political spectrum? The question must be asked, because even if we tend to despise the political spectrum and its false categorization, we are forced to make use of it in our everyday lives. To appreciate the political spectrum, one must revel in its subjectivity. Ask: who is the labeler, and who is the label being attached to? The answer will not show who is right, but merely create a distance between the two subjects. It is this distance that is useful. The consumer of political rhetoric must take the distance as it comes, and apply it to the historical, cultural, and political context it arrives in. It must be stressed that the conclusion one comes to about the labels of the political spectrum are never "right" per se, they only serve to position the values of political actors in the

¹ Labels from the political spectrum directed at the pre-1789 period should be viewed with particular suspicion—Sparkes calls them "at best analogical, at worst (and more likely) tommyrot." (Sparkes

mind of the consumer. From this, the consumer may act in one way or another, or simply decide not to act at all. Each option has a political side.

The ultimate usefulness of the political spectrum, then, is in this decision. Its mere use establishes ideology, but the action or inaction that is derived from that initial use is where the political spectrum bears fruit. Political labels are subjective, but their use lies in the objective action/inaction that they produce. This is why politics thrives on the subjective, because only through subjective feelings, emotions, and even the historical baggage that is attached to political speech will people act. The political spectrum has use because it creates a subjective distance that causes people to create or not to create, to affect their political world. This is one of the main goals of politics, that people will positively affect their world, and one of the purposes of political theory, that words and ideas will be translated into action. The political spectrum is only the first step in this process of political realization.

Practice: A Working Definition of the Left in Turkey

The political spectrum can be seen, then, as a useful tool for the study of politics. Now application must be made to the primary subject of this study, the Turkish left. Who will be counted among the left in this study? In Turkey, as in many Western countries, politicians on the reputed left have made similar claims about themselves. These claims will be used to define the parties and institutions to be studied here. In general, parties and institutions on the left are usually attached to labels such as social-democratic, socialist, communist, and/or labor. Their platforms are generally associated with an equalizing redistribution of income, land reform, empowerment of workers through banning of lockouts and legalizing of strikes, state planning of the

economy/nationalization, and state support of culture and art. These categories will be used to define who the “left” will be in this study.

In the context of Turkey in the republican era (1923-present), there are several parties that will be placed on the left side of the spectrum. These will be defined from the present backwards, for reasons that will become apparent when the first republic (1923-1960) is analysed. In the period 1980 to the present, there is a fairly clear line between the leftist parties and the rightist ones. Immediately following the opening of political life after the coup, the Populist Party (Halkçı Partisi, HP) was formed under the leadership of Necdet Calp. The HP emphasized a social-democratic line and a “mixed economy”, contrary to the line posed by Anavatan (ANAP) founder Turgut Özal, seen by most as on the right side of the spectrum because of its support of a free-market economic view. (McFadden 1985: 77) While its rhetoric was largely influenced by the military, it can be seen that the HP is a social-democratic party, and therefore will be defined as part of the left.

Though not allowed to compete in the 1983 elections, the Social Democratic Party (Sosyal Demokratik Partisi, SODEP) was founded in at the same time as the HP and later merged with it to become the Social Democratic Populist Party (Sosyaldemokrat Halkçı Partisi, SHP). The SHP and SODEP before it supported state planning of the economy and state-led achievement of social justice, a platform similar to that of the HP. (Mango in Heper and Landau, eds. 1991, p.174, Dodd 1990: 117) In 1991, a faction of the SHP under the leadership of Deniz Baykal broke away to form the Republican People’s Party (CHP). Several parliamentarians from the SHP followed. The newly formed party advocated a state led economy, autonomy for the state media (“freedom of speech”), and state promotion of the arts and cultural activities. (Tachau 1994: 595) It later adopted many of the social democratic policies of its parent party.

Both of these parties themselves claimed to be social-democratic, and therefore can be included in an analysis of the left as well.

In 1985, the Democratic Left Party (Demokratik Sol Partisi, DSP), was founded by Raşhan Ecevit, wife of former Republican People's Party leader Bülent Ecevit. It incorporated several former leaders of the HP under the behind-the-scenes leadership of Bülent Ecevit, who reemerged on the political scene in 1987. The DSP, while often less committed to the social democracy of the SHP, adhered to a more state-centered political philosophy and generally supported the cause of economic equalization. (Turan in Heper and Evin eds. 1988: 78) Bülent Ecevit, after returning to politics in 1987, advocated the formation of a statist economy and the removal of private interests. Therefore, the DSP is a worthy candidate of a position on the left, even beyond its name.

A problem arises in consideration of two types of parties: "Kurdish" parties and "Alevi" parties. The official policies of these parties have often cross-cut the lines between right and left, or have advocated the position where the party felt it could obtain more votes. Six parties fall into these categories: the Turkish Unity Party (Türkiye Birlik Partisi, TBP) and the Peace Party (Barış Partisi, BP) as Alevi parties, and the Democracy Party (Demokrasi Partisi, DEP), People's Work Party (Halkın Emek Partisi, HEP), and the People's Democracy Party (Halkın Demokrasi Partisi, HADEP) as Kurdish parties. It can be said for all of these parties that they advocated at one time or another social-democratic views or took votes away from other purely leftist parties. The Alevi parties will be discounted from this study because none of those links were ever formalized, and because vote transfer from these parties to the mainstream left was at best minimal. The Kurdish parties will be treated in this study as a quasi-leftist group, with some stake in the left, but not entirely leftist in

orientation. This is due to formalized links with leftist parties and a more marked transfer of support from Kurdish parties to the left and vice versa. Therefore, in the period encompassing 1980 to the present, the mainstream parties of the HP, SHP, DSP, and the CHP will all be categorized as on the left. HEP, DEP, and HADEP will be placed on the left only when their actions merit it.

The period 1965 to 1980 has two main leftist parties. The first of these is, of course, the Republican People's Party (also Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, or CHP – the relation between this and the post-1980 CHP will be discussed later). Until 1972 the CHP was under the leadership of former president İsmet İnönü, and from 1972 to 1980 under the leadership of Bülent Ecevit, who was the secretary-general of the party in the İnönü period. (Heper 1998: 19) While the ideological stance of the CHP in this period is mostly a subject for the historical account, it will suffice to say at this point that the CHP adopted the label “left of center” under the tutelage of Ecevit, and in general promoted a “pronounced, if not doctrinaire, socialism”. (Dodd 1990: 13)

On the side of the communists and socialists, the main party in this period was the Turkish Labor Party (Türk İşçi Partisi, TİP), founded in 1961. (Landau 1974: 122) Throughout the late 60s and the early 70s, TİP ran on a platform of land reform, industrialization, abolishment of the death penalty, and social equality for workers and peasants. (Landau 1974: 126-127) TİP was forcefully dissolved by a military court in 1971. (Landau 1974: 131) Following the 1971 military intervention, several other successors to TİP were formed, all with limited followings and no electoral success. These included the Turkish Socialist Labor Party, the Turkish Workers Party, the Turkish Labor Party (formed under a different banner), and the Socialist Revolutionary Party. These were all professed Socialist or Communist parties, and those that

survived long enough suffered the fate of TİP and were dissolved in 1980. These parties will be covered in a section on the radical left.

Also in the 1960s, a group of CHP deputies broke away to form the Republican Reliance Party (Cumhuriyet Güven Partisi, CGP). This party should not be construed as a leftist party, however. The platform and voting data available on the CGP indicate that it drew support from elements opposed to the CHP's new "left of center" platform, but supportive of its ties to the origins of the Turkish state. (Dodd 1990: 13) The CGP was "Kemalist, not Socialist, but sympathetically inclined to the redress of economic grievances and social reform." (Landau 1974: 17) This seems to indicate a closer tie to the left than may have existed, especially in light of the CGP's decision to later move closer to the policies of and even participate in coalitions with the Justice Party. Regarding this information, it will be excluded from the category of the left. This leaves the left in the period 1965-1980 as including solely TİP and the CHP.

These definitions are all well and good for the more recent period of Turkish politics. However, an attempt at classifying parties of the left before the 1960s is an extremely difficult affair. There is no possibility of a cursory analysis producing a definite answer on whether the CHP in the first Turkish republic was on the left or on the right. Such a judgment will only follow from a historical account of the period, including both what the CHP was itself, and what it was not, what was opposed to it. In the next section, the difficult questions of "was Atatürk a leftist?", "was İnönü a leftist?" and, perhaps more importantly "was their CHP leftist?" will be discussed, both to lay the foundation for a further discussion of the Turkish left, and also to discover whether in fact we can speak of a left at all in the first Turkish republic. Following this, the study will turn to an overarching history of the Turkish left in both the historical and electoral dimensions.

CHAPTER TWO

A HISTORY OF THE TURKISH LEFT

THE BACKDROP: 1923-1965 • BUILDING SUPPORT: 1965-1971
"BRIGHT DAYS": 1971-1980 • RECONSTRUCTION: 1980-1991
REDISTRIBUTION: 1991-1999

"Noisy election busses blare out folkly themes to poppy rhythms. The dazzling grins of party leaders ooze off every other billboard while their real selves hop from province to province addressing one open-air meeting after another. Though environmental awareness has reduced their numbers, red and yellow pennants and photos of middle-aged men in jackets and ties flutter plastically in every breeze. The Kurdish party is systematically harassed, but nobody cares. The registration of voters leaves many disturbing questions unanswered, but nobody cares about that either. Every Turkish election is the same. From poll to poll the nation remembers its party colors in the same way as it remembers its favorite football team from weekend to weekend. And yet every campaign is different..."

*-Briefing, April 12, 1999
(Briefing 1999, p. 3)*

The Backdrop: 1923-1965

To examine the question of the left in the first Turkish republic (1923-1960) is to intrinsically ask, “were Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and İsmet İnönü leftists?” This is the first question, a basic one, that must be asked before any analysis of the left in Turkey can begin. It is a question that must be asked because so much of Turkish politics, even through three military interventions, goes back to the actions of Atatürk and İnönü and the times they lived in. The very character of Turkey was fashioned by Atatürk, who changed its social habits, and İnönü, who changed its political habits. The answer to the political query that surrounds these two men and their era will go far in answering the question of the left in Turkey, especially as it relates to the Turkish state and political system, which these two men founded.

In a sense, this preliminary examination of the political leanings of Turkey’s founders is biased by the literature that is available. There is, as Zürcher has noted (in his 1991 work) a strong statist bias in Turkish political literature. While the lives and actions of Atatürk and İnönü have not escaped the scrutinizing view of history, the character of that scrutiny is indeed very narrow. The men are often seen as “above politics”, too interested with the grand goals of the nation to take sides in an ideological battle. In a very real sense, this view does have its merits. There is not much in the actions of Atatürk and İnönü that suggests a leaning toward one political ideology or another. However, there is an intrinsic political nature to the decisions that were made by these two men, a character of judgment they used in their everyday lives. This is the route this study will pursue, looking at the actions of Atatürk and İnönü instead of attempting to speculate on their personal political ideals. For in the end, the goal of this chapter is not to prove that Atatürk and İnönü are leftists. The goal of this chapter is to find whether or not the actions of Atatürk and İnönü created

a state that was hostile or conciliatory towards leftists, what the character of the party system was in their time, and whether a true “left” can be found at all in the first Turkish republic.

After the modern Turkish republic was founded on the ashes of the Ottoman Empire in 1923, a document was published by the Grand National Assembly entitled “The Nine Principles” (not to be confused with Atatürk’s “six arrows”, declared later on), which outlined the duties and goals of the new assembly in its national order. This will serve as a starting point for a discussion of the nature of the newly born republic. If the document is looked at in search of an expressed political ideology, that search will be in vain. However, looking at the motives and language in the document does reveal certain clues about the ideological orientation the document was meant to take.

Predictably, the main foci of the nine principles are security. Emerging from a period of occupation and civil war, the nation was bound to hear much about the securing of borders, the expulsion of foreigners, and peace throughout the country. Principle three states that “the most important duty is that of preserving absolute safety and security in the nation.” (Zürcher 1991: 119) In the context of the time and in looking at the generality of the points put forth in the principles, it is impossible to say which were meant as nation building and which were meant as a possible rightist isolationism. The role of the state and of government, however, is significant in this document, and does point to a brand of political ideology.

Principle five deals with the role of the state in educating and providing materially for the new nation. This involves the direct action of the state in reforming and stabilizing the financial system (point three), introducing state spending on agriculture (points four and five), and creating a state-run education system (point eight) (Zürcher

1991: 120). This predominance of the state should not be instantly taken as an endorsement of a state-centered economy, however. Welfare states in history (Germany and Japan, for example) have been created that were not on based on social-democracy or Communism, but on reinforcing the structure and hierarchy in society.¹ There is evidence in the nine principles of a more conservative tendency in these welfare policies. The emphasis is on maintaining order in society, stabilizing the pattern of everyday life. Therefore, while the nine principles do stress the need for state intervention in everyday affairs, the character of that intervention should not be construed as leftist.

After the declaration of the nine principles in 1923, there are three incidents that deserve special mention in the creation of the Turkish political system. The first two are the attempts by Atatürk to set up an opposition in the Grand National Assembly, first in the form of the Progressive Republican Party (1924-1925) and later as the Free Party (1930). The third is the sometimes tragic story of the Turkish Communist Party and other leftist elements in Turkish politics. From the first two experiments it may be learned what the new parties were in fact opposing, what the ideological landscape of the Turkish republic was. An ideology of the state and its leaders may be apparent in what was formed to compete against them.

By 1924, the territories of the fledgling Turkish nation and the rule of its leader were established. The time was ripe, in the eyes of some, for the nation to grow politically. Up to this point, the Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, CHP) had retained the entire parliament in a one-party system.² This one-party system did have its discontents. Throughout the tumultuous period of the embryonic

¹ The work of Gosta Esping-Andersen, The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism, systematically laid out this view, which shows the three "worlds" to be "Conservative" (Germany, Japan), "Liberal" (The United States, the United Kingdom), and "Social Democratic" (Scandinavian states).

² The CHP was also called the "People's Party" (Halk Fırkası).

national assembly, Atatürk had to either appease or silence his critics, who after the establishment of the republic became a larger force. The opposition to Atatürk and İnönü's policies, which were seen as increasingly radical in the post-independence era, started to grow from various factions. The principle of these factions was that of the İstanbul intelligentsia, which represented somewhat more of the established order. Their spokesman became Hüseyin Rauf, a deputy from İstanbul. His faction frequently attempted to block or alter Atatürk and company's program of rapid modernization, westernization, and secularization. It was not against these policies as such, but rather objected to the way reforms were often railroaded through the compliant party machine and the parliament. Kinross states that "Kemal was embarking on a social revolution. [Hüseyin] Rauf and his friends, at this stage, preferred social evolution." (Kinross 1964: 392)

The deputies which were tapped for the new opposition were from two regions. First, "from the conservative east of the country", which was largely rural, and close to the volatile border of the Soviet Union, which was surely a strategic concern at this time. (Zürcher 1991: 58) Atatürk, for such strategic concerns, had "secret discussions" with the deputies likely to join an opposition party, assuring their complicity with the idea of the republic. (Zürcher 1991: 58) The second core group of the new party would come from İstanbul, where the delegates were similarly conservative, although from the experience of the Ottoman regime rather than from a rural landscape. The leader of this new party was Hüseyin Rauf, longtime adherent of the resistance movement. His new party would be called the Progressive Republican Party (Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Partisi, TCP). In reaction to the name, Atatürk's

party, up to this point simply the “People’s Party” added to its name the moniker “republican” also.³

The ideology of the new party was decidedly not anti-republic, but it envisioned a different brand of republic than that of Atatürk, and surely a different way of carrying it out. Zürcher calls it “a party in the Western European liberal mold” and opposed to the CHP’s “radical, centralist, and authoritarian tendencies.” (Zürcher 1998: 176, Cf. Zürcher 1991: 98) This is seen most clearly in the party’s program which states in article nine that “the tasks of the state will be reduced to a minimum”, an idea from the liberal democratic mold. (Zürcher 1991: 139) The TCP generally endorsed “classical liberalism..., popular sovereignty, limitation of state influence, decentralization and free trade, and pleas for gradual improvement instead of radical innovation.” (Zürcher 1991: 108) A further difference between the TCP and the CHP was that the CHP had attempted to position itself as a party of the nation, and without a strict ideological line it was “more centralist and put more faith in the effectiveness of the state to force through reforms.” (Zürcher 1991: 108) The TCP, on the other hand, was dogmatic in its ideology, painting a clear picture of a rightist, liberal-oriented party that advocated a more decentralized system, both in its party and in the nation. (Kinross 1964: 394)

This adherence to a liberal line went together with Atatürk’s increasingly heavy hand in the process. The TCP was formed following the debate on the abolition of the caliphate, where future members of the party expressed disappointment that such a decision was “sprung” on the nation by a singular ruling party. A small corps of supporters resigned from the CHP to join the new party, although that support was

³ In his “great speech” Atatürk states that “if the party founded by Rauf Bey and his comrades had introduced itself under the name of ‘conservative’ a reason might perhaps have been discovered for it. But naturally they could not be justified when they pretended to be more republican and more progressive than we were.” (Atatürk 1985: 717)

timid. By this time Atatürk had in many ways purged some of the potential opposition he may have faced. Nevertheless, the founding of the TCP did have an effect on the way the CHP did business even in the short term. To keep the opposition of the new party to a minimum, Atatürk replaced the sometimes heavy-handed İsmet İnönü with Ali Fethi as Prime Minister for a time.⁴ (Zürcher 1998: 176)

The new party, once it was established, began to heavily criticize the government for its policies, in keeping with the ideas of the TCP party program. This raised eyebrows in the assembly, and caused much concern. At the same time, a Kurdish rebellion began to break out in the southeast portion of the country. Despite its having a portion of its support locked up in this region, and despite its proclamation of decentralized control, the TCP joined the government is endorsing martial law for the region. (Zürcher 1998: 179) In another case of the TCP complying with CHP policies, its deputies also supported the 1925 Abolishment of Tithe Law, which “can be considered one more indication that the TCP was not, as it has been made out to be, a reactionary party in any socio-economic sense, any more than it was...in cultural or constitutional matters.” (Zürcher 1991: 79) Unfortunately for the TCP, the Kurdish problem would simply not disappear, and was increasingly linked to the party in popular and parliamentary opinion. By 1925, the situation in the southeast had continued unabated, and increasingly the TCP was linked in the eyes of the government with the rebellion, however spurious such a link may have been. In the spring of 1925, Prime Minister Fethi asked the TCP to “disband voluntarily” to avert charges of treason. (Zürcher 1998: 179) They refused to do so, and continued with their party’s normal functioning.

⁴ İnönü resigned ostensibly for health reasons, although he admitted later that he was really just doing what Atatürk had ordered.

On the second of March 1925, the tide of parliamentary opinion turned against the TCP. Prime Minister Fethi, installed to appease the opposition, lost a vote of confidence. İnönü quickly filled his shoes, and immediately got to work on stabilizing the southeast and crushing the opposition TCP, all with the knowledge and participation of Atatürk. Only two days after the new Prime Minister took office, the Law on the Maintenance of Order was passed by the parliament. The law requested, in the light of “recent extraordinary circumstances and events”, the power to “persecute and subject quickly the foolhardy ones who are harming and humiliating the innocent masses” through “reactionary and subversive actions.” (Zürcher 1991: 160) The law allowed two Independence Tribunals, one in Diyarbakır for the southeastern portion of the nation, and one in Ankara to cover the rest of the country. The cabinet was entrusted with its implementation, and wasted little time in doing so. (Zürcher 1991: 160)

The Law on Maintenance of Order was used to shut down many of the nation’s major newspapers, including those that were broadly “conservative, liberal, and Marxist”. The only two papers in the country that were left ended up as *Hakimiyeti Milliye* (National Sovereignty) and *Cumhuriyet* (Republic), Atatürk’s own paper. After this purge of the media, the party system took its turn. On June 3, 1925, the TCP was closed down by the government. In the cabinet decision to dissolve the party, it is stated that the main reason for the TCP’s demise is its use of “the principle of respect for religious opinions and beliefs, included in the party’s program, as a means to deceive public opinion and to stimulate reactionary incitement.” (Zürcher 1991: 161) Kinross counters this claim by saying that the TCP was actually quite careful about who it admitted to the party, and that “had it chosen to admit the more conservative deputies to membership, it might have obtained on occasion a majority.

But it did not, despite the accusations of its enemies, care to be linked with reactionary forces or to create a serious split in the assembly.” (Kinross 1964: 394) For the combination of the unwillingness on the part of the CHP to allow a viable opposition and the circumstances of the rebellion in the southeast, the TCP was wiped out of existence.

This does not mean that it did not have effects, however. The memory of the TCP era lived large in Turkish politics throughout the Atatürk period and even after. Zürcher has put forth a theory on the subject with which I am inclined to agree. Most view Atatürk’s gargantuan “great speech” in 1927 as a simple history of the republic’s founding. However, Zürcher states that it is a “vindication of the purges of 1925-6 and criticism of the former leaders of the TCP...In his attempt to disgrace his former colleagues, he presents them throughout as doubters, incompetents, and traitors.” (Zürcher 1998: 183) This is a very valid idea, and can be substantiated through a reading of the speech (“Nutuk”) itself.

After the accounts of the independence struggle, the subject of the speech turns to the TCP, its founders, and its motives. Atatürk questions, “could it be that the alleged republicans were trying from the very beginning to discredit the republic and depreciate its value?” (Atatürk 1985: 659) On the subject of the party’s founding and motives, Atatürk puts words in the mouth of his opponents to brand them as “reactionary”, stating that “Rauf Bey wants to say that the most appropriate form of government is the one that existed before the republic.” (Atatürk 1985: 663) He also shows that “the TCP has been the work emanating from the brains of traitors. This party became the refuge and the point of support for reactionary and rebellious elements.” (Atatürk 1985: 718) Finally, at the peak of his tirade against opponents of the regime, Atatürk defends the Law on Maintenance of Order by saying “the

government and the committee found themselves forced to take extraordinary measures...The result was, of course, the success of the republic. The insurgents were destroyed.” (Atatürk 1985: 720) As a final insult, the TCP is also blamed for planning the 1926 attempt on Atatürk’s life in İzmir.

After the experiment of the TCP was swept away, the republic went through an enormous period of social change, led by the now firmly in control CHP and Atatürk, who held undisputed power. The abolishment of the fez, the reform of women’s dress, the abolishment of the caliphate, the reform of the alphabet, all these reforms were promulgated at Atatürk’s behest in the period following the Law on the Maintenance of Order. Arguably, none of these laws could have come into place with an opposition. They were so socially, culturally, and even politically radical, so realigning of political and social forces, that only the strength of a true leader could have carried them through. However, despite the complete change that took place in Turkish society through these reforms, there was one part of the Turkish nation that was very non-Western, and that remained the political system.

The episode of the TCP had proved that creating a Western political system required a heavy hand and patience. Atatürk was consistently proven to have the first, and rarely proven to have the second. This was to be shown again. In 1930, the time seemed right again to Atatürk to attempt another opposition experiment. Many of the elements that had been truly hostile to his rule, the former supporters of the TCP, had been purged by this time. What was left was a group that, while surely not completely uniform in its approach to the world, remained staunchly loyal to Atatürk, his reforms, and his style of rule. Any opposition picked from this group would attack the status quo with kid gloves. The opposition would not be simply allowed to exist as before. This time, Atatürk himself would guide the new party into the system

he desired to create. The genesis of the party would be “not independent, as Rauf’s had been, but under his [Atatürk’s] indirect control.” (Kinross 1964: 450)

Atatürk chose the former Prime Minister Ali Fethi Bey to form the new faction, which the chosen one was at first unwilling to do. The fate of the TCP still hung in the air even five years later, and by now the character of Atatürk’s rule was apparent. If the party overstepped its bounds, the consequences would be severe and swift in coming. However, Fethi was wooed by Atatürk’s promises that this time would be different. Since the founding of a party had the direct support of Atatürk himself, Fethi assumed that it would not be subject to the same sorts of pressures the TCP had been.⁵ Atatürk also promised assembly seats to Fethi Bey as an enticement, something the TCP had been unable to do en masse in its genesis. (Kinross 1964: 451) The conversion was promised to be smooth. Fethi accepted Atatürk’s offer, and the Free Party was born.

In many ways the Free Party of 1930 was ideologically identical to that of the Progressive Republican Party five years earlier, and Frey notes that “there is much in the program of the party that heralds the Democratic party’s propaganda appeal between 1946 and 1950.” (Frey 1965: 340) Fethi Bey “believed profoundly in the principles of a free economy, disapproved of İsmet’s rigid statist methods, and had strong views of his own as to the causes of the present economic crisis.” (Kinross 1964: 451) The party was to be based upon a liberal model, which appealed to Atatürk’s Westernist sensibilities but went against some of his policies that favored state intervention. The new party was to favor “giving scope to private enterprise while leaving certain spheres to the state.” (Kinross 1964: 452) Weiker has put forth eight principles that were the basis of the Free Party’s platform. These seem to

⁵ And of course, this time Atatürk’s sister Makbule was allowed to join the Free Party.

indicate that while the new party would operate strictly within the bounds of the Kemalist state, it would pursue a loosening of the radical reforms already taken and a slowdown in the general pace of future reforms.

Republicanism was the first tenet of the Free Party's program. This squarely aligned the party with Atatürk's nationalism and the flavor of the governments of the era. Liberalism, the second principle, was not explicitly part of the Kemalist state from the beginning. There was, ever since the nine principles had been declared, a rather dominant role for the state to play in the economy and society. The *laissez faire* attitude of a more liberal group would serve to moderate this, to promote the development of a society that was self-sufficient from the grip of the state. Third, and more directly contrary to Atatürk's movements, was the support for the abolition of state monopolies. The most significant of these was the banking monopoly, which had created sector banks that maintained a tight grip on investment and capital in the country. This may also be seen as an anti-Communist stand, although it will be stated later that Atatürk himself was fervently anti-Communist.

Fourth, support for direct elections to the assembly was a predictable move for an opposition party emerging from a one-party state, but nevertheless essential for its survival. This was also a stand against the center-oriented running of the CHP under Atatürk, which was characterized by all lines of authority running through the party leader. The fifth principle of the Free Party was the "free exchange of ideas", meaning an open discourse in the nation's politics and society. Again, this is a predictable stand for a new opposition party, but it indicates that the party would push for a more open system, one that could benefit either party in the end. The sixth and seventh tenets of the Free Party were directed towards foreign policy, namely advocacy for closer ties to the League of Nations and to Turkey's Balkan neighbors.

These can be seen as mirroring Atatürk's ideas to a point, but promoting internationalism as opposed to the sort of isolation that Atatürk's policies often promoted. (Weiker in Heper and Landau eds. 1991: 86)

Against the trend the TCP had established in 1924, and surely against both Fethi Bey and Atatürk's presuppositions, the Free Party was the recipient of massive support from the populace. Resistance to Atatürk's reforms, desire for a change, and general discontent had produced a latent oppositional element in society, an element that was simply waiting for an organized party to come along. Fethi Bey toured the country and received hearty support. In a speech in İzmir, where the TCP was once a political force, Fethi Bey tipped his hat to the crowd in greeting. The assembled masses, thinking the tip of his hat was a rejection of Atatürk's headgear reform, threw their hats onto the stage in agreement. (Kinross 1964: 451) Similar scenes were repeated around the country, especially in İstanbul, where the popularity of Atatürk, who had moved the capital and disbanded the Ottoman Empire, had never been particularly high. Support for the Free Party was nearly instantaneous.

Indeed, this support was so rapid in coming that the newly formed party was ill prepared to handle it. People joined the party in droves, so fast that the leaders of the party were not able to adequately screen the applications. As a consequence of this, those who signed up for party membership were not necessarily in concert with its party program. The Free Party local organizations were "rallying points for a mixed collection of extremists and malcontents", an open door for those who were not allowed a political voice in Atatürk's CHP. (Kinross 1964: 454) This quote is an eerie reflection of the statement in the Law on Maintenance of Order five years earlier, that had accused the TCP of attracting "foolhardy ones who are harming and humiliating the innocent masses, through...reactionary and subversive actions and

initiatives.” (Zürcher 1991: 160) The nearly rabid support for the Free Party found in the streets was not followed, however, in the parliament, where deputies had a clearer head about the direction of an opposition party. This does not mean that there was not support, just that those who supported the opposition were hesitant to join it in light of its founding principles, popular sentiment, and past experience.

The membership of the party soon became a cause of some concern. Along with the “extremists and malcontents” the Free Party attracted, it also became “the vehicle for counter-revolutionaries” of all sorts, from islamists to communists to Kurdish separatists. (Kinross 1964: 454, Weiker in Heper and Landau eds. 1991: 88) The massive support it received gradually bolstered its position in the parliament, where it became increasingly defiant. In the elections of October 30, 1930, the Free Party won 30 of 512 local councils, much to everyone’s surprise. Bolstered by the victory, “in an assembly debate directly after the elections, Fethi accused the governing party of large-scale irregularities and electoral fraud.” (Zürcher 1998: 187) The eyes of Atatürk, which had once looked upon the Free Party as his own creation destined for glory, now saw a party that had taken itself out of his grip. The party had gone the way of the TCP. The warning signs had come in abundance, and their message to the father of the nation was clear: the experiment in pluralism would, once again, have to be quashed.

Unlike 1925, when the Law for the Maintenance of Order had been used to persecute the TCP into forceful dissolution by the state security courts, the dissolution of the Free Party was done in a much more behind the scenes manner. Fethi Bey once again met with Atatürk, who issued the order for the Free Party to close down. Atatürk had betrayed Fethi’s trust in a way, not standing by his assurances of neutrality, proving once again that “he was firmly and explicitly linked to the CHP.”

(Zürcher 1991: 115) Fethi Bey, who had been a reluctant partner all along, despite increasing vehemence in parliament, knew that the cards were stacked against him. The Free Party was dissolved by Fethi Bey himself in 1930, the same year it had been formed.

This brief experiment in political opposition was dissolved for many reasons, as seen in the literature on the subject. Weiker places the majority of the blame for the Free Party's collapse on its ties to dissident groups, which had stamped the character of the party as not only anti-CHP, but also anti-republic. (Weiker in Heper and Landau eds. 1991: 88) No party that was anti-republic would be allowed to survive. To this cardinal reason, Kinross adds first of all that Fethi Bey was uncharismatic and that he simply did not have enough flair (especially in light of the flair of Atatürk) to conduct a political party. He was a back bencher forced into the limelight. The lack of adequate support in the assembly, crucial to the party's ability to influence on policy, was cited as another reason for the Free Party's decline. To all this must be added Fethi's speech after the elections, which most likely put the stamp on the party's fate.

Further, the system itself was not prepared for another experiment. The party was simply declared, not introduced gradually over a period of years. The lack of a grassroots organization caused the dominant political forces to be surprised by the Free Party's sudden popularity. The local organization of the party was faulty, allowing in malcontents from all sectors and giving them a political voice, a seemingly "disloyal" opposition. Perhaps a final reason for the Free Party's demise was, according to Kinross, that the Turkish polity was "retarded...by centuries of autocratic rule." (Kinross 1964: 454) It will suffice to say at this point that the political culture of the Turkish nation is a significant factor in political choice.

As the TCP resulted two years later in the “great speech”, the experience of the Free Party in 1930 led to the proclamation of the “six arrows” of Kemalism a short time later. This is the first quasi-programmatic statement that the CHP had released since the nine principles, and outlines an ideology of the Turkish state. The six arrows of nationalism, reformism (also called revolutionism), secularism, étatism, populism, and republicanism are still a large part of the Turkish state today. Can these arrows be called “leftist”, though? The most obvious target for such a claim would be the arrow of “reformism” or “revolutionism”. This was not understood in the light of Communism, however. This revolution was to be taken against the Ottoman state, not against a larger force such as capitalism. The reforms envisioned were mainly societal, not governmental. Indeed, the scope of governmental “reforms” were the most minimal legacy of the CHP. Shaw and Shaw have suggested that the revolution or reform being suggested is intrinsic on the arrow of nationalism, that the two are meant to go together. (Shaw and Shaw 1977: 376, 384)

What, it may be asked, is the point of looking at right-wing opposition when the study is concerned with the left? The experience of the TCP and Free Party have been outlined here for two reasons. The first reason for depicting this period is that it set several crucial precedents for the management of the Turkish nation in the future. Opposition has always been a problem in the three Turkish republics, mainly because of the trends set in motion during Atatürk’s time. These problems came from both sides. The government, for its part, was unwilling to accord the opposition room to maneuver, often not seeing the advantages of an opposition at all.⁶ The opposition is not blameless, however. It was often reluctant to narrow its base of support in the name of stability. Seeking total (and often instant) victory over the government, it

⁶ İnönü was heard to remark to the American Ambassador after the TCP incident: “opposition in this country means rebellion.” (Kinross 1964: 402)

was inclined to seek radical means. One of the most telling statements about the opposition in Turkey was made after the 1960 coup: “neither the Democrats nor the Republicans really understood how to oppose responsibly or accept opposition fairly.” (Shaw and Shaw 1977: 410) This statement can easily be applied to the Turkish system in all its forms.

Second, it may be maintained that since opposition to the CHP came from the right side of the spectrum, the CHP was itself a leftist party. The historical account, however, does not substantiate such a claim. The opposition parties were closed down not because of their rightist tendencies, but for their opposition to the often authoritarian powers of the CHP and Atatürk himself. The CHP was not a leftist party, it was a statist party, built to maintain the prominence of the state in the leadership of the nation. This can be seen in the Law on Maintenance of Order, which sought to protect the state instead of claiming to vanquish the opposition in the name of a leftist ideal. The best way to view this statist orientation, however, is through the eyes of the “true leftists” of the period, who were suppressed just as much as the rightists were.

Leftist groups were active in Turkey well before the period of the republic. In 1910 the Ottoman Socialist Party formed. Although it was a member of the second Communist International, it ended up being rather unproductive, and was soon closed down. However, some of its members filtered through to successor movements, which would soon have an effect on the new Turkish republic. (Lipovsky 1992: 9) During the Turkish independence struggle, Atatürk convened a national assembly that had many leftist elements in it. These groups were not all communist, but supported “a mixture of islamic, anti-imperialist, corporatist, and socialist ideas.” (Zürcher 1998: 164) They were also a rather strong force, which was “strong enough to have a lot of

its ideas incorporated in the first nationalist constitution, the ‘Law on Fundamental Organization’.” (Zürcher 1991: 21)

The prime mover in this group was the so-called “Green Army” (Yeşil Ordu), which consisted of both armed forces involved in the struggle and a parliamentary faction.⁷ (Zürcher 1998: 164) The parliamentary program of the Green Army stated in its first article that it was founded “to struggle to expel from Asia the imperialist’s conquering politics.” (Şengil 1996: 228) It had marginal links with the Soviet state, and was also associated with Enver Paşa for a time. (Şengil 1996: 164) The real star of the Green Army, however, was its leader, Çerkez Ethem. He was seen as a threat by Atatürk, who was wary of the Green Army’s motives. (Zürcher 1998: 164) Nevertheless, Atatürk supported the Green Army in its beginnings for pragmatic reasons. These were extra guns and soldiers that would lend support to the struggle. The support was short lived, however. When Atatürk judged that he was more firmly placed in his assembly position, Çerkez Ethem was pursued by the nationalist forces, and subsequently defected to the Greek side. With its leader gone, the Green Army was subject to Atatürk’s independence tribunals, which convicted many of its members and allowed Atatürk to disband it in July 1920. (Kinross 1964: 248, Zürcher 1998: 164)

Despite the demise of the Green Army as a viable military force, its strength in the assembly was still measurable. After the Green Army’s dissolution, its parliamentary wing reconstituted as the “People’s Faction” (Halk Zümresi, HZ). Its program stated that it supported the seemingly tamer goal of “unconditionally establishing the people’s rights.” (Şengil 1996: 232) This was still a leftist party of the

⁷ In a strange twist of irony, one of the founding members of the Green Army is listed as a “Celâl Bayar”. Historians have attempted to find out if this is the same person who was the third Turkish President, with mixed results. Şengil concludes that it is in fact not the same one, but leaves the question open for debate.

Communist/Socialist mold, however, as the program also acknowledged that capitalists and imperialists had placed “oppressive suffering” upon the nation. (Şengil 1996: 232) The program further stated that “the capitalist and imperialist experiment has produced interference, the accumulation of foreign debt, a privileged status for foreigners, a bill for the innocent people, and a rightless state of troubling tyranny.” (Tunçay 1991: 165) Despite all this, Atatürk’s initial reaction to the HZ was favorable. In a telegram to Ali Fuat Paşa, he said that “in the assembly, the Halk Zümresi has come out as friendly.” However, this confidence seems to arise from Atatürk’s thought that the HZ carried the seeds of its own destruction. He remarked “the HZ will dissolve itself...it will secretly play with starting a Green Army type organization. I warned them about this with arrests.” (Şengil 1996: 192)

Indeed, Atatürk was wary of the opposition faction, and attempted to subvert it through the old military tactic of outflanking. Instead of banning the party outright, Atatürk attempted to split it through encouraging his friend and ally Dr. Şefik Hüsnü to set up another Turkish Communist Party. This “official” Communist Party (often called the “Resmi” TKP) was created with the sole purpose of dividing the HZ (and later the “real” TKP) along ideological lines, and therefore confining it to the periphery where it would be easily dealt with. While the HZ eventually did cease to exist, it was not because of the existence of the Turkish Communist Party of Atatürk’s creation. Atatürk’s Communist Party applied for membership in the Comintern and was actually turned down for lack of legitimacy. (Gökay 1993: 223) Strangely enough, the programs of the “real” TKP and the “Resmi” TKP are not that different. (Tunçay 1991, p . 217-219) What was different was the rhetoric produced by the Resmi TKP. A leader said of Atatürk in a letter: “Mustafa Kemal Paşa, a master of

revolutionary psychology, defended a national form before all these events.” (Tunçay 1991: 227)

The Resmi TKP did not catch on as Atatürk had hoped. Atatürk’s party never attracted the doctrinaire communists, and therefore had a short life. This is due to the existence of another Communist Party that existed in the form of the “Turkish People’s Socialist Party” (Türkiye Halk İstirakiyun Fırkası, THİF). This party had been formed earlier through the efforts of Mustapha Suphi and others which had once been members of the defunct Ottoman Socialist Party. It started in İstanbul in 1920, and soon became the source of communist activity in the nation. Its publication Emek (“Work”) called for a “world revolution” in line with those proposed at various Communist Internationals. (Tunçay 1991: 397) Its stated purpose was to “struggle for the rights of Anatolian workers and their active participation in the world revolutionary struggle.” (Şen 1998: 46)

The THİF reacted violently to the news of an Atatürk-based pseudo-Communist Party. In a letter, the party leaders stated that “the new ‘official’ Communist Party’s servant-hood is becoming clear...before everything, when we saw an Anatolian parliament and governmental Communist Party freely formed and introduced in the press with a truly revolutionary line, we rejoiced in a truly important movement. But after this name had passed our eyes, we saw that a Union and Progress oligarchy, a ‘clique dictatorship’ was in the making...” (Tunçay 1991: 237) The THİF saw fundamental flaws in the Ankara government, which was in the “terrible situation of taking the palace government” in İstanbul’s place. This government, however, was also full of “old tyrannies and aristocratic administrations, the attempted revival of the old sultanic order.” (Tunçay 1991: 255) The solution of the THİF was a communist revolution to overthrow both types of tyranny. For this, the THİF was closed down

by Atatürk's government. The THİF responded to its closure with a letter to the government in which it stated that "with the official abolishment of the THİF on 12 September [!], you have taken the voice from the throats of workers and peasants. No sirs, no! THİF is an official body. It was legally organized. Its abolishment is not your right." (Tunçay 1991: 453) The wound to the movement proved to not be fatal, however. The THİF later renamed itself the Turkish Communist Party (Türkiye Komünist Partisi, TKP) and emerged as an even more powerful force.⁸

The story of this TKP will be treated briefly in the context of the first republic here, and continued in later historical sections. The TKP was led by Mustafa Suphi, who had been as a prisoner of war in the Soviet Union during and after the first World War. While in the Soviet camp, Suphi was trained in the doctrines and execution of Communism, and returned after the war to Turkey to attempt a turn towards the Communist way.⁹ Kinross characterizes Suphi as "the most dangerous Soviet agent in Turkey." (Kinross 1964: 249) He set up a Communist party that was fairly national in its composition, but nevertheless slightly concentrated in Ankara and İstanbul. The party had its own newspaper, which quickly started to turn out propaganda against the capitalist order of which Atatürk and company were very much a part. Delegates from the TKP attended the Soviet-sponsored "Congress of the Peoples of the East" in Baku, demanding more of a role for Communism in Turkey. This is where they officially set up the party and held its first congress. Suphi stated to this congress that "concerning the Turkish Communist Party's organization memo, there are two parts that are necessary: one is 'enlightenment', the other 'organization'." (Tunçay 1982: 66) In short, the TKP's first goals were educating the people and then organizing them into a revolutionary movement. The ideology of the

⁸ This Turkish Communist Party has also been called the "real TKP" in some of the literature.

party was summed up in its program, which stated that 1) “The worker and laborer classes have become the toll of the oppressive capitalist class”, 2) Workers have fallen under “a class of leeches who do not value work”, 3) The TKP is “populism’s highest form”, and will therefore work for the good of the people. (Tunçay 1982: 142-143) This ideology was manifested in the TKP’s support for land redistribution and the set-up of cooperatives after the goals of the revolution were achieved. (Tunçay 1991: 144)

Enver Paşa, a leading figure in Turkey at the time, was also on the margins of this movement. He had attended several international Communist conferences as the “Turkish delegate”, and has been said to be waiting in the wings should Atatürk and his policies have failed. Atatürk was not blind to these trends. In a telegram, he wrote to Ali Fuat Paşa that “of course, I do not see Communism and Bolshevism’s public opposition as suitable.” (Şengil 1996: 193) There is much evidence that the TKP at this time was a loyal arm of the leadership of the Soviet Union. The TKP had a constant presence in the various Internationals, and received money and other support from the Russians. (Şen 1998: 49) Communist agents had arrived in Turkey as early as the days of the Yeşil Ordu to write propaganda and agitate. (Şen 1998: 54-55)

Suphi was at the core of the Communist movement, meaning that if the Communists were to be dealt with effectively, Suphi would have to be “dealt with” first. In January 1921, Suphi and several important members of the TKP attempted to enter the country by sea from the Soviet Union at Trabzon (a seat of considerable resistance to Atatürk and the revolution). This was instantly seen as a threat by Atatürk and his associates, who knew that a movement in Anatolia could not be far

⁹ It has been noted that many of the future Communist leaders in Eastern Europe (Tito, Rákosi, etc.) were “trained” in the same way, through being prisoners of war in the Soviet Union.

behind. Suphi and the members of the TKP were denied entry into the country, and ordered to return to the Soviet Union. On January 28, they departed on a foggy Black Sea night. They never made it to their destination. There are various reports as to what happened that night, but most agree that the ship was deliberately sunk by another ship that had trailed close behind. This was no accident. As to who ordered the action, who carried it out, these are still subjects of much speculation. Some say that Kasım Kârabekir or Hamîr Bey ordered the attack on Atatürk's suggestion, some say Atatürk ordered it directly, and others say that the government had nothing directly to do with it. (Gökay 1993: 229) There is even a suggestion that Lenin ordered the drowning! (İleri 1994: 203)

Whatever the cause of the dubious ends the founders of the TKP experienced, the death of the most prominent communists in Turkey were perceived as a green light for the liquidation of the remainder of the party. Communists were arrested, party organs and newspapers were closed, and the Union of Turkish Communist Youth was disbanded. (Landau 1974: 97) The TKP was outlawed, and would remain so until 1991. It would continue to exist underground and in an extremely limited fashion.¹⁰ In 1926, some of the first prosecuted under the Law for Maintenance of Order were "thirty-three Socialists and Communists." In the light of past experiments on the left in the pre-republic period, this repression does not seem out of place. What has remained an interesting question, however, is why the Soviet Union did nothing to interfere. Its main agent in the country was drowned, and the Red Army was standing at the borders, which even at this time were not as secure as they could have been, yet the Soviet Union did not choose to intervene or even send a letter of protest to the government. (Gökay 1993: 231)

Relations between the Soviet Union and Atatürk's Turkish republic were instead fairly cordial. In 1925, during the Lausanne Conference, the two nations signed a non-aggression pact. (Kinross 1964: 408) Atatürk wrote in a letter to Lenin that "we believe in the Bolshevik government's war and struggle against all the imperialist governments." (İleri 1994: 102-103) Later in his rule, Atatürk viewed Stalin with much suspicion, but treated him with deference. Neither side seemed willing to contest the status quo. This seems to balance against the brutal repression undertaken against the communists on Turkish soil. Atatürk indeed was quite insightful, knowing that "with fascism arising on one front and Communism on the other, it was important for the Turks to show the world that they wanted neither of them." (Kinross 1964: 457) Atatürk was one of the first to attempt a "third way" in a limited sense.¹¹ "Communism, [Atatürk] maintained, had failed to achieve its aims and promises. Liberalism too was dead. Turkish statism was to be something different from either, leavening state control with a certain element of personal enterprise." (Kinross 1964: 457) The story of Turkish communism in its later (underground) forms will be taken up in a following chapter.

The early republican period is a difficult time to search for a leftist party in Turkey. It has been shown that there was official, sanctioned resistance to both the forces of liberalism in the form of the TCP and the Free Party, but also to the forces of Communism and the left. The CHP was to draw from the governments and experiences of many Western traditions, retaining a centrally controlled one-party state with policies that allowed private enterprise to establish itself. For the left and the right, this meant not having a formal party in the assembly. The CHP during

¹⁰ Tachau notes that "ironically, this is the only party to have survived from the 1920s to the 1990s." (Tachau 1994: 606) We shall see that although the TKP was underground for most of its existence, it did have a marked effect on Turkish politics, especially from the vantage point of the left.

Atatürk's time and after was a party of the nation, not a party of partisan ideology.

This is not to say that the CHP was "above politics" by any means. Instead, the political monopoly of the CHP was so complete that the CHP did not find the need to utilize the tool of ideology. This is easily seen in the context of the early republic, and can also be gleaned from the information about İnönü's time.

After Atatürk's death in 1938, İsmet İnönü, his long time associate, took hold of the CHP and the state. He was proclaimed as "Milli Şef", the "National Chief". In the first seven years of his rule, İnönü's government was involved in the Second World War, attempting to remain neutral in the light of many pressures from all sides. There was a notable experiment in his first few years, however, that would be a forebearer of events to come. In the late 1930s, İnönü set up a small group within the CHP, called the "independent group", to act as an unofficial, "extremely loyal" opposition faction, to give the party a chance to hear contrary views within its own cadre of supporters. (Heper 1998: 189-190) It has been said that this group was meant by İnönü to eventually become a legitimate opposition party. However, the crisis of the war forced the opposition group to be muzzled for the time being. (Heper 1998: 5) During the war, İnönü was criticised for funding a large army that would serve as a deterrent to both sides in the war at the cost of general welfare in the nation. Nevertheless, İnönü saw these measures, criticised as those of a "police state" as necessary in the face of threats from all around. (Heper 1998: 5)

After Turkey survived the war intact, İnönü again gave breathing room to opposition. The CHP was now "split between the conservatives wishing to retain [the CHP's] privileged position as the instrument of modernization and a more liberal group, which felt that further democratization and liberalization were essential."

¹¹ Kinross notes that Atatürk "was no Bolshevik. His opposition to Communism was categoric." (Kinross 1964: 246)

(Shaw and Shaw 1977: 402) 1946 became the first year that parties other than the CHP would be allowed to participate in elections. The decision was announced with barely enough time for the opposition to throw together a campaign, but it managed to do so in a limited fashion. As was the case in 1930, opposition had grown in the intervening years, especially against İnönü's tactics in the war. The Democrat Party (Demokrat Partisi, DP) was formed from the elements of liberalism and moderate conservatism that had been present throughout, first in the form of the TCP, second in the form of the Free Party. The opposition did gain a respectable sixty two seats, a good total for the short time in which it was allowed to campaign.¹² (Heper 1994: 53)

Opposition from the far left, suppressed from the time of Atatürk and before, had a short lived renaissance in 1946. A spate of parties were founded upon the liberalization of election laws in the late 1940s. All, however, were extremely short-lived, based as they were on factional opposition. None participated in elections, and most closed down within a year. Lipovsky calls many of them "pseudo-socialist" parties. (Lipovsky 1992: 10) They had names such as the Social Justice Party (1945), the Turkish Social Democrat Party (1946-1951), the Socialist Party of Turkey (1946, 1950-1952), the Turkish Socialist Workers Party (1946), the Socialist Party of the Workers and Peasants of Turkey (1946), the independent Turkish Socialist Party (1948-1950) and the Fatherland Party (1954). (Landau 1974: 116-120) Despite the fact that some of these parties ceased to exist simply because they were unpopular, many became influential in a short period of time.

Parties such as the Socialist Party of Turkey were seen as enough of a threat to be dragged through endless court cases brought on by the government, which the parties invariably lost. (Landau 1974: 116-120) Many of these cases were brought under the

¹² Unfortunately, the vote percentages and breakdowns by province and district are unavailable (because they were never announced) for this election. 1950 is the first year with electoral data.

umbrella of the “Law of Defense of the Nation”, a 1940 act that was used in the war to suppress such groups, and was kept around afterwards for the same purpose. (Lipovsky 1992: 10) While the splinter parties of the far left were being rounded up, several members of the now underground Turkish Communist Party joined their ranks in prison. The crackdown on the TKP in this period was severe enough to be labeled “McCarthyite” and ended up with a characterization of the TKP as “reduced to a small émigré organization with a foreign radio transmitter.” (Samim 1981: 65) These parties never formed into a wholistic party of the left, but did represent some outcroppings of leftist activity in the late 1940s and early 1950s. They were the forebearers of the Turkish Labor Party (Türkiye İşçi Partisi, TİP) in many respects. Unfortunately, however, they came at a time when communism and socialism were certainly not in fashion in Westernist circles, and were not allowed to participate in as free an environment as the 1961 constitution would soon allow. Indeed, “in the Turkey of the 1940s and 1950s, it was generally unwise for parties and individuals alike to express liberal ideas and defend them – as this made them liable to be labeled ‘leftist’ and ‘subversive’.” (Landau 1974: 121)

In 1950, the DP won a landslide victory with 53.3% of the vote to the CHP’s 39.9%. (Heper 1994: 53) While the margin of victory was significant, it became more significant in light of the electoral system, designed since the 1920s to keep one party in power, which gave the DP 403 seats in parliament to the CHP’s 69. (Heper 1994: 53) The CHP vote was concentrated in the less-developed periphery of the country, where the village-based “people’s houses” had maintained a strict adherence to the party. The vote for the DP, on the other hand, came mainly from the cities, where the population was starting to boom and the need for reform was felt. Another

reason for the DP's dominance in 1950, and even throughout the decade of the 1950s, may also have been due to ideology.

While the DP had organized itself along nearly identical patterns of the TCP and the Free party a generation earlier, the CHP had in many respects remained the same. It did not adjust its ideology on the basis of the DP, but instead chose to remain a party of the state. Throughout the 1950s, this cost it many votes, as the country (especially those in the large cities) saw the DP perform economic sleights of hand, encouraging modernization on a larger scale than the CHP had ever performed. The CHP largely restricted itself in this period to campaigning for a second chamber of parliament, the establishment of a Constitutional Court, and the introduction of a proportional representation system.¹³ (Landau 1974: 15) İnönü, for his part, was the main advocate of a variety of "above-party" politics. After the 1950 landslide, the army secretly offered to overthrow the government and maintain CHP rule, but İnönü refused, placing the needs and will of the country above partisan interests. (Heper 1998: 203) From the beginning, İnönü had gained assurances from DP leaders that it would operate freely under the assumption that it would maintain the village institutes as the bringer of education to peripheral areas, keep a consistent foreign policy, maintain the secular order (which the TCP and Free Party had been accused of undermining), and retain a universal deference to Atatürk and his reforms.¹⁴ (Heper 1998: 185) The DP was given basically a free hand in any other area, which it used to its full advantage.

On the side of the socialists and communists, activity was muted throughout the 1950s, as the government maintained a tight lid on opposition. In 1950, future TİP

¹³ It is interesting to note that while the 1961 constitution was fabricated under the moniker of a statist, non-partisan order, each of these three CHP demands of a decade earlier were enacted.

member Behice Boran set up the “Peacelovers’ Association”, which, while not a political party, was certainly an umbrella organization for communists and socialists of various stripes. The government caught on, however, and the party was closed soon after. Boran and her close associates were arrested, and remained in jail through most of the 1950s. Dr. Hikmet Kıvılcımlı also started the Fatherland Party (Vatan Partisi), but that was also short-lived. In general, the socialist movements were repressed enough that they were unable to make a severe dent in the political landscape. As will be seen in later chapters, the youth organizations were not yet in existence to feed such a movement as well.

While the events of the 1950s and the seemingly inevitable coming of the 1960 coup are not the main purpose of this study, it will be useful for the purposes of the study to point out one vignette from this period. First, in the 1957 elections, the CHP made significant gains. The percentages, as they often do in this period, betray the parliamentary situation. While the CHP only increased its support by six percent of the vote nationally, and while the DP lost around nine percent, the CHP parliamentary group jumped from thirty members to 173. (Heper 1994: 54) The CHP again became a force to be reckoned with. Since the 1954 elections, a group had split off from the DP, calling itself the Freedom Party. The Freedom Party represented a group that was unhappy with the frequent liberties taken against the state by the DP. This faction gained 3.8% of the vote in 1957, and later merged with the party of the state, the CHP. (Heper 1994: 54, Frey 1965: 381) This election victory for the CHP only strengthened the resolve of the DP leaders to keep power in their own hands, however, and resumed their brutality towards the opposition in an even more determined fashion.

¹⁴ All of this talk of neutrality on İnönü’s part is not to undermine his often brutal attacks on the DP towards the end of the 1950s, in which he often “descended” to the level of politics and predicted dire

On May 27, 1960 a group of army members led by Cemal Gürsel toppled the government in a military coup. The leaders of the DP, including the Prime Minister and the President, were arrested. Martial law was extended to the whole of the country, and order was restored. The CHP leadership, unlike the DP organization, remained intact to a great extent after the coup, prompting speculation that İnönü himself had ordered it or at least approved of it. Was the 1960 coup a leftist coup? The evidence does not seem to indicate that it was. First, the membership of the National Unity Council (NUC) was based on a secret organization, where the members did not even know each other's ranks. When their identities were discovered, it was found that their political views (not to mention their ranks) were very broad, and often mutually exclusive. Alpaslan Türkeş, who later became known for his extreme nationalist views, was a member of this group. None had formal relationships with the CHP. Second, İnönü himself did not support the coup. The restoration of order was a necessary action in İnönü's eyes, but the means in which it was taken were undesirable. He stated that he preferred the strategy of "[toppling] a suppressive regime with the power of the nation." (Heper 1998: 210) After the coup had taken place, the members of the NUC often consulted İnönü on the affairs of the nation, but were surprised to find that İnönü rejected many of their policies. He opposed the execution of Menderes and two of his ministers, an action that was soon regretted by the NUC and the nation.¹⁵

In the end, while the 1960 coup was not intentionally leftist in its orientation, it was bound to turn to the CHP for advice, it being the only party that was not entirely discredited. The constituent assembly, set up to establish a new constitution, was

consequences in retaliation for the DP's increasingly authoritarian policies. (Heper 1998: 203)

¹⁵ I find it a hilarious side note to all of this to look at the case of Celâl Bayar. He was sentenced to death in 1961, but that sentence was commuted because of his age. (He was 77 at the time.)

“packed with members of the CHP or its sympathizers.” (Landau 1974: 12) The consequence of this was that the new constitution included many of the items that İnönü and his party had been campaigning for as a party of the state throughout the 1950s. The elections of 1961, however, did not vindicate the CHP or the military regime. The CHP undoubtedly lost votes for its implicit cooperation in the 1960 coup. The new constitution was approved by a mere 61%, and the CHP, while winning a plurality with 36.7% of the vote and 173 seats, was only narrowly ahead of the DP-successor Justice Party (Adalet Partisi, AP), who won 34.8% of the vote and 158 seats. (Heper 1994: 54) (Now President) Gürsel offered İnönü his chance to form a government. Opting for a government of “national unity”, and one that would reflect the still large group of DP adherents, İnönü formed a government with the AP. However, the ideology of the AP, very similar to that of the DP, grated against the statist CHP ideology, and the coalition was short-lived. Still in this period, İnönü and his party did not turn to the left as a solution to their electoral problems. This only came in 1965, with the introduction of Bülent Ecevit’s “left-of-center” (Ortanın Solu) program. This period is the subject of the next section.

After all this evidence concerning the Atatürk-İnönü era in Turkish politics, what can be said about the situation of the left in this period? One thing can be said for certain: *there was no organized, mass party of the left in Turkey from 1923 to 1965.* The CHP remained to a certain extent “above party politics”, concerned more with the national interest than with a mere ideological program. While it had the chance to shape the political discourse by outlining a partisan program, it never opted to do so. Even in the face of opposition, from the TCP to the Free Party to the Democratic Party, all of which were conservative, the CHP did not attach itself to a leftist

Remarkably, after his sentence was commuted, he lived another 27 years, dying in 1987 at the ripe old age of 103! He outlived most of the “younger” plotters of 1960, and even the regime they created.

ideology. It remained a party of the nation, not a party of the left. It only became so after 1965, even then still being identified as the party of the statist elite for years afterwards.

The parties of the far left, from the Green Army and the People's Faction to the Socialist Party of Turkey, were occasionally an ideological force to be reckoned with. They created rumblings in society and attracted support from abroad. However, they were dealt with severely first by the CHP and later by the DP, which used the law and the force delegated to them to crush the far left parties and their organizations. As a consequence, the far left was never able to compete on a truly level plane, never able to establish itself firmly in the Turkish political spectrum. When these parties were allowed to exist, for however short a period, they were certainly not allowed to become mass parties of the left. As for the question posed at the beginning of this chapter as to whether Atatürk and İnönü were leftists, İleri answers the question by saying: "was Mustafa Kemal Paşa a communist? Was he a socialist? I will give the answer: definitively no, the leader of our war for independence was in no period a communist or socialist." (İleri 1994: 24)

As for the character of the system, it seemed not to be biased against the left necessarily, although a good case could be made on the basis of repressions after 1946, it seems instead that the system was biased against opposition in general. This opposition came from the left and the right, and was suppressed in equal fashion. The only difference between the two sides of the political spectrum seems to be how they were organized. The TCP and the Free Party were able to attract a parliamentary group, while the parties of the left seemed to work outside the system. It can be said that the system in Turkey was not biased against the left, but against opposition.

In light of this time, when there was no organized left in Turkey, the events of 1965 and onward must take center stage in the history of the left. As will be seen in the sections to come, after 1965 the left steadily built its support upon a definite strategy, inculcating the population with its ideas and gradually creating a whole political discourse in Turkey. The CHP was not the only one to make this transition. The far left, represented after 1961 by TİP, also emerged as a viable political force in the latter half of the 1960s, when it began to contest elections. It is to this emergence of the “true” left in 1965 that this study will now turn.

Building Support: 1965-1971

This study will now turn to the electoral dimension of the Turkish left in the period 1965 to the present. At the beginning of this era, the liberties and freedoms granted to new institutions under the 1961 constitution were just beginning to take shape as the military faded into the background of the political landscape. In 1965, there were two parties that encompassed the Turkish left—the Turkish Labor Party (Türkiye İşçi Partisi, TİP), and the Republican People’s Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, CHP). The CHP was the party of the republic’s founding, and had recently, in the 1965 party congress, adopted its “left-of center” platform. While this marked a new period in the CHP’s history, in this period, unlike in others, there can still be a rather direct parallel drawn between the CHP of old and the revitalized party. The CHP and its leader İsmet İnönü were not given the task of forming a government after the 1960 military intervention because they were associated with a left that was contradictory to the rightist Menderes-Bayar regime. They were given that task because the CHP, as previously mentioned, was a party of the state, of the nation as a whole. The party was entrusted with creating a national unity along the lines of Kemalism, which it managed to do to a limited degree. However, the forced marriage of the CHP to other

parties with which it did not agree was rather short lived, and this force was repudiated by the electorate in the 1965 elections, in which the Justice Party (Adalet Partisi, AP) emerged with a majority.

TİP was founded in 1961 by a group of socialists that had survived the roundups of the early 1950s. The initial founders were twelve union leaders, significant in the light of other socialist-leaning parties, which had been founded by members of the intelligentsia or members of the TKP. These unionists “did not see Türk-İş’s work [which was officially declared “above party politics”] as useful, their defence of worker’s rights convincing.” (Aybar 1988b, p. 174) The press did not pay much attention to the party’s founding. In fact, “only Vatan [the socialist newspaper] gave this story more room.” (Aybar 1988a, p. 169) However, this party would soon become an influential group. After the short tenure of an initial chair, Mehmet Ali Aybar became the leader of TİP.¹⁶ Upon taking the leadership role, Aybar stated that “we believe that in a short amount of time we can become a strong force.” (Aybar 1988a, p. 210) For nearly the next ten years, Aybar would become the sometimes hated, sometimes adored symbol of the far left in Turkey. TİP, unlike its predecessors, was extremely careful in carving out a niche in the Turkish political system. For the first seven years of its existence, TİP’s charter did not contain the word “socialist”. (Lipovsky 1992, p. 62) In the first few years of activity, its rhetoric was noticeably muted. It did not advocate outright socialist principles, but palatable notions such as “state planning” and “nationalization of industry”. (Lipovsky 1992, p. 14-16)

TİP showed its strength early on in the face of opposition. The labor union Türk-İş, which since its founding had preferred to stay above party politics, attempted to

¹⁶ This initial chair, Avni Erkalın, ran as an independent in 1961, but on the rightist Yeni Türkiye Partisi ticket! (Aren 1993, p. 36)

enter them in 1962. It began to form a political party of its own, which was to be called the “Turkish Worker’s [or Labor] Party” (Türkiye Çalışanlar Partisi, TÇP). The similarity of the name, as well as the similar goals that the TÇP was founded under, made it a thinly veiled rival to TİP. (Aybar 1988a, p. 193) However, the party proved to be still-born. It was never officially founded, the Türk-İş leadership preferring to work through TİP and the CHP to accomplish its goals. (Aybar 1988a, p. 194) TİP had passed its first test.

Just because TİP was allowed to exist, however, does not mean that it was popular. In a 1965 rally in Akhisar, a crowd threw oranges and peppers at Aybar. (Kısalı 1967, p. 104) Behice Boran, a major presence in the party, also reported that TİP members were unceremoniously denied employment and credit. (Lipovsky 1992, p. 13) In light of this and the political situation, for the first few years of the party’s existence, it concentrated on gathering its resources and planning election strategies. It did not compete in the 1961 elections, preferring instead to gather strength and establish party branches in more provinces, preparing for the 1965 elections. Its party program consisted of a wide range of policies, including nationalization of heavy industry, a forty-hour work week, a ban on lock outs, a redistributive land reform, severing of ties with the European Economic Community, and the slowing of urban migration. (Landau 199974, p. 251) These issues were to be tested in the 1965 election, to which this study now turns.

The CHP suffered a great defeat in the 1965 elections, where the AP was confirmed as the true successor to the Democratic Party. This conclusion can be made from the electoral data. The CHP won a total of 28.7% of the vote. This converted into 134 seats in the parliament: 102 from straight election, and 32 from the proportional representation/national remainder system. (Landau 1974, p. 260)

These totals are down from the previous election in 1961, where the CHP won 36.7% of the vote (8% more) and 173 seats. (Heper 1994, p. 54) This is in contrast to the AP, who won 52.9% of the vote, or 240 seats, a gain of 18.1% from 1961. (Heper 1994, p. 54-55) The dominant theory on why the CHP lost so many seats is that they were implicitly involved in the military-sponsored government after the 1960 coup, even if that involvement was a reluctant one. It is also important, however, to look at where the CHP vote came from.

Ergun Özbudun observed that Turkish voters in this period were essentially divided into two sections. The “modern sector” was characterized by “an essentially two-party competition, high levels of political institutionalization, political information, political awareness, and organizational involvement, as well as an autonomous, instrumental, and increasingly class-based pattern of political participation.” (Özbudun in Landau, Özbudun, and Tachau eds. 198, p. 107) It was amongst this “modern sector” of society that the AP gained most of its support, as it had in the 1950s. Its support in 1965 came from large cities, the intelligentsia, and business owners; in short, those who had supported the DP through its reign in the 1950s. (Dodd 1990, p. 9) In contrast, the CHP merely maintained its national average in the large cities. Frey, in his analysis of the Turkish political elite, explains further that the AP was composed mostly of professionals, who were spread across the country in urban areas. (Frey 1965, p. 381) Geographically, these areas were to be found in the Marmara region, although certain parts of the Aegean and Mediterranean regions could also be placed in this context. These, then, were regions where the strength of support for the CHP was relatively weaker.

The second of Özbudun’s categories is that of the “traditional sector”, where “an essentially personalistic style of politics predominates.” (Özbudun in Landau,

Özbudun and Tachau eds. 1980, p. 107) It was in this sector that the Republican People's Party maintained its greatest support. The mobilized machines of peasants, who often voted at the behest of local notables and landlords (ağas), were still strictly tied to the CHP, which for forty years had been defending the system as it worked, while the DP had emerged as a threat to that order. As the military intervention had done nothing yet to change the CHP away from supporting the status quo in underdeveloped regions, in 1965 the CHP retained its predominance in these areas. Frey cites these regions of support as "localistic", their voters in general less educated, and their party machines more bureaucratic, as was characteristic of the CHP in general. (Frey 1965, p. 381) The voting patterns, then, in spite of the military intervention (or perhaps because of it) had remained aligned along mainly the same lines as in the 1950s.

Özbudun has analyzed the 1965 election results in terms of a development index, ranking the provinces and regions by rural development, main occupation, provincial development, and then taking the average of these scores to produce an ordering of provinces by quintiles. The quintiles are ordered from Group I, that with the highest development, to Group V, with the lowest. This is a helpful tool for the analysis of Turkish elections, and this study will use it for all the elections to be covered, to attempt a tracing of the affect level of development has on voting patterns. Özbudun also divided Turkey into geographical regions, to see how this would affect voting patterns. I will do the same, but my regions will be those defined by the 1993 regional statistics, which are slightly different than Özbudun's. The two methods are basically comparable, but the boundaries I employ are first less specific (there are fewer regions), and second more easily integrated into the more recent electoral data

put out by the Devlet İstatistik Entsitüsü (State Statistics Institute). (See Appendix One)

Region/Province	CHP 1965	TİP 1965	Total Left
Turkey	28.70%	3.00%	31.70%
Marmara	28.45%	3.22%	31.67%
Vs. Average	-0.25%	+0.22%	-0.03%
Aegean	26.39%	2.67%	29.06%
Vs. Average	-2.31%	-0.33%	-2.64%
Mediterranean	29.76%	3.53%	33.29%
Vs. Average	+1.06%	+0.53%	+1.59%
Black Sea	28.58%	3.17%	31.75%
Vs. Average	-0.12%	+0.17%	+0.05%
Central Anatolia	26.16%	3.11%	29.27%
Vs. Average	-2.54%	+1.11%	-2.43%
SE Anatolia	29.37%	3.52%	32.88%
Vs. Average	+0.67%	+0.52%	+1.18%
East Anatolia	32.20%	3.94%	36.14%
Vs. Average	+3.50%	+0.94%	+4.44%
Table 2.1 ¹⁷			

For the 1965 elections, Özbudun's results show that the CHP gained the highest level of its support in the Mediterranean and east Central regions, whose percentages were up to 7% higher than in the South Central and Marmara

regions. (Özbudun 1976, p. 107) The data presented in Table 2.1, which is based on the regional scheme outlined previously, shows similar results, if slightly muted from Özbudun's. In terms of the development groups (see Table 2.2), while there is not an incredibly large difference, the lowest groups on the development scale tend to garner the most votes for the CHP. (Özbudun in Landau, Özbudun, and Tachau eds. 1980, p. 225) In my calculations based on different regional boundaries, I found even less of a difference, with none of the CHP vote deviating more than 5% from its national average in 1965. An analysis of the urban-rural dichotomy in 1965 reveals that the CHP maintained a virtually even percentage of the vote from rural to urban areas, although urban areas are scored slightly higher. (Özbudun 1976, p. 122) The data seems to indicate a fairly even spread of votes across the nation, although very slightly favored towards Özbudun's "traditional sector", mainly centered in the southeast parts of the country and among the urban elites.

¹⁷ The data in all the electoral charts in this section is compiled by the author from data in TC Başbakanlık Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü (DİE) 1978, 1993, 1997, as well as TC Resmi Gazete 1999

	CHP 1965	TIP 1965	Total Left
Turkey	28.70%	3.00%	31.70%
Group I	28.63%	3.53%	32.16%
Group II	28.93%	3.00%	31.93%
Group III	30.06%	3.11%	33.18%
Group IV	27.35%	3.53%	30.88%
Group V	28.93%	3.44%	32.37%
Table 2.2			

A portion of this “traditional sector” of the Turkish electorate are the gecekondu, or squatter

settlements in the big cities. These deserve special mention at this point. This portion of the electorate will prove crucial in elections to come for the left, and are worth a look here as part of a class analysis. The urban population had already started to boom in 1965, with cities marked as 28.2% of the population, a ten percent climb from fifteen years before. (Schmuelewitz 1996, p. 163) This trend would continue in the coming years, making the urban vote, especially that of the urban poor, critical to electoral success. This urban poor was not a small portion of the urban electorate. As data collected by Ruşen Keleş shows, in 1965, there were over two million gecekondu residents, representing 22.9% of the total urban population. (Keleş 1993, p. 383) However, this aggregate data is slightly deceiving when the numbers for Turkey’s largest cities are examined. The numbers for Ankara in 1966 indicate that gecekondu residents were in fact 57.4% of the Ankara population. (Keleş 1993, p. 384.)

It is difficult to place these votes in terms of Özbudun’s duality of voting sectors, since the residents are at once

Year	National Gecekondu Population	Gecekondu, percentage of the urban population	Gecekondu, percentage of Ankara’s population
1955	250,000	4.7%	21.8%
1960	1,200,000	16.4%	56.0%
1965	2,150,000	22.9%	57.4%
1970	3,000,000	23.6%	60.6%
1980	5,750,000	26.1%	72.4%
1990	8,750,000	33.9%	58.3%
Table 2.3 ¹⁸			

mobilized as their village counterparts are, but at the same time are partial recipients of the development that has made it worthwhile to move to a city. Keleş proved that the gecekondu residents voted for instrumental reasons, not for ideology. Gecekondu

¹⁸ Table from Keleş 1993, p. 383, 384. Ankara gecekondu figure listed as 1965 was actually 1966.

voters voted for the candidates who would provide their residence with the most tangible benefit in the form of infrastructure and connection to the metropolitan area. “To secure public employment, to secure legal guarantees for squatter houses, to get various public services, they had to turn to political parties that had the power to realize.” (Demirel 1998, p. 137) In countries where local governments are independent, the local government campaigns would be the focus of these votes, but in Turkey, local governments are wholly subservient to the national government. The national assembly, for example, allocates the budgets of municipalities, and can therefore reward and punish leaders of local governments. Therefore, “because of centralization, much of this [the *gecekondus*] political effort has been directed toward the national government, usually through the channels of national elections and the national political parties.” (Danielson and Keleş 1985, p. 100) The parties responded to this challenge. “organizing in *gecekondus*, and, in the classic instrumental fashion of urban political machines, promising to help newcomers in return for electoral support.” (Danielson and Keleş 1985, p. 105)

Over time, many of the *gecekondu* areas were incorporated in the greater metropolitan areas, and some have disappeared altogether. So it comes to the political observer as a challenge to trace the *gecekondu* vote, especially after the 1960s and 1970s. This challenge will be covered later. In 1965, however, it can be definitively said that the *gecekondus* were AP territory. Whether that was due to the *gecekondus* being part of the urban vote or for other reasons is difficult to ascertain. In 1965, the CHP performed poorly in the *gecekondu* areas, polling up to 11% less than its national average. This is in comparison to the AP, which polled from about the same as its national average (Ankara) to 22% higher than its national average (İzmir) in *gecekondu* areas. (Özbudun in Landau, Özbudun and Tachau eds. 1980, p. 121-123)

An anomaly in this system of dualities, a portion of the vote which became a harbinger of changes in the system to come, was TİP. TİP received a mere 3% of the vote in 1965, winning most of its 15 seats through the system of proportional representation, not through winning outright in the 51 of 67 provinces in which it competed. (Landau 1974, p. 260) However, the constituencies in which it did well proved to be prophetic for the future of the left as a whole as it was to emerge after the CHP's transition into a leftist party. Therefore, it deserves a bit more attention than its numbers seem to indicate.

TİP “did best in İstanbul, Ankara, İzmir, and Gaziantep, large centers with numerous intellectuals and industrial workers.” (Landau 1974, p. 261) a full one third of its votes, in fact, came from these three cities. As for the rural areas, TİP's support was mostly concentrated in the developed Marmara region. Support in the least developed provinces was also surprisingly higher than its national average however, as most analyses of TİP's performance include a note about the lack of appeal TİP had in outlying areas. These observations are significant in the light of future electoral realignments, as TİP was at this time drawing votes in some of the same regions as the AP, the “modern sector” of Özbudun's analysis.

There are conflicting reports as to the level of success obtained by TİP in 1965. Landau indicates that the party was crushed by the result; it had expected much more, especially in the cities and among workers. He cites six reasons that TİP failed to live up to its own expectation. First is in general “the electoral conservatism of numerous Turkish voters”, which may have a basis in fact, but is difficult to substantiate, especially in the light of the shakeup the military intervention had caused. Second, the “abstract, radical propaganda” of TİP may be to blame. TİP proclaimed itself, both through its name and through its platform, to be a “worker's “

party. This however, can be deceiving. Although fully one half of the Central Committee members were by party mandate workers and the other half intellectuals, the party did mainly cater in an electoral sense to the intellectuals. Its propaganda was simply a manifestation for them. Third, Landau states that TİP simply did not have the money necessary for running a nation-wide campaign.¹⁹ This is true to an extent, but it must be remembered that TİP did end up running in almost all the provinces, and was given an equal share of free radio time, along with the other parties. The fourth reason Landau gives for TİP's lack of success in 1965 is that TİP was not a grassroots party, but an intellectual party, and therefore unable to mobilize the support it needed in the least developed regions of the country. This dovetails with the argument about propaganda, that TİP's arguments were aimed not at workers and peasants, but at the intellectuals, who were mainly concentrated in the cities and developed regions of the country. Fifth, 'the bitter campaign against TİP by all the other parties' could be a cause of electoral woes. This is also a valid point, as there was a certain stigma attached to TİP as a de facto socialist party, although the word "socialist" was not put into the TİP charter until 1968 (Lipovsky 1992, p. 62) The sixth and final reason TİP may not have done as well in 1965 as it may have thought was because of the unwillingness of organized labor (specifically Türk İş) to cooperate with political entities. This may be a mirage, however, as we have already seen that TİP was generally not a party of the workers. (Landau 1974, p. 262)

Lipovsky draws a stark contrast in Landau's views, stating that the members of TİP were in fact ecstatic about their electoral success. One member remarked after the election that "the TİP has succeeded in accomplishing the impossible...this is a great victory." (Lipovsky 1992, p. 19) He further elaborates that TİP, empowered by

¹⁹ Aybar would state in the 1968 elections that "we have spent in the neighborhood of 100-120 thousand lira. The AP and CHP have spent millions" (Aybar 1988c, p. 71)

its victory, transformed itself into a truly socialist party in the coming years. It seems, however, that Landau's reasoning has more basis in fact. While TİP was fairly successful in its first nationwide election, its expectations were undoubtedly higher. It expected a more nationwide support, which it was, for the reasons cited above, simply unable to achieve. Nevertheless, after the 1965 elections TİP was given a platform on which to voice its views, which it began to do with earnestness.

This new expression of views was not without its consequences within the party, however. In the 1966 TİP general congress, splits in the party started to form. The idea of "National Democratic Revolution" (Milli Demokratik Devrim, MDD), as promoted by a faction led by Mihri Belli, began to make its voice heard. This was a more radical group within TİP, one that advocated a "Second War of Independence" against the government to establish "a fully independent and true Turkey", presumably without the influence of the West. (Aren 1993, p. 220-223) MDDists declared in a pamphlet entitled "National Democratic Revolution" that their "national goal" was to get rid of "Turkey's imperialist trusteeship's base in foreign capital", and that its "democratic goal" was to end "feudal relations". Such views, however, would have certainly created a situation where TİP could be easily disbanded. Aybar's party leadership stood its ground, despite the growing opposition of more radical groups within the party.²⁰ (Aybar 1988c, p. 54) Aybar showed his strength as party leader, and defeated the MDDist proposals that were before the congress. However, this split would return to haunt the party in the future.

In general, 1965 was not a bright year in the electoral history of the left. The right expressed in the AP and the New Turkey Party (Yeni Türkiye Partisi, YTP), gained a

²⁰ Aybar would also characterize the opposition as follows: "The 'old gun' Mihri Belli's group was in solidarity with the Yön group, and began attacking TİP. He was on the side of Hikmet Kıvılcımlı. The Mihri-ists defended the view of MDD. According to MDD, socialism was impossible in Turkey while sovereignty was owned by landowners and foreign comprador bourgeoisie." (Aybar 1988c, p. 54)

majority in the parliament, and was therefore not obliged to cooperate with the left in the formation of its governments. The CHP viewed this situation with alarm, and set out to reform itself for future contests. Before the 1965 elections, the CHP emerged in its rhetoric for the first time as a truly “leftist” party, adopting the slogan “left-of-center” and refining its program under the leadership of Ecevit and the consent of İnönü. After the disaster of the elections, many thought that İnönü would change course, especially in the face of heightened rhetoric from the AP, which adopted the slogan “Ortanın Solu, Moskva Yolu” (“left-of-center, the road to Moscow”). Opposition also came from the far left. Leaders of TİP viewed the move as too little, too late.²¹

However, as Ecevit notes in his book *Ortanın Solu*, published in 1965, “the CHP was not intimidated.” (Ecevit 1974, p. 19-20) He would later remark that “‘left-of-center’ thought would have been impossible without [İnönü].” (Mirkelâmoğlu 1976, p. 23) Indeed, İnönü defended the move, saying “we will not depart from this road. ‘The nation doesn’t understand’ is a false argument, we must be the protector of our direction.” (Dağıstanlı 1998, p. 22) This is not to say that the CHP became a “quasi-socialist” party as some authors have hypothesized.²² After the elections, İnönü would remark that “the CHP is not a socialist structure, but a party that institutes social reforms” and “we are not a socialist party, we never will be, the poverty of socialism cannot be compared with our principles.”²³ (Mirkelâmoğlu 1975, (p. 43) The change in rhetoric, however, involved a new strategy in elections, a strategy that would show itself in the patterns of voting that emerged in the 1969 and 1973

²¹ Communist writer İsmail Yalçın would later state that “‘left of center’ politics is one of mercantilism’s most worn out forms.” (Yalçın 1988, p. 28)

²² Dodd in particular has taken this view.

²³ TİP Chairman Mehmet Ali Aybar would say that the CHP’s new policies were not enough, that “in actual fact the CHP firmly occupies a position against the leftist position and against socialism.” (Lipovsky 1992, p. 22)

campaigns. It also entailed a new internal dynamic. Those voicing opposition to left-of-center policies in the party assembly were quickly dropped from party lists and leadership positions, mostly on the advice of Ecevit and his followers. (Dağistanlı 1998, p. 28)

In between the quadrennial vote for the National Assembly, there were elections in 1966 and 1968 for one-third of the membership of the Senate, a relatively less important body, but a gauge none the less of where the country was. The membership of the Senate under the 1961 constitution was also not entirely elected, making an analysis of which party has how many seats difficult. These samples will not be viewed with a broader analysis, since only one-third of the districts were in contention. They often served, however, as a barometer of the power situation, and will therefore be treated briefly here.

In 1966, the CHP gained less than a percentage point at 29.4%. The AP, on the other hand, gained 5% from its poll in 1965, achieving 57.4% of the votes. (Landau 1974, p. 269) These came mostly at the expense of the smaller parties on the right, however, not from the CHP. TİP polled 3.2%, slightly higher than its 1965 margin. For the left, then, the 1966 senate election does not represent a significant change from one year previous. Most of the changes in the numbers were confined to the right side of the spectrum.

The 1968 senate elections, however, are a bit more significant, due to the emergence of the Republican Reliance Party (Cumhuriyet Güven Partisi, CGP). After the 1965 CHP convention, where a new platform and slogan were proclaimed to establish the party as “left-of center” for the first time, a group of right-leading delegates, led by Turhan Feyzioğlu, broke off to form the CGP.²⁴ These were

²⁴ Future Prime Minister Ferit Melen was also part of this group. (Dağistanlı 1998, p. 33)

delegates who had stayed with the CHP through the start of the 1960s because it was a party of the state. When that platform was undermined in their eyes because of a turn to a truly “political” ideology, the delegates chose to form their own party.

The appearance of this party had measured effects on both the leftist votes and the rightist vote in 1968. The CGP polled 9.2%. These votes seem to have been taken first from the AP, whose share of the vote declined 7% to 49.1%. (Landau 1974, p. 269) It also took away, although less so, from the CHP, whose percentage declined 3% to 26.8% total. It is interesting to note that although the deputies who established the CGP were originally from the CHP, it was the AP that seemed to lose the most support. TIP, which had emerged from 1966 with no real change in its percentage, increased its piece of the vote in 1968 to 4.7%, the highest it would ever poll. This did not result in a senate seat for TIP, but did give it confidence for the elections to come in the following year. (TIP did have one senator, a life member who had switched in 1966. By 1968, however, she had retired.) (Landau 1974, p. 269)

The rise of radical groups that stemmed from the youth and labor movements in the late 1960s are the subject of another chapter. However, they cannot be completely dismissed when speaking about elections. Increasingly, radical groups were making themselves known in the late 1960s first through demonstrations (such as those on the first of May and against the American 6th Fleet) and later through violence (such as the kidnapping and murder of Ephraim Elrom). Landau notes that at the end of the 60s, student protests went from “merely deploring the situation in moderate terms” to being “loud and insistent”. (Landau 1974, p. 32) These events did not happen in a political vacuum, but were part of the system. Most of the radical groups on the left were either connected with or originated from TIP, which came under increasing pressure in this period to cease operation. TIP’s leaders were constantly attempting to

distance themselves from radical groups. Behice Boran stated that TİP was qualitatively different from “urban and rural guerillaists, as well as ‘revolutionary junta’ theses and movements.” (Boran 1992, p. 68) The emergence of DİSK in this period also affected the political landscape as it pertains to the labor vote. All these issues will be covered for the radical left as a whole. For now, it is enough to note that the publicity given to groups on the left in particular did change the electoral landscape. The CHP, far from being immune to the tensions on the left, changed its program in 1969 to bring in elements of the far left. The 1969 program called for “rapid change” and posited that the CHP was attempting a “revolution from above”. (Dağıstanlı 1998, p. 39) Radical movements may also have led to the AP’s performance in the 1969 elections.

The story of TİP continues at the 1968 congress, in which the splits of the 1966 congress were deepened. The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia had produced a rift within the party. Aybar had condemned the intervention, and was later criticized for making statements that were not sanctioned by the party. (Lipovsky 1992, p. 55) Upon this evidence, as well as on the previous split based on MDD, a faction of the party led by Sadun Aren and Behice Boran challenged Aybar for the leadership post. They were defeated, but the damage to the party had already been done. In December of the same year, the same faction was able to call an extraordinary congress of the party, in which they appeared to have strengthened, but still not enough to oust Aybar from the chairmanship. They did muster enough votes, however, to amend the TİP charter, inserting the word “socialist”. (Lipovsky 1992, p. 62) They also forced Aybar to turn more towards the left in order to appease a growing group of critics. In the congress he stated that “the state is [being built] on the turning wheel of the tyrannical, centralist, totalitarian Ottoman type. In the republican period, the CHP has

undertaken this responsibility.” (Aybar 1988c, p. 193) It was not far enough, however, as it was stated at the same conference by Sadun Aren that “the first of socialism’s principles is that of enlightening and organizing the people. Socialism is only this...Mr. Aybar has rejected this theory.” (Aybar 1988c, p. 208) It was this fractured party that found its way into the 1969 elections.

The 1969 general elections were approached by the parties with an extra degree of caution for two reasons. First, the previously mentioned founding of the CGP had changed the political landscape somewhat, although this change was mostly on the side of the right. Second, the electoral system itself had changed. In 1968, an AP-sponsored measure to eliminate the proportional representation/national remainder system was adopted. (Landau 1974, p. 270) This had the effect of handicapping the smaller parties to a great degree, as the majority of their seats had previously been attributed to the system of proportional representation. Therefore, the minor parties in 1969, while maintaining their percentages of the vote, lost most, if not all, of their seats in the parliament. In spite of all this electoral change, however, what Özbudun calls a “realigning election” took place, where the alliances of key sectors of the electorate changed hands.

The CHP led the way for the left with 27.4% of the vote. This figure represents a basically unchanged level of

	CHP 1969	TİP 1969	Total Left
Turkey	27.40%	2.70%	30.10%
Group I	29.32%	2.50%	31.82%
Group II	27.86%	2.29%	30.86%
Group III	26.84%	2.38%	29.21%
Group IV	23.21%	2.47%	25.69%
Group V	22.83%	3.31%	26.14%
Table 2.4			

support from the 1965 total of 28.7%. However, the importance of the 1969 election results for the CHP lie in *how* that vote was constituted. In terms of Özbudun’s five levels of development index, the CHP vote became increasingly stratified (see Table 2.4). The lower levels of the spectrum, which had supported the CHP marginally

above its national average in 1965, in 1969 polled 5% less than the national average.

By contrast, the top two quintiles increased their support from 1965, largely offsetting the drop in the less developed regions.

Region/Province	CHP 1969	TIP 1969	Total Left
Turkey	27.40%	2.70%	30.10%
Marmara	29.58%	3.16%	32.74%
Vs. Average	+2.18%	+0.46%	+2.64%
Aegean	28.06%	2.14%	30.20%
Vs. Average	+0.66%	-0.56%	+0.10%
Mediterranean	25.66%	2.07%	27.73%
Vs. Average	-1.74%	-0.63%	-2.37%
Black Sea	26.66%	1.75%	28.41%
Vs. Average	-0.74%	-0.95%	-1.69%
Central Anatolia	23.81%	2.38%	26.19%
Vs. Average	-3.59%	-0.32%	-3.91%
SE Anatolia	20.87%	2.78%	23.65%
Vs. Average	-6.53%	+0.08%	-6.45%
East Anatolia	25.36%	3.75%	29.11%
Vs. Average	-2.04%	+1.05%	-0.99%
Table 2.5			

In terms of geographical analysis (see Table 2.5), the CHP's support in the eastern region of Turkey fell almost 8% from 1965, and in the southeast, support fell nearly 10%. These two regions gave the CHP its highest level of

support in 1965, even though "high" is a relative term for that election. In 1969 support dipped to well below its national average in the same regions. Stepping in to fill the void were the Marmara and Aegean regions, which marginally increased their support against the general trend. In terms of the urban-rural dichotomy, the difference in the CHP vote had increased to 7%, with the urban vote now clearly outpacing the rural vote. (Özbudun 1976, p. 122) The development data and geographical data confirm that the CHP, while its vote stayed largely the same on the national level, was reforming itself on the micro level. The pattern of the 1950s had truly been reversed: the CHP, once strong in the less-developed east and southeast, had moved its center of strength to the more developed Marmara and Aegean regions, where the AP had once dominated.

The situation in the gecekondü regions also becomes significant in 1969. The population of the gecekondü regions had jumped nationally by almost one million, to nearly three million total. (See Table 2.3) In İzmir, Turkey's third largest city, the

CHP vote in the gecekondus doubled from its 1965 percentage. (Özbudun in Landau, Özbudun, and Tachau eds. 1980 p. 123) This 36.5% was well above CHP's national average. In Ankara, the CHP gained 5% over its 1965 gecekondü total, and in İstanbul, the gain was 2%. (Özbudun in Landau, Özbudun, and Tachau eds. 1980, p. 121-122) These gains are a stark contrast to the figures for the AP, which lost 10% or more across the board in gecekondü areas.

Özbudun theorizes in his 1976 work, as Keleş would later conclude, that this support, which does not follow the pattern seen above of less-developed regions supporting the AP, may not be due to the reasons the CHP may have hoped for. He states that "their political participation, unlike that of the more traditional peasantry, tends to be based on instrumental, rather than deferential and solidarity motives." (Özbudun 1976, p. 137) The CHP, fancying itself a party of "the masses" or "the people", most likely explained the increase in the gecekondü vote as one of "solidarity". Ahmet Samim states that the Turkish left in general in the late 1960s was "theoretically and politically shackled to an obsolete and romanticized vision of an alliance between the working masses and a 'progressive' state bureaucracy." (Samim 1981, p. 67) In spite of what the CHP leaders may have thought, Özbudun's idea has merit: the gecekondü voters, freed from the influence of rural ağas and not integrated into a "mass" in any real manner, saw the improvement of their standard of living as the real reason to vote.

Özbudun's idea about why the gecekondü voters voted as they did is largely substantiated by data found in a survey of gecekondü residents by Kemal Karpat in the late 1960s. Karpat found that the plurality of gecekondü voters gave their support to the party that gave the most instrumental advantage to the nation, gecekondü, and individual voter. (Karpat in Akarlı and Ben-Dor eds. 1975, p. 108) By contrast, few

respondents (8%) cited “feeling of obligation, advice of relatives” as the reason for voting for a particular political party. (Karpat in Akarlı and Ben-Dor eds. 1975,p. 108)

The gecekondü vote, then, cannot be viewed from the same lens of the “traditional sector” which Özbudun places on the nation, but from the view of a true class of urban poor who are out to change their concrete economic situation through governmental action.

In the remainder of the urban areas, amongst the middle and upper classes, the CHP maintained basically the same figures as it had achieved in 1965, with a slight increase in some areas. The urban vote, which was starting to be concentrated in the gecekondü areas, but which was also maintained in the higher-class districts, was being built as a cornerstone of the CHP vote, as the AP vote had shifted to rural areas. This trend, which is first seen in the 1969 elections, will become an even starker contrast when seen in the light of the 1973 elections. An interesting note here is that due to the AP-led change in the election law, the CHP, while losing nearly a percentage of its vote, actually gained nine seats over its 1965 total, as it had never relied too heavily on the system of national remainder/proportional representation. (Landau 1974, p. 279)

The story of TIP is continued in 1969, where it gained 2.7% of the vote, basically the same as its 3% poll in 1965. (DİE 1978, p. 3) The execution of the vote was basically the same as in 1965, with most of its support coming from the developed Marmara and Aegean regions, as well as from Turkey’s three largest metropolitan areas. But in this election, these patterns were the norm for the left rather than the exception. Özbudun noticed a small pocket of support, an “area of relative strength” in the east central region of the country, which he hypothesizes is due to an increase in the Alevi vote. While this hypothesis is impossible to either substantiate or

disprove, it is interesting and may explain the slight increase in support in this area. (Özbudun 1976, p . 110)

Hyland traces the failure of TİP to gain more seats largely to its ineffectual leadership and to the fact that the solutions it provided to the electorate were largely incomprehensible, a criticism leveled also in the 1965 elections. What was perhaps the ultimate downfall of TİP after the elections was not its voting percentage, which stayed relatively the same as in 1965, but the number of parliamentary seats it obtained. Due to the new system, TİP's number of seats decreased from fifteen to a mere two, making it unable by the parliamentary rules to even form a caucus. (Landau 1974, p . 279) The AP's strategy of pushing out the smaller parties had proved quite effective. The steep decline in representation only served to enhance the power of fractious forces within TİP itself.

By this time, fractures had begun to show in the TİP leadership, especially following the December 1968 extraordinary congress, where the faction led by Sadun Aren and Behice Boran had begun to show its strength in the party. This disarray undoubtedly contributed to the continued poor showing of TİP at the polls, where it gained the token support of the intelligentsia and a scattered corps of workers. After the elections, TİP party chairman Mehmet Ali Aybar resigned his post, and the party split amongst its various factions, never to rise again to the level of a competitive party. (Landau 1974, p. 131) Aybar cited four reasons why TİP lost votes: the undeveloped political education of the masses, competition from the CHP and the TBP, and hostile propaganda from other leftists. (Lipovsky 1992, p. 70)

At the dawn of the 1970s, the left in Turkey was in a changed position. The CHP had transformed itself from a party of the state into a party of the left, causing the defection of the CGP and the advent of a new cadre of leaders. The aging İsmet

İnönü had largely refrained from participating in the 1969 electoral campaign, allowing Bülent Ecevit to take control of key portions of the process. (Dağıstanlı 1998, p. 41) Ecevit fostered the further electoral transformation of the CHP, building a coalition between the urban poor and intellectuals as its new basis of operation. TİP had risen to a point of some influence, especially in urban areas, only to implode under the weight of rival factions. Turkey itself had also changed. By the end of the 1960s, radical groups on the left and the right were beginning to put pressure on the system of the 1961 constitution. The early 1970s would see that system's alteration.

“Bright Days”: 1971-1980

The military “coup by memorandum” of 1971 had some effects on the major parties as the 1973 elections closed in. The military had installed Professor Nihat Erim into a troubled Prime Ministry. Erim was a longtime member of the CHP, but symbolically resigned from the party before taking office. His government was a cobbled together government of “national unity” which housed many independents and back benchers from all parties. Its main functions were to implement the constitutional reforms demanded by the military, as well as lead the country into elections in 1973. It cannot truly be considered a leftist government, but since Erim was at its head, it did have somewhat leftist tendencies, if for no other function than to distinguish itself from the Demirel government that preceded it. The government's program focused when it could on social security, justice, and education policies, and included some who were more blatantly tied to leftist opinions than Erim was.²⁵ This was balanced, however, by a flow of patriotic rhetoric designed to sweeten the government's image in the eyes of the military. (Dağlı and Aktürk eds 1988: 201)

²⁵ Dodd cites Atilla Karaosmanoğlu, Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, as one such official. (Dodd 1990: 15)

Erim's government soon proved to be a house of cards. When Demirel pulled the ministers who had been AP members, the government fell. Erim submitted his resignation to President Cevdet Sunay, but it was refused. Erim then formed another hodgepodge coalition, promising to quell the noises popping up on the right. The second Erim government came out with a program aiming more at security issues than social ones. Erim stated that "we will decisively fight all divisive activity from the Communism of the extreme left, to the extreme right, to those who seek a theocratic state." (Dağlı and Aktürk eds 1988: 217) However, the rhetoric was not enough to sustain the government, and it soon fell as well, leading to election governments led by Ferit Melen and Naim Talu.

The major effect of the coup for the leftist political system hinged on the dissolution of TİP, which had ceased to be an effective political force at any rate. It had basically dissolved itself after its failure in the 1969 elections. On top of internal turmoil, TİP was taken to court in 1971 on charges that it had engaged in "anti-constitutional activities". (Landau 1974: 131) More specifically, "the attorney general, with an indictment dated 11 June 1971, opened a lawsuit on charges of advocating the predominance of a minority and compromising national unity based on statements made during TİP's 29-31 October 1970 Ankara Meeting of its 4th General Congress." (Perinçek 1985: 341) That indictment was later broadened "for the leaders' and Central Committee members' speeches and writings to be included." (Perinçek 1985: 341) The sentencing court saw one thousand cases in 1971 alone. (Birand et al. 1994: 230)

After the 1971 military intervention, the party was simply banned outright by the Constitutional Court. It was officially closed on 11 June 1971. (Aren 1993: 160) The decision of the court "opened an important chapter on the subject [of party

closings]. By looking at historical, sociological, and economic justifications, [the Constitutional Court] defined official lines and moved to give itself more authority.” (Perinçek 1985: 351) TİP’s leaders, along with 400 other “leftist intellectuals” were jailed, and those who were not incarcerated were banned from political life for five years.²⁶ (Landau 1974: 131, Dodd 1990: 15) Most of those jailed were sent to the Niğde prison with five year sentences (except for Behice Boran). They remained there until an amnesty in 1974. (Aren 1993: 164) The “socialist movement was constantly under the threat of fresh repression”, and therefore did not mount a campaign in 1973. (Lipovsky 1992: 127) The CHP had become the sole mass leftist party.

Just before its demise, however, the TİP leadership was able to voice its opinions in the most important trial of the 1970s. Deniz Gezmiş, Hüseyin İnan, and Yusuf Arslan, operatives of the Turkish People’s Liberation Army (Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Ordusu, THKO) were put on trial with many others after the 1971 intervention for various crimes, both physical and political. The three were sentenced to death, and all the others given lesser sentences. The case was debated in parliament, which had to approve the death sentences. The run up to and the effects of the trial will be discussed at greater length later, but for now, the analysis will focus on the speeches of Mehmet Ali Aybar, which were directed towards vindication of TİP, which was in its own trial at the time. Aybar stated that “TİP respects the law and the Constitution, being a legal leftist party. It exists to gain power through government, which everyone knows.” (*TBMM Tutanakları* 1988: 41) He was frequently interrupted by the taunts of AP and DP deputies, but continued, challenging the members with the

²⁶ Perinçek offers a long polemic on the subject, saying that “in truth, it is not easy to see the relation between TİP’s polemical meetings, the gendarmerie’s preventive defense, and the Constitutional Court’s actions in the Eastern Provinces. The courts, which impose themselves with regularity, have to see and listen to the government’s solutions concerning these problems.” (Perinçek 1985: 351)

statement “without the left, democracy is impossible.” (*TBMM Tutanakları* 1988: 45-46) Gezmiş and his friends were sentenced to death by a vote of 238 for, 53 against, and 151 either not present or “not consenting”. (*TBMM Tutanakları* 1988: 173) Aybar had made his final appeal for the fate of his party (which fell on deaf ears), and the militant portions of the left were dealt a major blow.

While it was largely unchanged by the political intervention of the military, the CHP underwent a large structural and leadership metamorphosis in the intervening years. After the government led by Nihat Erim came into power, secretary-general Bülent Ecevit resigned his post in protest to the military’s intervention, which again had branded the CHP as the “pro-military” party. (Dodd 1979: 112) The aging İsmet İnönü, still leader of the CHP, had eventually supported the intervention after Chief of Staff Memduh Tağmaç explained to him that if they had not intervened, “certain left-inclined radical officers would have done so themselves.” (Heper 1998: 232-233) Ecevit did not remain silent for long. In the extraordinary party congress held in 1972, Ecevit’s faction within the CHP managed to oust İnönü from his leadership position, installing in his place Ecevit, who had from 1965 onward become the ideological leader of the party and the representative of a new guard. (Zürcher 1998: 273) The vote was 709 for Ecevit, 507 for İnönü. (Dağıstanlı 1998: 53) The “left-of-center” (*Ortanın Solu*) policies that Ecevit had engineered from behind the scenes then came to the forefront of the CHP’s electoral platform and party structure. İsmail Cem states that “in the 1970s, the traditionally ‘progressive’ CHP was reborn”, an adequate remark in light of the transformation brought about by Ecevit in the party line. (Cem 1994: 7)

This transformation did not come without costs, however. In 1971, before the change had occurred, Ecevit stated “I am İnönü’s student. There is 100% respect

between teacher and student.” (Mirkelâmoğlu 1976: 23) Later he would also remark that "at Mr. İnönü's side, who is Bülent Ecevit?" (Dağıstanlı 1998: 52) An author has also noted that Ecevit was almost frightened with the possibility of ousting a national icon. "This person was Atatürk's comrade in arms, the 'national chief', without the aging İsmet İnönü there was no other." (Dağıstanlı 1998: 51) Later, however, tensions between Ecevit and İnönü began to show. When Ecevit resigned as secretary general, İnönü reportedly "became upset like nobody could remember" and later lashed out at Ecevit publicly, saying, "What do we want? In this transition period do we want a government or elongated military interference? If Bülent Ecevit and the Central Committee can organize a government, or even if they cannot, I would like to participate." (Mirkelâmoğlu 1976: 39-40) When Ecevit replaced him as head of the CHP, İnönü resigned from the party and took up his seat in the Senate reserved for him as a former president, dying a short time later, alienated from the party that he had helped to build. (Heper 1998: 243)

Prior to the election, the reinvigorated CHP released its party platform in the form of "Towards Bright Days" (Ak Günlere), which sold briskly. It branded the 1971 intervention a "crisis" of democracy, and instead promoted "widened rights and freedoms." (CHP 1973: 7) The pamphlet is divided into several sections that are geared towards different parts of the electorate. The *gecekond* vote, noted by Karpat and Keleş as inclined towards instrumental concerns, was catered to in a section on social services. The party noted that "the CHP, having accomplished the people's happiness, having not alienated the state, but saving it and making it whole; gave direction, justice, and health services to the people. Their [the services'] stoppage has proven their worth." (CHP 1973: 17) Another special section is devoted entirely to southeastern Turkey, where the CHP had lost the most support in 1969. The system

of land distribution was called “feudal”, and there was an outline of a scheme of land redistribution aimed at breaking up the monopolies of local notables in it. (CHP 1973: 34) The main idea and theme of the program is “the people’s sector”, which is seen as a partial nationalization of industry and agriculture aimed at higher employment. (CHP 1973: 31) This is part of the populist nature of the program, a change from the more aloof, statist role the CHP had played in previous elections.

On the strength of Ecevit’s leadership, his non-complicity with the military regime, and disarray on the right side of the political spectrum, the CHP posted its first electoral increase since 1957. The 33.3% support it achieved made it a plurality party, and represented a 6% increase over 1969. (DIE 1978: 2) The AP, on the other hand, lost 15% of its vote, and ended up on the opposition bench for the first time since 1965. The composition of this support was based upon the foundation established in 1969, especially that among *gecekond* voters and the urban poor.

Region/Province	CHP 1973 ²⁷
Turkey	33.30%
Marmara	35.69%
Vs. Average	+2.39%
Aegean	31.23%
Vs. Average	-2.08%
Mediterranean	32.01%
Vs. Average	-1.29%
Black Sea	29.80%
Vs. Average	-3.50%
Central Anatolia	27.19%
Vs. Average	-6.11%
SE Anatolia	26.83%
Vs. Average	-6.47%
East Anatolia	30.95%
Vs. Average	-2.35%
Table 2.6	

In geographic terms (see Table 2.6), the stratified pattern of 1969 was further aligned towards a relatively heavy support for the CHP in the more developed regions of the country. The Marmara region stood above the CHP national average by three percent, and continued the trend of being a bedrock of support. Slightly below the average, but close to it, were the

Aegean and Mediterranean regions, whose vote remained largely the same.

Southeastern Turkey, specifically targeted in the party’s platform and election propaganda, increased its support nearly five percent, but remained well below the

²⁷ For the next three elections, there will be no “combined left” category, as there was only one leftist party competing.

national average for the party. The appeal for land reform and the breakup of large holdings remained a sticking point for this region of the country.

The regional trend of stratification is even more marked in terms of Özbudun's development quintiles (See Table 2.7). The upper income groups, and even those of the middle, posted an increase of up to five percent over 1969. The lowest groups, however, remain largely the same, with no more than a two percent increase in support. These regions remained, as in the geographical picture, well below the national average, and in light of the increase in the national average itself, show a widening gap between support for the CHP in the remainder of the country and support in the less developed regions.

The most telling portion of the vote in 1973, however, was that of the gecekondu. In İzmir, the CHP increased its percentage of the vote by eight points to 44.2%, overtaking the AP in that city's gecekondu for the first

	CHP 1973
Turkey	33.30%
Group I	34.97%
Group II	30.45%
Group III	33.11%
Group IV	27.69%
Group V	26.98%
Table 2.7	

time. (Özbudun in Landau, Özbudun, and Tachau eds 1980: 123) In Ankara, the gain was fifteen percent, or 45.9%, nearly twenty points over the AP's total, and İstanbul's gecekondu doubled their support for the CHP, a twenty-six point gain to 47.5%. (Özbudun in Landau, Özbudun, and Tachau eds. 1980: 121) This leap in gecekondu votes was also responsible for the CHP obtaining the mayorships of Ankara, İstanbul, and İzmir in the 1973 election. (Danielson and Keleş 1985: 106) The trend that had started in 1969 was absolutely confirmed in 1973. The CHP had wrested the gecekondu from AP hands for the first time, and did so through an appeal to the instrumental policies they favored.

Unfortunately for Ecevit (and perhaps for Turkey itself), the plurality of the vote given to the CHP was unable to give it a majority of the seats in parliament. This led

to the formation of the unlikely coalition with the Islamist National Salvation Party (Milli Selamet Partisi, MSP) of Necmettin Erbakan, perceived by many in the CHP as an affront to the policies advocated in the party platform and the election campaign in general.²⁸ Despite the outward appearance of vast differences between the two parties, there were similarities. Both parties advocated a social approach to the nation's problems, they both sought a "moral" society (however different the ideas of morals proved to be), and they shared a distrust of Europe and NATO in particular. (Dodd 1990: 17) Erbakan had paved the way for cooperation between the two parties by softening up the opposition within the MSP. He stated that "the features of CHP thought are neither far left nor Marxist." (Dağıstanlı 1998: 66)

These similarities were vastly overshadowed in the difference between the two sides, however, and the government's program attempted to mask these differences. Many of the MSP members did not even understand the "people's sector" concept, which had been the main thrust of the CHP campaign. (Ölçen 1995: 60-76) As a consequence, the word "güç" ("strength") was used repeatedly in the government's program. (Dağlı and Aktürk eds 1988: 267) Interesting to note at this stage is that a specific part of the government's program addressed to gecekondu residents. Ecevit stated that "on the subject of gecekondu, by the end of 1973 the classifications will be changed so as to legitimate them." (Dağlı and Aktürk eds 1988: 284) The gecekondu population in Ankara alone was then approaching one million; the government knew where its primary support was coming from. (Keleş 1993: 384)

The heady Prime Ministry of Ecevit did not last for long. After his political victory in the Cyprus crisis of 1974, Ecevit resigned, hoping for "snap" elections that would give him a majority in his own right. However, the rightist parties, led by the

²⁸ The coalition between the two was negotiated on the CHP side by up-and-coming Antalya deputy Deniz Baykal. (Dağıstanlı 1998: 64)

AP, mounted a “National Front” government, which organized a broad spectrum of often mutually exclusive parties and independents to oppose Ecevit and bar early elections. This was only the first of a series of wobbly coalitions that would characterize the 1970s. These unwieldy coalitions on both sides of the spectrum led to instability in the affairs of government, and set the stage for the 1977 elections which occurred after the mandate of the 1973 elections had proven inadequate to produce the strong leadership Turkey needed.

In between the polls, there were events that deserve mention, especially on the side of the far left. After the dissolution of TİP, the socialist left was left without leaders or direction. This began to change in 1974 with a general amnesty offered by the Ecevit government. Prominent leaders such as Behice Boran were released from the prisons, and a brief renaissance of the far left took place. However, the far left was unable to unite around a single party. The various factions of TİP now became parties in their own right. Only Behice Boran’s new incarnation of TİP would compete in elections, with no more than a scattering of votes, 1% total, gained.

In the period leading up to the 1977 poll, Ecevit’s CHP ran a tight and vicious campaign. Ecevit chose the inclusion of the nationalist MHP in Demirel’s government as the focus of his criticism. “Ecevit continued his harsh attacks during the whole period of [The National Front] government. He blamed the government for instigating attacks upon the opposition, to protect what he believed to be fascists.” (Demirel 1998: 229) The MHP and MSP had been allowed to infiltrate large sections of the bureaucracy, specifically the ministry of education, with their own personnel. An example of the venom with which Ecevit attacked these policies of the government is in an interview with *Hurriyet* in 1975, in which he said that Demirel was “a person who could collaborate even with Satan to become Prime Minister.

Artificial shows of sorrow can deceive nobody. Those who robbed the state for years are now collaborating with fascists, murderers, and those obsessed with divine love. Even those bandits, who have taken to the hills, are less harmful than them.” (Demirel 1998: 230) This was not just personal quarreling between Ecevit and Demirel. On the contrary, “what is crystal clear...is that Ecevit seems to have supposed that the portrayal of the MHP as such [terroristic, extremist] would help his party in the elections.” (Demirel 1998: 232) The CHP mayors that had been elected in 1973 also encouraged the municipal workers organized by the tacitly-CHP unions to strike against the National Front governments. These tactics seemed to have worked, as the votes of the MSP and the AP fell dramatically in 1977.

– One month before the elections, another event changed the face of the debate between right and left in Turkey. On May 1 1977, thousands of workers, students, intellectuals, and even militants had gathered in Taksim square in İstanbul to celebrate May Day. The official holiday had not been celebrated the year before, causing the head of the Turkish Communist Party to write from abroad: “In 1976 the working class was wounded by the reactionary 1 May illegalization. [So in 1977,] hundreds of thousands came to Taksim with slogans such as ‘no passage for fascism’, ‘forward to a democratic order’.” (Yalçın 1988: 121) During a speech by Kemal Türkler, chairman of DİSK, gunfire erupted from a still unknown source. Panic ensued, and thirty-five people died in the ensuing melee between leftist militants, rightist militants, and the police. (Alpat 1998: 50) The incident woke the leadership in the country up to the reality of extremist groups and the thin line that they were treading in the affairs of government. It also may have given some credit to Ecevit’s speeches

on the tide of extremism. In the future, the first of May was abolished as a national holiday, first by military decrees and later by government order.²⁹

Nevertheless, Ecevit was aware of the political prizes, however small, that were available on the far left. In 1977, he held talks with Behice Boran about a possible post-poll alliance, however informal, between the CHP and her newly formed TİP. (Duru 1995: 23-24) TİP was actively supporting the CHP at the time, seeing that its own election chances were slim. The talks broke down, however, and they eventually proved to be moot as TİP did not gain enough support to be included in the parliament. The CHP may have capitalized on the chaos in the far left in 1977 by wooing away some of those votes. Such an alliance between the mainstream and far left would never be seriously discussed after this. Such talk was revived in the early 1990s by Doğu Perinçek, but it was never received by the mainstream parties as a genuine gesture.

The 1977 elections saw the CHP gain its highest percentage of the vote (41.4%) it would ever receive. This poll, held in “an atmosphere of increasing violence and economic crisis, seemed to show a return to a two-party system in Turkey.” (Zürcher 1998, p.275) The smaller parties, including the MSP and the Nationalist Action Party (Milliyet Hareket Partisi, MHP), did rather poorly. In large part, the performance of the rightist parties was linked to three factors: the galloping inflation linked to the oil crisis and import substitution policies, the inability of the “National Front” governments to adequately lead the country, and to a lesser extent the memory of the Cyprus intervention.

²⁹ Marital law commander Nevzat Bölügiray questioned the logic of the first strategy, saying “every year when they would outlaw 1 May, orders from above would start coming in. 1 May is a holiday, but celebrating it is illegal? It is an official holiday, but every soldier is on barracks duty?” (Bölügiray 1989: 459)

Region/Province	CHP 1977
Turkey	41.40%
Marmara	43.94%
Vs. Average	+2.54%
Aegean	39.19%
Vs. Average	-2.21%
Mediterranean	39.43%
Vs. Average	-1.97%
Black Sea	38.76%
Vs. Average	-2.64%
Central Anatolia	36.61%
Vs. Average	-4.79%
SE Anatolia	31.97%
Vs. Average	-9.43%
East Anatolia	32.88%
Vs. Average	-8.53%
Table 2.8	

In terms of the constituencies that gave the CHP its victory, it may be said that the pattern that had been evident in the CHP vote since 1969 remained intact, but to these were added a few extra constituencies that pushed the vote to the brink of a majority. Geographically, it can be seen that the vote in the Marmara region still led the way for the CHP, coming in slightly above

the national average. The Mediterranean, Aegean, and Black Sea regions also maintained their usual position just below the national average (see Table 2.8). What is significant is that the percentage of votes from the Central Anatolian region jumped nearly 10% from 1973, when it had been one of the lowest regions of support for the CHP. On the other hand, the eastern and southeastern regions of the country, before only 5% behind the national average for the CHP, now lagged behind some 10%. The votes in these regions increased only slightly compared to the national trend, proving once again that the CHP vote was stratified along lines of income.

In terms of Özbudun's development quintiles (see Table 2.9), this trend is confirmed. The highest groups give the CHP the most support, and the lowest groups, while their support does not increase, still lag behind the national

	CHP 1977
Turkey	41.40%
Group I	42.55%
Group II	38.62%
Group III	40.51%
Group IV	34.38%
Group V	32.32%
Table 2.9	

average for the CHP. A special problem that comes in analyzing the 1977 elections and the elections that come after it is the problem of the gecekondü vote. Özbudun's analysis ends with the 1973 poll, and no other author has attempted to replicate the study for other elections. This is due to several factors that make any data about gecekondus, even the data that the author has attempted to compile, potentially

unreliable. Since this is the case, the remaining analysis on the gecekondu vote will be found in appendix two, so it may be available, but still separate from the remaining analysis.

Whatever support Ecevit had received in the gecekondu areas in 1977, his government's attitude had changed slightly from 1973. Ecevit stated in his government's program that "to *prevent* gecekondu in certain districts, water, road, and sewer infrastructure must be quickly corrected, and then citizens must be given rights to public land for long leases." (Dağlı and Aktürk eds 1988 p. 434, emphasis added) While Ecevit was acknowledging the instrumental concerns of his electorate, he also attempted to address the wider problem of rapid urbanization in the country. Ecevit's government created a new ministry of local affairs to deal with the gecekondu problem and also to serve as a tool of patronage politics. It was eliminated by Demirel's subsequent government. (Danielson and Keleş 1985: 110) Despite the prominence of the CHP in the urban poor areas, we can also see through regional analysis that the CHP had widened its base to some of the middle income groups of the nation, the Central Anatolian region being a prime example. This combination of the vote of big cities and the jump in support from middle income groups like those in Central Anatolia gave the CHP the most support it would ever receive.

This support, however, was not enough. Birand reports that as Ecevit viewed the results coming in from the provinces, he prematurely declared victory, only to find that his party had come even closer, but not close enough, to winning the elections outright. (Birand 1987: 30) Ecevit pieced together a minority coalition dependent on independents, but unfortunately this was "as much a patchwork to placate disparate political forces as the preceding National Front coalitions had been." (Birand 1987: 32-33) The government ambitiously proposed reforms in the east and southeast of the

country, where the CHP had done poorly in its recent history. It also targeted gecekondu, with Ecevit stating that "in our cities, the state must help the local governments with public works needed for health such as water and roads. These public works will provide for present gecekondu residents." (Dağlı and Aktürk eds 1988: 359, 370) It was not to be, however. The government only lasted one month, the independents soon defecting away to offers from the right. A second "National Front" government was formed, and the CHP once again went into opposition as the plurality party.

Demirel also had little success, however, and his government only lasted from July to December of 1977. Independents and members of the Justice Party defected from the government and joined Ecevit for a second time. These defectors were soon rewarded, as each member of the Justice Party that had defected to Ecevit's side was given a ministry, which made the new coalition unwieldy and built on narrow margins. Ecevit was unable to hold it together, especially in the face of austerity measures from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that he was, in the face of mounting debt, forced to accept. The government collapsed again. Meanwhile, the country inched closer and closer to chaos. Martial law had been declared in one third of Turkey, and the violence in the streets between paramilitary forces of the radical left and the nationalist right was already taking its toll.

In the economic scene, inflation soared, and the new Ecevit government found itself in a bind with the IMF. The IMF demanded austerity measures to stabilize the economy before crucial loans could be granted, while Ecevit's CHP had campaigned against exactly what the austerity measures would affect on the nation. While trying to move closer to Europe, Ecevit found himself increasingly alienated from it by the violence in the streets and the growing prominence of the army in everyday life. The

country was going downhill, largely the small mandates given to any leader in the 1970s, as well as punishing external pressures. Ecevit's government fell, largely due to the austerity measures, but also for the reasons previously given. Süleyman Demirel's attempt was no better, however, as he resurrected the minority National Front government (though significantly without the MSP and MHP). Without strong leadership, the nation was bound to shift in the winds of change.

In 1979, Senate elections were held that were a disaster for the CHP. The coalition that had given them so much success in 1977 had faded away, largely through Ecevit's forced hand in the austerity measure debate. As a consequence, not only did Ecevit resign as Prime Minister, but his party was thrown into disarray. The heady atmosphere of gains was replaced by accusations about who was responsible for the losses. The entire CHP executive board resigned after the election failure, and left the party to be "reduced to an amorphous entity comprised of cliques." (Birand 1987: 89) Even the strong leadership of Ecevit, who had changed the structure of the party in 1972 to a more centralized, leadership-based one, was unable to prevent the party from imploding. But then again, leadership as an idea in Turkey seemed to have faded from the scene as well.

Ecevit knew that the military would not stand blithely by while the country descended into anarchy. There was little time for the political leaders to come up with a solution. Throughout 1979 and into 1980, Ecevit hinted publicly and privately that he would be open to a "grand coalition" with the AP to grant the country some security, even if it cost him his job in the CHP. On the 12th of June 1980, Ecevit remarked in a speech that "the question is to decide whether certain risks should or should not be taken in order to save the country...I am in no way concerned with my position within the party." (Birand 1987: 142) The AP, however, was unwilling to

listen, and the problem of political leadership deepened. After the military intervened, Ecevit would remark that “every so often, Turkey moves toward restoration. The soldiers always do it. This time they wanted civilians to do it. A CHP-AP coalition could have happened. But it did not.” (Duru 1995: 43)

Ecevit was also aware that he had faded from the good graces of the military. “Between 1974 and 1977, a significant section of the armed forces, mainly young officers, were sympathetic to the CHP.” (Birand 1987, p.40) This was due to the memory of the Cyprus intervention, as well as Ecevit’s failure to ally himself with extremist elements. However, in the period of his government after the 1977 elections, Ecevit and his party fell out of favor because of its “soft” stance on the Kurdish issue, probes into military affairs, a lack of consultation with military leaders, and a faction of the CHP that resisted the extension of martial law authority. (Birand 1987: 40) For its part, the military considered the worsening situation in the country troublesome indeed. A martial law commander would later write “yes friends, this is a war! In this tour special education is useless, and one must learn in a short time how to win...” (Bölügiray 1989: 28)

The solution, for better or for worse, came at 4:00 AM on 12 September 1980. when Turkey’s military under the Chief of Staff General Kenan Evren took power in a bloodless coup. The coup, which had been well planned in its organizational execution, soon proved poorly planned in its political execution. Originally, the political leaders and parties were to be returned after the return to law and order had been achieved. However, the former political leaders, who had been put on forced “vacation” at a resort in Gallipoli, angered the military by conducting political affairs as they had before the coup, even while they remained under the military’s control. The mood towards restoration within military circles soon became one of total

reformation. Ecevit, Demirel, Erbakan and Türkeş were all banned from politics for ten years, and hundreds of other politicians, including the entire parliament of 1980, were banned for at least five. The parties were uniformly banned, and all of their property was confiscated. (Birand 1987: 212) So started a new era in Turkish politics, one that would dramatically alter the political landscape for the next twenty years.

Reconstruction: 1980-1991

After the 1980 coup, the Turkish military overhauled the entire political structure, from the government to the party systems. The beginning of this new era was the construction of an interim government, which started in 1980. Turhan Feyzioğlu, former leader of the CGP and the possessor of “dead-center politics” was initially tapped to become the new Prime Minister. (Birand 1987: 200) The outcry of the political establishment that remained, however, was so great that he was quickly dropped as a candidate and replaced by the retired Admiral Bülend Ulusu. The purge of the ranks was complete, “a new turkey was to be built without the bricks of the old political establishment.” (Birand 1987: 208)

As for the former political leaders, many of them (including Ecevit, Baykal, and Doğu Perinçek) were jailed pending lawsuits against them. Twenty-one members of the CHP and nine members of the more radical TİKP (see Chapter Three) were kept in a language school in Ankara. (Çalışlar 1989: 10) They were treated with special care, as human rights groups and foreign governments were watching their every move. Every day medical attention as well as specially ordered rations were brought from the Army command. (Çalışlar 1989: 14) Ecevit used this time to write poems and answer the thousands of letters he received from Turks and foreign groups. He

also sent letters to other jailed leaders and by so doing attempted to influence the emerging political order. (Arcayürek 1986: 122-124)

A new political parties law was promulgated by the Constitutive Assembly that gave the military strict control over the process of formation of a new political party system. The military used “cut-off provision, redistricting, and mandatory voting” to electorally engineer the system. (Tuan in Heper and Evin eds 1994 p. 49) A list of twenty founders of a party was to be presented to the National Security Council, who would either approve it, disapprove of it, or approve of certain members. Those parties which did not have the required approval of twenty founders by the appropriate time before the election would not be allowed to compete. New parties could not have any of the politicians of the pre-1980 era, symbols of the pre-1980 era, or claims of being a “successor party” to a pre-1980 party. (Turan in Heper and Evin eds 1988: 74) A threshold of 10% of the vote was also placed on the parties, who had to achieve it before being allowed seats in the parliament. For the parties to compete in the elections, they also had to put up a candidate in at least one half of the electoral districts six months before the election. (Turan in Heper and Evin eds 1988: 71) Many parties applied for registration, but only three were allowed to remain in the system.

On the left, Necdet Calp formed the Populist Party (Halkçı Partisi, HP) with military backing, and was allowed to compete in the 1983 elections. Unfortunately, “Calp’s political ties extended to the coalition that had formed between the CHP and the military rulers of 1960, who were now in as much disfavor with the 1980 military regime [not to mention the public—BB] as the former politicians.” (McFadden 1985: 75) He was squarely aligned as an ally of the military, although the campaign of the HP was largely based on the same social-democratic themes of the former CHP. The

first party program was even entitled “Towards Bright Days”, as the CHP’s was several years before! (Dağıstanlı 1998 p. 120) The HP under Calp also emphasized a “mixed economy”, rather than the export based economy that was advocated by the center-right Motherland Party of Turgut Özal. (McFadden 1985: 77) Another pair of scholars has said that the HP offered “pastel-pink social democracy.” (Finkel and Hale in Finkel and Sirman eds 1990: 104) In other words, the HP seemed “solidly anchored on the left”, despite the intervention of a seemingly rightist military. (Ergüder and Hofferbert in Heper and Evin eds 1988: 98)

Perhaps the most important nod of support the HP received early on came from the military. Calp had sounded out Kenan Evren before founding the party to see what he would view as acceptable for a social democratic party. (Dağıstanlı 1998: 112) However, that was not the only constituency that demanded recognition. Ecevit wrote a letter to the TRT in 1981 that stated “the Republican People’s Partyists still live.” Bülent Ecevit, despite being in and out of prison, was still the leader of the left and of his party. No prospective party chair could ignore his influence on the process. “Necdet Calp was aware of this and kept a close eye on the Ecevit factor...this is why he visited Ecevit and asked his blessing.” (Ergül 1995: 157) Ecevit voiced his opposition to the formation later on of the Social Democratic Party, but still the HP deputies “were always seeking Ecevit’s favor. Even in the face of Ecevit’s opposition to SODEP they still looked for his blessing...some of these deputies later went on to join the DSP.” (Ergül 1995: 159-160) This influence was not merely behind the scenes. After the intervention, “in the press nothing was omitted from information about [Ecevit]. Ecevit’s name had a huge influence. Everything about his personal movement was hot news. His special foreign tours, speeches, and foreign press writings created a large public interest.” (Ergül 1995: 247)

A party that was formed, but not allowed to compete in 1983, was the Social-Democratic Party (Sosyal-Demokratik Partisi, SODEP). This party was formed under Professor Erdal İnönü, son of the late president. Former CHP notable Necdet Uğur and others had gone to İnönü's home to convince him to run a new party, which İnönü was dead set against, saying "my decision is made". (Dağıstanlı 1998: 109) The press went into a frenzy, making İnönü's decision big news. In the face of this, and a growing wave of support, İnönü eventually changed his mind and began to form the new party with the support of old CHPers. The appearance of a competitor "created a huge panic and anxiety at HP party headquarters", as the name İnönü was still seen to have a great deal of weight. (Ergül 1995: 177) However, it was evident that this linkage would open up the wounds of the Ecevit-İsmet İnönü battle for the heart of the old CHP. Ecevit came out against the new party, and as a consequence, many kept SODEP at arm's length. (Ergül 1995: 178)

İnönü's party submitted its list to the military, who rejected some of its members (including İnönü himself) as unfit or tied to the pre-1980 establishment. The list was resubmitted, but to no avail: the military once again rejected it, this time too late for the 1983 election campaign. (McFadden 1985: 76) The would-be supporters of the SODEP, then, had to choose whether to support the ideology of Calp's HP or the non-military alignment of Özal's Motherland Party. While it is impossible to say which of these voters defected to the center-right and which stayed in the leftist camp, the fact that Calp and İnönü were from rival factions of the former CHP and represented different generations has led some to believe that most of the support that would have gone to the SODEP was directed towards the Motherland Party. (McFadden 1985: 82)

After it was allowed to officially organize following the 1983 elections, SODEP published a program that proved to be much more in tune with reality than the HP program, and also much more tied to the ideals surrounding the former CHP. The SODEP program recognized that the 12 September coup was necessary, stating that “before 12 September 1980, we fell into a deep political, economic, and societal depression with dimensions of civil war and fratricide.” (SODEP 1984: 1) The SODEP program was much more specific in its proposals, covering everything from sports to finance. This all, however, emerged after the 1983 elections, in which SODEP was not allowed to compete.

There were many other attempts to form parties after the 1980 military intervention, but these attempts quickly faded to the background. Candidates that were once part of Ecevit’s party (but not high enough to make visible trouble) temporarily threw their hats into the ring. In a 1983 poll, İsmail Cem garnered the highest name recognition (76.9%), compared with 51.9% for Erdal İnönü, and only 30% for Necdet Calp. (Ergül 1995: 164) Nevertheless, Cem found it inadvisable to form a party of his own, and fell in line as an Ecevit supporter by joining the HP. He would remain so until the mid-1990s, when he switched parties and eventually became foreign minister under the “Motherleft-D” government and the subsequent Ecevit minority government.

It is an understatement to say that in these conditions the 1983 elections were not the norm. Nearly all of the far left, which had promulgated much of the terror in the late 1970s, had been arrested or even executed.³⁰ Throughout 1982, Ecevit had been in and out of prison for alleged political remarks made in public in Turkey, and even

³⁰ Zürcher states that “after one year 122,600 arrests had been made, while Birand notes that in “the four years following 12 September 1980”, 178,565 were arrested, 64,504 were detained, 41,727 were sentenced, 326 death sentences were pronounced, and 27 people were put to death. (Zürcher 1998: 294, Birand 1987: 212)

for remarks in foreign publications. (Heper 1994: 21) The HP campaign in 1983 was very narrowly based, for fear of the very real potential of military intervention in the campaign. The HP program was loosely based on the old CHP program, but certain key sections were eliminated, and the rhetoric was very carefully put together.

The HP stated that it was “committed to social justice, social security, the furtherance of working life, giving strength to statism, and the democratic freedom of parliament.” (HP 1983: 1) Instead of advocating a system of cooperatives as the CHP had done, the HP simply stated that “we will take pains to see the constitutional and democratic rights of workers protected.” (HP 1983: 24) There were no sections on the east or southeast, *gecekondus*, or even a recognition that the 1980 coup had even taken place. The majority of the program was focused on veneration of Atatürk and careful support for expansion of state activity. In spite of this, *Calp* still proclaimed that “a party to the left of us will not be founded.” (Yıldız in *Yüzyıl* 1996: 1268) Under this umbrella of strict control, the voters were faced with a choice of two military based parties, (one right and one left) and one non-military based center-right party. The latter was the overwhelming victor.

The advent of the Motherland Party was the true story of the 1983 elections, but the left was also a large part of the poll. The HP gained a respectable 30.50% of the vote nationally, which was over 10% down from the CHP’s all-time high of 41% in 1977. Seeing the support given to the Motherland Party, however, it is amazing that the HP managed to come in with so much of the poll after all. The trends evident in the numbers from the 1983 elections show that despite the electoral engineering of the military, the bases of support for the left remained largely the same.

Region/Province	HP 1983
Turkey	30.50%
Marmara	32.51%
Vs. Average	+2.01%
Aegean	29.19%
Vs. Average	-1.31%
Mediterranean	29.71%
Vs. Average	-0.79%
Black Sea	29.29%
Vs. Average	-1.21%
Central Anatolia	27.48%
Vs. Average	-3.02%
SE Anatolia	31.38%
Vs. Average	+0.88%
East Anatolia	30.66%
Vs. Average	+0.16%
Table 2.10	

As can be seen from the numbers in terms of geography, the Marmara region maintained its prominence, polling its predictable 3% of the vote over the national average, although that national average was significantly down itself since 1977 (See Table 2.10). These were the regions that the CHP had profited from in 1977, specifically the Central Anatolian region, that plummeted in 1983 by at least 10%. Surprisingly, it was the eastern and southeastern regions, whose support remained largely unchanged from 1977, that ended up being some of the most supportive of the HP. The coup that the CHP had pulled off in 1977, where it gained the Central Anatolian region at the expense of the east and southeast, was reversed in 1983.

In terms of development (See Table 2.11), the data show that the large stratification that had widened in the CHP vote since 1969 was compacted into a tighter form. None of the development quintiles differed from the national average more than 5%. In this, however, there seems to be a change as noted above, that is, that the HP drew its vote from the ends of the economic spectrum, from those who were either very well off or those who were very poor. It was in the middle classes where the HP did the poorest, although that should be in relative terms, as this difference was not as significant as it had been in past election cycles. Another author has confirmed this, noting that the HP did best in the large cities amongst the intelligentsia and in poorer rural areas. (McFadden 1985: 81) It has also been noted that the HP and the Motherland Party both drew from the same “economically more developed and sociologically more differentiated provinces.” (Turan in Heper and Evin eds 1988: 76)

While the HP did do fairly well in the parliamentary elections, it was the gerrymandered nature of those elections that turned out to be crucial for the HP's survival. This led to talks between the parties even before the 1984 local elections

HP 1983	
Turkey	30.50%
Group I	30.69%
Group II	28.78%
Group III	29.89%
Group IV	28.10%
Group V	32.52%
Table 2.11	

about a possible merger between the HP and SODEP, which was finally allowed to form in 1984. Erdal İnönü announced at a party congress in April 1984 that “we are in talks with the Halkçı Partisi for the elections, and I want to state that we are becoming closer in our thinking.” (İnönü 1998: 23) Behind the scenes, however, some were expressing reservations, saying that “the party was unable to move to a new axis.” (Ergül 1995: 259) The coalition was not organized in time for the elections, and was possibly delayed by both sides to see how strong the SODEP was truly going to turn out to be. The results proved that the SODEP had re-entered the scene as a more legitimate force on the left, and subsequently eclipsed the HP.

SODEP gained 23.4% of the vote, compared to a meager 8.8% for the HP.

Notably, this was the first election, according to SODEP, that featured the use of Turkish Radio and Television (TRT) as a propaganda machine. SODEP claimed that in 1984 “none of the SODEP's activities were reflected in the TRT's news programs. SODEP simply did not exist for the Turkish Radio and Television.” (SHP 1986: 5) For his part, İnönü expected more from the SHP's first election. He attempted to offer an explanation to the party faithful after the poll, saying “two or three days before the election, public opinion polls predicted 25-28% of the vote. The poll was 23.4%. The difference was either a mistake in the poll or in the last two or three days some voters distancing themselves from our party.” (İnönü 1998: 25) However, he also saw hope for the future, saying that the 1984 results were caused by “various political situations and societal shakeups.” (İnönü 1998: 26)

Calp had declared before the elections that he would step down if SODEP obtained more votes than the HP. (Ergül 1995: 265) After the results were announced, however, he recanted, saying “I will step down, but I have to make sure things stay afloat.” (Ergül 1995: 265) The tide towards union with SODEP was unavoidable, however. Calp was ousted from his leadership post at the 1984 HP convention, paving the way for the two parties to merge. (Turan in Heper and Evin eds. 1988: 77, Ergül 1995: 289) The new HP chair Aydın Güven Gürkan, empowered by the HP central committee, went first to future DSP chair Raşan Ecevit to propose a merger. Ecevit refused, and Gürkan then went to SODEP, who accepted the offer. (SHP 1986: 6-7) HP parliamentarians soon conceded that its fate had been sealed even from its founding. The party that had gained 30% of the vote in 1983 merged with the SODEP to form the Social Democratic Populist Party (Sosyal-Demokratik Halkçı Partisi, SHP) only two years later. (Birand 1987: 209)

This new conglomerate worked to form itself as a party of the intelligentsia and to a more moderate extent to revive the memory of the old CHP: This strategy was due to the “links between social-democratic parties and the working classes being eroded in step with the embourgeoisement of the latter.” (Mango in Heper and Landau eds 1991: 173) A social democratic party could no longer survive (and, judging from the experience of TİP, never did) on the sole notion of a working class ideology. In fact, a later poll revealed that an average of 28.3% of the SHP’s membership was composed of union members. (SHP 1992: 24) Nevertheless, the SHP did state in its program that workers and unionists were the “foundation of the strata of society” and that a constitutional change was needed to protect workers’ rights. (SHP 1985: 26-27)

The SHP ran generally on the principles of state planning, nationalized economic enterprises, a state-led growth package, and social justice. (Dodd 1990: 117) It can

be seen from a comparison of the new SHP program and that of the old HP and SODEP programs that most of the ideological drive came from the SODEP side, which quickly gained prominence. İnönü stated that “our party, protecting all worker’s rights, providing social security, exalting work, assuring that the laws reflect material and spiritual well-being, seeks a free and equal political order.” (İnönü 1998: 42) In its program, the SHP, like its predecessors, included a portion on *gecekondu*, stating that it saw urbanization as “positive”, a sign of development. In an attempt to cater to the known motives for *gecekondu* voting, the SHP also emphasized the need to foster urbanization through the building of essential infrastructure in *gecekondu* areas. (SHP 1985: 55) On the issue of the east and southeast, the SHP claimed that it was a human rights issue, stating “the military regime of 12 September has, both through legal provisions it has introduced and through its practice, restricted basic rights and liberties.” (SHP 1990: 9) The key to peace in the southeast was the encouragement of development as well as the unraveling of political restrictions (SHP 1990: 42)

After the 1983 elections had cemented the political landscape to a certain extent, and after Ecevit had been released from prison in October 1982, the military leadership allowed him to obtain a permit to leave the country. Ecevit embarked on a long foreign tour, travelling to "Sweden, Denmark, Austria, and Germany. He spoke at meetings about democracy, human rights, and social democracy." (Ergül 1995.p . 127) Despite this seeming absence from the Turkish political scene, however, Ecevit remained active, sending not-so-discreet messages back to his country through his speeches, articles, and letters. (Ergül 1995: 171-173) In many ways, this foreign tour was a publicity stunt, designed to prepare the way for Ecevit's return to politics five years later.

The second piece of this strategy came in 1985, when a rival party to the SHP was formed by Raĥan Ecevit, Bülent Ecevit's wife, as a thinly veiled personality-based vehicle for Ecevit called the Democratic Left Party (Demokratik Sol Partisi, DSP). The party was slow in forming, taking much of 1983 and 1984 to gather support from within other parties and prepare party rules and regulations. (Ergül 1995: 352) In December of the year DSP was formed, fifteen SHP members of parliament defected to the new party giving it an instant voice in the affairs of the country and a stake in the electoral landscape. (Zürcher 1998: 299) This is why "in 1985, when DSP's appearance was imminent, SODEP started to become uncomfortable. In the press, the SODEP leadership expressed anxiety and began to search out precautions." (Ergül 1995: 249)

While the SHP in its ideology attempted to form, as its name implies, a true "social democratic" party in Turkey, the DSP "depicted the SHP as elitist and old fashioned, and tried to position the DSP as the only true worker's party", the consequence of which was that most of the intelligentsia remained in the SHP camp. (Zürcher 1998: 298, Mango in Heper and Landau eds. 1991: 171) Key luminaries of the left such as İsmail Cem stayed with the SHP, giving it some measure of security in the trying times. (Ergül 1995: 165) The DSP also attempted to position itself (perhaps more successfully) as the de facto successor to the old CHP, even though it was not allowed to officially do so. The military, far from being ignorant of Ecevit's apparent return to political life, still kept a watchful eye on him. He was jailed in 1987 for violating a ban on political inactivity through a speech he made in the 1986 local elections, and was not permitted to make his presence explicit in his party. (Heper 1994: 26)

The reshuffling of the political landscape on the left was meant to go further. İnönü, seeing that a split in the left would only mean wasted votes if one of the parties

was not able to pass the 10% threshold, pleaded with the DSP for yet another merger, one that would create an overarching leftist party that, unlike the HP in 1983, would be able to compete as a legitimate heir of the leftist vote. He said that “in the last election another social-democrat party was created, a rival to take away our votes and add another factor to our calculations...I cannot believe that the DSP and SHP could not unite their votes, because scaring undecided voters takes them away from the social democrats.” (İnönü 1998: 112) However, “Ecevit remained aloof...[his DSP] was caught in an unresolvable paradox. It claimed to be the only ‘grass roots’ social democratic party untainted by complicity with the post-1980 regime. Yet it divorced itself from the old CHP party structure and far from being a mass party, seemed to be bounded only by personal allegiance to Ecevit.” (Finkel and Hale in Finkel and Sirman eds 1990: 107) Ecevit would say, “I am tired of these unification-related questions...I will not do it, so do not ask me any more of these questions.” (Dağıstanlı 1998: 146-147) A grand coalition of the left was not to be, at least for the time being. Perhaps this was due to the SHP demanding union on its own terms. İnönü put forth that “the SHP wants the old CHPers to join up. This is their true home. They should not be frightened by phantoms and run away. At least it is necessary that they not go to the wrong place.”³¹ (İnönü 1998: 148)

Against this backdrop of mergers and spin-offs in the left, the 1987 elections approached. Özal’s Motherland Party, which had been empowered to rule without a coalition partner since 1983, made three crucial moves before the poll to ensure that it remained in such a position. First, changes to the election law were made that were even more prohibitive towards smaller parties and ensured larger majorities for the victors. Parties now had to compete in two-thirds of the provinces six months before

³¹ Former TİP chair Mehmet Ali Aybar said of the two that “neither the DSP nor the SHP are on the left. They are both establishment parties.” (Dağıstanlı 1998: 136)

the election (previously it had been one-half), the district seat totals were calculated in a different way, and the number of seats in the parliament had increased from 400 to 450. (Turan in Heper and Evin eds 1988: 71) Second, a separate law required the party heads, instead of primary voters, to choose the candidates that would stand in the general election. (Turan in Heper and Evin eds 1994: 53-54) This was a calculated move by Özal, who knew that his iron grip on the party would make his choices easy and non-controversial. The SHP, on the other hand, was to face difficult choices that would threaten to split the newly merged party. The SHP, seeing how the move would threaten their party's unity, took the law to the Constitutional Court. The court declared the law unconstitutional, but by that time the primaries had already passed, the damage had already been done.

Third, the Motherland Party used its position as the majority party to control the output of the state-controlled TRT network. As private Turkish television stations had not yet been legalized, Özal's party effectively controlled an entire medium of information. This tactic had first materialized in 1983, but the SHP raised an even larger outcry to its continuance in 1987. İnönü protested, saying after the elections that "the TRT has a constitutional mandate. But this mandate has been trampled on at every opportunity by the majority, who use it for propaganda, with the consent of its [TRT's] directors; in order for it to serve democracy, they must not block democracy's path." (İnönü 1998: 194)

The SHP campaign rested largely on blaming the Özal government and ANAP's adherence to free market policies for allowing inflation and a reduction in the nationwide standard of living. The SHP produced an "Özal black book" that outlined the prime minister's handling of the economy. Each page was plastered with a rather unflattering picture of Özal in a mafia-type pinstripe suit. Özal was said to have

predicted that “workers prices will fall”. Seeing that they did not, the book states that “for democracy and the fight for bread, give your votes to the SHP.” (SHP 1987: 4) On the inflation question, Özal was portrayed as tied excessively to business interests. The result was that “now we’ve made our decision, Mr. Özal, on July 28 we’ll see you!” (SHP 1987: 6)

In 1987 the SHP also started to experiment with a Kurdish election strategy. İnönü chose candidates for southeastern districts that were known to have connections with Kurdish organizations active in the area. (Ölmez 1995: 54) A group called the “left wing” was allowed to form within the SHP to further Kurdish interests inside the party as well. This tactic drew wrath from the ANAP leadership. Özal stated that the SHP was attempting to “divide up the country”. (Ölmez 1995: 65) After the elections, however, this tactic would turn against the SHP. Seven deputies attended a Kurdish conference in Paris, drawing massive media attention. By the time the deputies returned, they had been expelled from the SHP. These later formed the People’s Work Party (Halkın Emek Partisi, HEP), which became the Democracy Party (Demokrasi Partisi, DEP), and later on the People’s Democracy Party (Halkın Demokrasi Partisi, HADEP). Each was formed as the previous was shut down by the courts. (Ölmez 1995: 69)

Despite a rather successful campaign on those themes, however, Erdal İnönü’s rhetoric about splits in the left proved to have a solid base in reality. The split in the left hampered its bid for more seats. While the SHP emerged relatively victorious with 24.8% of the vote, Ecevit’s DSP only received 8.5%, and therefore failed to qualify for the parliament. That 8.5%, which would have given a combined left party a nearly equal result with that of the HP in 1983, was “wasted”, and cost the left its share of the parliament. The SHP estimated after the election that the DSP cost it

some 76 seats. (SHP 1987: 13) The SHP campaign was based on criticism of the free-market bonanza proclaimed by the Motherland party. In it, “Erdal İnönü was considered a nice and honest man, but a disastrous politician; so it came as a surprise when a clever, hard election campaign, built around the symbol of a squeezed lemon (to indicate the position of the majority of the population after seven years of ‘stabilization program’) earned the SHP 24.8%.” (Zürcher 1998: 297) The DSP program, while slightly skewed towards the old CHP world view, was really based on the charisma of Ecevit, who was allowed to return with the rest of the old political leaders after the ban on their political participation was lifted (barely) by referendum in the same election.

Region/Province	SHP 1987	DSP 1987	Total Left
Turkey	24.80%	8.50%	33.30%
Marmara	26.24%	10.42%	36.66%
Vs. Average	+1.44%	+1.92%	+3.36%
Aegean	25.24%	8.05%	33.29%
Vs. Average	+0.44%	-0.45%	-0.01%
Mediterranean	23.96%	5.54%	29.50%
Vs. Average	-0.84%	-2.96%	-3.80%
Black Sea	19.86%	10.64%	30.51%
Vs. Average	-4.94%	+2.14%	-2.79%
Central Anatolia	21.48%	6.64%	28.12%
Vs. Average	-3.32%	-1.86%	-5.18%
SE Anatolia	23.50%	6.03%	29.53%
Vs. Average	-1.30%	-2.47%	-3.77%
East Anatolia	23.69%	8.22%	31.91%
Vs. Average	-1.11%	-0.28%	-1.39%
Table 2.12			

When looking at the combined geographical data for the 1987 election, a “shaking down” of the categories seems to have taken place. While support for the HP in 1983 was fairly even across the regions of the

country, the spectrum seems to expand a bit in 1987 (See Table 2.12). The Marmara region upped its support nearly 5% over 1983. In terms of the individual parties, it seems as though this jump was characteristic of both the DSP and the SHP. The other regions, while staying fairly even with the 1983 results, simply made the gaps in the process look wider. While the DSP did very well in the Black Sea region (2.14% above their national average), showing its relative strength in the region, the SHP showed its strength in the Mediterranean region. Both parties (but the DSP to a

greater extent) did rather poorly in the east and southeast regions, proving that the pattern of the 1970s had come back to haunt the left once again.

After the election, the SHP would count DSP's existence as the "most important factor" in its result, but the factor of geography also came into that calculation. A report cited that ANAP's hold on "villages and small towns" as ultimately damaging to the party's strength. (SHP 1987: 13) It cited the need to move away from a strategy that principally targeted large cities and industrialized areas. The SHP's strategy was, interestingly enough, viewed in the larger context of the left. The SHP saw progress in the fact that its totals, when combined with those of the DSP, were bringing up the total leftist vote, especially in the regions of Thrace (Marmara) and the Çukurova region (Mediterranean). (SHP 1987: 7, 13)

The development data, while a bit more convoluted, still mirrors the geographical data in the sense that the more developed provinces were more

	SHP 1987	DSP 1987	Total Left
Turkey	24.80%	8.50%	33.30%
Group I	24.85%	9.37%	34.22%
Group II	22.48%	8.58%	31.05%
Group III	24.54%	6.69%	31.24%
Group IV	21.54%	7.24%	28.78%
Group V	22.29%	9.95%	32.24%
Table 2.13			

likely to support the SHP or DSP in 1987 than they were in 1983, while the less developed provinces were less likely to do so (see Table 2.13) Interestingly, the data shows that Ecevit's party showed the "ends of the spectrum" phenomenon that characterized the HP in its first elections. The SHP, whose support is fairly even across the spectrum, showed relative strength in the highest and middle class groups, with a slight drop off in the lower regions. The two parties were moderately drawing from the same electorate, although there are certain niche audiences that responded to either the message of the SHP or the leadership of the DSP.

At any rate, the left remained in opposition throughout the next term of office. There were several developments in the intervening years that had effects, however

minor, on the left. Before the elections in 1987, a group of leaders of the outlawed (since 1923, that is) Turkish Communist Party and the faction of the radical left led by the octegenarian Behice Boran met in exile to unite their parties into one, the Türkiye Birleşmiş Komünist Partisi TBKP, or the United Communist Party of Turkey. Unfortunately, this seeming renaissance for the Communists was short lived. Four days after the union, Behice Boran died. Several days before the election, on 11 November 1987, the Communists, hearing somewhat conciliatory remarks from the government and military, decided to play the odds and return to Turkey to retry the Communist movement there. However, as soon as they stepped onto the tarmac at Ankara's Esenboğa Airport, "they were immediately arrested, despite being accompanied by a planeload of journalists and Europarliamentarians." (Zürcher 1998: 300) Turkey, despite being apparently ready for the politics of those banned in 1980, was still not ready for those who had been banned from politics in 1923.

Ecevit dropped a political bombshell in November 1987 when he announced that he was retiring from politics. The statement sent shock waves through the DSP, which was based more on Ecevit's leadership at times than social democratic principles. Ecevit remarked upon his departure "enough of your talk about 'Ecevit is gone, our work is over'. Don't say it." (Dağıstanlı 1998: 151-152) A new chairman was elected, and the DSP attempted to go on with business as usual. However, Ecevit would not stay away for long. In January 1989 he returned, immediately re-taking over the DSP leadership post, and even having his wife Rahşan elected deputy chair. (Dağıstanlı 1998: 151-152)

In the local elections of 1989, the SHP scored a relative victory. It received 28.2% of the vote, which seems average in the face of historical evidence about the left, but is more significant when viewed with the results of the Motherland and True Parties,

who polled 25.6% and 21.9%, respectively. (Zürcher 1998: 301) Despite this apparent success, problems were afoot for the SHP. Splits over leadership had been apparent in the late 1980s, when it became apparent that Erdal İnönü was not a natural politician. At an extraordinary congress of the SHP in 1990, İnönü was challenged for the leadership of the party by Deniz Baykal, a former luminary in the CHP who had served as Finance Minister and Energy Minister in the 1970 Ecevit governments, and who had also served jail time in 1980 with Ecevit and others. (Dağlı and Aktürk eds 1988: 412)

In 1991, Baykal's faction split off from the SHP to form another party which advocated a more state-oriented system than the SHP did. (Landau 1994: 595) This new party gave itself the historically loaded name of the Republican People's Party, and attempted to play off the similarities between it and the old CHP of the republic's founding, even though the resemblance was at best contrived.³² While it did not muster much support in the beginning, it soon attracted some parliamentarians and eventually a cadre of voters as well. İnönü pleaded for unity on the left, saying "...with the name of CHP, from the two social democratic parties we see that a small third party has split off. Naturally this result is important, but it is not the result we had hoped for. Actually, those with this hope, those at this unravelling said, 'look, a party named CHP has opened. Everyone will go to it and unity will be strengthened.' This strengthening could have happened, but did not." (İnönü 1998: 432-433)

In 1991, the further undoing of the military-sponsored system of 1983 was passed through the parliament before elections were held. The poor Communists arrested at Esenboğa should have waited. In October 1988, President Evren delivered a speech

³² A banner on the front of the CHP's Ankara headquarters to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the founding of the republic read "75 years of the Republic, 75 years of the CHP", a doubly false claim, as the present CHP bears almost no resemblance to the original, and as the CHP did not continually exist for 75 years.

during a state visit to Germany in which he hinted that the penal code should be amended to allow for a Communist party. (Heper 1994: 29) In March and April of 1991, articles 141, 142, and 163 of the criminal code were repealed. These articles had made it a crime to advocate communism or islamist revival through a political party or any other means. In July of the same year, the radical labor union DİSK, which had spawned some of the violence of the pre-1980 era, was re-legalized. (Zürcher 1998: 306) New DİSK offices were set up to reflect the new liberties, but these institutions were of decreased effect, the fundamental character of society and the times having inexorably changed. The return of the old institutions turned out to be largely symbolic.

Redistribution: 1991-1999

As the parties approached the 1991 elections, discontent with the Motherland Party was nearing its peak. There had been several accusations of corruption on the part of Özal, who had been in the intervening years elected president. The prime minister who replaced him, Yıldırım Akbulut, was widely regarded as a non-starter, a tool of now president Özal.³³ He was soon replaced at a party conference by a Özal's rival Mesut Yılmaz, who began to steer the party away from Özal's influence. Nevertheless, the electorate, which had started to vent its frustration with the Motherland Party in the 1989 local elections, now intensified its anger. İsmail Cem wrote before the elections that they would be "like watching an old film. Falsities will pervade, differences will increase, and unity will diminish." (Cem 1994: 82) The victor in this predicted denouement was not the left, but the True Path Party (Doğru

³³ Akbulut became the subject of much ridicule for his apparent lack of intellect. One of these jokes states that Akbulut got into a taxi in Ankara, and the taxi driver asked him "have you heard the latest Akbulut joke?" The Prime Minister replied, "I am Akbulut!" The taxi driver apologized, saying, "Fine, I'll speak slower then."

Yol Partisi, DYP) of the veteran Süleyman Demirel, which emerged as a true threat to the center-right vote guarded since 1983 by the Motherland Party.

The SHP launched its campaign much as it had in 1987, with vicious attacks against the economic policies of the Özal government. Its slogan was “a wealthy, healthy, dignified Turkey”. The “health” came through the defense of democracy and democratic values, the “wealth” through the implementation of social democracy, and the “dignity” through defense of human rights in the southeast. (SHP 1991: 1-5) The program engaged the Özal government’s economics through proposals of alternatives. The SHP favored a more “open” economy that was not hindered by nationalist policies, and aimed to promote the use of more technology in the Turkish economic growth. (SHP 1991: 9-10) The SHP program also targeted women, workers, and youth. (SHP 1991: 15-19) An internal party document also reveals that the SHP was going to target eight geographic areas, all of them relatively prosperous. Adana, Ankara, Gaziantep, İstanbul, İzmir, Kayseri, Kocaeli, and Samsun were all cited as strongholds of SHP support that were to be strengthened. (Veri 1993: 2-8)

The 1991 elections also featured a candidate debate, in which the leaders of the parties answered questions on what they would do for the economy and security. Here İnönü took the offensive against ANAP, blaming it for the ruin of the economy and for hyper-inflation. (*'91 Seçimleri* 1992: 33) On the question of security, İnönü reflected the position of his party’s program by saying that the lack of freedom and military presence in the southeast was the major cause of instability. (*'91 Seçimleri* 1992: 67) Ecevit took the line of his old CHP and advocated that the economy be organized into cooperatives and that the policies of Özal be reversed. (*'91 Seçimleri* 1992: 29) On security, Ecevit blamed not the situation in the southeast itself for

instability, but rather foreign governments' fostering of radicalism and radical groups in the region. (*'91 Seçimleri* 1992: 64-65)

For its part, the left retained its usual combined portion of the vote, but divided it in a more efficient manner, allowing both the DSP and the SHP to gain representation. The SHP attempted to bolster its position by entering into an election alliance with the pro-Kurdish People's Work Party (Halkın Emek Partisi, HEP), which was unable to compete on its own merits because it could not run candidates in at least two-thirds of the provinces.³⁴ (Zürcher 1998: 307) Saybaşılı notes that this entailed a change in strategy for the SHP, orienting itself more towards voters in the periphery of the country rather than at its urban core. “ ‘SHP is the villager's party' or ‘urban voters are in for a shock' were the labels that the SHP used to lean on its old foundations.” (Saybaşılı 1995: 47) İnönü's rhetoric changed, and at the 1991 SHP congress he spoke out on the ban on the Kurdish language in Turkey: “To learn one's language, to speak one's language, to advance one's language, to write in this language, how can that be illegal?” (İnönü 1998: 336)

This strategy did little, it seems, to stem the tide of defections from the SHP to the DSP and later to the CHP. İsmail Cem wrote that “[the 1991] election results are not a surprise...our party's front is choking. Our party is living through a long period of choking.” (Baykal and Cem 1992: 199) Because of this SHP chair Erdal İnönü was under pressure from within his own party, where Deniz Baykal was making a strong bid for the leadership post. Baykal had written an influential book, “Yeni Sol” (“New Left”) with İsmail Cem in 1992 that was to become a sort of “Ortanın Solu” for the 1990s.³⁵ (Dağıstanlı 1998: 182) The book was a commentary on the SHP party leadership, but also a theoretical treatise on where the left was in relation to its former

³⁴ It has also been noted that while HEP was planning to ally itself with the Socialist Party, the SHP went out specifically to recruit HEP for itself.

and present incarnations. The SHP was criticized because it “doesn’t say new things, doesn’t see new goals for society”. (Baykal and Cem 1992: 10) The new left, however, was said to be not Marxist, but still based on worker’s rights: “Work is the highest value. Work is an extension of people.” (Baykal and Cem 1992: 99) The goals of Turkish social democracy were set out to be “economic welfare, social justice, expansion of rights and freedoms, peace and universal solidarity, and the cosmic unity of life [that is, environmentalism].” (Baykal and Cem 1992: 108)

On the strength of this book, as well as on the strength of internal opposition brewing within the party because of its heavy-handed leadership policies, Baykal began to challenge İnönü for the party chairmanship. At the 1990 party congress, İnönü defeated Baykal by a vote of 504-405. But in 1991, the vote totals were İnönü 534, Baykal 451. (İnönü 1998: 284, 325) An internal split in the SHP was beginning to show itself. As a consequence of all these factors, total support for the left was flat in 1991, a combined 31.6%, down from 1987. The characteristics of that support, however, bear mentioning, especially with the alliance of the SHP and HEP in mind.

Region/Province	SHP 1991	DSP 1991	Total Left
Turkey	20.80%	10.80%	31.60%
Marmara	18.49%	15.66%	34.15%
Vs. Average	-2.31%	+4.86%	+2.55%
Aegean	20.64%	9.63%	30.26%
Vs. Average	-0.16%	-1.18%	-1.34%
Mediterranean	21.44%	6.37%	27.81%
Vs. Average	+0.64%	-4.43%	-3.79%
Black Sea	15.00%	11.06%	26.06%
Vs. Average	-5.80%	+0.26%	-5.54%
Central Anatolia	19.19%	7.88%	27.08%
Vs. Average	-1.61%	-2.92%	-4.52%
SE Anatolia	41.66%	2.49%	44.15%
Vs. Average	+20.86%	-8.31%	+12.55%
East Anatolia	25.93%	3.42%	29.35%
Vs. Average	5.13%	-7.38%	-2.25%
Table 2.14			

Geographically, the Marmara region maintained its usual state above the national average of the parties, but in the case of 1991 was outdone by the support in the heavily Kurdish southeast region, whose support for the SHP

skyrocketed from 23.5% in 1987 to 41.6% in 1991 (See Table 2.14). The southeast

³⁵ Strangely enough, Baykal and Cem ended up in different parties after the SHP collapsed.

region went from being one of the least supportive of the left to the most supportive, stealing some of the vote from the rightist and islamist parties. In contrast, Ecevit's Democratic Left Party plummeted from the already low 6% in the region in 1987 to a mere 2.5% in 1991. Where the DSP managed to scrape the support necessary for entry into the parliament was from the Marmara region, where it beat its national average by four percentage points.

In terms of the development data, the situation had changed greatly from the 1987 election. The DSP, which in 1987 had experienced the

	SHP 1991	DSP 1991	Total Left
Turkey	20.80%	10.80%	31.60%
Group I	18.16%	12.40%	37.25%
Group II	18.42%	9.98%	32.46%
Group III	21.09%	8.31%	32.86%
Group IV	24.64%	6.56%	28.11%
Group V	25.45%	5.13%	27.42%
Table 2.15			

"ends of the spectrum" effect, saw one of the ends evaporate with the SHP-HEP alliance (See Table 2.15). The data for 1991 show a top-down stratification, with the most developed areas giving the largest amount of support. The SHP, on the other hand, experienced the opposite effect. Their support was heavily concentrated on the bottom, a reversal of their fortunes in 1987. Their base in the top of the spectrum had been eroded by the wily Ecevit, who reformed his party to draw from the sectors that the pre-1980 CHP had counted on.

After the 1991 elections, the SHP entered into a coalition for the first (and last) time, with Demirel's DYP. Cem, cynical before the elections, was cynical after them as well, writing that "not one of our questions will be answered in the SHP coalition." (Cem 1994: 104) Indeed, the SHP entered the coalition as the decidedly junior partner. It was the DYP that called most of the shots. İnönü compared the marriage to the CHP-MSP coalition of the early 1970s: a seemingly odd mix, but necessary none the less. (İnönü 1998: 366) The SHP was given the Deputy Prime Ministry and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but not much else. (*Coalition Protocol* 1993: 23) It

is notable that the members of HEP that had run on the SHP ticket were excluded from the cabinet. The SHP ministers were also staunch members of the İnönü faction within the SHP. (Dağıstanlı 1998: 209) Still, the SHP did manage to insert certain parts of its electoral program into the coalition's agenda. The coalition protocol stated that "prohibitions on trade unions and other professional organizations which do not allow them to share in political activities will be done away with." (*Coalition Protocol* 1993: 6) There was also a section on the "social state", where social security, expansion of education, health system reforms, and family planning were included. (*Coalition Protocol* 1993: 6) Once the government took office, "its first actions were on the inflation question." (Saybaşılı 1995: 56)

However, the way in which the inflation question was attacked—through international loans and the furtherance of the Özalist policies that had created the situation in the first place—were attacked by disgruntled SHP members. The PKK/Kurdish question was also a major issue for the new government, which stepped up attacks in spite of the SHP-HEP election alliance. (Saybaşılı 1995: 92) As a consequence of these "sell outs" of the SHP, as well as the new found prominence of the DSP, the SHP crumbled. The newly formed CHP of Deniz Baykal started to gain converts in parliament, so that by "late 1993", it had 20 seats. (Landau 1994: 595) İnönü was indignant, stating that "a [new] party, after a big campaign, what will it have accomplished? A couple of points will be gained, the people will give it a temporary look. What will happen, the CHP will gain a couple, three points, and we will lose three. What is the use of that, the use to anyone? What utility is that to the people? What use is that to social democracy? Friends, do not go down this road. You were at a higher place before. You work and work, you get a few points, we lose a few, what's the use? It's a seesaw. This is of no use to the people." (İnönü 1998:

437) For his part, Ecevit objected to the formation of the CHP more on a double standard in the military and courts than its policies, which were on the whole almost the same as the DSP's. Ecevit wondered more why Baykal's party (and not his) was being allowed to form as the CHP, not whether it would cost him votes. (Dağıstanlı 1998: 227)

In September 1993, Erdal İnönü retired from the SHP leadership post, to be replaced by Murat Karayalçın. (Zürcher 1998: 310) İnönü stated upon his departure that he had "lived the past ten years like a day." Nevertheless, he had never developed a taste for politics, and was happy to step aside. (Dağıstanlı 1998: 242) Karayalçın inherited a party in decline, and faced with an angry constituency that was unhappy with the DYP-SHP coalition's performance on the economy (in which inflation still carried the day), social matters, and the Kurdish question. However, he also inherited the post of deputy Prime Minister from İnönü's departure. The government was reconstituted for the change in leadership. Some in this period started to question the SHP's strength as a coalition partner. But Saybaşılı notes that "if the breakup of the DYP-SHP coalition was necessary, increasingly loud voices began to ask in this confusing period: what is the alternative?" (Saybaşılı 1995: 80)

In the March 27 1994 municipal elections, the SHP obtained only 13.6% of the vote, while the DSP got 8.8% and the new CHP 4.6%. This was a wake up call for the left, which had reduced itself from two parties to three only nine years previously, only to split up again. Radical elements issued a "told you so" message to the SHP leadership through Mihri Belli, who wrote from abroad that "in the area of SHP's goals, the coalition has dictated them." (Belli 1996: 100) Some SHP supporters may have deserted the party because of its junior partner position in the government. Zürcher reports that "after the election disaster, a grassroots movement started within

the CHP and the SHP to force the leadership into a merger even if the two party leaders would have to step down to achieve it." (Zürcher 1998: 311) That was eventually what happened: a merger of the two parties was announced under the banner of the CHP on 18 February 1995. A transitional leader, Hikmet Çetin, soon gave way to Deniz Baykal, confirming that the merger of the two parties had been in actuality a hostile takeover. (Dağıstanlı 1998: 292) The DYP-SHP coalition then became a DYP-CHP coalition, and the ministries were re-shuffled to fit the new power situation once again.

The 1995 elections then drew near. The CHP, seeing from the 1994 results and its own internal intelligence that it was in for a fight for the old SHP votes, launched a largely negative campaign against its rivals. It produced a small book for each of the parties which demonstrated their weaknesses. The ANAP book was called "ANAP's Second Miracle". It was blank. The DYP was portrayed in "Tansu Çiller's Economic Outlook", a book in which every page had a ten dollar bill on it. On the Welfare Party, the CHP resorted to "The RP and the Fair Order", referring to the slogan the RP had been using. This book's pages were all black, indicating the darkness it was supposed to advocate. Finally, the DSP was subjected to "The DSP's brand-new cadre", a book with only pictures of Ecevit. (CHP 1995) Through these tactics and others, the CHP portrayed itself as the only party with serious alternatives for Turkish political and economic life, and also distanced itself from its position in its coalition with the DYP.

HEP, which had been closed by court order in 1993, was reformed as DEP, which in turn was closed down in 1994, and which reformed as HADEP in time for the 1995 elections. (Ölmez 1995: 256, 423) HADEP members decided that their party would not compete in the context of an election alliance, instead choosing to run on its own.

The result would be a decline in the leftist vote (especially that of the SHP) in the southeast. The elections would also show the real effectiveness of a Kurd-based party. Whether HADEP was a leftist party or not is open to much debate. This portion of the study will not contain them in the left, as the relationships that were once institutionalized between HEP/DEP/HADEP and the SHP were no longer apparent either in terms of personalities or in terms of programs. The result of this is a sudden downturn in “real” leftist support in the southeast and the lowest income groups.

The big story of this cycle was the Islamist-oriented Welfare Party (Refah Partisi, RP), which drew its support from the southeastern portions of the country and had built itself up from the early 1980s to 21% of the vote or 158 seats, the largest in that election.³⁶ (Doxey 1996: 13, Shankland 1996: 309) The DYP and Motherland Parties followed close behind, both with 19%. For the left, 1995 was nearly a repeat of 1991, but with the DSP taking the lead with 14.6% and with the CHP barely scraping itself into the parliament with 10.7%. This scattering of parties produced a great amount of instability, with the arrangement of parties producing several governments in the four years since the election. Even these scattered results do not reflect those who did not make it into parliament, like the Nationalist Action Party, which garnered over 8%, and HADEP, now competing in its own right, which garnered 4.2%.

³⁶ The number of seats in parliament had increased to 550.

Region/Province	DSP 1995	CHP 1995	Total Left
Turkey	14.60%	10.70%	25.30%
Marmara	22.12%	9.97%	32.09%
Vs. Average	+7.52%	-0.73%	6.79%
Aegean	16.41%	10.95%	27.36%
Vs. Average	+1.81%	+0.25%	2.06%
Mediterranean	10.00%	13.51%	23.51%
Vs. Average	-4.60%	+2.81%	-1.79%
Black Sea	14.51%	8.88%	23.38%
Vs. Average	-0.09%	-1.83%	-1.92%
Central Anatolia	9.99%	10.00%	19.99%
Vs. Average	-4.61%	-0.70%	-5.31%
SE Anatolia	3.98%	6.18%	10.15%
Vs. Average	-10.63%	-4.53%	-15.15%
East Anatolia	3.58%	8.88%	12.47%
Vs. Average	-11.02%	-1.82%	-12.83%
Table 2.16			

The split in the left was apparent, and without the support of the HADEP voters, the left's support shrank to its smallest combined level in recent memory . In terms of geography, the level of

support and constitution of that support remained relatively stable throughout the country, with three notable exceptions (see Table 2.16). First, the Marmara region marginally increased its support, entirely on the strength of the DSP, which polled 7% higher than its national average in the region. The CHP actually polled lower than its national average in the Marmara region, interesting in light of the former SHP dominance there. Second, the blip on the election radar that had occurred in 1991 in the southeast had remained to some extent, but diminished in size. Support in the region dropped by 10% for the entire left, even including HADEP in that equation. That region was particularly brutal (again) to Ecevit's DSP, which polled over 10% off of its national average in the region. The CHP, which polled around its national average in the southeast, showed relative strength in the Mediterranean region. Third, support for both parties of the left in Central Anatolia plummeted by over 5%.

In terms of development, the race was tighter for the left in 1995 (See Table 2.17) The support of the highest development group had

	DSP 1995	CHP 1995	Total Left
Turkey	14.60%	10.70%	25.30%
Group I	18.02%	9.61%	27.62%
Group II	14.81%	10.55%	25.36%
Group III	11.98%	12.32%	24.30%
Group IV	7.66%	9.39%	17.05%
Group V	6.50%	7.42%	13.92%
Table 2.17			

peaked for the post-1980 period in 1991, and now declined by more than 5%.

Support in the lower income regions stayed relatively the same, and those in the middle suffered a similar decline as the highest regions, most likely due to the mass defection of the Central Anatolian region from the coffers of the left. In terms of the separate parties, there are interesting stratifications that occur. The DSP vote, as in 1991, is stratified from top to bottom, with a 12 percent difference between the two. The CHP vote, contrary to the "ends of the spectrum" effect that seemed to infect all first-time parties, suffered the opposite, gaining most of its support from the middle portions. HADEP, if it is lumped in with the left, is heavily concentrated on the bottom of the spectrum, and therefore takes away any "natural" constituency that the left obtained in the lowest development grouping.

After the 1995 elections, the hot potato that was the RP was tossed around several times. Mesut Yılmaz's Motherland Party came close to forming a coalition with it, but backed out at the last minute. Instead, it formed a coalition with the DYP, now led by Tansu Çiller, who replaced Demirel after he assumed the presidency in the wake of Turgut Özal's unexpected death. The left was decidedly in opposition, allowing the rightist parties to tear each other up. The "Motherpath" coalition soon fell apart, however, and was replaced by an RP-DYP coalition. In early 1998, however, the military-backed Constitutional Court declared the RP illegal, banning it and removing its leader, the indefatigable Necmettin Erbakan, from political life for five years. The party quickly reformed as the Virtue Party (Fazilet Partisi, FP), but the damage had already been done. The military would in the future issue warnings to potential Fazilet coalition partners, giving the FP the appearance of a permanent opposition. A coalition to replace the previous one was quickly stewed up, consisting of the center-right Motherland Party, Ecevit's Democratic Left Party, and defectors from the DYP who had formed the Democratic Turkey Party (Demokratik Türkiye

Partisi, DTP). Even with these three, however, the coalition needed the CHP to abstain from confidence motions. (Dağıstanlı 1998: 346) None of the solutions attempted in the post-1995 election era seemed to work.

In December 1998, the "Motherleft-D" coalition lost a confidence motion under the weight of allegations of corruption aimed at Prime Minister Mesut Yılmaz. Baykal's CHP removed its support, and the government fell. Yılmaz, defiant to the end, refused to resign and was only ousted by a no-confidence motion. The CHP blamed the collapse on Yılmaz's corruption and Ecevit's attacks on Baykal himself.³⁷ This led to the near impossible task of forming a coalition of three parties that included the untouchable FP, the scandal ridden Motherland Party and DYP, and the mutually hostile DSP and CHP. Once again, the political system was at an impasse, once again the elections had turned out to be inconclusive no matter who was at the helm. In a sign of the circumstances, president Demirel gave the authority to form a government to Ecevit, leader of the fourth largest party in the Parliament. Despite a surge of optimism, Ecevit was unable to form a government. Demirel then offered the mandate to an independent deputy, who was unable to form one either. The lot then fell back to Ecevit, who emerged at the last minute with a minority election government. The ministers of the Motherleft government would remain intact save the Minister of Education, and the DYP would replace the CHP in abstaining from confidence measures.

Despite Ecevit's return to the spotlight after twenty years away from the prime ministry, and despite his ambitious program announced at the government's founding, the new government passed an early election bill and then adjourned the parliament, allowing deputies to spend time on the campaign trail. The nation was set to glide

into early elections, until a political bombshell was dropped. On February 16, 1999, Ecevit announced at a news conference that Abdullah Öcalan, leader of the Kurdish Worker's Party (PKK), had been captured. Öcalan had been painted as public enemy number one after his party started an organized armed struggle against the Turkish government in the southeastern region. He was caught in Nairobi, Kenya, where he was hiding in the Greek embassy. This situation only added to the drama of the announcement. Ecevit was not long in exploiting this unexpected political capital. On the night of Öcalan's arrest, Ecevit toured the evening news programs, conducting interviews on private and public television stations. He used the opportunities given to him to explain not only the circumstances of Öcalan's arrest, but also to lay out what were essentially his party's programs for the southeast. (ATV 1999a) Ecevit was able to monopolize the airwaves because he was one of only nine political and military leaders who had known about the operation's progress. (ATV 1999a)

An interesting parallel that many drew for Ecevit was that between Öcalan's arrest and his intervention in Cyprus twenty-five years earlier. İlnur Çevik expressed a widely held view when he wrote that "Bülent Ecevit was the prime minister of Turkey who won our hearts after he ordered the intervention on Cyprus in 1974 and saved tens of thousands of Turkish Cypriots from being butchered by the Greeks... Now, after 25 years, he is back as Prime Minister and has done it again by announcing the capture of PKK terrorist leader Abdullah Öcalan." (Çevik 1999) Ecevit was suddenly back at the center of the Turkish political drama. He was lionized in the Turkish press for taking lemons and making lemonade. The editor of *Nokta* said that Ecevit conducted the arrest "in the style of an orchestra conductor." (Türker 1999: 3) Another story related how "Ecevit, an experimental politician on the margins, a 'state

³⁷ Around this time, a cartoon appeared in which Baykal was saying to Ecevit "is it impossible for the two [leftist] parties to combine into a single, strong party?" Ecevit answered, "Impossible, because

man', had a directing vision for the state, from the start to the finish of the operation demonstrating again that Turkey can act as a big state." (Türker et al. 1999: 9)

As a result of this, the electoral landscape changed literally overnight. It was as if the "snap" elections that Ecevit had resigned for in 1974 had come to pass, only twenty-five years after he thought they would. The DSP immediately became the favorite to win the elections, if not by a majority than certainly by a plurality. (Briefing 1999e: 6, 1999d: 10) A magazine stated that "it is widely believed that Ecevit's party can expect to secure more than twenty-percent of the national vote, possibly sufficient to win them the election." (Briefing 1999e: 6) In a poll, 19.4% of the respondents stated that Ecevit's government should be given the credit for Öcalan's capture.³⁸ (Briefing 1999d: 10)

In its campaign, the DSP touted its achievements in the "Motherleft-D" coalition, saying that it had proven itself a viable leftist party. (DSP 1999: 3) An interesting development in the DSP campaign was its specific targeting of the Alevi vote. The election program counted as one of the achievements of the government that "Sunni-Alevi brotherhood has increased". (DSP 1999: 3) Along with these claims, however, the major focus of the program was the fight against terrorism, which Ecevit was attempting to milk for the most political gain possible. Specific proposals of the DSP included lowering the age requirement for parliamentarians, aid packages for the southeast, reforming the state security courts, and loosening restrictions on labor unions. (DSP 1999: 9, 25-26)

On the other hand, Deniz Baykal's CHP was expected to be the loser in 1999, and it started to "realize that it [stood] little chance of passing the ten percent threshold."

then we would come into power." (CHP 1998: 8)

³⁸ 20.2% stated that the military should be given credit, 19.4% the nation as a whole, and 16% the National Security Service (MİT). In a separate poll, 41% of respondents said that the government of

(Briefing 1999e: 6) Despite this warning, the CHP continued to target the same audience it had in the 1995 elections. In its program, the slogans “enlightenment is Turkey’s foundation” and “the power of change” were understood to mean a change, affected by the intelligentsia, reacting against the corruption of the parties in parliament. CHP newspaper ads asked the Turkish people to “not give a blank decision, but make a true decision”, stating that the CHP was the party that would provide “real” solutions. (CHP 1999) The CHP also attacked Ecevit’s DSP as being unwilling to participate in a broader union of the left. The DSP was portrayed as an Ecevit personality party: “in the DSP there is no democracy.” (CHP 1998: 5) This was in contrast to the CHP, which was “always ready” for a union of the two factions. (CHP 1998: 8) By failing to appeal to a wider audience through attacking rightist parties, the CHP opened itself up to charges of bungling the election, of not paying attention to the reality of the situation.

Adding to the anxiety was the announcement of party lists, on which many deputies elected in the 1995 election were not included. This caused 116 deputies to sign a petition to call the National Assembly back from its adjournment, possibly to delay the elections. All were concerned with the unexpected electoral bounty that Ecevit had reaped from the situation. Parliamentary speaker Hikmet Çekin, himself a member of the now-worried CHP, called the parliament back to Ankara to consider a possible postponement of elections, which had been voted for April 18 only a few months earlier by an overwhelming margin. Ecevit, seeing that his electoral play was in possible jeopardy, called the petition “a slap at civility”. (ATV 1999b) However, the rebellious members were unable to accomplish anything more than a disturbance

Mesut Yılmaz, under whom Öcalan left Syria, should get some of the credit for his arrest. (Briefing 1999d: 10)

in the campaign cycle. They were unable to delay elections, and did not succeed in a confidence motion to bring down the government.

The true shock of the 1999 elections came at the hands of the upstart Nationalist Action Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, MHP), which defied all the expectations of the pundits and more than doubled its 1995 total to become the second party in the parliament. It is quite interesting to note, however, that despite this, the voting patterns on the left remained largely as they had in previous elections. The DSP, boosted by the Öcalan factor and a well-run campaign, soared to 22% of the vote, an eight percent increase. The election was proclaimed by some as a victory for the “nationalist left and right”, referring not only to the MHP’s victory, but also to Ecevit’s hawkish campaign rhetoric. (Cumhuriyet 1999: 5) Significantly, however, this increase came not from new support for Ecevit across the nation, but from an increase in the districts where the DSP had traditionally performed well. This is significant not only because it proves that the increase in the DSP vote was limited in scope, but also because this arrangement caused the DSP to gain seemingly fewer seats in the parliament than it would have been entitled to had that support come from a wider spectrum. The MHP, on the other hand, played its cards right and gained a higher proportion of seats for its votes, using its strength in the Central Anatolian region to spread out its support in a more efficient manner.

According to the regional data (see Table 2.18), the DSP increased its margin of victory in the Marmara region, proving it once again to be a leftist stronghold. Significantly, however, Ecevit’s party increased its margin in the Aegean region as well. The DSP even came in first in several Aegean districts and won the mayorship in İzmir. This represents a broadening of the DSP base away from the Marmara region and into other areas. The situation in east and southeast Anatolia is interesting

in terms of the DSP's election performance. 1995 may have proven to be rock bottom for DSP as the eastern portion of the country is concerned. DSP's support increased five percent in both regions. However, it may be fairly said that this was a "rising tide" effect, as the difference between DSP's national support and its support in the southeast actually *widened* in 1999. The chart at the end of this chapter shows this effect vividly. The widening of the gap between rich and poor in the DSP vote can be seen more clearly from the data on development groups (Table 2.19). Stratification of the DSP vote, evident as early as 1991, became increasingly pronounced. The difference between the first and fifth groups had widened by three percent, indicating that DSP was still, for the most part, appealing to the same constituency and undertaking the same strategy that it had in previous elections.

Region/Province	ÖDP 1999	DSP 1999	CHP 1999	Total Left
Turkey	0.80%	22.19%	8.71%	31.70%
Marmara	0.70%	30.86%	7.87%	39.44%
Vs. Average	-0.10%	+8.67%	-0.84%	+7.74%
Aegean	0.77%	26.22%	8.45%	35.44%
Vs. Average	-0.04%	+4.03%	-0.26%	+3.74%
Mediterranean	0.73%	16.92%	10.41%	28.06%
Vs. Average	-0.07%	-5.27%	+1.70%	-3.64%
Black Sea	0.64%	19.05%	6.77%	26.45%
Vs. Average	-0.16%	-3.14%	-1.94%	-5.25%
Central Anatolia	0.57%	14.61%	8.24%	23.42%
Vs. Average	-0.23%	-7.58%	-0.47%	-8.28%
SE Anatolia	0.35%	8.53%	6.65%	15.53%
Vs. Average	-0.46%	-13.66%	-2.06%	-16.18%
East Anatolia	0.70%	7.18%	8.55%	16.43%
Vs. Average	-0.10%	-15.01%	-0.16%	-15.27%
Table 2.18 ³⁹				

The CHP, having seemingly ignored its danger of relegation in the campaign period, failed

to cross the barrage. The electoral data point to an interesting phenomenon, proving that the appeal of the CHP to the middle portion of the development spectrum displayed in 1995 was not the result of it being a new party. The prominence of the CHP in the Mediterranean region (Deniz Baykal is from Antalya) created a blip in the CHP's support there. This is also reflected in the development data, where the CHP

³⁹ The data in Tables 6.6 and 6.7 are compiled by the author from *TC Resmi Gazete* 1999: 1-94

crosses the barrier to parliamentary representation only in the third group, which contains many Mediterranean region provinces. This same data, however, point to the fact that the CHP, while maintaining relative strength in the middle portions of the electorate, had lost support in its former base in the Marmara region to the DSP. The fact that it polled slightly lower than its national average in the Marmara region shows that the CHP had alienated its traditional support, but the remainder of the data show that the CHP had failed to find an alternative.

The failure of the CHP to pass the barrage is due to several factors. First and foremost, the

	ÖDP 1999	DSP 1999	CHP 1999	Total Left
Turkey	0.80%	22.19%	8.71%	31.70%
Group I	0.79%	25.89%	7.81%	34.48%
Group II	0.61%	21.80%	8.23%	30.63%
Group III	0.88%	19.75%	10.07%	30.70%
Group IV	0.55%	11.32%	8.22%	20.10%
Group V	0.44%	10.15%	6.63%	17.23%
Table 2.19				

CHP pursued the same strategy of an urban intelligentsia base that it had pursued in the 1995 elections. The campaign and its program had not changed much from 1995, despite large social and economic changes that had occurred in Turkey itself. This necessarily limited the scope of the CHP's support. Second, the DSP actively fought the CHP for its base, something which the DSP had not done in 1995. The consequence of this is that many votes were likely transferred from the CHP to the DSP. Third, the CHP was to blame in the eyes of the public for the fall of the Motherleft-D coalition, which produced more weakness and instability in Turkey's government. The issue that caused that fall, corruption, was largely erased by the appearance of the Öcalan story. Fourth, the rather uninspiring leadership of Deniz Baykal may have been a factor in the CHP's decline. Many newspapers after the election attempted to prove that his "Tony Blair" style of leadership was unpopular.

Reaction amongst the CHP's decline was swift in both the popular media and the CHP cadre. The Sabah ("Morning") newspaper came out with a banner headline after

the election picturing Baykal (as well as Yılmaz and Çiller) and saying “enough already”. (Sabah 1999: 1) Most put the blame for the CHP’s loss (in spite of the above factors) squarely on the shoulders of Deniz Baykal. He resigned from both the party and politics in general two days after the election. That resignation, not presented by Baykal personally but delivered by the CHP general secretary in a written statement, had the appearance of a forced act. The scramble then began for a successor, a choice that would either guide the CHP into the future or ensure its ultimate demise. Former SHP leader Murat Karayalçın would have been a top candidate for that spot, but dropped in standing following his narrow loss in the Ankara mayoral election. Erdal İnönü also returned briefly to the scene, giving party members advice and meeting with caucuses within the party. Gaziantep mayor Celal Doğan emerged as an outsider candidate. (Hürriyet 1999: 23) The issue of leadership was to be resolved at an extraordinary congress one month after the election disaster.

The ÖDP was included in the above charts because of the important role it was supposed to have played in the 1999 election. What can be seen from the data, however, is that it did not do so. Failing to get even over the benchmark 1%, the ÖDP failed to meet the expectations of even its most pessimistic critics. This is most likely due to a last minute transfer of votes to the CHP, which may have garnered support because of its fight to get in the parliament. If this is the case, true support for the CHP may have been smaller than the results seem to indicate. Regional and developmental data on the ÖDP reveals little about where its support truly came from. It should be noted, however, that the ÖDP was unable to even field candidates in several eastern districts, some of them well populated. This is the reason for the slight downturn in support for the ÖDP in the east and southeast. The consequences of this

defeat for the ÖDP have yet to be played out, but will likely result in heavy soul searching and possibly increased fractionalization.

For his part, Ecevit greeted the election results with caution. Despite being the plurality party, the DSP was still in the position of forming a three-party coalition, an unenviable task. The selection of partners was also less than palatable. They included the now largely discredited Mesut Yılmaz and Tansu Çiller, whose parties had collectively lost much support; Fazilet Partisi, which was still declared as untouchable by the military; and the MHP, which immediately after its election victory attempted to break itself off from its militant past and portray itself as a more centrist party. Early media speculation focused on a DSP-MHP-ANAP coalition, but left open many other possibilities, as the leadership situation in the center-right parties was fluid.

Having covered the individual election cycles in terms of both rhetorical and electoral data, it may now be helpful to look at broader trends, attempting to see what the effect of the left has been over the past thirty-five years. In the second Turkish Republic (1960-1980), the CHP converted itself from a party of the state to a party of the left. This involved an intrinsic change in strategy. While throughout the 1950s the CHP had been a party of the less-developed regions, in the 1960s it reformed itself distinctly as a coalition between the intelligentsia and the urban poor. This can be substantiated through electoral data, which indicate that while the level of support for the CHP of the 1960s was almost flat, the characteristics of that support were changing into a stratified base that took hold in the Marmara region in particular and in the greater category of the more developed regions in general. (See Charts 6.1 and 6.2) This was done to the abandonment of the east and southeast regions, which consistently remained a sector of the right through this period. The cornerstones of

this strategy, though, were the gecekondu areas of the large cities, which saw a dramatic turnaround in the late 1960s from unconditional support for the AP to overwhelming support for the CHP. In the 1970s, this strategy peaked, allowing the CHP to become the plurality party. However, it is worth noting that even at the height of its popularity, the combined forces of the left fell short of governing in their own right. The right was always able, whether in the form of the AP and YTP in coalition or a “National Front” government, to create governments on its own terms.

In the third Turkish republic (1980-1999), support for the left has been relatively flat, and at a level that approximates that of the early 1970s for the CHP. Irregular elections (1983), splits in the left (1987, 1995, 1999), the problem of alliances (1991), and even a reshuffling of the right (1983-1999) can all be listed as problems the left has faced when attempting to solidify and increase its support. What can surely be seen from the 1980-1999 period is that the left in Turkey pursued its strategy largely on the lines of a coalition between city dwellers of many classes and those in the well-off regions of western Turkey. Chart 2.3 illustrates that support for the left in Turkey’s three largest cities has remained consistently above the left’s national average, and is just now starting to push its way closer to levels of support achieved before 1980. The problem with this is that geographic patterns have remained basically the same, with some variation due to the advent of HADEP and the decline in support in the Central Anatolian region. The eastern half of the country and most rural districts are still reticent to give their support to a leftist party of any stripe. What is fortunate for the left, but perhaps unfortunate for the rest of Turkey, is that the cataclysm of the left in the post-1980 era has been mirrored by similar troubles on the right. The entire political spectrum has been faced with the changing alliances of voters, the meltdown and reformation of parties, and the hovering influence of the

military. Instability has been a characteristic of all spheres of the Turkish electorate, not just of the left. While this all points to a certain exciting post-modern dynamism, it frequently rends the fabric of Turkish society and is uncomfortable for the average citizen, who must live with the daily turnarounds in policy, the economic nightmare of hyperinflation, and a system that is in dire need of the reform of a true leader.

The next section of this study will examine yet another factor in the political system in Turkey, that of extra-parliamentary groups: “radical” leftist parties, militant groups, labor unions, and the media. From the 1960s onward, the flowering of parties and militant groups on the left has profoundly influenced policy decisions, as well as the direction of popular ideas. Their story will be one of struggle, both with the system and with each other. Another piece of the left in Turkey are the labor unions. They will be viewed from the role they took, or refused to take, in the history of the Turkish left. There will also be a cursory look at the media in Turkey, for the purposes of finding its orientation. From these accounts, the account of the Turkish left will become more complete.

Chart 2.1: Support for the Left by Region, 1965-1999

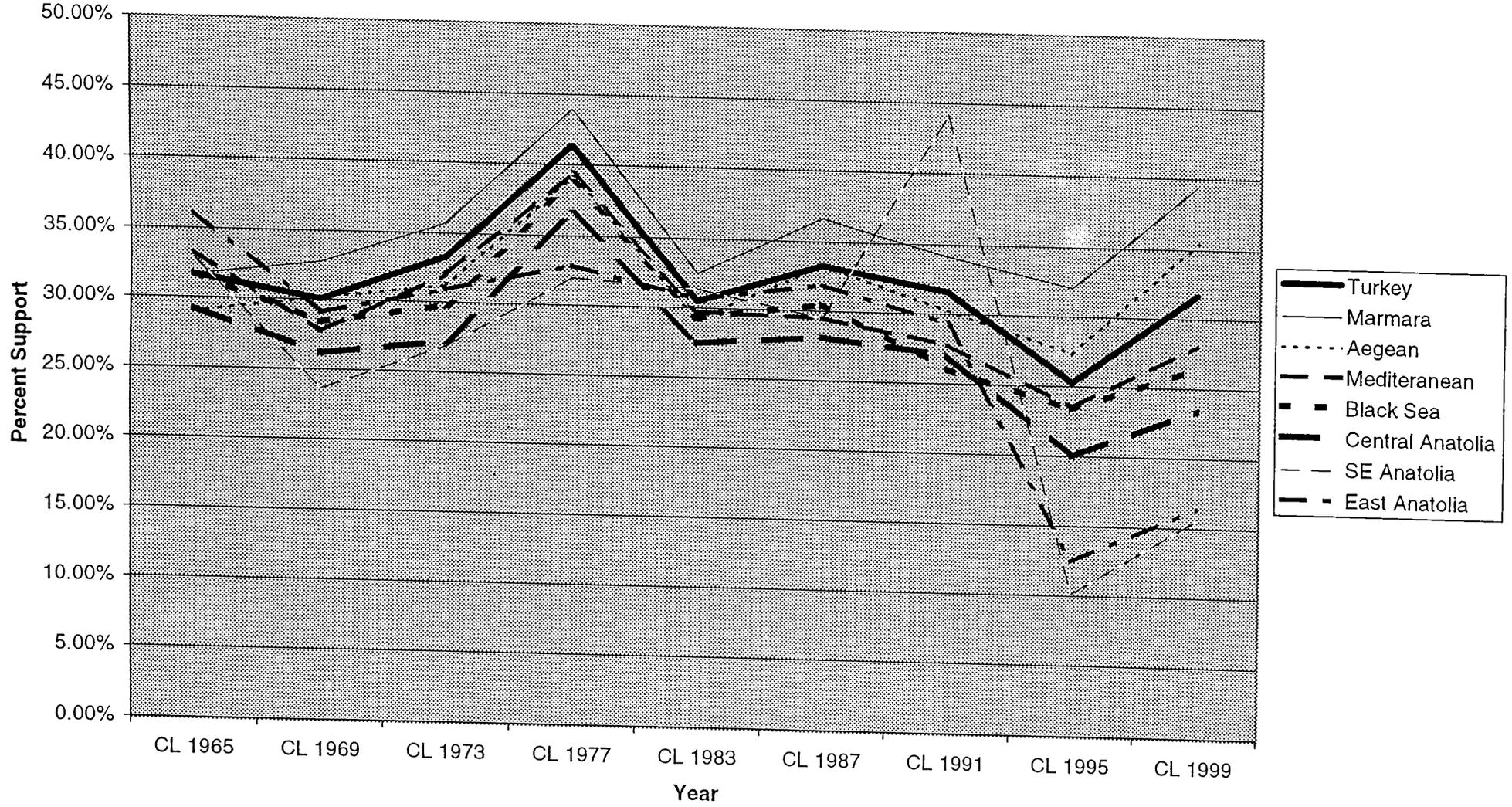


Chart 2.2: Support for the Left by Development Group, 1965-1999

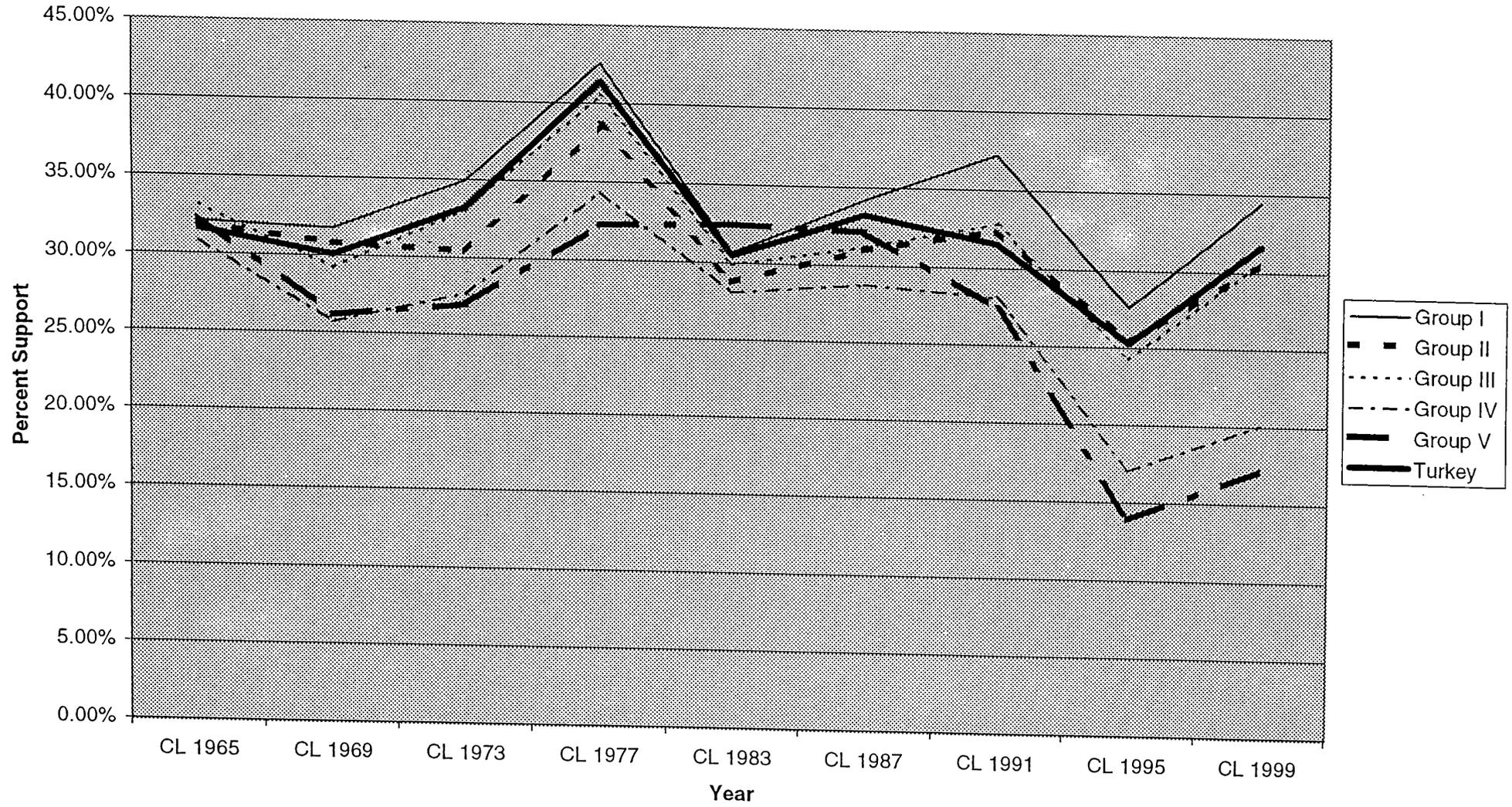
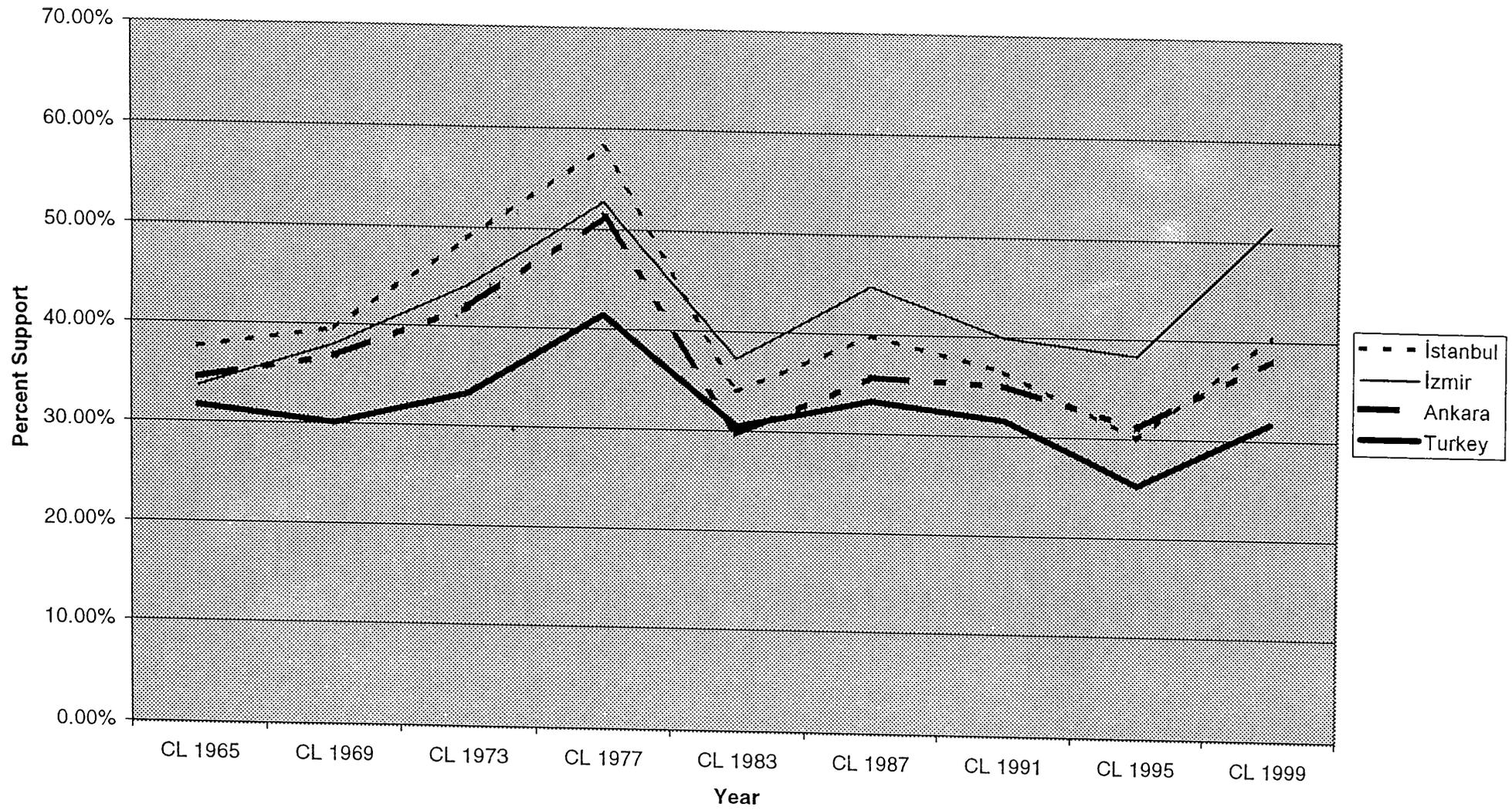


Chart 2.3: Support for the Left in Turkey's Three Largest Cities, 1965-1999



CHAPTER THREE

EXTRA-PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS

THE RADICAL LEFT • LABOR UNIONS • THE MEDIA

Above this revolving black earth, one ageless unique word exists: revolution..."

*-Nazım Hikmet
(Hikmet 1995, p. 176)*

The Radical Left

The “radical” left in Turkey is like an Ankara traffic jam. There are far too many actors in one particular space with no particular guidance or direction. The actors are screaming at each other, and none seem to want to give one inch to their competitors. Nevertheless, the group ends up moving in a certain direction, albeit after much time lost, energy spent, and resources squandered. In short, the “radical” left in Turkey is chaotic at best. To study it is to launch oneself into a sort of paranoia, an obsession with minutiae and details that seems to transcend the realm of useful information. Jacob Landau, in his monumental work *Radical Politics and Modern Turkey*, stated that many parties and groups classified in the “radical” left are “illegal, ephemeral, or both”, and that “the unorganized left is fluid and consists of a bewildering array of small groups and varying opinions.” (Landau 1974: 122, 49)

However, just because they may be so does not mean that they were not influential. Landau also states that “in relation to the total Turkish population of over thirty millions in the 1960s [and more than double that today—BB], the number who actively participated in radical politics was small. However, like the drop of dye that suffuses the wool, it was they who colored the life of the decade.” (Landau 1974: ix) Indeed, though many of these groups seemed insignificant on the surface, the reality of their influence was large, and continues to this day. Nevertheless, Landau’s first comment needs to be addressed, a methodology must be introduced if a study of the “radical” left is to be both focused on what really matters and useful.

The terminology question, addressed earlier in this study, is an important one to revisit. In Chapter One it was noted that political labels are useful to the extent that they differentiate groups and place them in relation. What then, shall the label “radical” be applied to in this portion of the study? Nadir Nadi, editor of the daily

Cumhuriyet, wrote in 1965, “where does the extreme right start? Beyond Atatürk’s reforms. Where does the extreme left start? Where totalitarian trends begin.”

(Landau 1974: x) In this chapter, I will confine my definition of the “radical” left to parties or groups that are or were a) not participating in the parliamentary elections; b) participating, but not successful (i.e., 1% support or less); c) illegal; d) based on exiled membership; e) armed; f) socialist; g) communist; or h) some or all of the above. In general, these parties and groups correspond with Mehmet Ali Aybar’s statement: “I think ‘left’ or ‘socialist’ means any movement that wants to change the capitalist order.” (Mumcu 1990: 42) Therefore, TİP before 1971 will not be covered here, as it was not fully present in any of the above categories. TİP after 1971, however, will be covered here, as it was unsuccessful in its parliamentary quest, socialist, and after 1980 illegal. What is of primary concern is not the success of the parties, for that success is uniformly minute. Instead, the concern of this section is how these parties and groups affected and affect the political landscapes and discourses of their time.

Since there are over thirty groups that still fall into the categories mentioned (See Table 7.1), the study will attempt to outline them in terms of the three most influential groups: the FKF-Dev Genç, the TKP, and TİP. From these four, the main trends of radical leftist thought can adequately be covered, as most of the minor parties and groups were derived in some way from these three organizations. Chart 7.2 attempts to provide a somewhat simplified genealogy of the Turkish radical left, and may be a useful roadmap to the bewildering gaggle of organizations that comprise it. It may be compared with the relative simplicity of Chart 7.1, which outlines the genealogy “mainstream left”. It must be emphasized here that a complete or comprehensive study of the radical left in Turkey is impossible, and is most likely undesirable. This

study will not attempt to describe every movement contained in the radical left, but merely attempt to emphasize the main trends and their influence on political life.

TİP-Based Movements

After the forced dissolution of TİP in 1971, most of its leaders and central committee were jailed. In April 1973, Behice Boran was given a fifteen year sentence (the longest) and separated from the rest of the former TİP leaders by being sent to a separate prison in Adapazarı. The remainder were sent to the Niğde prison, where they all served time together. (Aren 1993: 164) In 1974, the Ecevit government sponsored an amnesty, which released most of the jailed TİP members, including Boran. (Alpat 1998: 47) They did not waste much time. In 1975, a new TİP was founded, with Behice Boran as its chair. However, it was not the TİP of old. Far from being an umbrella organization of socialists, communists, and their sympathizers, the Boran incarnation of TİP was based more on leadership and adherence to strictly socialist principles. It was surely the most visible of the parties that emerged out of the first TİP, but it did not possess the electoral strength or membership base that the previous party had.

TİP ran in the 1977 general elections, only to garner a mere 1% of the vote. This was perhaps due to many factors. First, the Boran TİP suffered from the disease of its predecessor in that its rhetoric was aimed mainly at the intelligentsia, not a wider audience. Second, the character of that rhetoric had become more radical. Compared with the first TİP's slogan of "Land to the Peasants, Work for Everyone", the new TİP's slogan of "The Party is Our Gun!" was not for the faint of heart. (Boran 1992a: 184, 174) Third, the character of other radical groups, which had again become prominent by 1977, weighed heavily on the public consciousness, and undoubtedly affected TİP's performance at the polls. This new action was reflected in the public

consciousness most visibly in the 1 May demonstrations, on which there will be more. Fourth, the new TİP, because of its leadership and for all the reasons above, did not have a large membership base from which to draw both support and the necessary funds to run a more successful campaign.

The new TİP was but one of four parties that can be said to have emerged out of the tradition and membership base of the old TİP. Each new party was based around a factional leader from the old party. The new TİP was based on Behice Boran, the Turkish Worker's Party (Türkiye Emekçi Partisi, TEP) was based on Mihri Belli, the Turkish Socialist Labor Party (Türkiye Sosyalist İşçi Partisi, TSİP) was based on Ahmet Kaçmaz and Sadun Aren, and the Socialist Revolution Party (Sosyal Devrimci Partisi, SDP) was based on the former TİP chair Mehmet Ali Aybar. (Alpat 1998: 290, 316, 333) These three other parties were uniformly unsuccessful. None of them participated in the elections, and only participated in the discourse in the radical left through the publications of their founders and their party programs. Besides serving as "bully pulpits" for their leaders, however, some of the parties may also have been front parties or legal wings of armed organizations and the TKP.

The TEP, founded and run by Mihri Belli, was particularly accused of the latter offense. The party program may have had some hand in that, as it often blatantly voiced support for communist-style principles, although often without specifically mentioning the word "communism". The party was officially socialist, and its program stated that "without the coming of socialist revolution, the workers have no salvation or happiness." (TEP 1979: 12) Whether that revolution was to be through armed intervention or elections was not stated, although through Belli's connection with militant groups, one can presume that the armed option was definitely on the mind of many TEP founders and members. Further supporting the claim to ties with

the TKP is the direct line drawn in the TEP program between the TKP's founding in 1919 and the present party. The presence of known members of the TKP such as Dr. Hikmet Kıvılcımlı in the ranks of TEP advisors also suggests such a linkage.

Regardless of the success or linkages between these TİP spin-offs and illegal groups, all four of them were closed down after the 1980 coup. Many of the leaders, including Behice Boran and Mihri Belli, fled the country, some for Western Europe and some for the communist East. (Alpat 1998: 47) From there they attempted to run their parties in exile, or when the party fell apart (as happened with all but TİP), they ran a personality-based struggle from exile. Metin Çulhaoğlu resurrected the Aybarist SDP in 1990 with a new party, but it quickly faded, and folded into other movements. (Alpat 1998: 291) In this period, only Boran's TİP was able to keep itself together as a coherent force, establishing roots in Turkey and amongst exiles for future actions. In 1987, Boran met in exile with leaders of the TKP. The two decided to combine their forces, signing a unification protocol to form the Turkish United Communist Party (Türkiye Birleşik Komünist Partisi, TBKP), in which the leader of the TKP Nihat Sargın was to be chair, and Behice Boran was to be General Secretary. Unfortunately for Boran and for the new union, the TİP leader died only a few days after the agreement had been signed. The strength of the union was proved, however, in the fact that a successor to Boran was named from among the old TİP cadre. The remaining activities of this party will be covered in the section on the TKP.

In the mid-1980s, the faction of the old TİP led by Sadun Aren also made a comeback attempt. In this period, Aren began writing in leftist journals and other publications about his ideas for a "new" type of socialist party, one based more on a Eurocommunist model rather than the old way of doing things by the Sovietist method. (Aren 1989: 80) Aren saw this new type of party arising from five basic

principles: “changes in the capitalist mode”, increasing democracy, promoting international peace, democratizing the East of Turkey, and reaching out to workers. (Aren 1989: 82-83) Nevertheless, he did not move in the direction of actually founding a party until 1991, when under his auspices and with the support of a rather diverse group of socialist elements the Socialist Unity Party (Sosyalist Birlik Partisi SBP) was founded. (Aytemur in *Yüzyıl* 1996: 1283) Sadun Aren was its first and only chair. The SBP acted largely on Aren’s theses from the 80s, stating that its ideology was “a Marxist and not a Marxist contemporization”, in other words, a “third way”. (SBP 1991: 10) It declared itself against the portions of the Turkish criminal code designed to eradicate communism, as well as against the 1980 coup. It stood instead for widened freedoms, as well as autonomy for the Kurds. (SBP 1991: 14) The party stated that it was to be connected with the labor movements, but such a connection in reality never appeared. (SBP 1991: 18-19)

This party did not last very long in the legal sphere, however, and was soon replaced by the similarly-named Unified Socialist Party (Birleşik Sosyalist Partisi, BSP), also chaired by Sadun Aren. This was basically a continuation of the SBP under a different name. However, like the SBP, the BSP never held too much popular appeal, based as it was on the narrower basis of Sadun Aren’s leadership. The BSP was supposed to be a blanket party under which diverse socialist elements could operate, but that did not end up happening at the same level that Aren and others had hoped. (Bostancıoğlu in *ÖDP* 1996: 192-193) Nevertheless, the BSP did start what was to become a continuing process of bringing more militant members into the fold. In 1995, the BSP allied itself with HADEP, and also concluded a membership agreement with Dev-Yol. (Aytemur in *Yüzyıl* 1996: 1283-1284)

A more successful venture came with the presently existing Freedom and Solidarity Party (Özgürlük ve Dayanışma Partisi, ÖDP), formed in 1996. The BSP folded into the ÖDP soon after the latter's creation. Sadun Aren, while maintaining a prominent position, did not become chair. The party was greeted with much enthusiasm as the long-awaited unifying organization of the socialist/radical left. Aren announced at the ÖDP founding congress: "I have not seen socialists this enthusiastic, in this much splendor in a long time. Having seen it, I am very happy." (Aren in *ÖDP* 1996: 317)

The new party declared a wide base of support, saying "the ÖDP, having a plan for freedom, for a new human-nature relation, being anti-militaristic, being for an asexual socialism, seeks to establish the political power of work in place of the sovereignty of capital and realization of imperialism in our midst." (*ÖDP* 1996: 1-2¹) While reaching out to the socialist faithful as well as the militant groups that the BSP had taken under its wing, the ÖDP also claimed to be a mass party as well. The (inevitable) section of its program on foreign influence chastized the IMF and World Bank, but was suspiciously silent on Turkey's exit from NATO, something most other socialist organizations proclaimed with fervor. (*ÖDP* 1996: 23-24) There is also a slight flavor to the ÖDP program and rhetoric that distinctly "leaves the road of production relations" as its main focus. (*Mürekkap* 1997: 11) The attempt of ÖDP to contain many disparate movements has caused it some trouble. There have been questions as to whether the ÖDP can in fact become a solid organization while containing such often mutually exclusive groups. (Tarık 1998: 72) Whether the ÖDP will fulfill the promise of a wider appeal has yet to be seen in the long term, but if the

¹ Italicized ÖDP stands for ÖDP Tartışmaları, and non-italicized ÖDP stands for the ÖDP program.

1999 election cycle was any indication, the ÖDP's future is not as bright as some may have expected.

Prospects for the ÖDP in 1999 seemed bright, and many were predicting that voters in the Southeast would “channel their votes towards HADEP and leftist parties like ÖDP and EMEP.”² (Briefing 1999: 7) The ÖDP launched a vigorous campaign based on the slogan “Yes, to the furthest left!” Party members staged interesting rallies in Istanbul, where they joined together to sweep streets, indicating the “sweeping” of the system that would occur under an ÖDP administration. However, the ÖDP did not live up to those expectations, garnering a mere 0.8% of the vote, less than half of what most analysts had predicted. This slide may be due to ÖDP members switching to the mainstream CHP in the face of that party's dropping out of parliament. Another reason that ÖDP's support may have been so low is that despite the ideas of the pundits, ÖDP was still a largely urban-based party, with not much support in the rural areas that would have increased its support. The challenge that faces the ÖDP after the 1999 elections is attempting to build a larger corps of voters, and even investigating an alliance with the CHP if that party turns to a more leftist ideology following its change of leadership.

Another party founded in the spirit of ÖDP was the Socialist Turkey Party (Sosyalist Türkiye Partisi, STP), founded in 1990 by Metin Çuhaoğlu, an author and former TIP member. (Alpat 1998: 291) It was quickly engaged by the authorities with a lawsuit, and was closed by the constitutional court in 1993. (SİP 1998: 5) Many of its members folded into ÖDP, but some continued on in 1996 to found the Socialist Power Party (Sosyalist İktidar Partisi, SİP). Çuhaoğlu himself was not involved in the new venture. The new party blazed new ground for the post-1980 era,

² This prediction was obviously made in haste, as ÖDP did not even field candidates in many southeastern districts, notably Diyarbakır.

declaring itself as a “revolutionary” party of “real socialists” who were out to rid Turkey of the influences of world capitalism. (SİP 1998: 4) It declared itself as officially Marxist-Leninist. The party had a clear MDD influence, evident in their proclamation of “national liberation struggle.” (SİP 1998: 10) It was actually allowed to compete in the 1999 elections, which proved that it was a vapor of a party at any rate. The party gained only 0.12% of the vote or a total of 37,680 votes, the third worst performance in the election. (Resmi Gazete 1999: 4)

Another side note that none the less deserves mention at this point is the appearance of a green movement in Turkey. In 1989 members of the Turkish branch of Greenpeace, in operation with other environmentalist groups, formed the Green Party (Yeşiller Partisi, YP). The YP stated that it was “on the side of improved people-nature relations, independent movements, and a democratic society.” (YP 1989: 3) It distinguished itself sharply from other parties on the left and right by stating that it was actively against cities and urbanization. (YP 1989: 21) The party encouraged its members to leave cities in favor of a presumably more sustainable rural existence, and also called for more city planning and power for local governments to carry out environmental goals at the local level (YP 1989: 21) The membership of the party can be said to have come from a diverse group of sources, but possibly primarily out of the socialist parties such as the BSP. It had a very small membership and closed down soon after its founding. Its members, after folding into other organizations, remained on the political scene, however, and resurfaced to criticize the “sellout” of the SHP towards environmental concerns in the early 1990s. (Somersan 1993: 49-53)

While the parties that derived themselves from the original TIP were uniformly unsuccessful, they did have an impact on the political arena. In a way they proved

that the intervention in 1971 and the subsequent repression of socialist parties was not completely successful. They also proved that the issues that the socialists had been basing their campaigns upon (anti-imperialism, political and economic equality) had not been adequately addressed. Mostly, however, these parties can be seen as the natural successors to the personality-based movements within TİP before its dissolution in 1971. They influenced political life mainly by the issues they raised and the leaders they kept in the political scene.

Student-Based Movements (FKF-Dev Genç)

The story of the Federation of Idea Clubs (Fikir Kulüpleri Federasyonu, FKF), which later changed its name to Revolutionary Youth Union (Devrimci Gençlik Birliği, Dev-Genç) is indeed extensive, as it gave rise to nearly every radical leftist group that did not originate from TİP. It has a long and interesting history, and is essential to an understanding of the various currents (and there are many) that emerged after it was shut down. Indeed, “whatever movement you are in, underneath it is Dev-Genç.” (Yıldırım 1997: xvii) The power of this student movement grew from just a handful of students meeting to discuss politics to a mass organization that commanded the support not just of youth, but of professional politicians and everyday citizens. It is the story not just of a youth movement, but of a near-political party as well.

The beginnings of the FKF were humble. In 1954 at Ankara University’s faculty of social sciences, a group of students began to publish a magazine and meet as a group, both of which were called “Forum”. Forum was in the start not a leftist organization at all. The magazine published all viewpoints, from the radical left, the radical right, islamists, and everything in-between. (Yıldırım 1997: 23-24) The tendency of the articles submitted was generally liberal-democratic, however, and

tended to support the dominant Western-looking Kemalist thought of the time. The organization later changed its name to the “Idea Club” (Fikir Kulübü, FK) at the end of the 1950s. It was also around this time that the membership of the FK started to criticize the Menderes government. Attacks started to appear in the Forum publication, and members of the FK began to call for protests and even the resignation of the government. The Menderes regime did not sit idly by for this. It cracked down, and influenced Ankara University to punish the members academically. As a result, however, several professors tendered their resignations, all this in 1956. (Yıldırım 1997: 31)

Four years later, the situation in the nation and in the universities had worsened. In 1960, FK members again started to organize protests against the government. One such action resulted in fifty-eight arrests and a violent clash with police. After that protest, the students spread the word of another action by the code “555K”, meaning the fifth month, the fifth day, five o’clock, in Ankara’s Kızılay district. This protest dwarfed the smaller protest held on university grounds. Thousands showed up to call for the government’s resignation. (Yıldırım 1997: 32-33) Despite these actions, however, the student movement was neither large nor organized enough in 1960 to have brought down the government on its own. Neither was it an entirely leftist force, but rather a group of students from assorted political backgrounds, of which perhaps a majority had leftist leanings.

This all changed after 1960. The 1961 constitution granted broader political freedoms which were used by both the students and the left. The 1961 founding of TİP introduced new life into the socialist branch of the Turkish left. Soon after its founding, TİP began to search for a youth branch from which it could recruit new members and agitate on university campuses. Instead of creating its own, it simply

began to “adopt” the FK. For its part, after 1960 the Ankara University FK began to take on an entirely different character. It began to move decidedly left, and even more towards socialism. The membership of the club also increased, and with it the FK’s influence on campus politics. This did not go unnoticed. Students from other universities started to form FKs of their own. By 1962, there were FKs to be found at Middle East Technical University, the science faculty at Gazi University, as well as at several other Ankara University faculties. (Yıldırım 1997: 39) Organized around a common theme and what became a common political viewpoint, it was only natural that these individual clubs unite into a larger umbrella organization.

That organization, the FKF, was formed in 1965 under the urging of TİP chair Mehmet Ali Aybar as well as Nihat Sargin. (Yıldırım 1997: 43) The FKF elected its first chair, Hüseyin Ergün, from the original Ankara University FK. That FK retained a considerable amount of influence in the first few years of the FKF, guiding policies and providing most of the leadership. The FKF gradually grew, and further branches were founded outside of Ankara, first in İstanbul and later in far off Trabzon and Erzurum. It had little cohesive ideological underpinning, however, until the first FKF congress in 1967. A PhD thesis published in 1966 at Ankara University underlined the fact that “although the popularity of certain socialist ideas among students was undeniable, many only had a superficial idea of the concepts of socialism and were merely attracted to the slogans.” (Landau 1974: 35) The FKF would have to create an ideological base if it was to become truly socialist.

In late 1966, just before the first FKF congress, the association published a “strategy” for socialism in Turkey. It called for “a war of liberation against imperialism to establish political independence.” (Yıldırım 1998: 87) This can be seen as a predecessor to MDD, which was further developed at the first FKF congress

and afterwards by Mihri Belli and Mahir Çayan. At the congress itself, there were eleven FKs participating from all over Turkey. It was a critical meeting, and set in concrete the socialism that had been developing within the FKF since the early 1960s. TİP also played a key role in this congress, sending speakers and broadening its youth base. (Yıldırım 1998: 58) After this foundation was laid, the movement began to grow by leaps and bounds. By the time of its second congress one year later (23-24 March 1968), the number of FKs participating more than doubled to twenty-six, representing a truly national movement of students that seemingly dwarfed the original movement.

The links with TİP became more overt in this period. FKF general secretary Salig Er proclaimed at the second congress: “FKF brothers! The Turkish socialist youth are growing like mad. This is due to one big factor, the existence of TİP in our country. The FKF’s birth was a result of socialism.” (Yıldırım 1998: 126) The congress produced several decisions, most of them anti-imperialist and along the lines of TİP’s propaganda. One interesting note is the congress’s reaction to the move of the CHP towards a “left-of-center” stance. The FKF stated in its official position that it regarded the move as a good first step, but something that had to go further if it was to be of any use. (Yıldırım 1998, p.134)

Despite its overwhelming support for the mission of TİP, the FKF began to mirror the splits that were occurring in that party as well. The second congress proved decisive in this regard. The “Aren-Boran” faction within TİP was just beginning to show its might in 1967, but in the FKF it was better established. It was this faction that engineered the election of Doğu Perinçek, an Ankara University teaching assistant, to the chairmanship of the FKF. (Yıldırım 1998: 154) His election, opposed by some of the FKF leadership cadre and of course by Mehmet Ali Aybar,

was created through the direct intervention of Sadun Aren, who met with some of the leadership and convinced them that Perinçek was the only suitable candidate. Aybar was not happy with this development, for it marked the effective secession of the FKF from his domination of TİP. (Yıldırım 1998: 159) Perinçek acted quickly on the circumstances he was faced with, a hostile leadership in TİP as well as an expanding movement. His two major acts were the establishment of the “Proletarian Revolutionary Enlightenment” publication (Proleter Devrimci Aydınlik, PDA), and his fostering the foundation of Dev-Güç. (Yıldırım 1998: 163) PDA was not the official publication of FKF, but under Perinçek it attracted many adherents. It stuck to an MDD line, for which Perinçek was elected. More than its MDD line, however, it soon became attached to the personality of Perinçek himself, who, after his tenure as FKF chair was terminated, continued to run the magazine and dictate its content to a large extent. There will be more to say about this later.

Perinçek’s other accomplishment as chair of the FKF was the establishment of Dev-Güç, an organization that was basically a parallel to the FKF. Dev-Güç was an association of university clubs and organizations that were not FKs, and so it included a broader spectrum of ideas and personnel. Its goals, however, were merely spin-offs of those created by the FKF, and despite the FKF being a constituent member of Dev-Güç, the real power situation was the other way around. Dev-Güç got most of its inspiration from the FKF. Dev-Güç was slightly more overt in its support of MDD, and started to become a front organization for MDD elements within the FKF. Dev-Güç proclaimed as its “five-fold democratic war” complete independence from foreign powers, “étatism with a basic plan for land reform”, equal opportunities for all Turks, education reform, and a populist state. (Yıldırım 1998: 169) It may also be said for this period that the positions of both Dev-Güç and the FKF were bolstered by

the success of student movements around the world, from which they drew much inspiration. (Dodd 1990: 14)

In this period it is possible to a large extent to speak of the FKF and Dev-Güç operating in tandem, as their memberships overlapped to a considerable degree and as they also participated in many joint actions. The most famous of these actions came in 1968 with “no to NATO week” and the protests against the American sixth fleet. “No to NATO week” was organized for May 14-19 1968 by members of both the FKF and Dev-Güç. (Karadeniz 1995: 74) Demonstrators turned out in force, especially in İstanbul, to protest Turkey’s involvement in what was seen as an imperialist alliance. One of the reasons given for the protests continued to be Turkey’s participation in the Korean War, in which “the Turkish nation was driven to the front like sheep to be slaughtered.” (Yıldırım 1998: 172-178) The protests raised eyebrows in many circles, as they proved that the FKF and Dev-Güç had turned into a true mass student movement.

The second major action in this period by both FKF and Dev-Güç was the protest against the American sixth fleet, which was scheduled to stay in İstanbul for a short period as part of the NATO operations in the area. On the sixth and seventh of February 1969, masses of students turned out to protest the fleet’s arrival. They marched up and down the seaside avenues of İstanbul, clashing with police. A famous photo emerged from this march of one of the sailors from the sixth fleet being thrown into the Bosphorus. It was widely circulated after the marches as a symbol of what they were trying to accomplish. The rally ended at Taksim Square in central İstanbul, where the protesters gathered for speeches and chants. Banners seen at the rally included the slogans “the peasants have no land, the American oppressors have

lots”, “Imperialism no, Socialism yes” and “Sixth Fleet Go Home”. (Karadeniz 1995: 147)

In that rally, gunshots were fired from an unknown source, although some suspect nationalist groups. The result was a panic, more gunshots as leftist militia groups made themselves known, and the intervention of the police in the melee. In the midst of this, “The police went into the center of the Technical University [that is, İTÜ] and attacked it. Here they bludgeoned those who stayed and dragged them away. They came to the dorms via the rear, and fought inside them. Here Vedat Demircioğlu was thrown out of a window. He fell down onto the street. His blood spilled like that everywhere. They transported him to the nearest hospital. From the time they picked him up he was in a coma. After two days in a coma, Vedat Demircioğlu died.”

(Birand et al. 1994: 149) The news of Demircioğlu’s death became a lightning rod for further protests, occupations of university buildings, and mass marches in which banners stating “we have not forgotten Vedat Demircioğlu” were first displayed. The sixth fleet protests became known as “Bloody Sunday” for many, and were widely publicized in Turkey and elsewhere.

The movements that spawned those protests, however, soon became fractious. The FKF chairmanship soon became a proxy war between the supporters of Mehmet Ali Aybar and the MDD faction within TIP. In mid-1968, the Aybarist faction engineered a mini-coup within the FKF leadership, ousting Doğu Perinçek and replacing him with a non-MDD leadership. (Yıldırım 1998: 195) Perinçek, now labeled as an “opportunist”, took on his position at the PDA as a full-time occupation, and continued his work from there. Having abandoned the MDD line for the time being, the FKF parted ways with Dev-Güç, withdrawing its membership. (Yıldırım 1998: 200) It was during this time that a movement split off from the İstanbul branch

of the FKF, calling itself the Revolutionary Student's Union (Devrimci Öğrenci Birliği, DÖB). This movement, headed by Deniz Gezmiş, would soon make headlines of its own.

The brief Aybarist reign came to an end, however, only several months later at the third FKF congress in January 1969. The leadership lost a confidence motion, and was again replaced by MDDists, who quickly consolidated their hold on the party. Mirroring what was to happen several months later at a TİP extraordinary congress, the FKF publicly chastised Aybar for his criticism of the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia. (Yıldırım 1998: 240) This was also part of a larger movement on the part of MDDists to gain power in revolutionary organizations, which they accomplished for the large part after the sixth fleet protests. (Yıldırım 1998: 289) It was at this congress that Mahir Çayan also became a standout in the FKF, writing political propaganda organized around the MDD concept. A split of militants from the ranks of the FKF occurred at this time to form the THKP-C, to be covered shortly.

The FKF held another (extraordinary) congress in 1969, in which the splits within TİP as well as growing splits in the MDD movement itself were manifested in the FKF. Supporters of Doğu Perinçek, whose PDA movement had become stronger, vied with the supporters of Mihri Belli and Mahir Çayan for control of the movement. The supporters of Belli eventually came out on top, electing Atilla Sarp as the FKF chair, but the victory was largely ephemeral, for the movement was subsequently torn apart by the three factions. At this congress, the FKF changed its name to the Revolutionary Youth Union (Devrimci Gençlik Birliği, Dev-Genç), and changed its rhetoric to a far more militant line. (Yıldırım 1998: 372) The newly re-christened Dev-Genç became “like a political party”, working to organize workers and gecekondu residents into revolutionary cells.

The authorities were not blind to these developments. In the midst of these operations, in the summer of 1970, members of Dev-Genç fanned out into the countryside, where they were heavily monitored by the police and intelligence agents. One of these members wrote of the situation in Kars: “In Kars the police, gendarmes, and especially the MİT [Turkish Intelligence Agency] were everywhere. After researching Dev-Genç activities with Kars villagers, they would go around spreading anti-revolutionary propaganda. The MİT held power in Kars from below. Through prolonged propaganda and agitation they could control the people’s sovereignty to a great degree.” (Yıldırım 1998: 448) The operatives of Dev-Genç were working not only against nationalist groups, but also against other leftist militias. Perinçek’s PDA had become a powerful force in its own right, and later formed the Turkish Revolutionary Workers and Peasants Party (Türkiye İhtilalci İşçi Köylü Partisi, TİİKP). It took on a Maoist flavor, turning the MDD idea into a revolution of “workers and peasants”. The supporters of Mihri Belli had organized around the Socialist Enlightenment Publication. (Aydınlık Sosyalist Dergisi, ASD). It remained true to the original MDD line. “Oath”, a major leftist magazine, published a chart for those who could not tell the rhetoric of the two movements apart (See Chart 3.3).

ASD	PDA
“Peasants are the vanguard of the revolution”	“National classes participate in an MDD proletarian revolution.”
“The vanguard of the working class is an objective condition.”	“The objective condition of the working class is imperfect.”
“Some of the un-enlightened lumpenproletariat may participate.”	“Enlightenment must precede participation.”
“Our proletarian revolutionary militants are not terrorists. We will not liquidate them.”	“Militants have terrorist and anarchic tendencies. They must be liquidated.”
“Kemalism is a petit-bourgeois nationalism”	“Leftist Kemalists exist”
“With a revolutionary leadership and a thought base, TIP could become a central proletarian organization.”	“TIP would perform a large service with revolutionary leadership, but still would not suffice.”
Chart 3.3, compiled from Yıldırım 1998: 458	

In October of 1970, Dev-Genç held its fifth congress, in which the ideological footing of the movement was pitted more as a Marxist-Leninist light. The Çayanists also took power from the supporters of Mihri Belli, installing their own candidate as Dev-Genç chair. (Yıldırım 1998: 517) This Çayanist Dev-Genç welcomed the conversion of TİP to a more MDD line, and began to move closer to TİP in its official rhetoric and actions. (Yıldırım 1998: 558) As the situation on the ground in Turkey became ever more tense, Dev-Genç came under increasing pressure first from the police, and later from martial law authorities. The movement was but a shadow of its former self by this point, most of its more influential and militant members having fled to other organizations.

The military intervention of 12 March came as a shock to most of the Dev-Genç leadership. The organization quickly came out against what was perceived as the influence of imperialism. Dev-Genç chair Ertuğrul Kürkçü stated that “they want to stop anti-imperialist struggle and deny the revolutionary movement’s legal pathway. While they do this, they speak of ‘Atatürkism’. But the basis of Atatürkism is anti-imperialism.” (Yıldırım 1998: 562) The military and the government was unimpressed by such rhetoric. On 24 April 1971, Dev-Genç was shut down, and a lawsuit opened. That lawsuit turned out to be extensive, with 226 defendants in the Ankara trial alone! The İstanbul trial amassed 154 additional names, and trials around the rest of the country had more. (Yıldırım 1998: 564, 580) Many Dev-Genç members were sentenced to long jail terms, but most of the more important members had already gone underground or fled abroad. The FKF and Dev-Genç, upon their closure, were certainly the most influential leftist movements of their time, and not simply because of their direct actions. Much of the influence of the FKF/Dev-Genç

came through the groups that split off from it and continued long after the demise of the parent organization. The study will now turn to those movements.

Çayanists and Their Permutations: The THKP-C

Perhaps the most visible and influential strands that came out of the FKF/Dev-Genç was the Turkish Peoples Liberation Party-Front (Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Partisi-Cephe, THKP-C). Technically they were two different organizations (a party and a front), but in reality they worked in tandem and most members of one were members of the other. Another organization that was the armed wing of the THKP-C was the Turkish People's Liberation Army (Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Ordusu, THKO). The THKO also mainly derived its membership from the THKP-C. The THKP-C was founded by its main theorist, Mahir Çayan. The date of its actual founding is unknown, but it has been noted that its name began to appear in publications around Winter 1969. (Alpat 1998: 318) Another publication has theorized a Spring 1970 founding. (Marmara 1995: 52)

The THKP-C started out through the works of Mahir Çayan to be an anti-imperialist group, but soon expanded its goals to include a Marxist interpretation of a Turkish state that would emerge after the imperialists were expelled forcefully. In this sense, the THKP-C was an MDD group. Çayan was one of the "inventors" of MDD, and he became the outspoken philosopher king of the THKP-C throughout its early period. A briefing given to President Cevdet Sunay in 1971 stated the army's perspective on the THKP-C's ideology: "The THKP-C sees 'national democratic revolution' as the way to escape imperialism's hegemony and a feudal work system. The THKO shares a similar outlook." (Marmara 1995: 46) This is not to say that the ideology of the THKP-C was coherent and non-contradictory. The THKP-C "program" that appeared stated: "our party's ideological-political-strategic-

organizational basis is ‘narodnic’ Marxism with its eclectic unity, ‘the most dangerous leftist sin’ as they say; our party’s revolutionary line, an international *pacifist* line, is *armed* for this and no other purpose.”³ (Marmara 1995: 56, emphasis added) How pacifism and armed revolution fit together was not spelled out. What distinguished the THKP-C and the THKO from other MDD groups is that no matter how its goals were stated, it seemed quite willing and able to carry out acts of violence in pursuit of its convictions.

In its early period (1969-1970), the THKP-C was busy gaining a small, dedicated following and refining its political agenda. This was apparently done through Dev Genç members and associates. (Marmara 1995: 53) In 1971, however, it began to make itself known through very public acts, carried out by people who would later become rather famous for these acts. Çayan was one of these, who was already known by the public for his stint in as kingmaker of the FKF. The unknowns who quickly became part of the public consciousness were Deniz Gezmiş, Hüseyin İnan, and Yusuf Arslan. They were drawn into the limelight by daring and dangerous acts of sabotage, robbery, kidnapping, and murder throughout 1971. “The THKP-C, its program, rules, and first declaration just written, with Deniz Gezmiş and his friends at the head of the organization, ...decided to debut their organization’s work by robbing the Emek İş Bankası.” (Marmara 1995: 53)

The robbery of the Ankara bank thrust the THKP-C, its leadership, and its goals into the limelight. This was followed by several other robberies (presumably to rid the country of “foreign capital”), most notably the Ziraat Bankası in Ankara’s

³ Narodnic Marxism was apparently a Russian turn-of-the-century movement associated with Bakunin which “advocated the overthrow of the Tsarist autocracy, pressed for a democratically elected parliament, decentralization of administration and the consequent greater role for local government, the redistribution of land owned by the gentry and nobility to peasants, worker’s ownership of factories, radical modernization of agriculture, and opposed the development of industrial capitalism.” It was criticized by Engels for being against the fundamentals of Communist theory. (Wilczynski 1981: 374)

Küçükcesat and the Türk Ticaret Bankası in İstanbul's Erenköy district. (Alpat 1998: 204) It was later revealed that THKO militants were receiving training in Palestinian guerilla camps, that its members were highly knowledgeable about their actions. A member of the THKP-C described the organization's military operations, saying, "each of our members specializes in a military subject. Some that come to mind are surveying, explosives, firearms, guerilla strategy, organization, camouflage, destruction, and sabotage." (Marmara 1995: 59)

After the 1971 military intervention, the authorities, armed with new powers to apprehend such militants, succeeded in tracking down Deniz Gezmiş himself, along with many of his associates, who had fled to the Eastern mountains where they would be able to hide themselves easily. Gezmiş was arrested in the mountains surrounding Kayseri on 18 March 1971, and his friends soon afterwards. They were put on trial en masse. This trial and the events surrounding it later served to lionize in a way the actions of the THKP-C and the THKO militants, who were portrayed in a sort of "Robin Hood" type light. They were portrayed as those who valiantly fought for a cause, as in this report of the governor of Kayseri's encounter with the recently-captured Deniz Gezmiş: "I guessed that he would be some mix between bandit and executioner. I saw neither. This youth was tall, very handsome, and extraordinarily clever. I asked him, 'so you were up in the mountains.' 'Yes' he replied. 'Demirel resigned, did you hear the news?' 'I heard' he said... 'So are you pleased? The resignation of the government was the intention of the youth, right?' 'No. We have no dealings with the government. We are working for a new regime, a new state.'" (Birand et al. 1994: 218)

During their trial, the THKO members forcefully announced that they were still dedicated to their cause, despite the threat of punishment before them. One by one,

when asked their opinions of the court, stated “no confidence”. Gezmiş stated “I have no confidence in the court, and I feel shame in sitting before it.” (THKO 1991: 308) Deniz Gezmiş, Hüseyin İnan, and Yusuf Arslan were all sentenced to death, and the others were given long jail terms. From here, the case went to parliament, where the approval of the death sentence met with fierce debate. The case was presented to parliament on 10 March 1972, almost one year after the militants had been arrested. (TBMM 1988: 9) Both Bülent Ecevit and Mehmet Ali Aybar found themselves on the side against the death penalty, but for different reasons. Ecevit objected for moral and personal reasons, having seen the effect the 1960 executions had had on the country. He also insinuated in his speech that the justice commission which had tried the case had rushed to judgment. (TBMM 1988: 16) Aybar, on the other hand, objected to the executions not just on personal grounds but also on political grounds. He cited the fact that most of the rest of Europe had already abolished the death penalty. While he never contested that the acts pursued by the THKO members were bad or that it was the THKO members that had accomplished them, he did contest their executions on the grounds that they were politically motivated. Openly confronting his critics, Aybar questioned “are you going to dispatch Deniz Gezmiş and his two friends to the rope? (TBMM 1988: 45-46) In the end, however, the votes were stacked against Gezmiş and company. Their sentences were approved.

At this point, the parents of the accused attempted to lend their voice to the argument against execution. Cemil Gezmiş and Beşir Aslan sent a telegram to Prime Minister Nihat Erim saying “our children’s rights having been given and having resulted in a death sentence, we hold that our light of hope will not lose in the higher courts.” (THKO 1991: 580) That hope was soon extinguished, however, when the courts sustained the previous ruling. It is interesting to look at the final letters of the

three militants, which largely shaped how they were viewed in years to come.

Gezmiş's final letter was almost poetic: "I welcome this difficult situation; people are born, grow up, live, and die without much time for important things, because there is so much else to do. This is why I couldn't be a normal man. It remains as before that my friends and I are not afraid of death." (THKO 1991: 585) Arslan's last letter was more unapologetic: "Long live the revolutionaries! Long live the people's salvation and the fight for independence!" (THKO 1991: 589) The three were put to death, seemingly ending the long fight against the THKO in Turkey.

However, the THKP-C and THKO were not solely comprised of Deniz Gezmiş, Yusuf Arslan, and Hüseyin İnan. Mahir Çayan and many other militants had escaped the roundup following the 1971 intervention, and continued to commit acts of terrorism. Perhaps the most infamous and influential action of the THKP-C and THKO came in 1972. Members of the THKP-C kidnapped Ephraim Elrom, the Israeli consul in İstanbul, even in the midst of the strict martial law regime. This came as a shock to the martial law authorities and the government. Kurtul tells of when Prime Minister Erim heard the news through a phone call from the martial law commander: " 'They kidnapped the Israeli consul.' 'I didn't understand commander, what happened?' 'They kidnapped the Israeli consul, Mr. Prime Minister.' 'Was it our anarchists or a foreign organization?' When he heard the answer 'our anarchists', Erim's face turned quite yellow. With his hand he slammed down the receiver." (Kurtul 1973: 68)

The kidnapping came as a huge embarrassment to the Turkish authorities at home and abroad. The authorities searched in vain for the kidnappers, believing they were still in İstanbul. Then, "in the end they found Elrom in the Hamarat apartments in Nişantası. His mouth was taped over, his arms behind his back, and three bullets were

shot into his temple.” (Birand et al. 1994: 226) This brutal act, taken even after martial law had been declared, came as a blow to the credibility of the government’s promise to eliminate terrorism. The THKP-C and THKO also committed other acts of terrorism through 1972, one of which was a conspiracy to assassinate the head of the gendarmerie, another of which was the hijacking of a Bosphorus airlines flight.

(Marmara 1995: 68)

The government and military redoubled its efforts to catch the militants, however, and pursued them around the country. Their search ended in the small village of Kızıldere in the Tokat district (NE of Ankara) on March 30, 1972. Eleven THKP-C operatives, including Mahir Çayan, had been hiding out in a house there. When they heard and saw that the police had surrounded the house, they were faced with either surrender (and the almost certain fate of Gezmiş and company) or death. They chose the latter option. The militants began to sing the “International” and fire at the police and soldiers. The troops responded in kind, killing all who were inside. (Alpat 1998: 187) The “Kızıldere Incident”, as it was later called, served, like the execution of Deniz Gezmiş, as a lightning rod for militants in future years. It became an “Alamo” type symbol of fighting to the end no matter what the cost.

Despite this, however, the main theorist and militants of the THKP-C and THKO had been killed, leaving little in their place in terms of successors. The THKP-C remained militant, but was less active in the public sphere after 1972. The members who had been merely incarcerated began to work within the prison system to rally support for the organization, and those who had escaped altogether published memoirs and theoretical volumes to advance the THKP-C cause in the public consciousness. (Karataş 1995: 12) In recent years there has been a new interest shown in the THKP-C, especially in Deniz Gezmiş and his friends. Several new

books have been produced, as well as a movie (“Hoşçakal Yarın”, or “Goodbye Tomorrow”) about Deniz Gezmiş’s life.⁴

After 1972, the remaining THKP-C membership forged several splinter groups, most of which were illegal, and some of which were armed. In future documents by THKP-C members, the late 1970s were called a period of “organizational chaos”, which may have contributed to the formation of such groups. (Firat 1990: 21) The THKP-C ML (See Chart 7.2 and Table 7.1) emerged between 1972 and 1980 as an illegal organization that was much more of a political party than the THKP-C had been. It produced a magazine entitled “Kızıl Bayrak” or “Red Flag”. However, it never attracted a mass following. This is due to it “not having a niche in the left”. (Firat et al. 1990: 107) The THKP-C ML changed its name to TİKH, attempting to distance itself from the original THKP-C and form that “niche” on its own. However, the organization did not last very long after 1980, and it is said that many of its members went to the TKP ML or simply folded back into the THKP-C proper.

After 1980, the THKP-C experienced a renaissance of sorts. After the 1980 coup, its members organized an underground “no to the fascist constitution” campaign, which, while obviously unsuccessful, most likely gained new members and visibility. (Karataş 1995: 61) In 1991 the THKP-C planned a more public move (in coalition with Dev Sol), scheming to assassinate US president George Bush on the occasion of a state visit. The group had already assassinated an American serving at the İncirlik air base near Adana, and was seeking a more visible target. (*Time* 1991: 43) The MIT got wind of it, however, and arrested many THKP-C and Dev Sol members before they were allowed to carry out their plans. The response of the THKP-C was

⁴ This film is an interesting piece of propaganda. It was funded in part by the Council of Europe, telling for a movie that is basically anti-Turkish. The movie only covers the period of Gezmiş’s capture, incarceration, trial, and execution, not any of his illegal activities that led to his “wanted”

“[we] prepared a complex plan against Bush...When Bush came on 12-14 July [1991], twelve of our comrades were murdered. They [the authorities] demonstrated to Bush once again that they were his servant boys.” (Karataş 1995: 147)

Still, most members of the THKP-C remained incarcerated. The only activities available were killings or protests within the prison system. The THKP-C proved to be up to the task of both. In 1996, a group of militants from many organizations protested the deplorable conditions in Turkey’s most infamous jail, the maximum security prison at Eskişehir. The group, composed of “radical Maoists, Marxists, and urban guerillas” began a hunger strike that lasted from May until July. (*McLeans* 1996: 37) The hunger strike ended after sixty-nine days when the government negotiated with the prisoners for their transfer to other facilities. The strike had taken a toll, however, as twelve of the strikers had died in the mean time. (*NY Times* 1996: A3) The period after 1980 also witnessed several political killings within the jail system, mostly perpetrated by the left against jailed nationalists.

An important group that came from the THKP-C tradition, and which occupied more of the movements efforts after 1980, was the Turkish Revolutionary Communist Party (Türkiye Devrimci Komünist Partisi, TDKP), founded after 1980 in the prison system by captured THKP-C elements. It established itself as a more revolutionary party than the standard TKP, which had operated mainly abroad for several years. The new party began to publish prolifically. The TDKP called for “worker’s and peasant’s revolutionary democratic dictatorship” and, following its THKP-C roots, called for “national democratic revolution”, an idea that still held weight in the world of the far left. (Fırat 1990: 161) The problem that the TDKP faced, however, was its illegality. It was unable to make its views known to a larger audience. Therefore, it

status. He is portrayed as a Kemalist patriot, and his detractors as evil dictators. Many of the (gory) details of Gezmiş’s life are not covered.

formed a legal front party in 1988, the Labor Party (Emek Partisi, EP). That was quickly outlawed by the Constitutional Court, and its founders simply founded another party, also called by a twist of Turkish grammar the Work Party (Emeğin Partisi, EMEP).

The EMEP program took much the same line as the TDKP and the THKP-C before it had done, but this time also attacking the mainstream parties. The “Motherleft-D” coalition was attacked because of its repressive tactics against the radical left, and the CHP of Deniz Baykal was shown to be attached to the “politics of waiting”. (Yağmur and Şimşek 1998: 8) Other far left parties were also criticized for their lack of militancy. Doğu Perinçek’s İP was cited as a “radical Kemalist” party with “statist left” tendencies, in other words, a mainstream party in disguise. It was (falsely) reported to be in talks with Ecevit’s DSP for a coalition agreement after the next round of elections in 1999. (Yağmur and Şimşek 1998: 14, 22) The ÖDP was singled out for being “indirectly” statist and using “flattery” with the mainstream political parties to obtain its goals and stay legal. (Yağmur and Şimşek 1998: 14) The EMEP, it was said, had no such designs. Nevertheless, even if it was the most “purely” revolutionary party, EMEP has not met with success in the popular arena. In 1999, it garnered a mere 0.11%. It has mainly served as a haven for old THKP-C members and radicals alienated from the other parties. Surprisingly, it has remained legal...for now.

Doğu Perinçek-Based Movements and Parties

The previously-mentioned PDA group of Dev-Genç went on in 1971 to found a political party, the Turkish Revolutionary Workers and Peasants Party (Türkiye İhtilalci İşçi Köylü Partisi, TİİKP). It was based partially on the leadership of Perinçek, and also on the quasi-Maoist philosophy that had been developed in his

PDA publication. This philosophy saw “a basic contradiction in feudal modes of production and the impossibility of remaining under Turkish imperialism. It [preferred] a ‘democratic revolution’ strategy to a ‘national democratic revolution’ [MDD] strategy.” (Marmara 1995: 46) It was originally a legal party, and came out as an alternative to the THKP-C and other Mihri Belli and Mahir Çayan based movements. (Alpat 1998: 321) After the 1971 intervention, however, it was declared illegal. Some 400 of its members were rounded up and tried. (Marmara 1995: 83) During the trial, the police and military authorities were blasted by TİİKP members with accusations of being a “torture organization” and a “political police”. (Perinçek et al. 1992: 29) The TİİKP also asserted that they were “prevented from seeing [their] lawyers, who were also prevented from doing their work.” (Perinçek et al. 1992: 71) The trial gave the TİİKP a chance to assert its ideology in public, which it did in detail. The price it paid for this, however, was its illegalization. Despite this, the party remained active, going underground with its publications and ideology. It was probably around this time that it also founded a militant wing, the Turkish Revolutionary Workers Revolution Army (Türkiye İşçi Köylü Kurtuluş Ordusu, TİKKO). TİKKO still exists today, but has entirely divorced itself from Perinçek and company. It continued on with a Turkish brand of Maoism that Perinçek soon abandoned. It is also a relatively minor group, with a small following.

A group that split off from the same line of thought as TİKKO in terms of its Maoism was the Turkish Communist Party Marxist Leninist (Türkiye Komünist Partisi Marxist Leninist, TKP ML).⁵ The TKP ML was founded in 1972, and its leader was İbrahim Kaypakkaya, a luminary in the days of FKF and a minor player in the PDA group. (Alpat 1998: 327) Its membership is derived from both

⁵ This is not a typing error. The TKP ML was really a Maoist organization!

organizations. It was founded as an illegal organization which advocated guerilla warfare and the “Vietnamization” of Turkey through a people’s rebellion. (Alpat 1998: 327) In many respects it was similar to TİKKO, which was itself a sort of Maoist version of the THKP-C. From all accounts the reason the two remained separate was because of Kaypakkaya’s leadership. The TKP ML has the dubious distinction of being called “the Turkish Left’s most divided-from group.” (Alpat 1998: 327). In its prime of the late 1970s, the TKP ML gave birth to no fewer than four other organizations. Three of these were ephemeral. The fourth is the East Anatolia Region Committee (Doğu Anadolu Bölge Komitesi, DABK), which may not be counted as a separate organization from the TKP ML. It served as an autonomous mini-TKP ML that concentrated its activities solely on the Southeast part of Turkey. (Alpat 1998: 327) It later folded back into the TKP ML itself.

The TKP ML did not fare well in the 1980 coup. It was caught unawares, and the vast majority of its members were arrested. The group was so devastated, in fact, that through the beginning of the 1980s, it showed “no viewable political existence.” (Firat et al. 1990: 168) In the mid 1980s, the TKP ML again showed a blip on the political radar when a Maoist conference was organized under the guise of Kaypakkaya, by then out of jail. (Firat et al. 1990: 169) Despite this new activity, however, the membership of the TKP ML has mostly folded into other organizations such as TİKKO and the THKP-C.

Perinçek went on after 1971 to found the Turkish Worker’s and Peasant’s Party (Türkiye İşçi Köylü Partisi, TİKP) as a successor to his pre-1971 party. While it was not officially declared until 1978, the party or its elements were in existence as early as 1971. They published the journals *Aydınlık* (“Enlightenment”, a name that has been used by multiple socialist and communist organizations) and later *Halkın Sesi*

(“The People’s Voice”). (Alpat 1998: 324) These journals expressed the gradual tendency of Perinçek away from Maoism, and more towards a Marxist or even mainstream social-democratic view. It never contested elections, but remained as a bully pulpit for Perinçek and a forum in which his followers and other former FKF/Dev-Genç members could coalesce.

This all came to a sudden halt in 1980, when TİKP was closed and nine of its prominent members (including Perinçek) were jailed along with the rest of the political leaders.⁶ (Çalışlar 1989: 10) They remained in confinement until 1984, when most of them were released. Perinçek began to write prolifically, turning out a large amount of books in the late 1980s and early 1990s, in which he spelled out his position on everything from Islamic movements to other socialists. As Sadun Aren was also doing, Perinçek was laying the basis for a future political party, waiting out the hostile conditions.

In 1988 the time was judged to be right, and the Socialist Party (Sosyalist Partisi, SP) was founded. (Alpat 1998: 291) It was the first officially socialist party to be formed after 1980, and was greeted with muted applause by some socialists and much suspicion from the military and the government. Nevertheless, it was allowed to exist for a time, and made its presence known. The party’s program attempted to create a legitimate basis for continuation in the eyes of the law. It stated that “the Socialist Party is a new party. It is not the continuation of a previous party.” (SP 1991: 7) It supported the idea of revolution of an MDD type, but couched that idea in language that would keep the party open. It declared its struggle against bureaucracy, for freedom of the press, and the right to strike. (SP 1991: 15) The formation of peasant

⁶ Çalışlar notes that the members of TİKP were in confinement not only with Ecevit and the CHP members, but also with members of the nationalist parties, a situation that produces hilarious results in his book.

co-ops and support of a drastic land reform, however, proved that not much had changed ideology wise since TİKP had been dissolved. (SP 1991, p.25)

Perhaps surprisingly, the SP and Perinçek were allowed to be represented in the 1991 party debate.⁷ What resulted was an interesting public conflict between the radical left, unrepresented in the parliament since 1971, and the mainstream parties. Perinçek criticized ANAP policies and the leadership of Refah exclusively, preferring not to attack the other leftist leaders. (*'91 Seçimleri* 1992: 17) He attacked high inflation brought about by ANAP's free market stance and decried its continuation, saying that "Mr. Özal is its father, Necmettin [Erbakan] is an Özal, Mesut [Yılmaz] is an Özal." (*'91 Seçimleri* 1992: 18) The tirade on inflation and free-market policies continued with an allusion to the American sitcom "Dallas". Perinçek stated that "this is JR's economy." (*'91 Seçimleri* 1992: 19) On the question of security, Perinçek announced that security problems were a direct consequence of lack of Kurdish autonomy. (*'91 Seçimleri* 1992: 58-60)

This public display of the left's views were not enough, however, to win it enough support to pass the high ten percent barrage imposed after 1980. The party gained less than 1% of the vote, and soon after the elections was closed by the Constitutional Court. (Alpat 1998: 291) Perinçek and friends were soon to reform, however, this time as the Labor Party (İşçi Partisi, İP), founded in 1990 as a precautionary measure against such an event as the SP's closure. (Alpat 1998: 173) The İP, as its predecessor, desperately attempted to stay legal, and has had much more success. The İP provides in its program a laundry list of Marxisms, and then claims that it is none of them, that it is "independent", an avoidance of the legal provision about advocating one class over another. (İP 1994: 8) Instead, the İP states that it is in favor of a

⁷ In this debate, three of the six assembled leaders (Perinçek, Ecevit, and Erbakan) had served time with each other! (Çalışan 1988: 10)

“classless society”, a sort of “withering away” concept that goes back to classical Marxism. (İP 1994: 7-8) There is also a notable anti-imperialist strain that (unlike the ÖDP) advocates withdrawal from NATO. (İP 1994: 21-26)

The change in name has not kept the İP out of trouble, however. In July 1998, Perinçek was jailed for his alleged support of the PKK and other “separatist” groups. Unlike his previous incarcerations, Perinçek was kept in jail this time with several of his associates. While he still managed to publish party propaganda, books about Tansu Çiller, and newspaper articles from jail, his party was sent into a tail spin and was unable to recover in time for the 1999 elections, where the İP obtained a very small vote of 0.13%. This will most likely not put the İP out of business, but it certainly does seem to confirm the nature of the İP as Doğu Perinçek, his followers, and not much else.

The İP and the SBP/BSP/ÖDP have remained at loggerheads. Perinçek has written a book blasting the ÖDP on several issues, and the two parties continue to occupy different camps ideologically. The İP has also been in ideological conflict with the TDKP and EMEP, who claim that the İP is a “radical Kemalist” party with “statist left” tendencies.⁸ (Yağmur and Şimşek 1998: 14) Perhaps because of these rivalries, Perinçek’s party is surely the weakest of the post-1980 socialist parties. The İP, like the SP and even the TİKP before it, is merely a Perinçek-based personality party, and not much more. It has not even been able, like the ÖDP, to reach out to either militant groups or the public at large as a broader basis of support. As it seems that support for Perinçek’s personality (and increasingly his political views) is fading, the İP probably does not have a bright future, barring a union with another party or the demise of Perinçek himself.

⁸ Perinçek is called the “General Command’s Courier” in the EMEP program. (Yağmur and Şimşek 1998: 85)

Dev-Yol: A “Non-Organization Organization”

In 1974, many of the former Dev-Genç militants (and some from the THKP-C) formed a group called Revolutionary Path (Devrimci Yol, Dev-Yol) while serving time in the prisons. (Alpat 1998: 89) It soon became an influential organization not only for its ideological stance, but also for its tactics. Ideologically, Dev-Yol started out as a Çayanist organization, advocating an MDD line, anti-imperialism, and Marxism-Leninism. (Alpat 1998: 89) It also adhered to a largely Sovietist viewpoint of communism. (Alpat 1998: 85-86) Dev-Yol aligned itself on the ASD side of the split in Dev-Genç, criticizing the PDA/TİİKP group as “counter-revolutionary”. (Karataş 1995: 38) These ideas were developed in the organization’s newspaper, also called Dev-Yol. On the ideological front, Dev-Yol was not that much different from the THKP-C. However, its membership of former practitioners soon gave it a different approach to militant action. The organization was loose. It was so loose, in fact, that there was no coordinated leadership, no program or rules, no membership cards or evidence of membership and a very fluid cadre of supporters. For this reason, it has been difficult for scholars and even government officials to document the progress of the movement.

It is known, however, that the organization played a large part in the violence that preceded 1980. It claimed responsibility for several terrorist acts in that era. Tracking it down to a definitive place or person, however, proved difficult. In 1978, a spin-off of Dev-Yol was produced. Revolutionary Left (Devrimci Sol, Dev-Sol) apparently started in İstanbul, where it worked mainly in the gecekondu areas in the period before the 1980 coup. (Alpat 1998: 85-86) Some of these were declared “liberated areas”, and were occupied by Dev-Sol and other militant groups in defiance of police and military objectives. Dev-Sol, while organized in a similar manner to

Dev-Yol, has been much more public about its goals and has produced more publicized actions. It is best known for the murder of former Prime Minister Nihat Erim, a killing that produced shock waves. This publicity came at a price, however, when after 1980 a large part of its membership was arrested and given long jail terms. (Alpat 1998: 85-86)

After 1980, with many of their members jailed, Dev-Yol and Dev-Sol both worked within the jail system to recruit more members and cultivate the members that already existed. The two organizations produced the “United Resistance Against Fascism”, which was mostly an ideological bridge between the two. Dev-Yol became slightly more institutionalized in the early 1990s, when it formed a central committee for the first time. Dev-Sol, however, has become the more active of the two. It claimed responsibility in 1996 for the murder of Özdemir Sabancı, son of one of the richest tycoons in Turkey. (Briefing 1999: 5) In 1992, Dev-Sol operatives gathered for a “liberation congress”, in which they formed a new organization, the Revolutionary People’s Liberation Party-Front (Devrimci Halk Kurtuluş Partisi-Cephe, DHKP-C). This group was declared a natural continuation of Dev-Sol, but also claimed ideological roots in the THKP-C. (Karataş 1995: 4, 9) It also committed itself once again to revolution, maintaining that it would stay illegal and completely outside the popular political system. (Karataş 1995: 286) This may have been a statement against the “institutionalization” of Dev-Yol, which contributed some members to the BSP and later the ÖDP.

Despite its formation at an official congress, the new DHKP-C continued in the Dev-Yol/Dev-Sol tradition by declaring that “there will be no committees, cells, militias, or foreign groups.” (DHKP-C 1995: 67) The movement’s military strategy was a “politicized soldier strategy”, which entailed “guerilla war in the city and in the

countryside” on the model of Cuba, Vietnam, and China. (DHKP-C 1995: 71, 147)

This included, of course, the expulsion of foreign capital and influences.⁹ The struggle was aimed at the creation of an ideal state: “this state is not a bourgeois-type, but a state of proletarian hegemony. It is the people’s strong dictatorship over oligarchy and authoritarianism.” (DHKP-C 1995: 150) It was rumored that after the capture of PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan that the DHKP-C and the PKK formed a temporary alliance which was responsible for a number of pipe bombs and attempts on the lives of some regional governors.

Dev-Yol, Dev-Sol, and the DHKP-C have proven to be crucial (however secretive) actors in the Turkish left. They have defined terrorism for many with their assassinations and other killings. While the government did produce results in rounding up some of these groups’ membership after the 1980 coup, many of them fled to the mountains and were never captured. Governments after 1980 have had less success in keeping the movement under control. Newspapers are still dotted with items about political killings and radical manifestos. This is most likely due to the fact that few know who exactly is in Dev-Yol and the DHKP-C, not to mention where they are.

The Turkish Communist Party

At first glance, the TKP can be dismissed as a “small, insignificant party, banned for more than half a century, being the only illegal communist party in Europe.” (Wilczynski 1981: 611) It has also been said that “organized communism never became a mass movement or a potent force in Turkish politics.” (Landau 1974: 96)

It seems that since the TKP is such a small party, since most of its members have resided abroad, since it has been illegal for most of its existence, it can be easily

⁹ The DHKP-C proclaimed itself fundamentally opposed to the Turkish-Greek conflict, and proposed that the Aegean be turned into a “peace lake”. (DHKP-C 1995: 152-153)

written off as what Landau calls “illegal, ephemeral, or both.” (Landau 1974: 112) However, this explanation of the TKP seems to discount its vital role in shaping the discourses and ideologies that flowed from all the previously named groups, influencing government policy by serving as a scapegoat, and serving as the official agent of the Soviet Union in Turkey. Having covered the early history of the TKP in a previous chapter, this study will now look at its impact after the early part of the republic.

In the mid-1920s, the former leader of the “official” TKP Dr. Şefik Hüsnü became leader of the now illegal TKP. (Alpat 1998: 326) He would remain in that position until 1956. In the early 1930s, there was a rather large crackdown on the TKP, and “almost all of its leading cadre was arrested.” (Şen 1998: 32) After this, the TKP began to institute internal security measures to protect itself. The organization became even more secretive, holding fewer meetings and using more clandestine tactics to deliver newsletters and other communications. In spite of these repressions, however, morale in the TKP was high. Hüsnü reported to the general plenum of the Comintern Central Committee in 1933 that the “workers’ and peasants’ struggle” was well underway, and that the TKP would soon defeat the “Italian-type fascist power” of the CHP-led government. (Şen 1998: 33) In this period, the TKP used the Comintern for both political guidance and money. (Şen 1998: 49) As a consequence of this, the TKP was established as a dominantly Soviet-line organization, something that would continue throughout its history.

In 1951, the TKP was again subjected to a roundup of its members, which was part of a larger wave of arrests that hit Behice Boran’s Barışseverler Cemniyeti as well. Most of these were given lighter (1-3 year) sentences, and were out of jail by the mid 1950s. This was only the first in a series of arrests that would strike the TKP

throughout its history. Often, governments would round up supposed members to use them as escapes or distractions, a policy that both hurt the TKP membership and enhanced its position as an anti-government outlet. In 1956, Şefik Hüsnü died. He was succeeded by Yakup Demir (who was also known by several pen names). Demir ran the TKP from exile in East Germany, where with the aid of the Soviet Union he established Bizim Radyo (“Our Radio”), a mainstay of TKP propaganda throughout its existence. (Alpat 1998: 326) Bizim Radyo was produced in East Germany and broadcast in Turkey from a station in Bulgaria. It provided political information and propaganda for Soviet activities. It is said that after the 1960 coup, some tuned in to Bizim Radyo as a substitute to the official TRT radio broadcasts, which were either not informative or broadcast only government sponsored information. (Çalışlar 1989: 72)

Bizim Radyo was later joined by TKP’nin Sesi (“The TKP’s voice”), a parallel radio broadcast that operated much like Bizim Radyo. Both were started under Demir’s chairmanship, and advanced further in the early 1970s. In addition to these radio stations, the TKP in the early 1960s began to publish magazines such as Yeni Çağ (1963) (“New Age”) and Yurdun Sesi (1964) (“The Nation’s Voice”). The money for these publications came directly from Moscow. The TKP also set up branch operations with exiles in West Germany, Belgium, Denmark, France, England, and Cyprus. (Yalçın 1988: 44) These cells prepared propaganda for Turkish consumption, as well as advocating the TKP’s case for legality with foreign governments.

After the 1960 coup, the TKP sought to expand its youth base in cooperation with TİP. (Yalçın 1988: 15) The “triumvirate” of Behice Boran, Sadun Aren, and Nihat Sargın worked through the FKF to advance the cause of the TKP and attract new

members. (Yalçın 1988: 15-16) The TKP in the early 1960s was heavily involved in the activities of TİP and the FKF, not through formal political or financial links, but mostly through advisors and ideological advice. Because those links were informal, however, the TKP did not have as much control over its satellite organizations as it may have wished. As the FKF and some members of TİP became more and more radical, the TKP became further disenfranchised from its original allies. In the early 1970s, Mihri Belli wrote an article that blamed the TKP for not being “radical” or “revolutionary” enough by not allying itself formally with militant groups. Belli wrote to a Turkish magazine in London “here is the TKP, window dressing.” (Yalçın 1988: 34) This came as a serious issue to the members and leadership of the TKP, who were prepared to “take its reins in hand” when Yakup Demir suddenly fell ill and was forced to retreat abroad for medical care. (Yalçın 1988: 19)

Demir was replaced by İsmail Bilen, who succeeded him formally when Demir succumbed to his illness a short time later. Bilen was more geared towards the radicals of the Belli type, and was therefore less subject to the criticism of his predecessor. (Yalçın 1988: 19) He stepped up the rhetoric on the TKP’s radio stations and convened a TKP congress in 1974 that gave the TKP a new program and by-laws. (Yalçın 1988: 47) This program appeared in Turkey in the late 1970s. It contained an interesting blend of Sovietist rhetoric and the anti-imperialist jargon that was coming out of militant groups in the same period. Turkey’s problems were blamed largely on foreign influences that “defend[ed] such parties as the AP, CGP, and DP.” (TKP 1978: 10) It was “this bourgeois American imperialism, leaning on NATO and with the support of the CIA, that drove the general’s junta against the people on 12 March 1971.” (TKP 1978: 12) The major parties, then, were in some sort of collusion with either the United States, NATO, or other “imperialist” forces.

However, the TKP also had to deal with TİP, which they had taken a large stake in. What is interesting is that the TKP seemingly disavows the actions of TİP after its collapse in the early 1970s. It states that “a legal worker’s party was founded. But the bourgeoisie delayed this legal worker’s party’s development. It was attacked by the police, fascist commanders [presumably marital law commanders], provocateurs, opportunists of every kind, Maoists, and MDDists. The grand bourgeoisie, on 12 March, with the military’s bayonets, in martial law, scattered nation-loving organizations, arrested their leaders, and gave them severe sentences.” (TKP 1978: 32) Therefore, the decline of TİP was not due merely to the actions of outside forces loyal to the government, but also to forces within the movement over which the TKP had little or no control. Strangely, however, later in the program these internal elements were also attacked as being American agents, even though most of them were just as anti-American as the TKP itself. (TKP 1978: 35-36)

In 1975, the TKP experimented again, as it had in the 1940s and 1950s, with front parties. Dr. Hikmet Kıvılcımlı set up the Fatherland Party (Vatan Partisi, VP) as a vehicle for the TKP in the legal realm. It was unsuccessful and never competed in elections, but most likely drew some membership away from the other TİP-based movements that were appearing at the same time. It also allowed the TKP a platform by which it could disperse its political rhetoric. The party was closed after the 1980 coup. (Alpat 1998: 347) There is also evidence that in this period the TKP was advising other parties that had sprung out of TİP.

In the late 1970s, the TKP experienced a rise in membership, mostly due to its newer policy of allying itself with militant groups. Organizations like Dev-Sol, Dev-Yol, TİKKO, and the TKP ML received monetary aid and other advice from the TKP in the period before the 1980 coup. (Yalçın 1988: 61) With the decline in these

organizations after 1980, however, the TKP was left without the base it had struggled to build in the late 1970s. The TKP developed splits based on ideology. (Alpat 1998: 326) In 1983, İsmail Bilen was succeeded as leader of the TKP by Haydar Kutlu. He sought to bring the TKP into a more modern era, allying it more with Eurocommunism than the Soviet Union. The party in the early and mid-eighties was confined largely to exile groups in Germany and elsewhere. There it sought to influence some of the socialists who had fled the military intervention, with some success. A split developed in the exile communities between those who were pro-TKP alliance and those who were against. Behice Boran's TİP headed the pro-TKP group, and Sadun Aren's TSİP was more attached to other sectors. What resulted from this was the eventual unity of TİP and the TKP in 1987, when they formed the TBKP.

The TBKP started out as a legal party in Turkey, and stayed that way until 1991, when it was banned and again went underground. The chairmanship was offered to Nihat Sargin of TİP after Behice Boran's untimely death, and Haydar Kutlu of the TKP took over the General Secretary post. (Alpat 1998: 314) While maintaining extensive contact with communist parties throughout Europe (and depending on their support through the European Parliament), the TBKP also maintained its ties with the Soviet leadership, despite the liberalizing influence of the Gorbachev era. Uğur Mumcu wrote in the first edition of the TBKP's new organ: "are you waiting for Kutlu to take a different road? No. Before, we were in Brezhnev's line, and before that Kruschev's, and before that Stalin's. The TBKP's politics and ideology are the Kremlin's line...The TBKP, before Gorbachev's time, proclaimed Brezhnev's politics; now we do so for Gorbachev." (Yalçın 1988, p.65)

After its illegalization in 1991, the TBKP has become a weaker organization. Many of its members still live abroad, and are therefore far away from the political life of Turkey. Nevertheless, they still hold a large influence over the ideology and practice of politics on the radical left. Throughout its history, the TKP has been a pivotal organization for the left, a standard bearer whose policies have created reactions and counter-reactions in the left. It cannot be discounted as ephemeral, for it influenced the policies of the radical left and even the mainstream left throughout its existence.

The radical/socialist/communist left in Turkey, despite its seeming minute existence, has had a very direct impact on Turkish politics. The first obvious impact comes from the actions of militant groups. Terrorism has served to change the face of Turkish political rhetoric, creating a constant challenge to state authority. The military interventions of 1971 and 1980 would arguably have never taken place if the militant groups named above had not existed. These groups changed forever the face of state action, and dictated the attitude of the state towards its people and its political life. Second, the official lines of the parties that have competed in the electoral realm have also been seen as an intrinsic threat to the system that has been constantly denounced both by rightists and leftists. The ideology of these parties and organizations was seen as an equal threat to the system. Laws and policies were shaped by the attempt to liquidate these ideologies from the political scene. Both of these challenges to state authority have had marked impact on the mainstream left as well. The rhetoric of the left was often confined by the militant and far left groups, with which it did not want to appear to be in collusion. Reactions of the military and police to radical leftists have spilled over into the mainstream political current. The study will return to this point in its conclusion. What follows is an introduction to the

labor movement in Turkey and how it shaped or did not shape the leftist movement in Turkey.

The Labor Movement

Most social democratic and leftist movements throughout the world have traditionally had a base in the labor movement. Whether that movement was strong or weak, labor has traditionally been a recognized ally of the left, as the left has promoted workers' rights, the ability to organize, and even the principles of socialism, itself based on the idea of work. However, this pattern does not seem to hold in Turkey. Organized labor has been either too weak politically or simply unwilling to support the left until recently. This study will now turn to labor as an extra-parliamentary group and how it has effected (or not effected) the strength of the left in Turkey. This will not be accomplished through an exhaustive history of the labor movement in Turkey, as this would prove largely useless and inconsequential to the goals of the study. Instead, the labor movement will be analyzed in terms of its concrete relationship to the left. Peripheral details will be kept to a minimum.

Throughout the early days of the republic, organized labor was not allowed to exist, let alone play a significant role in politics. Labor unions were seen as threatening to the established order, as they may have spawned rival parties and organizations to compete with the CHP. Therefore, with "the Restoration of Peace Act, passed in 1925, the establishment of class-based organizations and specifically of trade unions was discouraged. Unions and political parties, except the ruling party, were forbidden. This effectively ended trade unionism in Turkey until unions were again permitted in 1947." (Dereli 1968: 57) The Ottoman years had produced a fledgling union movement, but that was all done away with in the years of centralization that followed the establishment of the republic in 1923. The 1925 ban

was re-enforced by the labor code of 1938 and the law of associations, which retained that there were to be no unions for either workers or employers, and that any industrial conflicts were “subject to state arbitration”. (Sakallıoğlu 1992: 712)

In 1947, this law was amended as part of the larger political opening-up process that started under İsmet İnönü. Unions were allowed, but only in limited numbers, and all had to be approved by the government, who could also intervene at anytime and shut them down. (Sakallıoğlu 1992: 713) The law also stated that “workers and employers syndicates, in order to be a union, must refrain from politics, political propaganda, and political writings; they must not form political parties.” (Koç 1998a: 55) The law, while allowing unions to exist, made sure that as in the past, organized labor would not interfere with either the business of the nation or the political sphere. Another interesting phenomenon that the law allowed was for people to join more than one union if they were eligible. A welder working in a shipyard would be able to join either the welder’s union, the shipworker’s union, or both. This was meant to create rivalries and weaken the power of any one union. (Dereli 1968: 72-73) The law also forbade closed shops and mandatory union membership. (Dereli 1968: 73)

Five years passed until the law was utilized. In 1952, the first overarching union, Türk-İş, was formed in Ankara. It was comprised of several smaller unions, and was formed to advance the larger interests of workers in Turkey. In compliance with the law, Türk-İş was to be officially non- or even anti-political. This does not mean that it did not have political ties, however. Strange as it may seem, it was not the CHP who attempted to ally itself with the labor unions, but the rightist Democrat Party. Starting in the late 1940s, the DP “adopted the principles of free bargaining and the right to strike.” (Sakallıoğlu 1992: 713) Once it gained power, however, the DP abandoned those principles to a large extent in their public dealings, “in order to

forestall the threat of a potential growth in [labor's] political power.” (Sakallioğlu 1992: 715) Nevertheless, the ties to labor remained, even if the public posture had changed. For its part, Türk-İş in a sense had to support the DP to a certain extent, for as the DP's power grew, its government had the power to judge whether Türk-İş was in compliance with the political sections of the 1947 law. In 1956, the labor laws were put under the direct supervision of the government, an increased guarantee that labor would be attached to government policy. (Dereli 1968: 100)

This attachment was realized in a more concrete form in 1957 when Türk-İş elected a new chairman. Nuri Beşer was an old friend and ally of Prime Minister Adnan Menderes, which assured that Türk-İş would have favor in the government. The ties between Türk-İş and the DP regime began to grow stronger. Labor became, in essence, an arm of the government. These ties were so strong that after the coup of 1960, Beşer was implicated in his dealings with the government. Six days after the 1960 intervention, Beşer resigned his post as chairman of Türk-İş. (Koç 1998a: 61) He was later arrested, and sentenced to one year in prison for his connections. (Koç 1998b: 181)

In the aftermath of the 1960 coup, it was seen that the labor movement, if there was to be one at all, would have to be independent of government influence to a certain degree. The planners of the new constitution, in association with those who were left in Türk-İş, devised a compromise between those who favored a powerful union movement and those who favored none at all. The 1960 constitution and subsequent laws allowed Türk-İş and other smaller unions to exist, but on a slightly different footing. (Landau 1974: 90) The ban on taking money from political parties and unions as an arm of political parties remained, but labor was now allowed to support candidates and parties, however unofficially that support may have come.

(Dereli 1968: 132) Labor emerged as a force that, unlike in the previous era, was able to assert itself more vocally. In this period “posters attacking the ‘greedy boss’ or the ‘dirty capitalist’ appeared for the first time in Turkey.” (Ecevit in Karpas et al. 1973: 153) However, Türk-İş decided not to make use of many aspects of its new-found freedom. It declined to support any party in an official policy of “above party politics.”

This was in contradiction to the ideas of many of its members, however, and splits started to form within Türk-İş. In 1961, TİP had been founded by twelve Türk-İş union leaders, against the policies of Türk-İş. One year later, in part to appease these elements within its ranks, Türk-İş began to create a party of its own. The leadership had the idea that the new party would be a labor party on the British model, with leftist leanings and supported by a unified working class. This was in contradistinction to the model of TİP, which was based on a Marxist understanding. Seeing that TİP had attracted a cadre of supporters even in its first year, Türk-İş decided to try its luck in the same game, but with a party geared more towards the mainstream. The name of the party was almost identical to that of TİP: the “Çalışanlar Partisi” or “Worker’s Party”. The leadership of Türk-İş began to lay the groundwork for the party, but as they did so it became increasingly clear that the establishment of a party would not only spell the end of “above party” unionism, but also the conceivable end of Türk-İş if the party did not catch on. Before the party was announced to the public, the idea was scrapped. Aybar proclaimed its decline as a victory for TİP’s Marxist path, saying “they said they had changed their minds, they said, showing their trembling.” (Beşeli in Işıklı ed. 1994: 231)

Türk-İş’s problem of factions remained after its ill-fated Çalışanlar Partisi experiment. A growing number of unionists and their leaders were upset now not

only with the apolitical stance of Türk-İş, but also with its dependence on aid from several sources, some of which were foreign. From the early 1960s, Türk-İş was the recipient of money from USAID, the OECD, and the international union group ICFTU (International Confederation of Free Trade Unions). (Koç 1979: 109) This smacked of imperialism and the intervention of foreign capital to many unionists who were also members of TİP. In 1965, Türk-İş attempted to take a swing at political activity, and released a list of members who were pro-and anti-union. However, the list was carefully balanced so as not to affect any one party adversely. Both CHP and AP deputies were targeted, making the list useless for TİP partisans. (Koç 1998a: 104, Landau 1974: 92) The first attempt at a rival union came in 1964, when Türk Hür-İş was formed. (Koç 1998a: 78-79) It had a more leftist political bend, and may be seen as a predecessor to DİSK. It did not last long as an organization, but proved that the support for the Türk-İş leadership was waning in certain influential circles.

The deeper split came in 1967 with the foundation of the Revolutionary Workers Syndicate Association (Devrimci İşçi Sendikat Kanunu, DİSK). Formed largely under the umbrella of TİP, DİSK soon attracted several unions as an alternative to the benign Türk-İş. Mehmet Ali Aybar had invited those who were unhappy with the operations of Türk-İş to form a separate organization as early as the Türk-İş congress in 1966. (Beşeli in Işıklı ed. 1994: 259) DİSK refused foreign aid of all kinds, and was open in its support of political parties and causes. (Koç 1998: 81) It operated under a Marxist viewpoint, and called much more vocally for workers' rights and privileges. TİP chair Mehmet Ali Aybar stated that "our unionist friends did not see Türk-İş's work as useful, their defense of worker's rights as convincing." (Aybar 1988b: 174) For its part, TİP had a decisive stake in the success of DİSK. The two were to have a symbiotic relationship, with TİP lending DİSK political support, and

DİSK introducing a class-based union that would “legitimate TİP’s political struggle.”
(Aybar 1988b: 174)

All of these principles came in stark contrast to Türk-İş, which was determined to maintain its above-party stance. It also opened itself up to charges of “system bias” in the late 1960s when some of its leaders were awarded seats on government commissions. (Sakallıoğlu 1992: 718) The DİSK split had also opened up questions as to where the union was headed. “DİSK’s split in general pushed Türk-İş towards the right and at the same time inside Türk-İş created a move towards purity”, all of which lead to infighting. (Beşeli in Işıklı ed. 1994: 240) Some of the leadership of Türk-İş in this period advocated an alliance with the CHP, but such an alliance would not be had in the end by either side. As DİSK became more and more radical in the same period, eyebrows were raised in government and military circles. In 1970, a labor law reform was pushed through that strengthened the hand of Türk-İş. The law required the support of 1/3 of any shop to form an official union. (Sakallıoğlu 1992: 719) As DİSK did not have that kind of numbers behind its cause, it was seriously hampered in its search for new membership. It was then forced to look within the membership of Türk-İş, dragging away unions who were unimpressed with the leadership. In 1970, it was estimated that 15% of the organized labor force belonged to DİSK, while 85% belonged to Türk-İş. (Landau 1974: 94)

DİSK allied itself increasingly with TİP’s socialism, and often went further, allying itself secretly with militant and youth groups. Members of Dev-Genç in particular, “joining the peasants in a revolutionary struggle against imperialism”, began to work as DİSK organizers in factories and villages. (Landau 1974: 39) The larger umbrella group Dev-Güç also participated in such operations. (Koç 1998a: 109) The pro-DİSK activity also came against other organizations. In 1970, a bomb

was thrown at Türk-İş headquarters by leftist militants. (Koç 1998b: 72) For its part, Türk-İş was split again in 1971 by a faction that formed Sosyal-Demokrat İş. (Sakallıoğlu 1992: 722, Yazıcı 1996: 142) This group, while maintaining alliances with Türk-İş, allied itself with the CHP. However, it soon folded back into Türk-İş when its membership refused to grow.

Then came the 1971 coup. Türk-İş was of course allowed to operate as usual, as it had never posed much of a threat. (Koç 1998b: 72) However, TİP was closed down, along with all of the youth and militant groups that DİSK had associated itself with. DİSK itself, however, was not closed down. It was given stern warnings, and some of its members were taken into custody, but for the most part it remained intact after the coup. The closure of its support organizations, however, would have a damaging effect on DİSK's political strategy. In the 1973 elections, the DİSK leadership turned to the only leftist party still in operation, the CHP. They declared in a 1973 publication that "DİSK, for constitutional freedom, democratic rights, and the search for civilization, maintains that one party will be for workers, peasants, artisans, and employees, and urges voting for the CHP." (Koç 1998a: 86-87) This corresponded to the move with the CHP of Ecevit towards the left, and stood in contrast to a convention statement of Türk-İş: "it has been seen that the policy of supra-party unionism has the advantage of establishing good relations with a large proportion of both government and opposition parties." (Hale in Hale ed. 1976: 69)

The CHP and DİSK never established formal ties, but it became established that they were in de-facto alliance. Ecevit even began to publicly criticize Türk-İş for its above-party approach: "Türk-İş's refusal to put weight on politics has prevented worker's rights from being advanced. Türk-İş's 'above party' politics serves to advance big capital and the business community." (Mirkelâmoğlu 1977: 432) DİSK

would maintain this posture officially throughout the 1970s, even though at the end of the decade its true affiliation had changed quite a bit. Oddly enough, when the 1974 amnesty broke ground for successors to TIP, the DİSK leadership did not respond with outright support. DİSK refused to ally itself formally with any of the TIP successor parties. (Koç 1998a: 86-87) This may have been because of ideological disputes, but a more likely reason was that of personalities. DİSK at this time most likely housed members of all the camps, and a policy of supporting a party that would win over the support of a party that was adherent to a specific ideology would prove useful. DİSK maintained itself as a fairly unified organization throughout the 1970s, and even increased its membership, wooing four unions away from Türk-İş after 1971. (Beşeli in Işıklı ed. 1994: 241)

In the late 1970s, however, that unity and even the strength of all the unions began to fade under several strains. The first of these strains was a 1971 labor law revision in which “strikes were suspended and the lockout was introduced, thus sapping the bargaining power of the unions.” (Sakallıoğlu 1992: 723) This had been a response by the military-influenced government to change the power status of the unions, and it worked fairly well at the outset. The second strain on union strength was the organization of management and capitalist groups. It was in this period that the newly-formed Turkish employers foundation began to demand an “authoritarian solution to the labor question.” (Sakallıoğlu 1992: 723) A third strain had to do with the official stance of DİSK. Some unions resigned from DİSK in the mid-1970s when İbrahim Güzelce was elected chair. These unions favored a more radical position than Güzelce was apt to propose, and began to identify themselves with more militant groups such as Dev-Yol. (Koç 1998a: 86-87) This desertion was stemmed later in the decade when Abdullah Baştürk became DİSK chair. He often sided with the

positions of the TKP, but was sure to maintain official support for the CHP. (Koç 1998a: 88) A further difficulty was the economic climate, in which inflation and prices soared. The unions, “hemmed in as they were between restrictive legislation, dwindling membership, and lack of funds, offered no serious resistance.” (Zürcher 1998: 323)

Despite all of these challenges, however, the labor movement in Turkey did make some strides in the 1970s, and was able to influence the political arena. DİSK and Türk-İş were actually able to cooperate in some areas in the late 1970s, developing a “lasting, productive relationship” in certain spheres. (Koç 1998a: 94) Türk-İş also began to reluctantly move towards the political arena. After the intervention, Türk-İş attempted to support the CHP in unofficial statements. (Hale in Hale ed. 1976: 71) In 1976 its by-laws were amended so that if two-thirds of its membership agreed, it would officially support a political party. (Koç 1998a: 106) In 1978, it took a more decisive move, entering into what was termed a “social contract” with the CHP. In exchange for electoral support, a CHP government was to guarantee 1976-level wages for workers. The plan never panned out, but did represent a more concrete move by the mainstream branch of the labor movement to enter the political realm. (Sakallıoğlu 1992: 724)

The 1980 coup, however, stifled the labor movement considerably. Kenan Evren stated in his speech on the day of the coup that “no allowance whatsoever will be made for the activities of some labor barons [i.e., those in DİSK] who have exploited the well-intentioned Turkish worker.” (Birand 1988: 194) DİSK was hit especially hard by the coup. “In the first days of the intervention the generals’ central organ released the National Security Council 7th proclamation which outlawed actions of and took under arrest the leaders of DİSK.” (Geniş in Işıklı ed. 1994: 263) The vast

majority of its leadership and prominent members were arrested and tried in what was to become the most infamous action of the coup. It would later be written that “the DİSK trial, in that day and today, in terms of legal validity was a scandal of a trial.” (Firat et al. 1991: 90) The case was opened on 25 December 1981, and continued on for a long five years. Seventy-five defendants were faced with the death penalty. (Geniş in Işıklı ed. 1994: 264) In the end, twenty-eight of DİSK’s thirty-one member unions were banned, and DİSK itself was shut down. 264 DİSK officials were sentenced to fifteen year terms, 56 sentenced to five or ten year terms, and 1,169 were acquitted. (Helsinki Watch 1987: 51) There were also accusations of torture and even death at the hands of police and the military. (Koç 1998a: 145)

The holocaust occurring in DİSK was not repeated in Türk-İş, however. It was allowed to remain, and very few of its members were arrested or tried. (Geniş in Işıklı ed. 1994: 267) In the early 1980s, however, it faced difficult situations in a regime that saw an organized labor movement as a potential rival. At the outset, Türk-İş was faced with a constitution that did not recognize many of the freedoms of the 1960 document. Article 52 of the 1982 constitution stated that “unions...will not pursue political goals, will not undertake political activities, will not support political parties.” (Koç 1998a: 149) This had been the policy of Türk-İş all along, but in the late 1970s, it had been slowly abandoned. Now Türk-İş was faced with being hemmed in by its official policy. The initial response to this was compliance with military authorities. The compliance was to such an extent that on 15 August 1980, Türk-İş was expelled from the ICFTU for its complicity with the military. (Geniş in Işıklı ed. 1994: 270) It was allowed back in only after 1983, when that policy of complicity had faded with the official military regime.

Another restriction that came down on Türk-İş was the faction which eventually took power in the civilian government. Dereli noted in 1968 that “in Turkey, the philosophies of management and of industrial relations are...[antithetical] to the presence and activities of trade unions. The younger, technically trained managers in both private and state industry look on unions as obstacles to the effective expansion of industrial potential.” (Dereli 1968: 53) It was precisely this “younger, technically trained” group of managers that both advised the military regime and that came into power with the Özal government in 1983. They moved to restrict the activities of organized labor, as well as advance the cause that had been set out by employers’ and capitalist groups in the 1970s. This meant government crackdowns on labor activity, as well as restrictive legislation.

However, this strategy by the government backfired in a sense. After the 1980 coup, especially after the intentions of the Özal government to reform the economy became apparent, Türk-İş began to make its way into the political sphere. In 1982, when the military government was still in power, Türk-İş released a pamphlet that, while supporting the new constitution, asked that basic worker rights not be trampled upon. (Geniş in Işıklı ed. 1994: 271) Throughout the ANAP period, Türk-İş maintained a working relationship with the Özal government, meeting at times behind closed doors to discuss workers’ issues. (Geniş in Işıklı ed. 1994: 282) In the 1987 elections, Türk-İş aligned its rhetoric towards that of the SHP. While not supporting the SHP outright, the unionists published several works designed to discredit the ANAP government’s approach to the economy. (Koç 1998a: 151) In the 1989 local elections and the 1991 general elections, “anti-ANAP positions appeared in the union publications.” (Koç 1998a: 151) This continued in 1992, when, at its annual conference, the Türk-İş leadership actively encouraged its members to engage in

political activities, such as running for office. (Koç 1998a: 151) Surprisingly enough, the governments that existed throughout this period were reluctant to dissolve the labor movement by force, although they certainly had the power to do so.

In 1991, a supreme court decision paved the way for the return of DİSK. It was re-opened the same year with much fanfare from far left elements. It immediately re-entered the political realm, criticizing the policies of the government and the “soft” approach of Türk-İş to those policies. In its first congress, the new chairman described the 1980 military leadership as a “junta” and blasted the SHP, stating that “DİSK is waiting for a social democratic partner in power.” (Şahin in Belek et al. 1992: 119) However, the negative experiences of DİSK in the early 1980s were put in a positive light as well: “our unionist struggle continues. Today we are more conscious. Today we are more decisive. Today we have an influential and tested past, an honorable history of struggle...” (Şahin in Belek et al. 1992: 121) In terms of rhetoric, it was like DİSK had never left. It took hard political stances, although it did not endorse a particular party in the 1995 elections stating that it was to “stay neutral...for its own strength.” (DİSK 1996: 61) Instead, it was simply stated that “on the side of work and peace, [DİSK] gives its support to leftist parties and candidates” and that the union was officially against the RP. (DİSK 1996: 62, 63) Some in this early reformation period had suggested that DİSK and Türk-İş join forces, as Türk-İş had moved closer to overt political action. That notion was quickly dispelled by the DİSK leadership: “To separatist unionists I will say: This is the last disagreement on DİSK and Türk-İş’s union. This union is impossible in theory and in practice. This is because our view of classes, our world view, our search for politics-democracy-unionism, our opposition to capital is fundamentally different from Türk-İş.” (Şahin in Belek et al. 1992: 130-131)

Nevertheless, DİSK and Türk-İş did show resolve to cooperate when it was in their mutual interest. They have participated in many joint actions, including uniting in opposition to the “Welfarepath” government that took power in 1995. (Koç 1998a: 159) The two unions have also collaborated in several marches and protests. This has been helped by Türk-İş’s further willingness to enter political life. In 1994, some of its members ran as “labor candidates” in the local elections. (Koç 1998a: 152) Taking an even bolder step, in the 1995 general elections Türk-İş advised its members to not cast their votes for either the DYP or the CHP due to the previous government’s anti-labor stances. (Koç 1998a: 153)

As can be seen from the historical account of the labor movement, unions in Turkey have either been unwilling or unable to participate in politics. Up until the early 1980s, Türk-İş adopted an official policy of “above-party” politics, which hindered its outright advocacy of any one party, even though most of its members and leadership were attached to the CHP. After 1980, Türk-İş was hindered in its efforts by legal concerns. DİSK, while offering outright support for the left, was unofficially silenced after 1971 and officially silenced after 1980. It also represented a much smaller (though no less vocal) proportion of workers than Türk-İş had ever held. Indeed, one of the main reasons that a study of the left in Turkey surprisingly pushes the labor movement into no more than an annex is that the left has not been able to adequately exploit union support. To a small extent this has to do with the unwillingness of leftist parties to reach out to unions, but it has mainly been a consequence of the structural concerns which have left labor politically impotent. It should also be noted that the labor movement itself is not entirely skewed towards leftist concerns as it is in many other nations. The existence of the islamist Hak-İş and the nationalist MİSK proves that the left never had a decisive hold on the

movement to begin with.¹⁰ While the conclusion of this study will elaborate on labor's connection with the left's levels of support, it is sufficient to say here that labor has rarely been up to the task of supporting the left, and when it has, that support has proven largely inadequate.

The Media

Another small piece of the puzzle of the Turkish left is the influence of the media. Far from having a tradition of an "objective" media, Turkey has, especially in recent years, experienced a media that is increasingly tied to politics and political parties. In Turkey, journalists have "aspired to a role more dominant than that of active and participant journalists in the continental European style, for they wish not only to influence but to shape political regimes, policies, and the course of events in the polity and society." (Heper and Demirel 196: 120) This statement can be said to hold not only for the mainstream press, but for the radical and underground press as well. Media exposure in Turkey has traditionally been high, but more so in the larger urban areas than in the countryside. Özbudun reported that in 1980, a mere 0.6% of city dwellers had no mass media exposure, while the rate in villages was 11.8% (Özbudun in Landau, Özbudun, and Tachau 1980: 117)

In terms of the mainstream media, there are many newspapers in Turkey, all of which fight for a tight market. In the 1990s, Turkey experienced a series of mergers in the newspaper industry, creating media "barons" who sought to influence policy and politics through their multiple acquisitions. The three main newspapers in Turkey are Sabah ("Morning"), Hürriyet ("Freedom"), and Milliyet ("Nation"). These have the highest nation-wide circulation, and are said to be "basically centrist", although there are tendencies towards the right every now and again. (Heper and Demirel 1996:

¹⁰ Indeed, as recently as the 1970s the right had nearly as many former unionists in parliament as the

112) Cumhuriyet, founded in Atatürk's day, has remained in operation to the present, but has a marginally lower circulation. The importance of Cumhuriyet is that it is read by a very select group of intelligentsia. Its political leanings have been said to be "moderately left-of-center". (Heper and Demirel 1996: 112)

In addition to newspapers, there are magazines (owned largely by newspaper conglomerates) and television stations. Some magazines, such as the DSP-tied *Nokta* retain a relatively large circulation and are widely read. Leftist opinions are not as noticeable on television, however. TV stations have been opened up by the family of DYP leader Tansu Çiller (Kanal B) as well as the Islamists (Kanal 7), but there is no such station that represents the left. Some stations are tied to newspapers through common membership in a conglomerate.

As previously seen in the section on radical groups, Turkey has also had a lively tradition of a radical and underground press, spanning from the early days of the republic to the present. In the early 1920s, various (previously mentioned) communist party organs made their mark, and were succeeded by other underground papers, many of which did not last more than one year or so. In the 1960s, the publication *Yön* ("Direction") had considerable impact as a magazine with a socialist edge. It criticized the right in the form of the AP, but also came out against certain CHP policies. (Landau 1974: 63) It was not intrinsically tied to TİP as such, but in many ways prepared the groundwork for such a party to both be founded and to continue operations. *Yön* was succeeded in the late 1960s by *Ant* ("Oath"), a similar publication in that it had no organic links with any one particular party or faction. Unlike *Yön*, however, *Ant* advocated a much more militant line, and was eventually shut down by the Erim government for this policy. (Landau 1974: 64-73)

left did. (Tachau in Landau, Özbudun, and Tachau eds. 1980: 242)

These two magazines are just a small sample, however, of the innumerable small publications that came out of parties and groups throughout Turkish history. Whether these smaller journals and newspapers had as much of an effect is debatable. What can be seen from their existence as well as the existence of the mainstream leftist media presence, is that the media may be one of the strengths of the Turkish left. The media has proven that even if its core of leadership and base of viewers and readers is small, it has been able to operate at a significant level for the promotion of leftist ideals and actions. While the media's relation to the left is not expressed in one overarching publication, the usefulness of several smaller groups has also proven its worth, giving the left the flexibility to incorporate into its media presence a variety of opinions. In general, however, it can be said that the media in Turkey has not affected the left to a large degree.

Chart 3.1: A Genealogy of the Mainstream Turkish Left

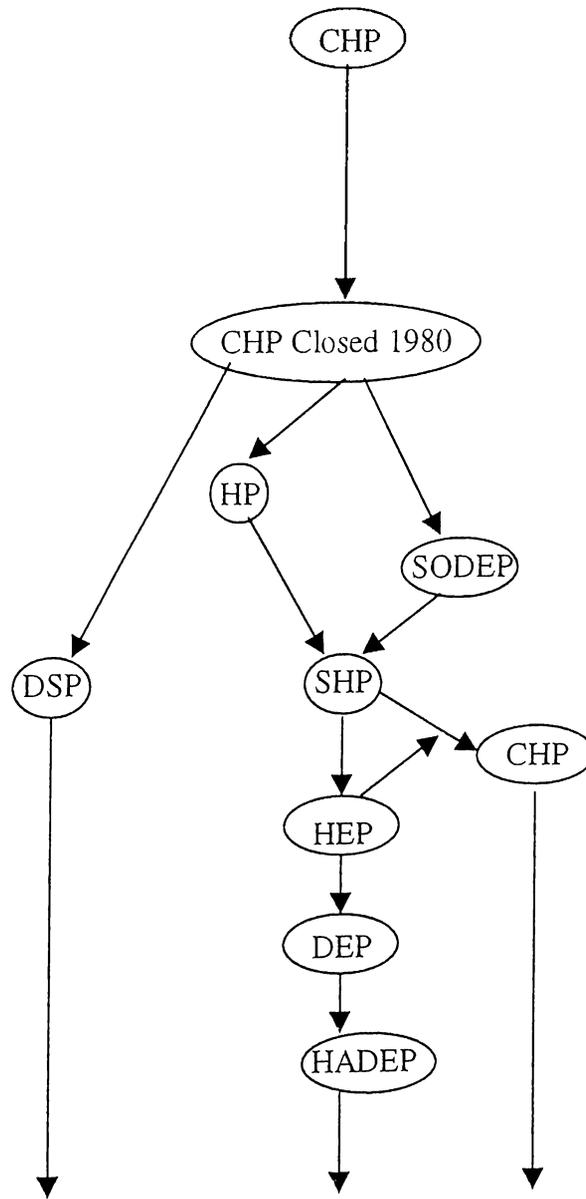


Table 3.1: Far Left Groups in Turkey

Proper Name (Turkish)	Proper Name (English)	Abbreviation
"Resmî" TKP	"Official" TKP	RTKP
Barışseverler Cemiyeti	Peaceovers' Association	BC
Birleşik Sosyalist Partisi	United Socialist Party	BSP
Devrimci Sol	Revolutionary Left	Dev-Sol
Devrimci Yol	Revolutionary Path	Dev-Yol
Doğu Anadolu Bölge Komitesi	East Anatolia Region Committee	DABK
Emek Partisi	Work Party	EP
Faşizme Karşı Birleşik Direniş Cephesi	United Resistance Front Against Fascism	FKBDC
Fikir Kulüpleri Federasyonu	Federation of Thought Clubs	FKF
Halk Zümresi	People's Faction	HZ
Halkın Kurtuluşu	People's Liberation	HK
İşçi Partisi	Workers Party	İP
Kurtuluş Hareketi	Liberation Movement	KH
Marxist Leninist Silahlı Propaganda Birliği	Marxist Leninist Armed Propaganda Union	MLSPB
Özgürlük ve Dayanışma Partisi	Freedom and Solidarity Party	ÖDP
Sosyalist Birleşik Partisi	Socialist Unity Party	SBP
Sosyalist Devrim Partisi	Socialist Revolution Party	SDP
Sosyalist İktidar Partisi	Socialist Power Party	SİP
Sosyalist Partisi	Socialist Party	SP
Sosyalist Türkiye Partisi	Socialist Turkey Party	STP
Türkiye Birleşik Komünist Partisi	United Turkish Communist Party	TBKCP
Türkiye Devrim Partisi	Turkish Revolution Party	TDP
Türkiye Devrimci Komünist Partisi	Revolutionary Turkish Communist Party	TDKP
Türkiye Emekçi Partisi	Turkish Workers Party	TEP
Türkiye Halk İştirakiyun Furkası	Turkish Socialist Faction	THİF
Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Ordu	Turkish People's Liberation Army	THKO
Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Partisi-Cephe	Turkish People's Liberation Party-Front	THKP-C
Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Partisi-Cephe Marxist-Leninist	Turkish People's Liberation Party-Front Marxist Leninist	THKP-C ML
Türkiye İhtilalcı İşçi Köylü Partisi	Turkish Revolutionary Workers and Peasants Party	TİİKP
Türkiye İhtilalcı Komünistler Birliği	Turkish Revolutionary Communist Union	TİKB
Türkiye İşçi Çiftçi Sosyalist Fırkası	Turkish Workers' and Farmers' Socialist Faction	TİÇSF
Türkiye İşçi Köylü Kurtuluş Ordusu	Turkish Workers' and Peasants Liberation Army	TİKKO
Türkiye İşçi Köylü Partisi	Turkish Workers' and Peasants Party	TİKP
Türkiye İşçi Partisi (1)	Turkish Labor Party (1)	TİP
Türkiye İşçi Partisi (2)	Turkish Labor Party (2)	TİP
Türkiye Komünist Emek Partisi/Leninist	Turkish Communist Work Party/Leninist	TEKP/L
Türkiye Komünist Partisi	Turkish Communist Party	TKP
Türkiye Komünist Partisi/Birlik	Turkish Communist Party/Union	TKP/B
Türkiye Komünist Partisi/Marxist-Leninist	Turkish Communist Party/Marxist Leninist	TKP/ML
Türkiye Komünist Partisi/Reorganizasyonu	Turkish Communist Party/Reorganization	TKP/R
Türkiye Sosyalist Emekçi ve Köylü Partisi	Turkish Socialist Workers' and Peasants' Party	TSKEP
Türkiye Sosyalist İşçi Partisi	Turkish Socialist Workers Party	TSİP
Türkiye Sosyalist Partisi	Turkish Socialist Party	TSP
Türkiye ve Kuzey Kürdistan Kurtuluş Ordusu	Turkey and North Kurdistan Liberation Army	TKKKÖ
Vatan Partisi	Fatherland Party	VP
Yeşil Ordu	The Green Army	YO

Table 3.1: Far Left Groups in Turkey

Abbreviation	Intellectual Tradition	Founder/Main Personality	Legal?	Armed?	Founding Year	Aliases
RTKP	Kemalist/Socialist	Dr. Şefik Hüsnü	Yes	No	1920	None
BC	Anti-Imperialist	Behice Boran	Yes	No	1950	None
BSP	Socialist	Sadun Aren	Yes	No	1994	SBP
Dev-Sol	Sovietist	None	No	Yes	1978	IDHKP-C
Dev-Yol	Marxist-Leninist	None	No	Yes	1974	None
DABK	Maoist	None	No	Yes	1972	TKP/ML
EP	Guevarist	Levent Tüzel	No	No	1990	Emeğin Partisi
FKBDC	Guevarist	None	No	Yes	After 1980	Dev-Yol
FKF	Several	Several	Yes	No	1965	None
HZ	Socialist	None	Yes	No	1920	None
HK	Guevarist	None	No	No	After 1980	None
İP	Socialist	Doğu Perinçek	Yes	No	1990	İP
KH	Guevarist	None	No	Yes	1974	TKKKÖ
MLSPB	Marxist-Leninist Çayanist	None	No	Probably	1975	None
ÖDP	Quasi-Socialist	Ufuk Uras	Yes	No	1996	None
SBP	Socialist	Sadun Aren	Yes	No	1991	BSP
SDP	Socialist	Mehmet Ali Aybar	Yes	No	1975	None
SİP	Marxist-Leninist	None	Yes	No	1996	STP
SP	Socialist	Doğu Perinçek	Yes, No	No	1988	İP
STP	Socialist	Metin Culhaoglu	Yes, No	No	1990	SİP
TBKP	Marxist-Leninist	Haydar Kutlu	Yes, No	No	1988	None
TDP	Sovietist	None	No	No	?	TKP/R, TKP/B
TDKP	Albanian, Orthodox Marxism	None	No	No	1980	None
TEP	MDD	Mihri Belli	Yes	No	1975	None
THİF	Sovietist	None	Yes	No	1920	None
THKO	Guevarist	Deniz Gezmiş	No	Yes	1971	None
THKP-C	MDD, Guevarist	Mahir Çayan	No	Probably	c. 1969	None
THKP-C ML	Marxist-Leninist	None	No	Probably	After 1971	TIKH
TIKP	Maoist, later Sovietist	Doğu Perinçek	Yes, No	No	1971	None
TIKB	MDD	Aktan İnce	No	Possibly	1979	None
TIÇSF	Socialist	None	Yes, No	No	1923	None
TIKKO	Maoist	None	No	Yes	?	None
TKP	Marxist-Leninist	None	Yes, No	No	1919	None
TİP	Socialist	Mehmet Ali Aybar	Yes	No	1961	None
TİP	Socialist	Behice Boran	Yes	No	1974	None
TEKP/L	Leninist	None	No	No	1970	TEKP
TKP	Sovietist	Mustafa Suphi	No	No	1920	TBKP
TKP/B	Sovietist	None	No	No	1978	TKP/R, TDP
TKP/ML	Maoist (!)	İbrahim Kaypakkaya	No	Yes	1972	None
TKP/R	Sovietist	None	No	No	1972	TKP/B, TDP
TSKEP	Sovietist	Dr. Şefik Hüsnü	Yes	No	1946	None
TSİP	Socialist/Sovietist	Ahmet Kaçmaz	Yes	No	1974	None
TSP	Socialist	Esat Adil	Yes	No	1946	None
TKKKÖ	?	None	No	Yes	?	KH
VP	Sovietist	Hikmet Kıvılcımlı	Yes, No	No	1975	SVP
YO	Socialist/Sovietist	None	Yes, No	No	1920	None

Table 3.1: Far Left Groups in Turkey

Abbreviation	Roots of Members	Publications	Comments
RTKP	Loyalist Kemalists		Atatürk's front Communist Party
BC	TKP		Closed in 1950
BSP	SBP, Militant Groups		Broader incarnation of SBP, merged with ÖDP
Dev-Sol	Dev-Yol		Killed Nihat Erim, Özdemir Sabancı
Dev-Yol	FKF, TIP, Dev-Genç	Yeniden, others	A "non-organization organization"
DABK	TKP/ML, TİHKP		Mini TKP/ML for the Southeast
EP	THKO, HK, TDKP		Closed, reformed as Emegın Partisi in 1996
FKBDC	Dev-Yol, TEKP/L		Branch of Dev-Yol
FKF	AÜ FK	Several	Gave birth to many organizations
HZ	Ottoman Leftists		Socialists in the first Parliament
HK	THKO	Halk Kurtuluş	Faction of THKO after 1980, merged with TDKP
İP	TKP, TİHKP		Mostly a Doğu Perinçek personality party
KH	THKP-C	Kurtuluş Sosyalist	Merged with TKKKÖ
MLSPB	THKP-C		Criticized Dev-Yol and Dev-Sol's "spontaneity"
ÖDP	Multiple Parties		Combination of diverse ideologies/membership
SBP	TSİP		Aren-based personality party
SDP	TİP (1)		Closed in 1980
SİP	STP		Continuation of STP
SP	SP		Closed by Constitutional Court, became İP
STP	Far left parties of the 70s		Closed by Constitutional Court
TBKP	TİP (2), TKP		Officially closed by Constitutional Court
TDP	TKP/R, TKP/B, TSİP		
TDKP	THKO	Halk Kurtuluş	
TEP	TİP (1)		
THİF	Yeşil Ordu	Emek	Closed 1921
THKO	FKF, Dev-Genç	Türkiye Devrimin Yolu	
THKP-C	TİP (1), FKF, Dev-Genç		Robbed Banks, Kidnapped Ephraim Elrom
THKP-C ML	THKP-C	Kızıl Bayrak	Merged with TKP/ML and MLKP
TİHKP	TİP (1), FKF, Dev-Genç	İşçi Köylü, Şafak	Survived through the 70s and 80s
TKB	Dev-Genç, HK	Orak Çekiç	Many members tortured/killed in 1980
TİÇSF	Ottoman Leftists		Folded into the THİF
TİKKO	TKP, TİHKP		
TKP	Yeşil Ordu	Orak Çekiç, Aydınlık	Dissolved itself into the TKP in 1924
TİP	TKP		
TİP	TİP (1)		
TEKP/L	THKO		
TKP	Yeşil Ordu	Several	Merged with TİP (2) in 1988
TKP/B	TKP/R, TSİP		
TKP/ML	Aydınlık group		Had many small factions
TKP/R	TSİP		Changed name to TKP/B in 1978
TSKEP	TKP	Emekçinin Sesi	Front party for the TKP. Closed in 1946
TSİP	TİP (1)	Birlik	Many members later went to TKP/B
TSP	Probably TKP	Gerçek	Closed in 1946. members rounded up
TKKKÖ	THKP-C		
VP	TKP		Front for the TKP
YO	Communists		Liquidated by Atatürk

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSIONS

THE ELECTORAL DIMENSION • THE IDEOLOGICAL DIMENSION
THE SYSTEMIC DIMENSION • FUTURE STRATEGIES

*How do you know
From your place in the universe
How do you run
Your nation*

*-Bülent Ecevit
(Ecevit 1998, p. 9)*

Those who research the left in Turkey must be prepared for ridicule. Upon learning that the subject of one's research is the Turkish left most observers, both Turks and foreigners, both non-participants and those who have a role in politics, come out with the same response: "you mean there is one?" The popular view of the Turkish left, both in academic and popular culture circles, is that the Turkish left is ineffectual to the point of not being worth studying. The subject of this study, however, has been why that is the case, not from the point of view of the Turkish right or in terms of external problems, but from the point of view of the left, in terms of internal problems. Many studies of the Turkish political situation, especially after 1980, have taken the dominance of the Turkish right as a given, usually due to its role in the economic realm and its dominant politicians. What this study will attempt to show is that this strength of the right in Turkey is not solely due to these reasons, but also because the left itself has not come out as a viable alternative.

The final portion of this study will review the data presented in previous sections and attempt to formulate conclusions based on it. The data shown presents interesting information on why the situation of rightist dominance has come about. These reasons are often contrary to the usual thoughts of observers from academia and the Turkish public. This study will attempt to answer its fundamental question by first giving reasons for why the situation has developed and in the process examining the conventional wisdom about the Turkish political system and why the landscape has repeatedly come out to the disadvantage of leftist element in the country.

The Electoral Dimension

The left in Turkey has never governed in its own right. From the time a true mainstream left emerged in the republic in 1965 to the present time, the left, unlike the right, has always had to enter into a coalition with a rightist or non-leftist oriented

party to obtain power. Even in cases of the left entering into coalitions, it has not had many chances to be in a controlling position. A portion of this must be attributed to the electoral dimension, to why the leftist parties have been unable to obtain the votes necessary to rule in their own right. There are several reasons for this, some that have to do with electoral strategy, others that have to do with the fractious nature of the left. This study will deal with the former cause first.

As can be seen from the electoral data put forth first by Özbudun and later compiled by this author, the left has not targeted the constituencies necessary for gaining an absolute majority in parliament. After the landmark 1969 election, Ecevit's CHP and Demirel's AP exchanged the electoral positions that their parties had formerly occupied in the 1950s. The CHP forsook its roots in the rural communities and exchanged them for a constituency based on the urban intelligentsia. The AP did the opposite. This strategy, while gradual in its yield of results, did manage to produce steady gains for the CHP throughout the 1970s. The cornerstones of this strategy were the *gecekondu* districts, which provided key support for the CHP throughout this period, even though that support was gradual in coming. In terms of a regional strategy, the CHP built up its support in the more prosperous regions of the country, in which it saw that the population was booming and that the potential for a "quasi-Socialist" party was large. This strategy began to yield concrete results, and came to its zenith in 1977, when the CHP came to within a hair's breadth of gaining power on its own.

It seems that this strategy of targeting *gecekondu* residents and populations in the more prosperous areas was successful. However, the reason that it never gave the CHP a majority in the parliament is because in the final analysis, these regions were too small in terms of population to yield such a majority. The electoral data prove

that support for the CHP in the cities and the *gecekondus* increased only slightly from 1973 to 1977. What accounts for most of the difference in the result was the expansion of CHP influence into Central Anatolia, into a wider constituency that also included parts of rural areas. The flaw in the CHP strategy was that although targeting a wider audience in the rural areas did gain the party a larger percentage of the vote, it had not changed its party rhetoric to match that new strategy. The CHP was forced to straddle two constituencies which had often conflicting goals. What happened in the end is that the CHP attempted to contain both while maintaining the rhetoric of only one, that of the urban constituency. The experience of the 1979 local elections demonstrates that this strategy was doomed to fail, that competing elites within the party would tear it apart if the ideals were not changed. Therefore, the electoral strategy of the 1970s, while it seemed to produce positive results, was in reality doomed to decline. The 1980 coup did not allow this denouement to take place, but the signs of its arrival were present well before the coup happened.

After 1980, the left has been plagued by the attempted return of this strategy, which has failed even more due to the pluralization of the left wing. The total of the HP in 1983, while it occurred in an unusual election to say the least, is indicative of how the left after 1980 would pursue the same faulty strategy that it pursued before 1980. The HP and its successors have continually based their strategy on urban elites and the intelligentsia, ignoring the rural areas to a large extent. What has exacerbated the problem of the natural boundaries of this strategy is that the strategy itself has broken down. While the left has been able to maintain dominance in the Marmara region and most of the more developed provinces, it has lost control of the *gecekondus* and the urban poor, the portion of the electorate targeted first in the old CHP's strategy. The natural boundaries of this strategy have been ignored, and as

recently as the 1999 elections both the CHP and the ÖDP have relied on this strategy. Another troubling aspect of the left's strategy in the post-1980 period is the increasing stratification of the vote, especially that of the DSP, along lines of income.

In the post-1980 regime, however, there have been two notable exceptions to this electoral strategy of the left. The first was the SHP-HEP alliance in 1991. This attempted to appease not only the urban elite for whom the Kurds were a pet issue, but also expand the range of leftist votes to the Southeast, where it has, ever since 1965, done poorly in relation to other parties. However, this opened up the left to all sorts of accusations of treason against the state, a difficult charge to defend against. It can be seen that during this alliance which was meant to broaden the scope of leftist voting the total leftist vote actually *declined* from the previous election. The second electoral strategy that has broken somewhat with the old CHP strategy has been that of the DSP in 1999. The DSP attempted to move towards the center, taking on the issues of the fight against terrorism and national security as its own. Ecevit also made advances during the race towards the Motherland party, hinting that he would enter into a coalition with ANAP if elected. This seemingly increased the viability of the left in the 1999 elections, as it would have a built-in partner. Unfortunately for the DSP, this movement did not produce results, as ANAP itself lost support and DSP's gain was not distributed in a way that would produce more seats.

Another piece of the left's electoral struggle that has caused it to decrease its effectiveness is its perennial split. In the late 1960s, TIP and the CHP battled somewhat for the same votes in urban areas, but the success of TIP was marginal at best, especially after the election law changes of 1969 made it harder for smaller parties to enter parliament. The CHP had always catered to a more moderate audience in any case, and in a sense, the existence of TIP was good for the CHP, as it

could place itself in relation to the “radicals”. After TIP was disbanded, the left had a sort of built-in unity, as there was only one viable leftist party to vote for. This is one reason why the left had its strongest performances in the 1970s, because there were no breakaway factions (until 1979) either within the party or without that would have been able to mount a serious threat to Ecevit and the CHP.

After 1980, however, the existence of two (and sometimes three) leftist parties, as well as the existence of the ten percent barrage, has created a situation where leftist votes are used inefficiently. By keeping his party separate from the SHP in the mid- and late-1980s, Ecevit caused a significant portion of the leftist vote to go unutilized and the effectiveness of the left in parliament to become greatly diminished. The DSP and the SHP have always had similar messages and goals, which can be seen in everything from their programs to the speeches of the party chairs. It can also be seen that since through the 1995 elections both parties were pursuing the old CHP electorate, competing for votes in the same constituencies. Therefore, instead of either combining their parties into one, unifying the leftist block, the Ecevit faction and the İnönü/Karayalçın/Baykal faction have been competing for votes in the same small constituency. It would perhaps be advantageous for the left to have two parties if these parties competed in mutually exclusive electoral zones. However, since the parties are competing largely for the same electorate (although each party has an area of relative strength, such as the Mediterranean for the CHP and Marmara for the DSP), the votes are being used to the disadvantage of the combined leftist cause. The appearance of the ÖDP and the İP, who also compete for these same votes, can only further complicate the situation. A further problem is the heavy concentration of DSP votes in certain districts and its near absence in others. This lop-sided distribution,

demonstrated most visibly in 1999, costs the DSP seats in a parliamentary system that caters to rural districts.

Added to this situation in the strategic realm is the point addressed in the last chapter, that of organized labor. It can be seen from the historical account of the movement as well as the electoral results that organized labor has been either unwilling or unable to become a viable partner with the left. From its founding in the early 1950s to the 1980 coup, Türk-İş maintained an official policy of “above party politics”. This was an electoral and ideological blow to the left, who needed the official support of workers to legitimate its electoral strategy and its ideological strategy as well. The socialistic leanings of the CHP under Ecevit were supposed to be based on ties with workers groups, and it came as hypocrisy when those workers groups themselves would not support Ecevit’s ideas officially. After 1980, Türk-İş became more active in politics, especially in the period after the 1991 elections. While still maintaining its arm’s-length position from allying itself with one party in particular, Türk-İş has made its unofficial links with the left a bit more formal by announcing its support for leftist causes and ideals. The labor community is now more willing than ever to participate with the left on issue politics. What still lacks, however, is the formality of that relationship. Labor is not automatically in the leftist camp. The left cannot rely totally on the presence of labor as an electoral base. The left must spend time, energy, and resources courting what is for leftist parties in other countries a given.

The advent of DİSK and its re-emergence in the early 1990s has served to emphasize this problem of linkages to “mainstream” labor forces. DİSK’s official alliance with TİP in the late 1960s gave that party a base upon which its electoral strategy and ideological strategy could be based. The two organizations lived in a

symbiotic relationship, with TIP giving DİSK political support and legitimation in the parliament, and with DİSK giving TIP ideological roots and an electoral base. Indeed, this is how leftist parties have traditionally operated around the world. The advantages of this relationship have re-emerged with DİSK's reopening. The ideological and blatantly political actions of DİSK have put the mainstream labor organizations on notice that labor must have a political bend if it is to accomplish what it means to do. Still, however, the new DİSK has not allied itself with a particular political party in its new period. This may be due to legal concerns or the absence of a suitable partner, but raises questions about the viability of such a labor-left connection.

A further problem with labor in Turkey from the standpoint of the left, however, must be its divided nature. Türk-İş and DİSK are not the only powerful labor unions in Turkey, and the left is not the only party that has pursued a labor strategy. The appearance of the Islamist union organization Hak-İş and the nationalist union organization MİSK have underscored the fact that rightist parties have had a stake in organized labor as well. While the left still has an advantage in labor in terms of numbers alone, the appearance of rightist unions indicates that the labor-left relationship must be pursued from both sides if it is to be effective. Labor must not only reach out to the left to achieve its goals in the political sphere, but the left also must reach out to labor in order to achieve its goals in that sphere. The left, if it is to have a viable labor strategy, must claim labor as its own and work with leftist labor organizations to achieve its goals.

The Ideological Dimension

Beyond the electoral view of why the left has failed to achieve political power electorally is the view from the side of ideology, an important dimension that

complements the electoral side. An explanation of the ideological failures of leftist strategy must start with a discussion of socialism/communism and its effects. The constant antagonism between mainstream political opinion in Turkey and socialist currents can explain partially a failure of the left. From the time of Atatürk onward, socialism has been a taboo political ideology in Turkey. As mentioned and shown earlier, socialist parties have been constantly subject to closure and harsh treatment by authorities. The Turkish Communist Party has been illegal for most of its existence. Even beyond this, however, is the realization that when socialists have been allowed to compete in elections, their showing has been uniformly poor.

The antagonism towards socialistic thinking in Turkey can be said to extend from the highest levels of government and the military to the average villager. This can be accounted for by three factors. The first of these is basic grassroots opposition to the goals of socialism. The existing power structure, especially in the Southeast region, is firmly entrenched. There are clearly defined haves and have-nots in Turkey, and the power of the (capitalist) haves in terms of influence on popular discourse and sheer amount of resources has produced opposition to socialism even on the grass-roots level. It is only the urban elites, who control their own destiny to a large extent, who have emerged as potential supporters of socialist thought. Student movements have also taken socialism to heart, but their relatively small numbers and radical orientation have kept that movement in check since 1971.¹

A second factor in the antagonism towards socialism can be said to come from foreign influences. Membership in NATO and alliance with the West, while controversial in Turkey, has produced concrete results including a higher standard of living and international prestige. The price of these benefits for Turkey has been an

unchanging dogmatic adherence to Western values. These values are, of course, fundamentally hostile towards communism in any form. This hostility, maintained in the government towards foreign powers, has also been nurtured in the larger populace. The appearance of direct foreign influences in the form of Western “cultural” influences and Western industry has only served to underline that point. Communist and socialist states never made a widespread concrete investment in either the material or ideological roots that could foster a socialist ideology in Turkey.

The third reason for this fundamental opposition to socialist thought could be said to be Kemalism. In the example set by Atatürk himself, as well as in the interpretations of Atatürk developed after his death by both the military and political parties, Kemalism has been placed in opposition to socialist or communist thought.² This has meant that those who have defined themselves as socialists or communists have had to either reconcile their theories with Kemalism in some way or deny Kemalism all together. The scope of this dilemma was largest for the socialist left in the 1960s and 1970s. Some organizations and parties, such as TİP, attempted to reconcile socialism with Kemalism, defending the basis of the state in parliamentary debates and political programs as Kemalist, and showing socialism to be in concert with that ideology. Many of the militant groups also attempted such a reconciliation. The strategy of merging Kemalism and socialism revolved around the idea of anti-imperialist revolution. The militant groups identified their movement with Atatürk’s, citing their common goal of expelling foreign forces and setting up a new regime.

¹ A further example of this restriction of socialism to students and urban intelligentsia can be found in the efforts of Dev-Genç to radicalize the countryside in the summer of 1970. These efforts, while taken seriously by the authorities, were largely unsuccessful in creating a larger popular base for socialism.

² Dodd states that “to the military those on the right in Turkish politics, especially when they stress the Atatürkist tradition of solidarism can easily appear as dedicated idealists—the best of youth. This concern for social unity explains the military’s deep distrust of communism and even socialism.” (Dodd 1990: 29)

however different the goals of that regime may have been.³ The second strategy of socialists and communists has been to deny Kemalism all together. (İnsel in Cinemre and Çakır 1991: 206) This view sees Kemalism as another “bourgeois nationalism”, another hegemonic view that seeks to overtake workers and their rights. The danger of such a view in Turkey is a fundamental break with the populace, who has been socialized to militantly defend anything attached to Atatürk’s name, as well as the government and military, who see the defense of Kemalism as one of their sacred duties. Whichever strategy is taken, it can be seen that the socialist and communist left has faced a fundamental problem of dealing with a Kemalism that does not totally fit with their own ideology.

This problem with Kemalism does not stop at the borders of the socialist and communist portions of the Turkish left. Indeed, the problem manifests itself as well in the mainstream parties, as they attempt to incorporate Kemalism into their official ideologies. The CHP in the 1960s attempted to integrate the reforms of Atatürk into its program, but at the same time it focused to a larger extent on the program of cooperatives and the “people’s sector” than Kemalist ideology per se. After 1980, the HP, SHP, and CHP have explicitly gone through the six arrows of Kemalism and outlined their interpretations of those ideals. However, each party has also added to those ideals with new pieces that attempt to reconcile Kemalism in its former incarnation with more contemporary issues. Therefore, the ideological problem the left faces in terms of its socialist or even social-democratic outlook is the basic opposition in society to this thought, due to a coordinated grass-roots opposition, foreign influences, and the seeming incompatibility of socialism and Kemalism.

³ A single citation here would not do justice to the vast amounts of material in the militant left that support this point. The programs of Dev-Genç and the THKP-C are a good starting point, however.

A further ideological problem facing the left in Turkey is that of explaining the goals of the left. It has been mentioned that socialist and communist parties in particular have had difficulty in producing their ideology as one for mass consumption. This problem plagued TIP in all of its forms, and may be one of the reasons for the inability of these parties to become a truly mass movement. The problem of relating a complex ideology to a citizenry which is unable for educational reasons to grasp its complexity (especially in terms of Marxism), has proven to be a real barrier for the left, especially the far left, in obtaining wider levels of support. To be sure, fault for this lies not only in the system, but also in the formulations of the leftist parties themselves. The overly complex and dogmatic nature of socialist and communist party programs has not increased their readability in the slightest. The left has not adopted the simple communist slogan of “land, peace, bread”, but has instead produced five-hundred page tomes on ideological matters. The former strategy would be much more effective, at least in the short term.

Another problem of explanation that the left has encountered after 1980 is the explanation of what the differences are between different leftist parties. In reality, there is little difference between the ideological stance of the DSP and the HP/SHP/CHP. The difference lies merely in which leader one prefers. The ideological connection, then, becomes buried in a mire of personality parties and a sort of celebritized politics. Policy seems to fall by the wayside when such a political scheme occurs. This may be another reason why the left has been ineffective, because in the absence of significant difference between the parties on the left, the leaders have resorted to a non-ideological distinction to maintain their positions.

Perhaps another interesting reason why the left, in particular the mainstream left, has been unable to capture support after 1980 is the problem of a lack of radical

opinions. In the 1960s and 1970s, the CHP was forced to refine its ideology very tightly by the mere existence of TİP. The CHP, while in some ways courting TİP voters, also was forced to differentiate itself and move towards the center, where it would naturally attract more support. The post-1980 regime lacks an effective far left from which the mainstream parties are forced to flee towards the center. The SBP/BSP/ÖDP and İP have failed to create a sufficient challenge to the mainstream leftist parties in terms of electoral effectiveness, which has caused the mainstream parties to feel that a free hand has been given to them to create ideology as far left as they desire. Such an attitude, it has been proved, does not engender an increase in support.

The Systemic Dimension

There are several additional factors in the Turkish political system that may be seen to contribute to the difficulties the left has faced. The first of these, the one that is perhaps most often cited, is that of the military. It can be seen that the military and forceful authority in general (that is, the police and the gendarmerie) have come down particularly hard on the left in military interventions and even the course of everyday affairs. From the closure of TİP to the DİSK trial to the harsh police crackdowns on communist and socialist elements throughout the years, it can be said that the left has faced a significant opposition to its viability from the forces of state and military authority. To be fair, these crackdowns have also come down on the heads of rightists and nationalists as well. However, the scope and breadth of intervention in the political system by the authorities has effected the left's viability to a much greater degree. The military and police have almost single-handedly prevented the emergence of a viable mass socialist or communist party in Turkey by arresting key leaders and activists whenever and wherever they seem to pop up. The same cannot

be said for rightists and nationalists. They have only been seriously effected by military and police activity in the 1980 election, in which all political parties and organizations were disbanded.

One of the main causes of this seeming bias of the authorities can be explained in an (unusually) perceptive quote from Doğu Perinçek. He says that in the decisions of the Constitutional Court (controlled in large part by the military), “national unity and secularism’s defense have been confused with ‘Atatürkist thought’ and ‘Turkish nationalism’. This is why the basis of opposition to ‘Turkish nationalism’ or ‘a decline in Atatürkist thought’ has become the legal basis for [party] closings.” (Perinçek 1985: 352-353) Perinçek continues with this line of thought, stating further that “opposition to national unity is the basis of abolishing parties. But this opposition, in the absence of objectivity, is interpreted as ‘Turkish nationalism’, with the final result being an ideological monopoly and a ‘Turkish nationalism’ that leads to dictatorship.” (Perinçek 1985: 355-356) This seems to adequately explain the systemic bias that exists to a large part in bodies of authority in Turkey. Since these bodies have interpreted the main goal of the Turkish state as unity, any opposition that claims an order outside that unity, or an order which seeks to modify that unity, is seen in a hostile light. As Perinçek adequately notes, however, this can soon lead to an ideological “dictatorship” of nationalistic thought to which outsiders are forced to either compete with head on or adopt for themselves. This is a deep systemic bias that can be said to exist for the left, and it has been manifested in the fact that nationalistic factions have suffered less at the hands of authorities in Turkey than have leftist forces.

This systemic condition worsens when the situation of militant groups is considered. The violence that preceded the 1971 and 1980 military interventions was

propagated by forces of the left and the right, in large part against each other. The *blame* for that violence, however, has fallen in Turkish popular opinion largely on the leftist forces. In 1971, the trial of Deniz Gezmiş and his co-conspirators served as a show trial, in which the whole Turkish nation learned the ins and outs of a violent leftist political agenda. There was no such show trial highlighting the abuses of the right, however. Similarly in 1980, the DİSK trial was held in full view of the world, the leaders of DİSK having been implicated in the downfall of the state. While Türkeş and other nationalists were tried in similar fashion, the DİSK trial produced a larger number of high-level convictions, and therefore served to skew public opinion against the left. In a sense this focus has changed in recent years. Now the main threat to the state is not seen as socialists and communists, but rather islamists and Kurdish elements. It can be seen from the experience of these groups, however, that the same strategy is being pursued with them that the military and other authorities. Islamists and Kurdish groups are being denounced as defying “national unity” and advocating a change in the existing political order. These charges ignore that it may have been the policy and ideology of national unity itself that created the impetus for these parties to radicalize themselves instead of seeking mere reforms in the system.

Along with the bias seen in the ideology of the state and the parties that enforce statist ideology, there are also more concrete examples of how the system has been formed to the disadvantage of leftist parties. The changes in electoral law, first in 1969 by the Demirel government and later in 1987 by the Özal government (not to mention the Menderes regime), have shown that the right wing in Turkey is interested in maintaining power at all costs. These changes in the law of the land have put the left at a strategic disadvantage because they have attempted to keep rightist governments that were in danger of losing their majority in power. The strategies

were not challenged to a sufficient degree by the leftist forces (or in the case of 1987, the decision was not handed down in a timely manner), and left them to cope with a reduced ability to gain support. In 1969, the effect of such a change came at the expense of the far left TİP. (Indeed, in 1969 the CHP actually benefited from the change in the electoral law.) This could be construed in a legitimate light as an attempt to create clear majorities in the parliament. In 1987, however, the change in the primary election law dictated that democracy itself was undermined, that the choices of the populace were interfered with.

A further systemic condition that the left has had to face is the almost extraordinary ability of the rightist parties to overcome their differences and unite against the left, either in campaigning or in the parliament itself. The primary example of this is, of course, the Demirel-led “National Front” governments of the mid- and late-1970s. This displayed the fundamental desire on the part of rightist parties and leaders to deny the left any part of governance. This sparked quite hostile opinion from Ecevit in particular, but to no avail. The coalitions held together for a rather long time, and were reformed when circumstances dictated. After 1980, this situation has not manifested itself as strongly, as the left has often been a more politically viable partner for the right when put in contrast with other options on the far right. The DYP-SHP coalition marked the first time since the forced union of the CHP and the YTP in the early 1960s that any kind of “government of national unity” was attempted. This notion was re-introduced with the “Motherleft-D” coalition, and may be symbolic of a new period of entente between the center-right and the center-left in Turkey, both of which viewed each other in the past as untouchable.

Future Strategies

This study has attempted, through broad analysis of the Turkish left, to show the reasons why that sector of the electorate has not met with significant success. The conventional wisdom on why this situation exists largely rests on the external and systemic factors outlined in the previous section. However, it can also be seen that a singular (external) explanation of the left's demise cannot sufficiently deal with the complex web of relations and causes that have sent the left into a permanent backbencher status. The remaining portion of this study will concentrate on possible solutions that the left may be able to seek to alleviate this quandary that it finds itself in.

1. Unity

Electoral and rhetorical data have shown that the Turkish left cannot operate effectively with two parties that compete for the same electoral base as the DSP and CHP do. The solution to this problem could come in three forms. The first is the most obvious: union of the two parties. While this has been downplayed to a very significant degree by both leaders (perhaps more so by Ecevit), it may prove necessary if a viable left is to emerge. A preliminary move towards such an action would be the concentration by both parties on not attacking each other in their electoral rhetoric (of which both Baykal and Ecevit are guilty), but rather producing a united front against the rightist parties. The second possibility is that the two parties could continue to exist, but come to a tacit agreement on the courting of different constituencies. Whether this agreement could come on geographical strategies or class-based strategies is an issue of preference. What is important is that the two parties no longer compete for the same urban intelligentsia which shows no sign of either rapid expansion or the possibility of putting either party into power on its own. The third possibility is that one party would simply overtake the other, forcing it for

reasons of *realpolitik* to either disband itself or engage in talks of a merger.

Unfortunately, this seems to be the strategy of both parties, with the result of increasing infighting within leftist circles. The further painful portion of this strategy is that it is a long-term strategy that, at its conclusion, produces mistrust between the various factions of the movement.

2. Leadership

It is no secret that Turkish political leaders seem to serve until either they or their party dies. This makes for a certain job security, but leads also to stagnation of both the individual political movements and the political system as a whole. It prevents the emergence of new ideas and viewpoints, leading to tired solutions that the populace becomes disenchanted with. It may be shown that the only way to remove a leader of a political party from the scene is to attempt a military coup! Another aspect of this leadership monopoly is that the parties themselves become models of dictatorship rather than democracy. This system usually hides under the rhetoric of “party discipline”, but in reality such a doctrine prevents the emergence of new personalities and ideas. The most recent example of this is the 1999 announcement of party lists, in which a score of deputies were cut from their parties in view of their potentially varying viewpoints. This leads not only to stagnation within parties, but also results in the creation of more parties, as the disaffected parliamentarians resign to form their own smaller political factions.

The solution to this, however, must not be worse than the previous situation. A regime of constant leadership turnover could turn out to be equally as disastrous. Nevertheless, a periodic change in leadership would be highly beneficial for the political system in terms of its ability to incorporate changes in the ideological and political landscape. Whether this could be accomplished through an amendment to

the political parties law (which may be considered undemocratic) or through the grassroots efforts of backbenchers or members within the parties is again a matter of preference. What is certain, however, is that if the left (or even the right, for that matter) is to adequately incorporate change in the political world, it must be prepared to change its leadership. The resignation (forced or otherwise) of Deniz Baykal is a step in the right direction.

3. Electoral Strategy

It has been shown that the strategy of attracting the urban intelligentsia to the left has ended in failure. This is due to the natural boundaries of such a strategy, the number of voters of such a profile is simply too low. This does not mean abandoning the urban intelligentsia altogether, but just means that this intelligentsia base must be complemented by a broader range of voters. The left must build a broader coalition if it is to obtain power on its own terms. This necessarily means changing electoral rhetoric and perhaps ideology altogether. There are several possibilities as to what form this change in strategy could take. In terms of geography and income, an expansion into the middle-income regions of the Mediterranean and Central Anatolia would be beneficial for the left. A strategy based on these regions would call for land reform (always a pet issue) and agricultural subsidies, but may also have to focus on morality and religious issues, which the left may be uncomfortable adopting.

A strategy that may work better for the left, however, may be a class-based strategy. In this case, the left would have its campaigns focus on the haves and have-nots issue. Geographically, this strategy would focus on the southeastern region and eastern Anatolia. There are risks in this strategy, however. Any ties the left would forge with Kurdish elements could put it in legal jeopardy and alienate voters in the larger cities. Therefore, if this strategy is to be pursued, it must be strictly on a class

basis, and never on an ethnic basis. The populations are significant enough in the eastern portion of the country that a “west-east” coalition may prove to be a viable strategy. The ideology of it would also be a slightly better fit for the left, as it would be able to concentrate more on the social-democratic dimensions of its plan.

One thing is for certain, and that is that if the left is to be successful in Turkey, it must move closer to the center. The simple fact that a vast corps of voters exists near to the center-right dictates such a move. There is a dedicated far left in Turkey, but it cannot contribute more than around five percent to any campaign. The center is where the votes are, and a strategy that seeks to obtain these votes will keep its party in good stead. It seems as though Ecevit’s DSP has discovered this in the 1999 cycle, creating informal links with ANAP for a possible post-election coalition. The DSP campaign has also focused more on national security issues, usually an issue that is dominated by the right. This is a sensible way to take a portion of the center, and will undoubtedly lead to a larger share of the electoral pie. The CHP’s tired strategy of urban votes is untenable, especially in a country with a ten percent barrage. There simply are not enough votes in the cities to make the formula work.

4. Ideology

Changes in party ideology are always contentious, but the past and present situation of the left has proven that such a change is warranted, even if the changes are minor. One change that may benefit the left is the discovery of environmentalism. The worsening quality of the air in Turkey’s major cities, as well as the water situation, make for good political issues that cater to the population’s concerns about health and welfare. Environmental issues in Turkey seem to have been concentrated mainly in races for local mayorships. However, the degree of centralization in the Turkish system often creates local authorities who are unable to turn those promises

into action. A national party that actively promoted environmental concerns could reap political capital that seems to have been largely untouched in Turkey. This discovery would seem to complement the leftist ideology in existence, and may draw in more rural voters who would be concerned about the deteriorating quality of the environment.

Another issue that the left could benefit from is that of decentralization. The power in Turkey is highly concentrated in the central government, even though a grassroots movement at the municipal level for more power started in the 1980s. By promoting the advent of more autonomous municipal and regional authorities, the left could promote efficiency and net savings for the country. This strategy could intrinsically (though perhaps not explicitly) promote a more autonomous regime for the southeast. This would also help the left to gain more support in medium and smaller sized cities, whose administrations are not yet as independent as the larger cities have been allowed to become. The urban strategy would be widened to a much larger base.

In concord with this could come movement on the issue that is the largest and most difficult to capitalize on, that of inflation. The existence of double and often triple digit annual inflation in Turkey hurts the average citizen tremendously. The constant increases in prices around the country have made an unstable currency a way of life in Turkey. The prominence of five million lira bills points to a real difficulty in government financial policy. The policies that have maintained such an order benefit a small (yet important) section of society. As part of a populist program, the left could gain a serious amount of support with a workable program to get inflation under control. The creation of the left as the “financially responsible” party would also be a boon for party support. The difficulty this strategy faces is the staunch opposition of

the supporters of inflation, as well as the large unemployment figures that may accompany such a move. The dangers in this policy are many, but the rewards are also large. A leftist strategy that would gradually phase in anti-inflationary moves or somehow compensate the losers in such a scenario would have to be considered before such a move was accomplished.

A Future of Possibilities

Mihri Belli has written that the left in Turkey “has no destiny”. (Belli 1996: 114) At many times in the history of the left, and arguably in its present position, this statement has been true. The left has always seemed to be a minor player or spoiler in the Turkish political system. It has been unable to garner support, whether through faulty electoral strategy, ideological problems, or systemic biases. This situation has produced a sort of malaise in the left, the idea that the left will never gain power, that its issues will never be dealt with. Indeed, this malaise has infected foreign views on the subject as well. Academics seem to take for granted that the regime in Turkey will always be rightist, that the left can do little or nothing to change the situation.

What this study has proven, however, is that the responsibility for changing that situation may lie in the hands of the left itself. The constant underdog status of the Turkish left has not been entirely due to unconquerable hurdles imposed from the outside. In fact, the internal reasons for the failure of the left are compelling. The consequences of such a realization are twofold. First, the prevailing attitudes towards rightist dominance in Turkey must become more balanced, including the unintended complicity in such a regime on the part of the left. Explanations of rightist dominance based solely on economy, foreign relations, or military ties have ignored the part the left has played in the dominance of the right. Second, the left must view its situation not as one that is inescapable, but one that is full of possibilities. The cost of these

possibilities must be recognized and carefully weighed, but they must not be viewed as insurmountable.

The future of the left in Turkey, as it has often been throughout the years, has great potential. The question remains as to whether that potential, that “destiny” can be achieved. TIP chair Mehmet Ali Aybar stated in his speech defending Deniz Gezmiş and company that “without the left, democracy is impossible”. (*TBMM* 1988: 45-46) This may be true, but the left itself must step up to that duty if it is to make itself a viable force by which Turkish democracy can thrive into the next century. The value of a balanced regime is great for Turkey, which often faces the difficulty of a lopsided regime. The challenge that remains for the left is the creation of a viable alternative to the existing order, one that will take Turkey into a future that, like that of the left, is full of possibilities.

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*If you think of it in terms of Spinoza, it makes sense.
But if you think of it in terms of reality, it doesn't work.*

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⁴ This book is officially anonymous, but is signed at the end by all of the defendants in the TİİKP trial, the first (and principle) of which is Doğu Perinçek. Since he is the probable author anyway, I attribute it to him.

⁵ This transliteration is not a joke. This is really how it is spelled in the title.

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APPENDIX ONE

The regions that I used to define my regional vote totals are based on DIE data and are as follows. Provinces in parenthesis are regions that were split off after 1991. Note that these have been included in the regional totals, but not in the development group totals.

Marmara

Balıkesir, Bilecik, Bursa, Çanakkale, Edirne, İstanbul, Kırklareli, Kocaeli, Sakarya, Tekirdağ, (Yalova)

Aegean

Afyon, Aydın, Denizli, İzmir, Kütahya, Manisa, Muğla, Uşak

Mediterranean

Adana, Antalya, Burdur, Hatay, Isparta, İçel, Maraş, (Osmaniye)

Black Sea

Amasya, Artvin, Bolu, Çorum, Giresun, Gümüşhane, Kastamonu, Ordu, Rize, Samsun, Sinop, Tokat, Trabzon, Zonguldak, (Bayburt, Bartın)

Central Anatolia

Ankara, Çankiri, Eskişehir, Kayseri, Kırşehir, Konya, Nevşehir, Niğde, Sivas, Yozgat, Kırıkkale, Aksaray, (Karaman)

Southeast Anatolia

Adıyaman, Diyarbakır, Gaziantep, Mardin, Siirt, Urfa, (Batman, Şırnak, Kilis)

East Anatolia

Ağrı, Bingöl, Bitlis, Elazığ, Erzincan, Erzurum, Hakkari, Kars, Malatya, Muş, Tunceli, Van, (Iğdır)

APPENDIX TWO

Data about the gecekondü factor has not been relegated to an appendix because it is not important. On the contrary, it may in some of these elections be the most important constituency to examine. It is the nature of the gecekondü data, specifically the definition of a gecekondü, that makes analysis potentially problematic. These difficulties will be examined here briefly. First, many scholars and government officials have studied gecekondus in their works, but the definition of a gecekondü is never explicitly stated. The synonyms of “squatter housing” and “slums” are frequently used, but are never defined in terms of hard data such as income, and are rarely even defined in terms of location. Therefore, it is difficult to analyze election data in terms of gecekondus if one cannot find out what, or even where, a gecekondü is.

Second, since the problem of definition exists, the scholars who do use gecekondus in their works are either tied to the definitions that already exist or are forced to compile a list of gecekondus based on either historical records or rhetorical data.¹ Most scholars who did their work in the 1970s (Özbudun is included in this category) used the works of Ruşen Keleş, the main Turkish authority on the subject of gecekondus and urbanization in general. He did studies in 1969 and 1972 on the gecekondus of İzmir and Ankara. Those works have a list and maps of the districts that are said to be gecekondus. The problem is that these lists and maps are based on Keleş’s own observations and rhetorical data, not any objective condition.

Third, a huge problem that exists for the student of gecekondus is the lack of data that would be able to establish such an objective condition for analysis. The State

¹ I ran across a study of gecekondü women by a Turkish ministry that took a representative sample of “known gecekondus”. It listed the sample neighborhoods, but there was no mention of how they were

Statistics Institute (Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü DİE) publishes and has published data on income levels in Turkey for its whole existence. However, it only does so at the level of province (il), not at the level of neighborhood or even city. Election statistics are as specific as the ballot-box level, but cannot be correlated with other data. Therefore, there is no micro-level information by which one might establish a qualification of the term “gecekondu”.

Fourth, it may be fine to use Keleş’s 1969 and 1972 rhetorical and observational data about gecekondu...if the situation was static. However, most observers of gecekondu note that they are constantly in motion, changing status on sometimes a yearly basis. Government policies have legitimated some of these gecekondu, de-legitimated others, and others have been developed. Therefore there is a constant process of building, tearing down, and building in the midst of what exists. What was a gecekondu in 1973 may not be one in 1980. In terms of the development of gecekondu, a further problem arises when one considers the type of transformation that takes place. In some gecekondu areas high rise apartment buildings have been built into which middle and upper class families have moved in. These neighborhoods (and their voting patterns) do not remain in the category of “urban poor” but become a sort of hybrid between urban poor and urban rich.

Therefore, can the old data be relied upon? Also, what is the advantage of showing gecekondu votes, if all these problems exist? The answer to the first question can only be that since there is no possibility of establishing gecekondu data through income statistics, then rhetorical and observational data, however biased, must be used. There is no other alternative with the tools the researcher has available. The second question is more difficult to answer. Part of the solution may be found

selected as gecekondu. Neither was the list a complete catalog of gecekondu that other researchers could use.

Özbudun's works. Based on the data culled from Keleş, Özbudun found a significant correlation between living in a gecekondu and a certain voting pattern. Those who won the gecekondus won the elections. That established gecekondus as significant, but also established problems for those who would come after, those that are listed above. Any study that examines voting patterns in Turkey now seems nearly incomplete if the gecekondu vote is not examined, but the analysis of that vote is dependent on the solution to the above factors. I have attempted to get around these as much as possible, and in the next section I will show how this attempt was made. The data was placed in an appendix, however, so that it could be discounted from the study if the above problems constitute a methodological quandary from which it is impossible to escape.

Skimming through the works on gecekondus, the only lists of districts that exist are either in Keleş's works of 1969 and 1972, or are derived from them. These lists are too out of date to use past 1980, when significant changes occurred in gecekondu policy and many were developed into middle or even upper class neighborhoods. The most recent work by Keleş, *Kentleşme Politikası* (1993), has a rather offhand reference to the gecekondu districts in Ankara and İstanbul. Districts in İzmir are not mentioned. He lists these districts in what is probably not intended to be a complete catalog. They are also simply referred to as "known gecekondus", and are not connected with any income distinction data. Unfortunately, the districts listed do not all correspond with the electoral districts used by the Turkish government, and some were created as electoral districts in the 1991 election. What I have done is taken those districts that do correspond with Keleş's list and compiled them back from the 1983 election.²

² There is an explicit assumption here, one that I believe is safe to make, that these districts were not upper class districts before they became gecekondus.

	CL 1977	CL 1983	CL 1987	CL 1991	CL 1995
Turkey	41.40%	30.50%	33.30%	31.60%	29.50%
Ankara	51.30%	29.70%	35.70%	35.10%	33.60%
A. Gecekondu	50.40%	28.80%	34.65%	32.40%	31.25%
İstanbul	58.20%	34.00%	22.77%	34.82%	30.00%
İ. Gecekondu	57.97%	43.50%	41.10%	36.16%	34.26%

1977 was the key year in the history of elections

for the left, when it received its highest total. These figures are born out in the gecekondu data as well, but indicate something slightly different from what Özbudun observed in 1973. The gecekondu vote actually shrank in 1977, ending up at nearly the same level that it was at in the city as a whole. This suggests that the CHP in 1977 made up for a slight decrease in the gecekondu vote with predominance in the Central Anatolian region.

The 1983 data for the HP indicate a split result. In Ankara, the gecekondu vote is almost the same as that in the whole of Turkey and Ankara, which nevertheless indicates a massive defection from the left since the 1970s, when the CHP was winning the gecekondu with more than seventy percent of the vote.³ In İstanbul, however, the gecekondu vote still represents a nine point advantage over the rest of the city. It can also be seen in the İstanbul data, however, that there is a weakening of the leftist vote in 1983.

In 1987, the data for Ankara remains largely the same. The leftist vote in the city as a whole rises, and the gecekondu are part of that trend, maintaining a position just behind the vote in the city as a whole. In İstanbul, however, a marked difference appears between the gecekondu districts and the city as a whole. The gecekondu support for the left is nearly twice as high as that for the rest of the city, a result that is difficult to understand. The intuitive answer to who should have dominated in the gecekondu in 1987 would be ANAP. They were in the best position to divide the spoils of government, to address the “instrumental” concerns of the gecekondu

³ The data is compiled from DiE 1998 by the author. CL=Combined Left. The 1995 figures contain the HADEP vote.

residents. The difference between the Ankara and İstanbul totals indicates that there may be another factor that is not apparent, but which accounts for the difference between the two cities.

In 1991, the data seems to come back to a more established pattern. The gecekondu vote in both Ankara and İstanbul comes close to the average, both of those averages being slightly higher than that of the rest of the nation. The fact that the combined vote of the left has been reduced to a mere 35% or so, however, indicates that the left, in the ten years since the 1977 election, lost half of its support in the gecekondus. It can be seen from the data that the main party that gained from the left's loss was the RP, which began to show enormous strength in gecekondu areas. As in the 1969 and 1973 elections, gecekondu voters were switching their votes directly from a party of the left to a party of the right.

In 1995, the trend holds. Support for the left in the gecekondus of Ankara and İstanbul remains flat, slightly beating the average for the cities and the nation, but remaining well below support levels in the late 1970s. What is particularly interesting in the 1995 statistics is the HADEP vote. Intuitively, HADEP would get a larger percentage of the vote in the slums of the big cities, where they have been said to flee from the Southeastern region's oppressions. However, the electoral data does not seem to bear that out. Support for HADEP in Ankara as well as its gecekondus is half of its national average. In İstanbul it is slightly higher, but never more than 7% of the gecekondu or overall city vote. The 1999 election data was not available at such a detailed level at the time of publication.

If the data in this appendix is accepted as valid, what conclusions can be drawn from it? The main conclusion seems to be that the left, starting with the 1983 election and continuing after that, lost over half its support in the gecekondu areas. This is

most likely due to the change in the type of leftist party that competed in the 1980s and 1990s. The CHP of the 1970s, with its legacy as a statist party and concentration of leadership, was well positioned to cater to the votes of instrumental gecekondu voters. However, the social democratic parties of the 1980s and 1990s, despite being controlled either implicitly (HP) or explicitly (DSP) by most of the same personalities, geared their rhetoric towards urban elites and middle class workers, neither of which lived in gecekondus. The parties were also stripped of a party history to which they could point. Another possible reason for the left's decline in the 1980s could be that they were not in power, and therefore unable to distribute the spoils of government to the gecekondu areas.

If the left is to be successful in the gecekondu areas (and indeed, it has been seen that the gecekondus may be the key to the nation as a whole), then there are several changes that need to occur. First, the left must become more practical in its rhetoric, appealing to the concrete concerns of gecekondu residents. Second, the left must put itself in a position to demonstrate that it can distribute adequately government wealth. This may come in holding local government posts. Third, the gecekondus must be consciously placed into the strategy of the left if it is to apply the first two suggestions. Whatever the outcome, it is evident from the data available that the left has neglected the gecekondus as a base of building support in the 1980s and 1990s.