ROLE OF THE MILITARY IN TURKISH POLITICS: CASE OF THE 1980 MILITARY COUP

by

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ABSTRACT

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1980 military coup d'état was a rupture in Turkish political system and society, in range and consequences comparable at least with the transition to parliamentary democracy in 1946. The causes of the coup were manifold: a malfunctioning parliamentary democracy and weak governments were not able to deal with political terrorism and severe economic crisis. Meanwhile, a switch in the Cold War balance of powers upped the strategic importance of Turkey for NATO and the US, which became impatient for stability in Turkey. A further cause of the coup was a peculiar political role of the military in Turkey. This thesis explores the nature and worldview of the Turkish military, from the Republican beginnings until 1980. The military's ideological doctrine, Kemalism, is a variant of corporatist ideology, a political ideology opposed to both modern western liberalism and socialism/communism. An ideal society for the military is an orderly, harmonious society, with interests of the nation above individual interests. Although Kemalism demanded that Turkey adopts western institutions, common points with liberalism are fairly sporadic and accidental, and democratic ideal is subordinate to corporatist goals. This explains the paradox why the military has claimed, on one hand, that they are protectors of democracy, while on the other hand they have intervened and suspended democracy three times. The 1980 intervention manifested the military's doctrine in an exemplary fashion: they limited the scope of freedom for education institutions and press, and increased the influence of military bodies over civilian sphere.

ÖZET

ORDUNUN TÜRK SİYASETİNDEKİ ROLÜ: 1980 ASKERİ DARBESİ

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1980 askeri darbesi, etkileri ve sonuçları bakımından Türk siyaset sistemi ve toplumunda 1946'da parlamenter sisteme geçiste yaşanılana benzer bir kırılma noktası teşkil etti. Darbenin nedenleri muhtelifti: aksak işleyen parlamenter demokrasi ve zayıf hükümetler siyasi terörizm ve ciddi ekonomik krizle başa çıkamadı. Soğuk Savaş döneminde kuvvetler dengesinde yaşanan değişim sonrasında NATO ve Amerika kendileri icin stratejik önemi artan Türkiye'nin bir an önce istikrara kavuşması konusunda sabırsızdılar. Darbenin bir nedeni de Türkiye'de ordunun siyasetteki özel rolü idi. Bu tez, Cumhuriyet'in başından 1980'lere kadar Türk ordusunun niteliğini ve dünya görüşünü incelemektedir. Ordunun ideolojik doktrini olan Kemalizm, korporatist ideolojinin bir başka biçimde tezahür etmiş biçimidir. Hem modern Batı liberalizmine hem de sosyalizm/komunizme karşı bir ideolojidir. Ordu için ideal toplum, itaatli, uyumlu, milli çıkarlarını kişisel çıkarların üstünde tutan bir toplumdur. Kemalizmin Türkiye'nin batı kurumlarını örnek alma ilkesine rağmen liberalizmin uygulanışı düzensiz ve tesadüfidir. Demokratik idealler ise korporatist hedeflerin yanında ikincil konumdadır. Bu da demokratisin koruyucusu olduğunu iddia eden ordunun demokrasiye üç defa müdahale edip onu kesintiye uğratmasındaki çelişkiyi açıklar. 1980 darbesi ordunun doktrinini açıkça göstermiştir: Ordu, eğitim kurumlarının ve basının özgürlük alanlarını daraltıp, askeri birimlerin sivil alandaki etkisini arttırmıştır.

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INTRODUCTION

After more then 30 years, the 1980 military coup still flames controversies and discussions in the public and media in Turkey. Not without reason: Turkey today, its society and basic institutions such as the constitution or the laws regarding democratic procedures, is largely a creation of the 1980-83 military regime. After 1980 we talk about the Third Turkish Republic, and the associated so-called new Ataturkisation of Turkish society. It is a society fundamentally different from pre 1980-Turkey: a society in which basic institutions such as education, media and political system were restructured in accordance with the isolat0ionist, nationalist, secularist, in one word, Ataturkist principles, principles that had become looser in the three decades preceding 1980. In this sense, the 1980 coup represents a rupture in the republican history of Turkey, in range and consequences comparable at least with the transition from one-party rule to democracy that took place in 1946.

The aim of this thesis is to explore historically and in a more general sense the role of the military in Turkish politics (particularly after democracy was introduced): we try to dwell into the structure and world outlook of the military in order to explain what were the inner motives of the military that made it leave its principle domain – security – and engage in politics, and break up and suspend democracy three times. Therein, the focus is on the 1980 coup because of our initial assumption that the 1980 coup demonstrated better than any other intervention preceding it the power and socio-political influence that the military holds over society and politics in Turkey. This assumption is based on the fact that, firstly, the 1980 military regime lasted longer than those of 1960 and 1971, and implemented a larger number of fundamental reforms regarding politics and economy. Secondly, the military ruled almost entirely on its own, with no assistance or a working coalition with any of the existing political parties (unlike the previous two interventions); thus, it is in this

coup that the worldview and political outlook of the military can be observed at its purest. And thirdly, it was the last direct military coup that Turkey has had, with effects that are easily discernable until the early 2000s, and to a significant extent still today. Our analysis extends from the last few years prior to the intervention, focusing on the developments in politics, economy, civil society and the military, then deals with the years of the military regime in which social and economic reforms were implemented, and ends with the return to civilian regime that took place in November 1983.

PART I

THE TURBULENT 1970s: SETTING GROUND FOR A MILITARY COUP

> *"It's all very well to talk about not taking sides and being above everything! Is that possible in this country? We're forced to make choices. To choose between political parties we don't believe in… Which one can we choose? /.../ Should one go down to the level of the people and struggle side by side with them? Should one be a milk-and-water Social Democrat or a full-blown revolutionary? Or should one join a cell in the underground movement or what? Just let me do what I'm best at. I'd like to be helpful in an advisory capacity… But no, that's not allowed. By either side…"*
>
> *Adalet Ağaoğlu, Curfew*

The First Part aims to analyze the political and social developments before the actual coup, inside Turkey and internationally, trying to focus on the factors that brought Turkish economy and society into such conditions in which a military takeover became possible and, according to some, even desirable and legitimate as a means to end the social turmoil and bring economy back to order. It is divided into six chapters. The first chapter analyzes developments on the political scene; the second focuses more on political happenings within the civil society, with emphasis on the issue of political terrorism; the third chapter explains what governmental policies and external influences led to the economic crisis; the following chapter talks about the position of Turkey in international relations; the fifth chapter is more extensive and represents a slight digression, analyzing the hierarchical structure of the Turkish military, the evolution of its ideological doctrine, and its role in politics before 1980; the six chapter rounds up the events leading to the 12 September coup and summarizes the immediate perception of the takeover among the public and in the media.

Overall, the First part tries to show how different spheres of society influenced one another, as the society as a whole was becoming more and more dysfunctional: polarization and militarization of the civil society affected political parties to become more radicalized and less receptive for political compromise; parliamentary deadlocks and inability of the executive to effectively govern the state, then, further radicalized civil society. In the meanwhile, the military entered a state of alarm regarding stability and territorial integrity of the country: their efforts to stabilize the political situation varied from putting pressure on the politicians through the national Security Council, to plotting a military takeover.

1. Turkish Politics of the Late 1970s: Crisis of Democratic System

The period starting from October 1973 elections and lasting till the 1980 takeover can be read as probably the most unstable and turbulent period of Turkish post-World War II history: these were years filled with fragile and ineffective governments, escalating popular unrest, political terrorism and steeply deteriorating economic conditions. For example, throughout the 1950s – the first decade of Turkish democratic politics if we neglect the 1946 elections – there was one single prime minister – Adnan Menderes. On the other hand, in the seven years between October 1973 and September 1980 there were four different governments with two different prime ministers, several caretaker governments that would last up to seven months, and a number of inconclusive elections, both parliamentary and presidential. Mehmet Ali Birand in his book on the 1980 coup compares Turkish political and social history of the 1970s with a marry-go-round that "spin out of control, as if some *dues ex machina* tempered with its gears and breaks and sped up events and developments".[1] Indeed, the succession of the events and political decisions that led towards the coup, especially in the last couple of years of the decade – approximately when the RPP government took over in 1978 – virtually read as an unstoppable, deterministic,

[1] Mehmet Ali Birand, *The Generals' Coup in Turkey: An Inside Story of 12 September 1980* (London [etc.]: Brassey's, 1987), pp. 14-15.

almost teleological historical development with no possibility of being slowed down or reversed and no other chance than to end with a military coup.

Usually, the period between 1971 and 1980 is regarded as a whole, i.e. a specific and complete chapter in Turkish political history. Yet for the purpose of this thesis we will limit our analysis to the last few years before the actual takeover, that is, from the 1977 general elections to September 1980. It is possible to trace trends and developments that are directly linked to the 1980 takeover during the rule of the government formed in the aftermath of the 1977 elections, while there are less direct links before that date.

Following the military takeover of 12 March 1971, there was no military regime, strictly speaking; however, the regime was not a free parliamentary democracy either. For more then two years, Turkey was governed by cabinets that worked closely with the National Security Council (a body that had been designed to bring together military's top ranking personnel and politicians to discuss current political and security issues). Democracy was restored in the autumn of 1973 when general elections were held. However, they turned out inconclusive. New government was formed in February 1974, a coalition between the Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*; abbrev. RPP) and National Salvation Party (*Millî Selâmet Partisi*; NSP), with the head of RPP Bülent Ecevit as the prime minister. It was a short-lived government (February-September 1974), yet remembered for the military operation in Cyprus in July 1974.

The RPP-NSP coalition was a fragile one, mainly because the two parties had very different ideologies, especially on the issue of secularity (RPP being an old Kemalist-secularist party, and NSP an Islamic party). They were largely united by opposition to the Süleyman Demirel's center-right Justice Party (*Adalet Partisi*; JP).[2] Following the RPP-NSP coalition, Turkey saw three different successive coalitions until 1980. The "Nationalist Front" coalition, consisted of JP, Nationalist Action Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*; NAP) and NSP and under the premiership of Süleyman Demirel lasted from March 1975 to June 1977. The elections of June 1977 were inconclusive. In the following year in

[2] Ibid., p. 18.

January, Bülent Ecevit formed an RPP government with 12 JP defectors. Ecevit's government was losing support steadily, until JP won the by-elections in October 1979. JP government, formed in November 1979, lasted until the 12 September military coup.

To start from the Nationalist Front coalition – this was essentially a government against all forms of leftism. The NAP coalition partner was a party based on the ideology of ethnic Turkish nationalism, closely associated with neo-fascism and profoundly anticommunist. The NAP party leader and the government's deputy prime minister, ex-colonel Alparslan Türkeş was put in charge of internal matters and the secret services. Hence from 1975 onwards there was a drastic increase of partisanship in the civil bureaucracy. The so-called "Grey Wolves" or "commandos", youth and paramilitary organization of the NAP, largely infiltrated governmental security positions, which led to an escalation in political violence in the streets as they started fighting out with the left.[3]

NSP, on the other hand, was against the left on the issue of secularism versus religion. The party took over the key economic and public sector ministries and, similarly to the NAP, started appointing partisan people to important posts. In a way, the JP, that was in fact not so distant from RPP ideologically speaking, was being radicalized by the two smaller parties on the extreme right. Same was happening with the RPP at the time. Although it is true that the RPP had taken a left-of-center turn under Ecevit during the 1960s and defined itself as a social-democrat party, with considerable socialist leanings, it was still a center-left party.[4] However, it kept being dragged from the center by far-left political fractions and organizations and the according electoral base. These trends made it very difficult for the JP and the RPP, the two biggest parties and their leaders to cooperate, or at time even to communicate with each other.[5]

[3] Ibid., p. 19.

[4] The turn to the left also made RPP more alienated from the military, while the party that enjoyed the biggest confidence of the army was a relatively small party, the Republican Reliance Party, which had split from the RPP amidst the RPP's left turn. (Cf. ibid.)

[5] Ibid.

In the two years and three months of the Nationalist Front government, large section of the public (including the military) observed with discontent the concessions made to Islamic fundamentalism and the rise of partisan politics. Economic disorders mounted. As economist Çağlar Keyder commented, the ruling coalition was "not a compromised-yet organic unity; it rather worked on the basis of a parcellization of the state apparatus".[6]

In the elections on 5 June 1977 the RPP again won the plurality of seats in parliament, but it fell thirteen seats short from majority so it was not able to form a government of its own. Finally, after several months of party talks and negotiations, the RPP formed a government with twelve defectors from JP, two from the Republican Reliance Party and one from the Democratic Party. It took office in January 1978.

The new government was expected with great hopes. But it would turn out to be a disappointment. It was not capable of dealing with the economic trouble that it partly inherited from the previous government (in press, the period of 1975-77 was often referred as the "period of collapse").[7] It could not tackle street terror. The opposition, most notably Demirel and JP, was undermining the legitimacy of the government throughout its entire mandate. Demirel, for instance, deliberately kept avoiding referring to Ecevit as "prime minister", using the term "head of the government" instead.[8] The constant harping on the rules of the game ultimately served the anti-parliamentary movements of the extreme right and left.[9] Further, the RPP itself became an arena of hostile factions, each with its own baron, fighting for supremacy, rather than a coherent organizational entity.[10] Ecevit himself

[6] Çağlar Keyder, "The Political Economy of Turkish Democracy" *New Left Review*, No. 115 (May-June 1979), p. 6 and p. 12; via Birand, *The Generals' Coup in Turkey*, p. 19.

[7] Birand, *The Generals' Coup in Turkey*, p. 36.

[8] Ibid., p. 33. Another example from Demirel's speeches; he is addressing Ecevit: "You may have intrigued your way to finding a majority in the parliament, but you will never represent the majority. You may have declared yourselves a government, but you will never be able to govern." (ibid.)

[9] Ibid., p. 34.

[10] Ibid., p. 88.

was becoming more and more isolated both in relation to foreign allies (the USA saw him as an obstacle in their policies concerning the Middle East) and in his own country (e.g. he did not have support from the military which almost hated him). He was only supported by a minority fraction in his own party. All in all, it appears that the RPP, having been in opposition for so long (for 23 years out of 28 years since 1950), had lost their skills to administer a state with a massive bureaucracy and numerous levels of power.[11] They were losing public support steadily.

On 14 October 1979 by-elections for five seats in the National Assembly and one-third of the Senate were held. They were also a kind of referendum, a "vote of confidence" on the future of the Ecevit government. JP won all five seats in the lower chamber and thirty senate seats out of fifty in the senate. Ecevit resigned and a JP minority government took over in November, with indirect support of other rightist parties.

Demirel's minority government – also the first minority government in Turkey's republican history – was yet another weak government that did not promise much in terms of tackling with the country's crisis. Ecevit tried to persuade Demirel into forming a grand coalition of RPP and JP. This was the first time when the idea of a great coalition was put forth. However, Demirel, distrusting Ecevit and suspecting a trap, rejected the idea.[12] Thereafter the two of them met a few more times with mediation of the president, trying to sort out their disagreements and find a cooperative way to confront the pregnant economic problems, and even more the political terrorism, but never with success.

On top of all, presidential crisis emerged on 6 April 1980, when president Fahri Korutürk's term was over. The two biggest parties could not agree on the new candidate and there was fruitless voting in the parliament (over 100 rounds). Finally, İhsan Sabri Çağlayangil, speaker of the senate and Demirel's former foreign minister, became the caretaker of the president. For years before, the election of president had been hinged upon agreements between the two major parties to provide a parliamentary majority for a candidate

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid., p. 90.

acceptable to both – that is why the quarrel over a new president was a final signal that the country was in a deep institutional and democratic crisis.[13]

2. Street Violence

Before the RPP government took office in 1978, street terror was only limited to cities. Within the first six months of the new government, however, it expanded into Anatolian towns. One of the first shocking events, a forecast of what was yet to come, happened on 17 April 1978 in the Anatolian city of Malatya. Hamid Fendoğlu, mayor of Malatya and a JP member, was blown up along with his daughter-in-law and two grandchildren. There were certain hints as to who was responsible, for instance, the bomb was produced in the Turkish Nuclear Energy Center near Istanbul, at the time under control of the Grey Wolves. This assassination triggered off violence in the province, especially in Eastern Turkey.[14]

The violence was not only politically motivated (clashes between the far-left and far-right) but also involved ethnic conflicts, for example the conflict along Alevi-Sunni lines. Different lines of division were often intersected: the political right would support the Sunni majority, while the left would support an oppressed Alevi minority. Furthermore, the rapid eruption of bloodshed and brutality could not have been only a consequence of the dismal social and economic crisis of the last half of decade – these were ethnic tensions that had been accumulated over the decades, probably even centuries.[15]

Statistics of 1978 are lurid. In sectarian rioting in Sivas on 3 September, over 1000 homes were destroyed, 9 people died, and 92 were injured. Later during that month, there were 12

[13] Ibid., p. 132.

[14] Ibid., p. 37.

[15] Especially notable is the geographical triangle with its apex in Kahramanmaraş and the base towards the Black Sea coast: an area characterized by Kurdish-Turkish and Alevi-Sunni divisions. (Cf. ibid., p. 60.)

dead in two days of violence in Elâzığ, Gaziantep and Adana, and 15 people were reported killed in Van. On 3 October the NAP Istanbul regional chief Recep Hasatlı and his son were slain by automatic fire. The following day, two left-wing youngsters were forced out of an Istanbul bus and executed by a firing squad in view of horrified passengers.[16]

In the cities, initially, political activism of youths was mainly limited to university campuses areas. Different university campuses became "fortresses", kind of para-military strongholds of extreme left- or right-wing political organizations.[17] In time, it became common for the militant students to regularly interrupt classes, threaten those faculty members who they perceived to be hostile to their view, and used dormitories as safe houses and place of recruitment of new members into their groups.[18] Eventually, this activism became more radicalized and started involving arms; it also spread to the urban areas. The situation in some cities started to resemble 1920s Chicago with its gang-warfare, as whole sections of cities were parceled out between the various left- and right-wing para-militaries, who then proclaimed their parts of the city – mostly *gecekondu* or shanty-town areas – as "liberated zones".[19]

On one end of political spectrum, there was the far left or "orthodox left", ideologically influenced by diverse Marxist-Leninist currents, such as Guevarism or the legacy of May 1968. They took different socialist models as a source of inspiration: some were pro-Soviet, while others looked towards Mao's China, Cuba, or even Enver Hoxha's Albania.[20] Hence the left was very fragmented and the fractions became extremely numerous by late 1970s:

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[16] Ibid., p. 38.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Sabri Sayarı, "Political violence and terrorism in Turkey, 1976-80: a retrospective analysis" *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 22, Issue 2 (2010), p. 200.

[19] Ibid., p. 210. Even entire towns in the province were proclaimed as independent zones under control of this or that political organization: Çorum in Northern Turkey was claimed as a "no-go" area by the right, while the far-left proclaimed Fatsa on the Black sea as its own territory, before being crushed by a detachment of tanks and troops. (Cf. Birand, *The Generals' Coup in Turkey*, p. 147.)

[20] Sayarı, "Political Violence and Terrorism in Turkey, 1976-1980: A Retrospective Analysis", p. 202.

one left-wing daily newspaper counted 49 different left-wing party manifestos in 1979, including programs of secessionist Kurdish organizations.[21] Many of these fractions turned to militant tactics and established urban guerillas – to a great extent this was a response to the aggressive militantism of the ultra-right para-military sects, such as the infamous Grey Wolves, a wing of the NAP. However, especially within the left, there was also a lot of intra-group violence between different factions as they fought for the leadership of the leftist militancy.[22]

On the other end, there was the extreme right which was initially tolerated by the conservative establishment as a countervailing force to the left-wing student movement (cf. the Nationalist Front coalition mentioned above). Soon, they became the strongest mass right-wing movement in Europe (the NAP had a 6.4% share of votes in 1977, hence commanded almost two million votes).[23]

On 13 October 1978 Ecevit made an unfortunate statement: "We have reached the end of the bloody scenarios. The security forces have managed to infiltrate and disperse most of the left-wing terrorist cells. We now have conclusive proof of the sources of right-wing terror."[24] The reality was exactly the opposite – things were getting worse. A significant turning point in augmentation of street terror was the massacre in Kahramanmaraş that took place between the 19 and 25 December 1978. The event started off with a bomb explosion in a cinema. The following day gangs of rightists machine gunned and bombed a coffee house frequented by left-wingers. Two days later two teachers were murdered and one had his house bombed. Next day these sporadic events escalated into full scale assault; by 24 December there were 100 deaths and hundreds of casualties and the events began to spread to neighboring provinces. What was particularly horrifying about this violence was that

[21] Birand, *The Generals' Coup in Turkey*, p. 50.

[22] Sayarı, "Political Violence and Terrorism in Turkey, 1976-1980: A Retrospective Analysis", p. 205.

[23] Birand, *The Generals' Coup in Turkey*, p. 50.

[24] Ibid., p. 38.

even three-year-old children were butchered and pregnant women's abdomens were stuck by bayonets.[25]

Following the Kahramanmaraş event, martial law was declared in 13 provinces of Turkey (out of then total 67) and military tribunals were set up. Another immediate effect of the massacre was that the West turned its attention to violence in Turkey (especially Germany and the US). They realized that Turkey was not only facing serious economic difficulties but was also in danger of disintegration.[26]

Another milestone in terms of whom the violence was directed to occurred on 1 February 1979 when Abdi İpekçi, liberal editor of newspaper Milliyet, was killed in his car in Istanbul.[27] Terror was no longer restricted to the fighting militants but turned on moderates, university professors, lecturers and public personalities. Many were compelled to hire bodyguards or sleep at a different place each night. Some people migrated to other towns to protect their anonymity, while judges and prosecutors began arming themselves.[28]

By mid-1979, an average of 20 Turks lost their lives in political violence each day. There was not a single day without a murder.[29] In the five years from 1976 to 1980, more than 5,000 people lost their lives in hundreds of terrorist incidents. This was a bloody statistics even in comparison with other European countries that were known for the problem of political terrorism at the time: during the early months of 1980, terrorism in Turkey caused more fatalities in one week than it did in Italy in entire year or in West Germany during the entire decade.[30] A large part of the population was directly involved in armed clashes. Even

[25] Ibid., pp. 59-60.

[26] Ibid.

[27] He was assassinated by Mehmet Ali Ağca, ultranationalist terrorist who later made a well-known attempt to kill Pope John Paul II in Rome in 1981. (Cf. Sayarı, "Political Violence and Terrorism in Turkey, 1976-1980: A Retrospective Analysis", p. 204.)

[28] Birand, *The Generals' Coup in Turkey*, p. 60.

[29] Ibid., p. 48.

[30] Sayarı, "Political Violence and Terrorism in Turkey, 1976-1980: A Retrospective Analysis", p. 198.

by very conservative estimates, there were more than 10,000 young men and women among the ranks of leftist, rightist or Kurdish separatist organizations.[31]

Finally, we should note that while casualties were a consequence of various types of conflicts (ethnic, religious etc.) statistically probably the most frequent and pervasive divisive line was the antagonism between leftist and rightist groups, one that also accounted for the greatest number of terrorist incidents. These clashes were particularly hard to detain due to an almost standard, predictable pattern that they followed: a leftist terrorist was murdered and immediately proclaimed a martyr by his comrades and given a political funeral. It then triggered the revenge killing of a right-wing terrorist. In turn, the rightists proclaimed their victim as a martyr and took out a leftist militant. There was a similar course followed with respect to public figures: an assassination of a journalist working for a right-wing journal would result in an assassination of a professor suspected of having sympathy with leftism.[32] Violence eventually became self-perpetrating:

> "[L]eftist and rightist terrorism literally fed off each other. The dialectical process of mutual escalation was the most distinctive characteristic of the 'anarchy' in Turkey. It also proved to be difficult to contain since the number of 'martyrs' on each side grew at an accelerated pace, thereby perpetuating the vicious cycles of violence."[33]

Meanwhile, even in the capital, Ankara, few people would dare to walk in the streets at night.[34] As the streets were filled with bloodshed, common people or "bystanders" were getting anxious to return to usual life and hoped that the government, or for that matter any force strong enough would detain violence and resume peace.

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[31] Ibid., p. 202.

[32] Sayarı, "Political Violence and Terrorism in Turkey, 1976-1980: A Retrospective Analysis", p. 203-204.

[33] Ibid., p. 204.

[34] Birand, *The Generals' Coup in Turkey*, p. 38.

3. Economic Crisis

Turkey was facing a severe economic crisis in the last few years of the 1970s. The winter of 1978-79, for instance, came to be known as the "winter of discontent": during one of the coldest winters in Anatolia in many years there was no heating in cities because of a lack of fuel oil for central heating systems, as oil imports to turkey had stopped. Even the parliament itself was without heating. It was hard to get through with life for an average Turk, as there was lack of many basic commodities such as light bulbs, vital medicines and toilet paper. Inflation was rampant, and workers' strikes and other work stoppages were overwhelming the economic life of the country.[35] It was this economic crisis, probably even more than the social unrest and street violence, which led to such instability of political life of the late 1970s.[36]

The causes for the crisis are manifold and they can be traced up to two decades before the actual crisis. In fact, it is necessary to view the crisis in the context of the economic policies that had been carried out in Turkey from 1960, after the first military takeover, to 1980. Over these twenty years, Turkey had an economic system of *import-substituting industrialization*. This was a period of rapid industrialization in Turkey, like in many other Third-world countries at the time, and successive governments in Turkey tried to create as self-sufficient market as possible, so they stimulated a home-grown industry. They did it in three main ways. First, through extensive import restrictions and high tariffs designed to keep out European and American industrial products. On the other hand, Turkey was importing oil and huge amounts of partial, intermediate goods, which would then be used by domestic firms to produce final products for domestic market (that is where the name "import-substitution" derives from). Thus, Turkey was by and large dependent on its own production of industrial goods. Second, through manipulation of the exchange rate, that is, keeping the rate of the Turkish lira artificially high, so that the Turkish firms that were

[35] Anne Krueger and Okan H. Aktan, *Swimming against the Tide* (San Francisco: ICS Press, 1992), p. 34.

[36] Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004), p. 267.

allowed to purchase dollars or Deutschmarks from the government were able to buy foreign materials cheaply. Third, by creating a buoyant internal market. This was done by paying high guarantee prices to farmers (far above the world price) and by allowing industrial workers high wage rises.[37]

Import-substituting industrialization normally took the form of a joint venture in the sense that a foreign company supplied technological know-how and the components and raw materials. The Turkish partner supplied the capital, the workforce and the distribution system, as well as influential contacts. As a consequence of the inward orientation and import restrictions there was no real competition between the foreign firms and their Turkish partners. But what is more, there was very little competition between Turkish producers too. Oligopolies were established in almost every sector. There would be two or three rival holding companies each founding one car factory, one soft-drink distribution network etc. and dividing the market between themselves (under this arrangement, industries that would not be able to compete on an open world market had good profits at home).[38]

The influence of politics in economy was strong and it was exerted mainly through the State Planning Office (or: State Planning Organization), established in 1960. The State Planning Office, together with foreign consultants, started to formulate five-year development plans. At first, these were applied to all economic sectors. However, after the first five-year plan, they were declared binding only for the state sector (comprised of so-called "state-economic enterprises" or "state-owned enterprises"; abbrev. SEEs), but only indicative for the private sector which rested more on market mechanisms.[39]

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[37] Ibid., p. 265.

[38] Ibid., p. 266.

[39] This was largely due to the change of government from a more statist Republican People's Party to Justice Party which saw the state more as subservient to private enterprise. (Cf. ibid.)

For some time, this system was quite successful in terms of economic growth. Between 1963 and 1976 the annual rate of growth was 6.9% on average.[40] It could be claimed that after World War II Turkey was the poorest European country and the richest Asian one (if we ignore the Soviet Union and East Asian countries). On the other hand, per capita income rate did not grow equally rapidly (under 3% annually from 1950 to 1980). This was mainly because of a great population growth (over 2.5% annually in the same period).[41]

One problem of this development policy was that the industrial sector was not very efficient – a sector that was largely consisted of the state-economic enterprises and made about 40% of the total industrial production.[42] Business decisions in this sector were politically influenced (including the pricing of products) and the SEEs were hugely overstaffed. This resulted in heavy losses (e.g. nine billion Turkish liras in 1977 alone). While half to two-thirds of fixed capital investments were in this sector, its share in total value added declined from half to one-third in the 1960s and 1970s.[43]

That was not the main weakness of the system though – there were other more important causes that led to the crisis of the later 1970s. One "Achilles heel" of this development strategy was that the new industries were heavily dependent on imports of foreign parts and materials for production, and thus on availability of foreign reserves (i.e. foreign currency deposits held by monetary authorities) to pay for them. The access to these funds – they were mostly government-held –, rather than industrial or commercial qualities of a firm, often determined whether a firm could survive.[44] Since Turkey had a persistent balance of trade and balance of payments deficit throughout these two decades it was a major problem

[40] Ibid.

[41] Krueger and Aktan, *Swimming against the Tide*, p. 5.

[42] Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, p. 266.

[43] Ibid.

[44] There were also widespread opportunities for rent-seeking and unproductive forms of investment as economic agents tried to take advantage of the variety of controls and regulations imposed on the price mechanism. Cf. Ziya Öniş: *State and Market: The Political Economy of Turkey in Comparative Perspective* (Istanbul: Bogazici University Press, 1999), p. 462.

to make available the necessary dollars and Deutschmarks. The need was partly met by American aid and by transfers from Turkish workers who had moved to Europe.

However, the oil crisis in 1973-74 led to a fourfold increase of the price of oil on the international market.[45] On one hand, the drastic increases of oil prices directly shocked Turkish economy that was dependent on foreign inputs of raw materials, especially oil as a source of energy. The increase in oil prices meant a rising import bill which had to be paid in dollars. For instance, after the second oil shock (1979-80), two thirds of Turkey's foreign currency reserves went to meeting the oil bill. On the other hand, the oil crisis brought recession in Europe, so the transfers of the Turkish workers in Germany began to decline steeply after 1974: partly because their own economic situation in Germany worsened, and partly because they lost confidence in the situation in Turkey, so they kept their money in Germany (the money that had been used to compensate for the foreign currency deficit).[46] At that point, the government failed to take significant action, permitting the current account to worsen rapidly. Also, the government's fiscal deficit rose sharply towards 1980, since most of the petroleum imports were on government account and the government failed significantly to increase domestic oil prices.[47]

The Nationalist Front coalition government (1975-77) tried to solve the problem by concluding extremely costly short-term Euro-dollar loans and by printing money. Meanwhile, oil for industry and for generating electricity was becoming increasingly scarce (for example, by 1979, power cuts up to five hours per day were the rule, even in winter). Rising price of energy, together with printing of money, resulted in inflation. During the first years of the 1970s, inflation was running at around 20% a year – in 1979 it was 90% and rising.[48] Simultaneously, growth slowed down significantly. In 1979, the real GNP was growing only at half rate of the preceding three years and the five-year interval ending in

[45] The crisis was caused by the 1973 Arab oil embargo against the USA and some other OPEC members because of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

[46] Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, p. 267.

[47] Krueger and Aktan, *Swimming against the Tide*, p. 18.

[48] Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, p. 267.

1980 recorded the slowest rate of economic growth of any such period since 1950 (growth averaged a little over 6% annually between 1950 and 1975, compared to only 2.7% in 1980). As a result, Turkish living standards did not increase much between 1975 and 1978: real per capita incomes are estimated to have dropped by 5.8% from 1978 to 1980. [49]

By 1978 it was clear that radical measures needed to be taken to normalize the economic situation in the country. When Turkey's transition from import-substituting industrialization to neoliberal economy is being discussed, usually what is mentioned is the 24 January 1980 reform package initiated under the Justice Party of Süleyman Demirel. However, already before that, under Bülent Ecevit's government, there were two liberal reform packages negotiated toward more liberal economy, although they were not implemented. Namely, the Ecevit's government started negotiations about new credits with the IMF, the World Bank and the OECD in 1978.[50] The government seems to have made an assessment that the main problem was the unavailability of foreign exchange: shortage of dollars was restricting imports, which were then constraining domestic production levels. Their solution was therefore to seek for foreign aid and foreign loans.[51]

In this context it is helpful to learn the general policy of the IMF, the main foreign institution that Turkish government negotiated with for loans. At the time, IMF was launching what it saw as a "new economic order", a Friedmanite model of a free market. This model would become effective throughout the 1980s, especially among Latin American debtors and in the Third World in general: breaking import substitution, domestic markets, strong public sector, and replacing it with free market and private sector. Countries in a similar situation as Turkey had to either accept the terms of IMF terms or face recession.[52]

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[49] Krueger and Aktan, *Swimming against the Tide*, pp. 18-19.

[50] Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, p. 268.

[51] Krueger and Aktan, *Swimming against the Tide*, p. 36.

[52] Birand, *The Generals' Coup in Turkey*, p. 121.

The first standby agreement with the IMF was reached in 1978 but it was evident by September of the same year that it would fail (Turkish government wrote to the IMF, noting that the IMF conditions had not been met). Negotiations for the second standby agreement started the following year and were concluded in July 1979. This agreement was basically a reform package which was consisted of goals to abolish import and export controls, cutting subsidies and government expenditures, freeing interest rates – in one word, liberalizing the economy.[53] The main reason why the negotiations between the IMF and Ecevit's government were so slow and delayed was that free market policies were anathema to RPP as a social-democrat party:

> "The political views and ideological complexion of the left-of-center Ecevit government created almost insurmountable barriers in … taking decisive action to counter it. The Ecevit government appeared convinced of the paramount virtues of government intervention in the economy. … In addition, it was emotionally inclined towards a self-sufficient, even autarkic view of economic development, which restricted to a minimum the foreign role in the economy. The RPP had, in recent years, espoused undefined causes and slogans, such as total independence and anti-imperialism. … In the Turkish government's view, there was nothing structurally wrong with the Turkish economy or with the economic development policies followed in Turkey between 1960 and 1978. … All that was needed to restore the situation was additional foreign financing and the rescheduling of short-term debts to help the balance of payments, and a period of restraint in public sector finances to control internal inflation."[54]

As the import shortages intensified and government-controlled commodities such as sugar, cigarettes, and cooking oil became increasingly expensive, the public was discontent with the inability of the government to deal with the crisis. The Ecevit government fell in October 1979 and Demirel came to power again the following month.

The highest priority of the new government was to implement the second standby agreement negotiated under the previous government. In fact, this reform package was

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[53] Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, p. 268.

[54] Osman Okyar, "Turkey and the IMF: A Review of Relations, 1978-1982", in *IMF Conditionality*, edited by John Williamson (Washington, D.C.: Institute for International Economics, 1983); via Krueger and Aktan, *Swimming Against the Tide*, p. 36.

basically the one that was launched in January 1980, after the responsibility for its implementation had been assigned to the under-secretary for economic affairs, Turgut Özal.

During the spring of 1980, however, a widespread resistance to the reform package and austerity measures continued and grew. Obviously, the agony and longevity of this economic crisis did not have purely economic causes: it had political aspects as well. Namely, the opposition to proposed measures was coming from trade unions that had grown incredibly strong from the 1960s onward.[55] Trade unions like DİSK and Türk-İş had passed under control of the Turkish Communist Party so they became very politicized and radical. They had been asking for wage increases and winning them in the years preceding the crisis. In addition, there was a sort of competition among different trade unions as to who would be more progressive in demands: one was forcing the other to become more politically radical, not to be accused of class betrayal. For a long time, rise in wages helped expanding domestic market. But from the mid-1970s, expansion of domestic market reached its limits and costs of wage increases were more and more emphasized.

The proposed austerity package implied a stop of the real wage increases, a stop of printing paper money and a larger part of domestic market directed to export, trying to bring almost equilibrium between imports and exports. Business class, with the MESS (*Madeni Eşya Sanayıcı Sendikası* – Metallic Products Industrialists' Union) as its center was very vocal in calling for austerity measures.[56] There were no signs of either side, business or trade unions, backing down. Already in the summer of 1978, when negotiations with the IMF and World Bank started, strikes against the austerity measures virtually paralyzed industrial production, and continued intensifying during 1979 and 1980. [57]

[55] The reform package was often referred to as the "Chilean solution" – a reference to the policies of General Pinochet introduced in Chile after his coup against president Allende. (Cf. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, p. 268.)

[56] Business class was particularly dissatisfied with Ecevit's government: many industrialists had to close down factories or even leave them over to the workers-strikers; many left the country (they "left the sinking ship"). (Cf. Birand, *The Generals' Coup in Turkey*, p. 46.)

[57] Birand, *The Generals' Coup in Turkey*, p. 45.

The situation was deadlocked: Turkey could escape from the economic quagmire only with an acute and decisive action by the government; however, successive governments did not have popular support for their economic reforms and were facing labor difficulties. The January 1980 reform package was going to be fully implemented only after the military takeover of September 1980, making Turkey a show-case for IMF's new policy and interventions.

4. International Political Context

In part, the social crisis in Turkey and, later on, the way it would be resolved, reflected certain changes in broader regional and global context. The intricate balance of power between the two great blocks of the post-World Word II world order, the Western liberal-democratic block (with NATO) and the Eastern communist block (with the Warsaw Pact), started to change in the late 1970s. Around 1979 the period of relative stability and détente came to end and the so-called "Second Cold War" began, with new conflicts emerging and both sides becoming more militaristic. Consequently, Western alliance had new expectations from Turkey, its old NATO ally, and this profoundly affected the internal political life in Turkey.

There were several developments in the global political scene that can be considered as causes of the escalation of the Cold War. We will focus on two: Iranian revolution and Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Coincidentally, they both took place in the Middle Eastern region, thus had a more direct effect on geopolitical significance of Turkey in international politics.

Iran witnessed Islamic revolution on 16 January 1979. The deposed Iranian shah had played a prominent pro-American role in the Middle East (the USA had diverse benefits, such as the share of Iran's oil wealth; they exerted strong influence mainly through Iranian

secret service and armed forces). With the new leader, Ayatollah Khomeini coming to power, all US military bases and monitoring installations were closed down. The Americans were deprived of military facilities which meant an end to vital electronic surveillance that had been able to penetrate into the Soviet heartland.[58]

The "loss" of Iran upped the "value" of Turkey in the Middle East for the US. However, Turkey was a less stabile and less reliable partner than Iran. Iran had been an absolutist state with the Shah clearly siding with the US interests. Turkey, on the other hand, could not offer the same pliability since it had a quarrelsome parliament and also an extra-parliamentary opposition – for example, a vivid left which was opposed to "American imperialism".

An already volatile political life in Turkey was in danger of becoming even more unstable because of the revolution in the neighboring country.[59] Namely, the Islamic revival of the Iranian revolution could easily spread like a prairie fire across the Islamic world, thus strengthening the Islamic element in Turkey. Indeed, despite of the decades of Kemalist Westernization in Turkey, 98% of the population was declared Muslims – and although most of them were not radical, there was a significant presence of the NSP which had already had an established position in Turkish politics; already emergence of pro-Khomeini paramilitary groups, adding to the escalation of street terror was detected. Further, Iranian revolution made the Kurdish uprising in Eastern Turkey even more likely. Iranian Kurds that had been systematically oppressed under the Shah's regime (for example, bombing of Kurdish villages each spring and autumn, obstacles for Kurds in finding jobs) were on the offensive with the change of the regime and they were close to autonomy.[60]

[58] Ibid., p. 66.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Ibid., p. 68.

Nevertheless, Turkey now became the most important Western ally in the Middle East, replacing Iran and becoming a buffer zone in the defense of the Middle East and Europe.[61] Yet, its security and reliability had to be enforced: "Turkey needs stability" became the main motto in the Western military and diplomatic circles and could be heard time and again in Washington and other major capitals of the Western alliance. But they were seriously concerned that Turkey was heading in the opposite direction.[62]

US State Department found it very difficult to get along with prime minister Ecevit in the sense of conducting new policies that would modify the role of Turkey in the Middle East and in relation to the eastern block. For instance, Ecevit did not let the Americans use the İncirlik base for clandestine U-2 spy flights over the Soviet territory because it could provoke Soviet retaliation against Turkey.[63]

From early 1979 onwards (still during the rule of Ecevit), the focus in Turkish-American relations switched towards economic and financial issues. Washington realized that Turkey was in desperate economic straits with a large foreign dept and they knew that economic collapse could lead to upheavals and strong anti-Western sentiments. A moratorium on dept loans to the country was out of question because this would give a bad precedence to the indebted Latin American and African countries. That is why Washington placed an effort to reach an agreement between Turkey and the IMF on the top of its agenda (however, as the

[61] Concretely, the idea of Turkey as a buffer zone would mean that Turkey would, for example, delay a potential Soviet invasion towards Western Europe for about 12 hours in the plains of Konya. (Cf. ibid., p. 121.)

[62] Ibid., p. 65 and p. 73.

[63] Zbigniew Brzezinski, Carter's principal foreign affairs advisor, commented on the issue: "You can't get anywhere with this man [Ecevit]" (ibid., p. 72). Interestingly, Ecevit was not favorably regarded in the Soviet Union either, despite of his leftist leanings and efforts to seek rapprochement with the Soviets. One reason was the Soviets' ideological mistrust of the social-democratic model which they tended to see as a Trojan horse with an unclear stand in the East-West division. Another reason was related to the delicate position of Turkey in the Cold War balance: unstable Turkey could eventually change its position in the equilibrium between the two camps, which could trigger off difficult, perhaps even bloody consequences. Therefore, somewhat surprisingly, the USSR's stand towards Turkey was the same as that of the US: they wanted a stabile Turkey. (Cf. ibid., p. 76-77.)

IMF was now faithful to its new policy, the aid was accompanied by various conditions, most importantly a prescription for a free market economy which made negotiations deadlocked; cf. chapter 2).[64]

Another crucial event was the USSR invasion of Afghanistan on 26 December 1979 (this was during Demirel's administration in Turkey). The invasion was the turning point that triggered off "the second Cold War". West interpreted the Soviet move as a strategy directed to the oil-fields of the Gulf: they argued that the Soviets had lost their prestige in the world after being rejected by Anwar Sadat of Egypt. They wanted to reverse this by military involvement in Ethiopia and Southern Yemen and pursued a domino expansionist strategy.[65]

In January 1980, US president Jimmy Carter unequivocally declared the Gulf as vital for US and Western interests: he stated that the West would oppose any Soviet penetration to the region (the so-called "Carter Doctrine").[66] For this purpose a new military concept was introduced: "rapid deployment force" (RDF). Its function was to intervene at any Middle Eastern trouble spot effectively and at short notice. If the Soviets were to threaten vital raw materials flow to the West and the shipping lanes upon which these depended, this force would deter such an advance.[67] Anwar Sadat of Egypt immediately offered bases to the RDF. Now all eyes were focused on Turkey, with its Eastern region that was a particularly good location for the RDF, and was regarded as lynchpin of the new strategy.[68]

However, Washington's analysis of Turkey was still – or even more than before – pessimistic. The continuous emphasis on stability for the country meant in practice that,

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[64] Ibid., p. 73.

[65] Ibid., p. 116.

[66] Ibid., pp. 118-119. To illustrate the importance of the Gulf oil reserves for Western economy: European NATO allies depended on Gulf oil supplies for 80% of their total oil requirements. (Cf. ibid., p. 119.)

[67] Ibid., p. 118.

[68] Ibid., pp. 118-119.

first, even a tiniest presence of left became intolerable, and second, political Islam was undesirable (Erbakan of the NSP was regarded as a Trojan horse of religious fundamentalism). Ecevit had not been flexible enough. But Demirel, although long perceived as the closest to the West among Turkish politicians, did not completely fit their needs either: he relied too strongly on the NSP.[69] The question for Washington now was who would be the most willing to cooperate, to implement the needed economic reforms and able to establish law and order in the country. Although the economic reform package was launched under Demirel's government, it was virtually stopped by the wave of strikes. Therefore there seemed to have been nobody in the Turkish political arena who could move against the left and stopped the wave of strikes, neutralize the Islamic stirrings in the country, while being pro-Western at the same time: only the army was regarded as capable of dealing with these problems.[70] Indeed, the Letter of Warning, published by the Turkish Armed Forces in December 1979/January 1980, expressing concerns over the situation in the country, such as threats to national unity and integrity, lack of protection of person and property etc., gave Washington a signal that a coup was on the way; Washington, in return, increased the volume of its indirect signals to the Turkish military members.[71]

5. The Military

This chapter represents a digression from the chronological course followed so far: we go back in time, examining the role that the military played in the foundation of republic and

[69] Ibid., pp. 122-123.

[70] Ibid., p. 124.

[71] Ibid., pp. 124-125. Washington could not directly support a military takeover. If they were directly asked about the desirability of a coup, they would have been obliged to say no. But they did give signals about it, for example, questions posed to Turkish generals on cocktail parties like "In view of the deteriorating situation in your country, what do the armed forces intend to do?", or "I hope that you will not allow things to get out of hand in Turkey" (ibid., p. 172).

For the Letter of Warning, see chapter 5.6. of this thesis.

its importance in the construction of Turkish cultural identity; we look at the cultural attitudes of the public in Turkey towards the military as an institution and the military service in particular, from its beginnings until now. The second section deals with the organizational structure of the military, which has not changed crucially since the late 1970s. The third section talks about the military's system of recruitment and education in military academies, with special regard to the officers' self-perception and their perception of politics and politicians, a perception rooted in their education; of particular interest in this section is the official ideological doctrine of the military (Ataturkism). The fourth section is a sociological assessment of the military's ideology, its categorization within the spectrum of political ideologies; based on that, we try to explain certain contradictions within that ideology, for example, why the military tends to draw itself out of its elementary domain into the realm of politics. Coming back to the historical line, in the fifth section we summarize the military takeovers before 1980, and finally return to the military's involvement in the events of the late 1970s.

5.1. Cultural Importance of the Military in Turkey

In a broader socio-cultural sense, military is believed to be inextricably linked to Turkish nationhood and history. The idea that Turkish nation is fundamentally a military nation is shared by Turkish masses and transmitted from parents to children. This idea is illustratively captured in the slogan "every Turk is born a soldier" (*"Her Türk asker doğar"*) expressed in daily conversations, educational institutions and used in training during military service.[72] To majority of Turks, the military and military values lie at the heart of what it means to be Turkish; the institution of the Turkish military is seen as embodiment of the highest values of Turkish nation, while military officers enjoy an image of model citizens in the eyes of Turkish public.

[72] Ayşe Gül Altınay, *The myth of the military-nation: militarism, gender, and education in Turkey* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 13.

For males, military service is seen as a passage into adulthood/manhood. Especially in rural areas only men who have served the military are considered as possible candidates for marriage. In the evening before a conscript is off to military service, his family and friends celebrate his induction in the streets, dancing and singing patriotic songs. Turkish national holidays (of which nearly all represent military victories) are marked by celebrations that include military parades.[73]

This rural folk understanding of military service as a passage to manhood is coupled with an understanding of the military and military virtues as something that has always been in the core of Turkish nation, its ever-present defining feature ever since the nation's origins in Central Asia. This is not only a popular belief; it is an elaborated theory shared by many academics. As an example, Ayşe Gül Altınay in her book *The Myth of the Military-Nation* quotes Halil İnalcık, a prominent historian of the Ottoman Empire and Turkey who argued that "the Turkish nation has conserved its military-nation characteristic from the beginning of its history till today" and that "Turks are used to living as *hakim* (dominant) and *efendi* (master)".[74] In this theory, "Turk" is seen as "marching on the forefronts of world history … because of his unshakable national characteristics, military character, his grand military virtues and his ability to engage in total war for his rights and freedom. The Turk has inherited this character from his history that goes back thousands of years".[75]

The theory of Turks as a military nation from time immemorial has its roots mainly in the early Republican period (1930s) and partly in the late Ottoman period. The beginning phase of the Turkish Republic was a time when Turkish ethnic identity was not yet finally defined and "constructed" – however, its first contours had already been drawn in the late Ottoman period when the Ottoman state was taking measures to become a modern nation-state with

[73] Gareth Jenkins, *Context and circumstance: the Turkish military and politics* (Oxford: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2001), pp. 13-14.

[74] Altınay, *The myth of the military-nation*, p. 13.

[75] Halil Inalcık, "Osmanlı Devrinde Türk Ordusu", *Türk Kültürü 22* (August 1964), p. 56; via Altınay, *The myth of the military-nation*, p. 30.

a centralized administrative structure, a modern education system and a citizen army.[76] This was roughly a time when Turkish national ideology (at the time called "Turkism") was competing with Ottomanism and Islamism (or "Pan-Islamism") as means of maintaining ideological unity and keeping together a multireligious and multiethnic empire. By the end of Balkan Wars (1912-13), during which the Ottoman Empire lost most of its Balkan provinces and hence a considerable non-Muslim element of its population, Turkish nationalism was gaining prominence and turning into a program. It was first a program of the Union and Progress Party, and later, after the establishment of the Republic, of Mustafa Kemal and the People's Party.[77]

Turkish nationalism became an elaborated ideology particularly in the 1930s, when a number of historians and anthropologists worked on rewriting Turkish and Ottoman history (including Mustafa Kemal's adopted daughter Afet İnan). Two institutions, Turkish Historical Society (*Türk Tarih Kurumu*) and Turkish Linguistic Society (*Türk Dil Kurumu*), under directives and close scrutiny of Mustafa Kemal were entrusted of research and intellectual production regarding Turkish historical narrative.[78] Eventually, they produced what was called the Turkish History Thesis, a historical narrative explaining origin and evolution of Turks. To name a few arguments of the thesis: the Ottoman Empire was only one phase in the history of Turks; their original homeland was Turkistan (and not Mongolia); Turks are not members of yellow race but white race; Neolithic civilization was first created in Central Asia by Turks, who then introduced it to the rest of Asia, Europe and America; the Turks developed early civilizations in Mesopotamia and Egypt, etc.[79]

During this period, Turkish national ideology became more racial in its outlook, compared to its earlier elaborations in the late Ottoman Empire, but most importantly, it added two new points to the definition of Turkish national identity and therefore two instances that

[76] Altınay, *The myth of the military-nation*, p. 16.

[77] Ibid., p. 18.

[78] Ibid., p. 21.

[79] Ibid., pp. 22-23. Some of these arguments were later dropped, such as the claim of Turkishness of Egyptian civilization. (Cf. ibid., p. 25.)

would curve into the historical consciousness of generations of Turks to follow. Firstly, Turkish history is a history of state-making. Turks were always forming states and they carried their skills as state-makers wherever they went.[80] The Ottoman Empire was only one of many civilizations and states that they established; among them were also the Great Hun Empire in Central Asia, the Seljuks, and, following the Turkish-Ottoman Empire, the Turkish Republic.[81] Secondly – and more importantly for the aims of this thesis – it was thanks to Turks being a military-nation that they could establish so many states in history.[82] Good example of this interpretation can be found on the webpage of the Turkish General Staff, where the first sentence under the "History" tab states: "The history of the Turks whose political order was developed in line with its military order dates 4000 years ago", and continues with: "devoted soldiers as individuals, the Turks proved themselves to be an army-nation to the whole world. Beginning from the Turkish nations in Central Asia till today, being a soldier was not considered as a profession, since every Turk was regarded as a naturally born warrior."[83]

This narrative, however, was more a result of practical necessities of the time than an empirically undisputable theory. For centuries, most of the Ottoman subjects were not directly involved in military campaigns and defense of the country. Military activities were reserved for the standing army of Janissaries, professional warriors recruited mostly from the Balkans among the Christian population.[84] They were a special social stratum, tied directly to the palace (Sultan being their commander). Ordinary subjects of the empire started to be involved with military institutions and practices during the 19th century, when universal conscription was introduced under influences from Europe (the system was initially based on Prussian Conscription Law of 1814). At the beginning, conscription

[80] Ibid., p. 24.

[81] Ibid., p. 25.

[82] Ibid.

[83] http://www.tsk.tr/eng/genel_konular/tarihce.htm [taken on 2 February 2011].

[84] Altınay, *The myth of the military-nation*, p. 26.

demanded recruitment of certain number of soldiers from each region (1839), and was only gradually and in several steps extended to all male subjects of the empire (1909).[85]

The introduction of conscription, however, never became effectively universal under Ottoman rule. Military service was normally very unpopular and evasion was not an infrequent phenomenon throughout the 19th century. This was primarily due to the length of service.[86] But other reasons also played a role: the state had difficulty in feeding, clothing and equipping its soldiers, and especially in wartime the conditions under which the army had to fight were atrocious. It was especially easy to evade the military service in the countryside where it was easy to go into hiding ("leaving for the mountains" to evade conscription was an established tradition in the Balkans and Anatolia).[87] Apart from hiding, other means of evading were applied, such as leaving the country and taking a different nationality; Ottoman Muslims would convert to Christianity; some would mutilate themselves in order to be sent home (especially widespread in the Egyptian province).[88] There is even an entire category of Ottoman songs which depict conscription as a death sentence. On top of it, frequent evasions were going on in the light of the fact that conscription was not even yet fully universal: for instance, when conscription was

[85] Ibid.

[86] Conscripts were sometimes kept under arms longer then their legal term because of wars, and even more because of constant guerrilla warfare in provinces (some reports speak of conscripts serving for ten years and more). Cf. Erik Jan Zürcher, "The Ottoman Conscription System in Theory and Practice, 1844-1918", in *Arming the State: Military Conscription in the Middle East and Central Asia 1775-1925*, edited by Erik Jan Zürcher (London; New York: I. B. Tauris, 1999), p. 85.

[87] Zürcher, "The Ottoman Conscription System in Theory and Practice, 1844-1918", pp. 85-86.

[88] Jan Lucassen and Erik Jan Zürcher, "Introduction: Conscription and Resistance. The Historical Context", in *Arming the state: Military Conscription in the Middle East and Central Asia 1775-1925*, p. 13. The process of recruitment involved several stages: registration, medical examinations, drawing of lots etc., and since bureaucracy was still being created, evasion of military service was easier than in the established bureaucratic states of Europe. (Cf. ibid.)

introduced in the Ottoman Balkan province of Bosnia during the 1860s, only one Bosnian man out of fifty would be recruited for the Ottoman army.[89]

Military service was especially unpopular in the last period of the Ottoman Empire which witnessed frequent wars and territorial disintegration of the Empire. From 1912, the year of the First Balkan War, to 1923 when Republic was proclaimed, the country was virtually in constant warfare. Consequently, the number of deserters was extremely high. During the World War I, for instance, one-fourth of all recruits did not turn up. On the other hand, those that were recruited were more likely to die from cholera, typhus and dysentery than of wounds.[90] Many would escape on the way to the battlefields and they would even receive assistance from the villagers (which proves that desertion was socially acceptable to the villagers). In popular perception, the military was most often associated with poor conditions, like lack of proper clothing and food, and a sense of war and loss (if you go on campaign you might never come back). By 1918, there were about half million deserters in the Ottoman Army, thus the army that was to undertake the Independence War was one with a very high rate of evasion and desertion.[91]

Efficiency of conscription changed drastically during the 1920s and 1930s. First conscription law in the Republican period was passed in 1927. In 1932, the size of the Turkish army was still a little greater compared to 1922 (78,000 men). By 1940, this number increased to around 800,000.[92] The success of government's efforts to mobilize a strong military force was certainly much thanks to the change of discourse from the late Ottoman one that linked military service to war and loss, to the discourse that was developed in the 1930s along the lines of Turkish History Thesis and which now stated that military virtues are a crucial component of the Turkish national spirit, that the Turks are the

[89] Odile Moreau, "Bosnian Resistance to Conscription in the Nineteenth Century", in *Arming the state: Military Conscription in the Middle East and Central Asia 1775-1925*, p. 131.

[90] Zürcher, "The Ottoman Conscription System in Theory and Practice, 1844-1918", p. 85.

[91] Altınay, *The myth of the military-nation*, p. 28.

[92] Ibid., pp . 27-28.

best soldiers because they carry the cultural elements that make them good soldiers etc.[93] In other words, the discourse switched from seeing the military service as a necessity of the times, to the discourse that made military service a matter of tradition and basis of cultural identity.[94]

Therefore, from the empirical and historical point of view, military and soldiering has not always been an essential part of "being Turkish". However, once the importance of military was stressed and nurtured by concrete policies of the one-party period, the mandatory universal conscription and the military service started to be seen as a patriotic duty relatively fast for Turkish elites and most of the common citizens. It has continued to be so until this day. In the meanwhile, Turkish military as an institution has been somewhat modifying and improving its internal structure, based on different, mainly western models (Germany, USA).

5.2. Organizational Structure of the Military

The Turkish Armed Forces (TAF), like most of the armies, are composed of the Army (land forces), the Navy, and the Air Force; apart from these, there is the Gendarmerie and the Coast Guard: these two have military functions, but they operate as part of internal security in peacetime and are subordinate to Ministry of Interior. TAF are mainly made up of conscripts commanded by a cadre of officers. They are the second largest army in NATO: in 2008, the combined troop strength of TAF was 1,040,000 personnel, including Gendarmerie, Coast Guard and reserves.[95] Of this number, about 360,000 in the army and navy were conscripts. The officer corps comprises of around 104,500 personnel, of which

[93] However, it is not yet clear how the state, in practical terms, managed to change conscription practices so effectively in only one decade. (Cf. ibid., p. 32.)

[94] Ibid., p. 29.

[95] "Country Profile: Turkey", Library of Congress – Federal Research Division (August 2008), p. 25 (http://memory.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Turkey.pdf) [accessed on 2 February 2011].

approximately 60,000 serve in the army, 16,000 in the navy and 28,500 in the air force (data for 2000).[96]

TAF are commanded by the Turkish General Staff (TGA), headed by the chief of staff. In other countries, the chief of staff is primarily a coordinator between services, but in TAF he is a commander of each of the individual services and is entitled to wear the uniform of the navy and air force as well as the army. Another distinction of TAF is that the chief of staff is usually an ex-chief commander of the army, while in some western countries the naming of chief of staff circulates between army, navy and air forces to ensure equal representation of interests of individual services.

Internal organization of the TGS is a system of seven departments headed by so-called J-Chiefs (J from "joint", a term taken over from the American system): department for personnel; for collation and evaluation of intelligence from Turkish intelligence organizations; for operations, training, planning and exercises; for logistics; for determination of strategic policies, threat assessment, targeting, budgets and military agreements (arguably the most important department); for communications and electronics; for studies of military history and strategy.[97] The J-chiefs constitute the foundations of General Staff Headquarters. J-officers assign duties to the relevant department heads. The departments consult with the relevant armed service or all three services and draft their proposals to be submitted to the J-Chief. The draft is then submitted for the approval of the chief of the general staff. If approved, orders are given for its implementation throughout the army services; if not, it is returned to J-Offices for change or revision. This is an efficient procedural system, because the orders signed by the chief of the general staff are communicated downwards without delay.[98]

[96] Jenkins, *Context and Circumstance*, p. 21.

[97] Ibid., p. 22.

[98] Mehmet Ali Birand, *Shirts of Steel: An Anatomy of the Turkish Armed Forces* (London; New York: I. B. Tauris, 1991), pp. 187-188.

The military is nominally subordinated to the Ministry of National Defense, but in practice the chief of staff is autonomous and ranks ahead of the Minister of National Defense to be second only to the prime minister. The Ministry has therefore responsibilities only over conscription, defense procurement and relations with other ministries.

Another important body in the structure of the military is the Supreme Military Council, comprised of the prime minister, defense minister and (all) 15 four-star generals. It decides upon promotions and retirements of the military personnel. Similarly as with the relations between the chief of staff and defense minister, in theory, the SMC is chaired by the prime minister with the deputy chief of the General Staff acting as secretary, but in practice, it is the military which decides on appointments and promotions of officers.

Probably the most important and controversial institution in Turkish civilian-military relations has been the National Security Council (NSC). It was first established in 1961, with the constitution that was enacted the same year. It underwent several structural changes since then. The 1961 constitution set up the NSC "to recommend to the Council of Ministers the necessary basic guidelines regarding the coordination and the taking of decisions related to national security".[99] NSC was composed of ten members, five civilians and five military officers: prime minister, minister of national defense, minister of internal affairs, minister of foreign affairs, chief of TGS and the four commanders of the army, navy, air force and gendarmerie. It was chaired by the president of republic.[100] The 1982 constitution retained the same composition of the NSC, but it further strengthened its influence on civilian politics, since the Council of Ministers was obliged to "give priority consideration to the decisions of the National Security Council".[101]

Basically, the NSC was established after the deteriorating relations between the military and the government of Adnan Menderes during the 1950s, to ensure better communication

[99] From Article 111 of 1961 Turkish Constitution. (Cf. Jenkins, *Context and Circumstance*, p. 45.)

[100] Jenkins, *Context and Circumstance*, p. 45.

[101] Ibid., pp. 45-46.

between the TGS and civilian politicians. It was a place where soldiers and politicians would discuss security, and other, sometimes acute, issues. Officially, its purpose was only to serve as advisory body to the civilian government, but in practice it often turned out to be a channel through which the military expressed its expectations or dissatisfaction with certain governmental policies or even with the conduct of civilian politics in general.

5.3. Officers' Education and World Outlook

Each of the military services has its own military academy. Cadets normally enter it at the age of 19 for four years. Approximately half of the academy cadets are drawn from the graduates of military high schools (there are all together five of them); the other half is drawn from graduates from a variety of civilian high schools.[102] Those from the military high schools usually make a more informed choice and are more ambitious.[103]

Candidates for military high schools and especially academies have to undergo a rigorous selection process. The requirements are three-fold: academic, physical and ideological. There is a minimum score limit which the candidates have to surpass in their university entrance examinations. Candidates below this score would not be able to keep up with the pace of education at the academies. This exam is later followed by a special exam given by the military academy. Any physical shortcomings or abnormality are checked. The very short and excessively fat or thin, the flat-footed, the color-blind, as well as those with a legacy of serious illness in their past, are weeded out.[104] The candidates also have to undergo physical tests like running 1600 meters in a given time and doing a certain number of push-ups. They have to obtain a report from the hospital proving they are fit to be a soldier.[105] Final – and probably the most interesting – are ideological criteria. A

[102] Birand, *Shirts of Steel*, p. 22.

[103] Ibid., p. 25.

[104] Ibid., p. 30.

[105] Ibid., p. 16.

confidential investigation is carried out not only about the candidate himself, but about his family as well. The applicant is checked whether he has a police record. Further, academies do not admit students from the theological schools. They also check the occupation of applicant's mother and father and if his parents have a good record. They investigate to find out whether any members of his family have been involved in political incidents, or have been convicted of left- or right-wing activities. Some of these investigations are based on records, but some rely on enquiries by the local police of the butcher or the greengrocer.[106] If a stain is found on a record of an even far relative of the candidate, this can result in the candidate's immediate rejection, because it is believed that the candidate might have been influenced by undesirable ideas.

Especially the last criteria are not only applied during the selection process: special attention is given to them throughout the whole education and training of cadets (we can say that the strictest watch is held over ideological matters). Mehmet Ali Birand describes a case of a military high school pupil who was summoned to see the commander of the school towards the end of his first year. The commander told him that he found about his cousin Ahmet. The pupil did not quite know who the commander was talking about because he had never met his cousin and only heard his name once. The commander got annoyed and criticized the boy for not telling before that his cousin was a trade unionist who went to prison for inciting strikes. The boy, not being able to explain that he did not know his cousin, was eventually expelled from the military school.[107]

There are other rigorous principles adhered to in the training of young cadets in order to shape them into officers. Generally, there are five offences that military academies will not tolerate: violation of discipline, failure to get promotion, involvement in ideological or party activities, larceny, and homosexuality. Violations of these principles may result in penalties, impediments on promotion in future, or even expulsion – not only of those who commit the offence, but also of those who witness them or are aware of them but fail to

[106] Ibid.

[107] Ibid., pp. 16-17.

report them.[108] Even later, in an officer's career, violations such as infringement of traffic regulations can be an impediment to his promotion.[109] Moreover, there have been massive expulsions from academies especially in periods of unrest. The biggest one occurred in May 1963 when 1,400 Army Academy students were expelled for participating in the second attempted post-1960 coup (as a result, there were no graduating classes from this academy in 1963 and 1964). Between 1977 and 1984, some 1,200 students and graduates were weeded out from the Army Academy.[110]

Furthermore, during the four years in the academy, virtually every hour of the day of a cadet is prescribed and occupied with lessons, study or physical education. Students are free to leave on weekends, especially if they live in the same city. Otherwise, outside of the school year, they are entitled to only 45 days of a year to spend with their family. Hard work and obedience to commander's orders without questioning are part of the training. On admission to the academy cadets swear that they will sacrifice their life for the country; in the academy they are taught that a land is a country if there is someone dying for its sake.

The students, however, do not learn only the discipline and military skills: especially in high schools, they receive training to develop their social life, for example, how to go to the theatre for the first time, how to applaud, or how to eat in a restaurant and order a meal.[111] Emphasis is made to make a courteous and gentlemanly individual, with knowledge of at least one foreign language and who will know how to behave in any circumstances. Therefore, the main aim of all this training is not only to create a skillful and competent military officer, but a complete personality in a much broader sense: expectations are not limited to working day and job post – they extend to officers' leisure time and private life as well. M. A. Birand puts this nicely: "The academies are trying to create … an ideal Turk, the kind of Turk one dreams of. He is free of all the maladies thought to afflict Turkish society; he is extremely well-informed, trustworthy and has all the social graces; he is also

[108] Ibid., p. 22.

[109] Jenkins, *Context and Circumstance*, p. 28.

[110] Birand, *Shirts of Steel*, p. 36.

[111] Ibid., p. 15.

a proud and honorable warrior, a man of discipline and integrity."[112] Turkish officers are expected to be model citizens; this, then, has certain implicit assumptions such as getting married and raising a family, among others mentioned above.[113]

5.3.1. Officers' Self-perception

Inevitably, among the cadets and later officers there is a sense of difference or isolation from the rest of Turkish society, and even a sense of superiority. In the academies it is frequently emphasized how different the cadets are from the outside. One significant reason why this feeling is inoculated into the cadets is that the academies and the military in general care strongly what people will think of them. Young cadets are obliged to wear their uniforms even on days off, outside of the walls of the military academy. Thus, even when going to a party or a discothèque, their clothes must be spotless and their shoes must be immaculate. They are warned to be mindful to all they do:

> "Every single step you take involves the honor of the glorious Turkish army. Walk tall, chest out. Show that you are men prepared to perform a Turk's loftiest duty. Hold your heads high. … Do not talk in a loud voice. In particular, never engage in horseplay in public, never trip up your fellow-students, and don't play impromptu ball-games while in uniform."[114]

The consequence of school's demands, as well as of the fact that students mainly come from various towns of Anatolia, away from the place where they study, is that they are unable to join a social circle outside the school.

Same factors that distinguish them from the rest of society also raise them above it. It is common enough for the officers to develop a distinguished sense of moral superiority. While in academy, special emphasis is put to implanting certain moral values in them: they

[112] Ibid., pp. 28-29.

[113] Jenkins, *Context and Circumstance*, p. 31.

[114] Birand, *Shirts of Steel*, p. 45.

learn about concepts like "devotion to the motherland", "self-sacrifice" (that is, willingness to sacrifice your life for the sake of the country), "superiority"…, which is not the case in civilian schools, or at least it is not as emphasized as in military schools. Lesson about the military men's excellence are very explicit: "Always bear in mind that you are superior to everyone and everything and that you are trained here to have superior knowledge and superior qualities."[115] So when the cadets come out of the academies, they feel that "their country is in their care and that they are its true champions".[116]

5.3.2. Guardians of Kemalism

Certainly, this sense of superiority within the military strongly rests upon the fact that the first politicians of the Republic, including Atatürk, were themselves military officers, and on the fact that the military played a crucial role in the independence struggle of Anatolian Muslims and the establishment of the Republic. Until today, Kemalist legacy has been the ideological core of the military and of the teaching curriculum in military academies. However, the role and importance of Kemalism has not been static and the ideology itself has gone through some changes. Ataturkism became important during the 1970s, and especially after the 1980 coup (not only in barracks and military academies: after 1980 it also gained prominence in civilian education system). But it was less visible before 1980. It did not have a prominent place in the curriculum of the military academies of the 1940s. In fact, there was not such thing as Ataturkism, because Atatürk's party, the RPP, was the only party, and the official ideology did not have a need to define and posit itself in opposition to other ideologies. M. A. Birand notes a conversation with an officer who held an administrative position in a military academy in the 1940s (conversation must have taken place during the 1980s, when the book was published):

> "[Ataturkism] was natural, like eating and drinking. The officers regarded Atatürk as one of them and were at one with his principles and reforms. There was no need

[115] Ibid.

[116] Ibid., p. 87.

> for instruction in depth. … We did occasionally attend lectures or were assigned to do research on the subject, but that kind of instruction did not reach the dimensions it has today."[117]

This trend began to change after the 1950s, that is, after the decade of Adnan Menderes' Democrat Party rule and the 1960 military intervention. Official state ideology during the 1950s became faced with alternative views and political programs. For instance, the officers felt that the Democrat Party was exploiting religion for political purposes and deviating from the reforms and principles of Atatürk to attract more votes. Hence, after 1960, Ataturkism became more prominent in textbooks and curricula and more time was devoted to study of the reforms. For example, in the 1960s there was a rise from 5% to 8-9% in the number of hours of instruction of Ataturkism in the Military Academies.[118] Study and teaching of Ataturkism would be further enforced with the rise of other competitive political ideologies, such as left-wing politics in the 1960s.[119]

The best way to examine Ataturkism instructed in Military Academies is by focusing on some of its crucial points: significance of the War of Independence; Kemalist principles, together with the Dynamic Ideal; opposition to rival ideologies such as liberalism or socialism; perception of internal and external threats.

The War of Independence (1919-23), a war that annulled the Treaty of Sèvres, prevented partition of Anatolia among the Allied countries after World War I, and followed by the establishment of the Turkish Republic, is taught very systematically and with great enthusiasm. Young cadets learn almost every Atatürk's action and daily events; they learn almost every battle by heart. Thus they internalize it deeply and they identify with the

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[117] Ibid., p. 54.

[118] Ibid.

[119] However, it was only after the 1980 coup when the scholarly teaching of the subject became a comprehensive ideology. Hence in the 1980s, 20% of all the hours of instruction in Military Academies were directly or indirectly related to the study of reforms and principles of Atatürk. This transformation was, in fact, prompted by a top-level decision in the military, brought about by the events leading up to the 12 September intervention. (Cf. ibid., pp. 54-55.)

person of Atatürk. Interestingly, Atatürk's military aspect is more present than his civilian aspect – this is also manifested in the pictures in military facilities where Atatürk is generally dressed in a field marshal's uniform.[120]

Strong identification with the period of the War of Independence has certain material implications: cadets gradually adopt the idea of "saving the homeland", as Atatürk and his followers did against external threats, on one hand (Greek, British and French armies in Anatolia), and internal threats on the other (for example, the reactionary Sheikh Said Rebellion in 1924 that opposed abolition of Chalifat and introduction of Western institutions, and was taken up mostly in the Kurdish region). [121] Even today, what the military identifies as a threat to the state is very similar to what it was in Atatürk's time. Political Islam and Kurdish nationalism are seen as reactionary or separatist forces. Pressure or criticism from the international community – particularly from the West – for implementation or better convey of certain institutions and principles, such as human rights, are often seen as attempts to harm and divide the country. In this context, the events at the end of World War I, especially the Treaty of Sèvres, are being commonly evoked and referred to.[122]

Moreover, future officers are compelled to study speeches of the Great Leader. Among them, the Great Speech of October 1927, the "Nutuk", has a status similar to a sacred book

[120] Ibid.

[121] Ibid., p. 57.

[122] This is not limited only to the military: conspiracy theories, summoned under the notion of "the Sèvres syndrome", are almost a special genre in both secular and Islamic Turkish press. For instance, when Cardinal Ratzinger uttered criticism of Islam in 2006, this was seen as legacy of the Crusades and an evidence of Holy War against the Muslim world. In much of the secular press, the EU is seen as an agent that would like to re-implement the Sèvres Treaty and create a Kurdistan, a greater Armenia and an independent Orthodox Patriarchate, and wants to eliminate Kemalism, which represents an obstacle in their plans to divide and colonize the country. A survey from 2006 showed that 72% of Turks believe that there are some countries that would like to divide Turkey; this view is shared by many politicians, too. Cf. Michelangelo Guida, "The Sèvres Syndrom and 'Komplo' Theories in the Islamist and Secular Press", *Turkish Studies,* Vol. 9, No. 1 (March 2008).

and his pronouncements on various subjects are taken as guidelines.[123] These extend to almost all areas of life, from ideas of how politics and economy should function, to the conduct of family life.

In a schematic way, these principles can be summarized in six points, or the so-called "six arrows" (six arrows are also a symbol of the Republican People's Party, established in 1923 by Atatürk and his colleagues). Many of them have roots in the War of Independence, but they became crystallized in its aftermath and were the ideological basis of various political and social reforms implemented throughout the 1920s and 1930s, until they were finally put together more systematically – and described as "Kemalism" – on the Fourth Congress of the CHP in 1935.[124] These are:[125]

1) *Republicanism*. It meant that it was only the republican regime, a constitutional democracy, which could best represent and realize the ideal of national sovereignty of Turkish nation. The establishment of the Republic was made possible as a result of people's efforts during the War of Independence, therefore, it was to continue its existence for the good of the people and not for the good of any individual, group or dynasty.

2) *Nationalism*. The republic was proclaimed by the National Assembly in Ankara that represented the Turkish nation. Turkish nation is the popular basis of the Republic and Turkishness is not determined by one's race or place of origin but by one's personal association with the ideals and goals of Turkish nation.

3) *Populism*. The elite should rule the state towards the best interest of the general public, especially the common people, such as villagers and workers.

Today, this principle is most often linked to democracy: "democracy and populism mean the same thing," to quote a top-level officer: "'In ancient times the Turkish nation proved

[123] Jenkins, *Context and Circumstance*, p. 32.

[124] Suna Kili, *Kemalism* (Istanbul: Menteş Matbaası, 1969), p. 71.

[125] Cf. ibid., p. 80-110.

their adherence to the idea of democracy in the general assemblies they held to elect heads of state.' Atatürk pointed out that populism was like an ever-rising sea which found its way into all modern constitutions."[126]

4) *Étatism*. The state was given primary role in the economic development of the country. It was to regulate or engage in economic activity in the country, especially in areas where private enterprise was not capable or not wiling to do so. Although the role of state is emphasized, this principle did not suggest public ownership of all the means of production: the rights to private property and private enterprise were recognized.

Even today, étatism is strongly stressed (although, paradoxically, the sphere of private economy has become much larger). Cadets are taught that a powerful state is the most effective means of achieving the Dynamic Ideal (discussed below) and that the state must intervene wherever necessary, especially in the economic field.[127]

5) *Secularism*. Separation of religion from state, as well as from educational, cultural and legal affairs. In practice, it meant realization of independence of thought (emphasis was on scientific thinking – an enlightenment ideal) and institutions from religious thinking. This principle, however, did not advocate atheism: it did not involve abolition but de-emphasis of Islam. It allowed "enlightened Islam" – a personal, non-political Islam that was compatible with positivist scientific thinking – but was against Islam that was opposed to modernization (ever since the 18th century the struggle of modernizing elites of the Ottoman Empire had been a struggle against religiously-driven reactionaries).

Today, secularism is among the most extensively taught and emphasized principles of Atatürk. It is considered that, unless state and religion remain separate, the country may once more revert to a period of decline and may lose touch with developments in the modern world, and therefore surrender to foreign powers.[128]

[126] Birand, *Shirts of Steel*, p. 60.

[127] Ibid., p. 62.

[128] Ibid., p. 63.

6) *Reformism (revolutionism)*. The country should replace the traditional, backward, medieval institutions with modern institutions based on contemporary Western models. In the context of the one-party period, this implied social and political reforms, such as the language reform (replacement of Arabic letters with Latin alphabet; cleaning of Turkish language from Arabic and Persian influences), universal suffrage etc. with a goal to completely modernize Turkey. Reforms should be employed continuously, whenever an urge would occur, to maintain the country's modern character and keep it in pace with the modern world.

Nowadays, in the military this principle is interpreted as changing the established institutions by force, that is, in words of a top-ranking general of the General Staff, "destroying those institutions which hindered the progress of the Turkish nation … and replacing them with new ones which will raise the nation to the highest level of civilization."[129]

To the above mentioned ideals we can add the Dynamic Ideal. Cadets learn that Ataturkism is not a static ideology but one that undergoes a "dynamic" development according to the conditions of the time. This means that it is not inflexible like other ideologies, but keeps changing in the light of previous experience and progressing towards the "ideal": "dynamic component of Kemalism gives the other principles not only chance for development but a certain commitment to development; and it helps to maintain the open character of this ideology; and it prevents the ideology from being an ideology of the *status quo* by keeping it committed to a continuing process of modernization".[130] A powerful state is seen as the best way to the Dynamic Ideal.[131]

Ataturkism is further specified as being opposed to some other ideologies or theories, such as trade unionism, or communism, or even capitalism (and liberalism). Particularly during

[129] Ibid.

[130] Kili, *Kemalism*, p. 110.

[131] Birand, *Shirts of Steel*, p. 62.

the 1920s and 1930s, Kemalism positioned itself in direct opposition to these ideologies which were alive either in the West (liberalism) or in the Soviet Union (bolshevism) – in both cases present in important and influential regions neighboring Turkey. It reputed all of these systems as not being suitable for Turkish mind-set and cultural heritage.

Regarding the relationship between Kemalism and liberalism we can say that for liberals, roughly speaking, the welfare of the individual, the citizen, is the main goal. A good society is consisted of free and materially provided individuals that are seeking to satisfy their private and egotistic interests (as far as the law allows them) which results in a better welfare of a society as a whole. Kemalism rejected liberalism because of its emphasis on the individual and the individuals' interest representation in politics; in words of a Turkish officer, member of the TGS:

> "The theory of the representation of interest groups is rooted in the diversity of interests represented by various professional groups, artists, and businessmen, each group being a separate entity in society. Thus, it is claimed that *such groups will seek their private interests* … Who will stop them from working only in their own interests if some of these groups join forces in the representative assembly and come to power? Accordingly, we do not think that … this particular theory … is suitable for our nation."[132]

The relationship between Kemalism and socialism was more complex. In the 1920s, there was a spread of socialist activities and movements in Anatolia, mainly under the Soviet influence. Turkish Communist Party was established in Baku and it was under the control of Soviet Comintern. In Anatolia the "Green Army" was established in 1920 with the specific aim to reconcile Islamic doctrine with that of communism. Atatürk relied on its military troops for guerilla warfare against Greek forces, prior to the formation of the regular army.[133] Atatürk and Vladimir I. Lenin even signed a friendship treaty in 1921 that included clause of non-aggression between Turkey and Soviet Union and Soviet military

[132] Ibid., pp. 61-62 (words in italics marked by M.T.).

[133] Sinan Ciddi, *Kemalism in Turkish Politics: The Republican People's Party, secularism and nationalism* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 17.

help to Turkey, without accepting Soviet hegemony.[134] However, despite the fact that Kemalists tolerated socialist developments in Anatolia, they never felt at ease with them. They turned a blind eye to them because of the pragmatic needs of the time, but they regarded socialism as non-compatible with Turkish nationalism. Socialist notion of struggle between the classes and intra-national antagonisms was an anathema to nationalist ideals of national unity, coherence and solidarity. Kemal in one of his speeches emphasized the difference between forming an alliance with Bolsheviks and becoming a Bolshevik and rejected the latter.[135] Here is what a member of the General Staff in the post-1980 period says about socialist ideology and its role in education in military academies (which is particularly important to understand the developments before the 1980 military takeover):

> "Under the Bolshevik theory, a minority composed of workers, and officers of the navy and army have united in the economics-based Communist Party and established a dictatorship. They have no national goals, no respect for the sovereignty of the people, and recognize neither equality nor the freedom of the individual. At home they forcibly impose their own views on the majority of the people, and abroad they try to spread their principles to the international community through propaganda and revolutionary organizations. … Theoreticians of revolutionary political syndicalism are workers' groups who would have all political organizations work only in their interest, so that they can eventually take over political power and sovereignty. Waiting for an opportunity to achieve their aims by force, they occasionally organize general strikes, thereby making their presence felt and exercising their influence on the government to have certain matters solved in their favor."[136]

Going back to Kemalism and the military: the military of the one-party period was completely imbedded in Kemalist principles. After all, the RPP was "a product" of the military, and many officers, after retirement from the army, joined the ranks of the RPP. The reforms and the principles of Kemalism composed a platform around which the RPP and the military were unified.[137]

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[134] Ibid., p. 25.

[135] Ibid., p. 17. Eventually, the Anatolian movements were suppressed. The cadre of the Turkish Communist Party was replaced by a cadre loyal to the RPP, and the Green Army was abolished with the drowning of its leaders off the cost of Trabzon. (Cf. ibid., p. 19.)

[136] Ibid., p. 17.

[137] Kili, *Kemalism*, p. 111.

Moreover, although some of the Kemalist principles have been modified in the course of the 20th century, or even abolished, and some novelties introduced, the general attitude of the military has remained unchanged; it is best contained in the words of Atatürk himself, namely his speeches from the last years of his life: "Our army is the steellike expression of Turkish unity, of Turkish power and ability, and of Turkish patriotism. Our army is the undefeatable assurance of our systematized activity to realize the Turkish ideal, and to protect the land of Turkey."[138] The following quote, dating from 1938, a few days before his death, was his last message to the Turkish army: "The brave Turkish army … always carries the torch of civilization along with its victories. As you have protected and saved the country from oppression, catastrophy; and calamities in times of difficulty and crisis, I have no doubts that you will do your duty with the same loyalty … in the progressive atmosphere of today's Republic."[139] Indeed, future cadets, having gone through intensive Ataturkist education, assume a role of those who should "guard and protect the existing order" and keep "Atatürk's torch alight".[140]

We should note that Kemalism, which has always been the foundation of the military's world outlook, has been taught even more vigorously over the last 25-30 years. Cadets do not only learn and internalize his speeches – they even regard Atatürk as having an almost physical presence in their lives. For example, on 13 March each year, the anniversary of Atatürk enrolling as a cadet, at morning rollcall an officer calls out Atatürk's name and the cadets respond in unison: 'Present!' Some of them weep or faint when they visit Atatürk's tomb in Ankara or during commemorative ceremonies on the anniversary of his death on 10 November. [141] Cadets who have graduated from the military academies over the last two

[138] From Atatürk's opening speech to the Grand National Assembly on 1 November, 1937. (Ibid., p. 112.)

[139] Ibid., p. 112.

[140] Birand, *Shirts of Steel*, p. 58.

[141] Jenkins, *Context and Circumstance*, p. 32.

and a half decades are probably even more committed to Kemalism than the officers currently filling the highest echelons in the TGS.[142]

Lastly, we should also note that, although the six principles are covered extensively and in great detail, with examples from Atatürk's speeches, Military Academy graduates seem to have a confusion of some concepts in their minds. This becomes clear especially when it comes to the understanding of other ideologies. For example, there are significant differences among the currents that are summarily known as the "left": social democracy, socialism, communism, and there are even tensions between them. However, the mind of a cadet generally tends to see the left as a single concept.[143] In general, the cadets find it difficult to discuss the abstract characteristics of Kemalism as an ideology when they are asked (many even deny that it is an ideology): the majority ends up superficially talking about the six arrows symbolizing the six principles, while their point of identification is manly the more concrete War of Independence and Atatürk's deeds in that war.[144] One reason for this probably lies in the fact that cadets do not have a habit of engaging in extra reading or in-depth research. Though even if they wanted, they might not find it easy: purpose of the academies is to keep them from alternative political ideologies and movements. As mentioned above, they can be dismissed from the academy even if a distant relative of theirs was engaged in extreme left- or right-wing activism. Further, books and periodicals stocked in the libraries are carefully censored. Left-wing and religious publications are not allowed. Anyone seen with publications not stamped as "readable" by the head of office is penalized. Also, when an external lecturer or guest speakers are invited, care is taken to select those that are not liberal in their outlook.[145]

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[142] Ibid.

[143] Birand, *Shirts of Steel*, p. 66.

[144] The author of the above cited book notes that this superficiality and confusion only reflects a confusion of concepts that is to be observed in almost every section of Turkish society. (Cf. ibid., p. 67.)

[145] Ibid., pp. 66-67.

5.3.3. Officers' Perception of Civilian Politicians and Politics

The officers' peculiar sense of superiority and elitist culture, together with a feeling of moral duty to guard Kemalist principles, further leads to a very peculiar way in how they perceive civilian politicians. In the eyes of an officer, politics is dirty work because it leads to favor personal interests over preserving the interests of the nation. An officer who is politically minded or actively engaged in party politics is not looked upon favorably by his colleagues. They would condemn him in terms like "pity about our commander!"[146] They tend to see politics as a "mess", and officers who engage in politics as those that "got into a mess".[147] Further, a person who talks vaguely about his intention is mocked and accused of "talking like a politician", and if an officers' meeting went noisy, it is generally likened to the National Assembly.[148] Indicatively, after the introduction of democratic elections, only a handful of retired soldiers attempted to engage in active politics (none with any success).[149]

However, although cadets are taught to stay out of politics and cultivate a dislike/distrust of politicians, they are nevertheless – somewhat paradoxically – also taught of what politicians and political parties ought to be like. In other words, the instruction in Ataturkism that they receive in schools is not an abstract theory or merely a history course. Cadets get very concrete prescriptions of how Turkish politics should function, and these prescriptions are, in fact, a direct application of Ataturkist principles onto Turkish politics. For instance, there is a special chapter that talks about ideal political parties in the textbook used in the Military Academies; it begins with the words "parties are responsible for achieving the Dynamic Ideal of the state".[150]

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[146] Ibid., pp. 68-69.

[147] Ibid., p. 69.

[148] Ibid., p. 75.

[149] Jenkins, *Context and Circumstance*, p. 34.

[150] Birand, *Shirts of Steel*, p. 69. At least, this goes for textbooks used in the mid-1980s when the book quoted here was published.

The general conviction is that Ataturkism explains the duties and courses for those in responsible positions in the fundamental institutions and these people should plan in detail the course of action that will allow them to perform those duties successfully. This general outline is specified by concrete definitions and principles of republican democracy: what the parties in the Grand National Assembly should be like, what qualifications politicians should have and how the opposition should function. To put it briefly, political parties are responsible for administering a firm state authority, which defends the principles of republicanism, nationalism, populism, étatism and secularism, an authority which will ensure the full security of its citizens, as well as order and discipline.[151]

Although special emphasis is put on the principle of populism, and officers truly believe that plurality of parties should faithfully represent preferences of the people, expressed through elections, nevertheless, there are certain limitations to what the parties are supposed to do:

> "Political parties should not promise to meet all the wishes of the people. This is damaging for democracy, and fails to be convincing. It is natural for the people to press for their needs, but they cannot fully consider how this can be accomplished. Political parties, on the other hand, have to consider the people's needs and wishes in the light of the existing means and of the future and general well-being of the country."[152]

To be fair, this view is not peculiar to Turkish understanding of democracy, nor is it something non-democratic: we can find similar ideals in Western democracies (criticisms of demagogy, emphasis on pursuit of general and long-term interest instead of winning cheap election points etc.). However, the desired limitations become interesting when it comes to the role of parties that constitute the opposition:

> "According to Ataturkism, parties and individuals in opposition should try to disseminate their own political views and be critical of the party in power, *but their criticism should not be damaging to national unity*. *They should be constructive,*

[151] Ibid., p. 70.

[152] Ibid., pp. 69-70.

> *rational, and realistic in their opposition*, and bear in mind the interests of the country in criticizing the mistakes of the party in power."[153]

The term "constructive opposition" is understood as "not to divide the nation or incite clashes of interest of class": "The struggle between the parties should be of a positive and constructive nature. There should be no place for divisive politics which would run against national interests."[154] Basically, this means that political parties should not represent class interests (this severely limits activity of Marxist parties) and that parties, no matter what the ideological outlook, should not create hostility among the people. Instead, their principle aim "should be to establish social order and solidarity".[155]

Obviously, through their education, young cadets get a refined picture of what relations between the government and opposition should be like. They are also taught about "an ideal politician", one that will not pursue his personal or party interests at the expense of national interest. However, it is almost inevitable in every democracy that relations between parliamentary parties are not always harmoniously coordinated and that political parties pursue partial interests of their base – that is, of a section of society instead of the general interest, and they naturally struggle for power and influence; cadets' opinion of politicians deteriorates as they are learning about the realities of day-to-day politics. The military's image of politicians is emphatically negative.

To give just a few examples to illustrate this disrespect of politicians, here is a quotation from an interview with a military academy cadet who talks about the level of knowledge of politicians:

> "Some politicians aren't half as educated as we are. Some know one-tenth of what we do. How can they govern the country? … Some of them can't even speak proper Turkish, let alone a foreign language as we do."[156]

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[153] Ibid., p. 71 (words in italics marked by M.T.).

[154] Ibid., pp. 71-72.

[155] Ibid., p. 74.

[156] Ibid., p. 75.

> "Some of our politicians are so ignorant that they've never really been aware of the dangers inside and outside the country."[157]

The following quote expresses a typical conviction about politicians' concern for particular interests at the expense of national good:

> "A politician doesn't put his country above everything else as I do. His priority is his own re-election in four year's time, though, in the meantime, he talks a lot about patriotism. He can abuse the state by indulging in favoritism to secure his re-election. I trust very few of them …"[158]

It should be noted, though, that these views are not limited to the military: many civilians share the same negative image of politicians (stereotypes of politicians as untrustworthy selfish liars etc.). The difference, however, is that the civilians may be more aware of their own faults and misgivings, while officers are more self-confident and educated not to allow any deficiency, thus les tolerant towards errors in the political sphere (curiously, in almost all of the above-mentioned quotes, there is an instance of comparison between "the politician and me" – between politicians and officers).[159]

5.4. Kemalism and Corporatism

It is apparent that the military's notion of democracy is very different from civilians' and politicians' notion of democracy. Furthermore, the military's notion is quite different from the notions in Western countries that have an established democratic political culture. Then, of course, there is also a gap between the military's notion of democracy and the actually-functioning democracy, "democracy at work" in Turkey. This contradiction leads us to the following question:

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[157] Ibid., p. 76.

[158] Ibid., p. 75.

[159] Ibid., pp. 74-75.

What are the Turkish Armed Forces really after? What political order do they favor, if not democracy in its standard definition?

What they actually want, we can say, is a model of society that "combines discipline, proper organization, disregard for self-interest in favor of the homeland, cooperation, unity and constructiveness." There is a name for it in sociology: it is called *corporatism*.

Corporatist ideology, first formulated at the turn of 19th century, was primarily a response to what was seen as weakening of public morality and weakening of ties between individuals in modern capitalist societies. Moral decadence was seen as a consequence of individualistic norms, on the one hand, and of functional specialization brought about by the division of labor, on the other. Corporatism postulates that this anomaly can be overcome if society is organized as an organic whole consisting of mutually interdependent and functionally complementary parts. These parts are called occupational groups, professional organizations, or corporations. They consist of individuals working in the same industry or sector of economy, and employees and employers are merged within the same group.[160] People are socialized within these groups, as they share their lifetime activities with other members of the same corporation, and they make their living in them. Corporations mold the individual to be proper participant in social and political life as a member of his or her specific unit of society (but not as an abstract individual); they constitute the primary building blocks of political and social life.[161] The role of the state is to direct, supervise and manage relations between occupational associations, thus maintain order. Accordingly, the state may assign different weight and value to different occupational groups.[162]

[160] Taha Parla and Andrew Davison, *Corporatist Ideology in Kemalist Turkey: Progress or Order?* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2004), p. 33.

[161] Ibid., pp. 26-27.

[162] Ibid., p. 33.

In the liberal model of society, the main unit of political activity is the individual, with his or her prerogatives against the state. The main mechanisms of interest articulation are groups and political parties, which are organized by the individuals whose interests coincide – and when they coincide. Such groups can dissolve when the common goal which was uniting the group is achieved. The major institution in which the articulated and aggregated interests are transformed into political decisions and policies is the parliament. In the corporatist paradigm, by contrast, the major political units of political life are not the atomistic individuals and the changeable groups but the before-mentioned well-defined and constant occupational groups. The governmental structure in which corporately organized interest groups and the state meet is either a parliament, or corporative councils organized in pyramidal form. Corporatism is not tied to a single political system: it can coexist with multi-party system (which becomes subordinate to corporative interests) or it may exist in a single-party regime, where different associations are made organs of the party.[163]

A corporatist society is not the mere sum of individuals – society is believed to be greater than the numerical total of individuals. This leads to the next important principle of corporatism – the public interest does not result from individual pursuit of self-interest: that is to say, the individual's pursuit of his or her interests – especially those associated with private property – is considered legitimate only as long as it serves social solidarity and does not violate the public interest. This implies a "visible hand" in economic life, regulation and intervention in economy by the state. However, regulation does not go as far as in socialism, for corporatism is in fact not anticapitalist as such. It does not reject the fundaments of capitalist economy, such as private property and enterprise. We can say that corporatism seeks to replace liberalism (as the superseding rationale of modern capitalism) but not capitalism itself; it seeks to eliminate the profit-maximizing logic of capitalism and individualistic atomism, without abolishing capitalism.[164]

Therefore corporatism is not at all equal to socialism. In fact, when corporatism came about in the 19th century, and especially during the first half of 20th century when the world

[163] Ibid., p. 32.

[164] Ibid., p. 30.

witnessed actual socialist regimes for the first time, corporatism came to be known as the "Third Way ideology" – a political ideology that "pursued capitalist modernity and societal transformation but rejected both an individualist version of liberalism and a class-based vision of society and social transformation of socialism".[165] Being opposed both to Western-type liberalism and Soviet-type socialism, corporatism rejected not only the category of individual but also the category of class. While the individualism of the liberal model was seen as too atomistic and consequently disruptive of social equilibrium, the struggle and warfare of classes in the socialist model was also viewed as detrimental to maintenance of the social system.[166]

Although corporatism, with its critique of atomism and disintegration of social texture in modern capitalist society does bare some resemblance with Marx's critique of alienation, this resemblance is misleading. Instead of conflict and antagonism between the workers and capitalists, proletariat and bourgeoisie, corporatism merges the members of these two groups into a same, cohesive corporation, while ensuring coordinated and unconflicting coexistence between different corporations. Thus the end to which the corporatist critique is directed is not the abolition of human power differentials that emerge out of capitalist class structure, as in Marxist critique, but unity, harmony and efficiency across the functional spheres of industrial economy. The remedy to alienation/exploitation of the individual is not abolition of private property, it is not workers' selfmanagement etc. – the alienated individual can find social and moral refuge within a corporation, which is an institution intimate enough with its members to feel their needs, with their variations.[167]

Corporatist ideology (prevalent in Kemalism, as we shall se later) is not to be confused with fascism. Namely, corporatism had historically two versions – solidaristic and fascistic version (the latter met most prominent realization in Mussolini's Italy and Hitler's Germany). Whereas they both share the organic vision of society – a society consisted of

[165] Ibid., p. viii.

[166] Ibid., p. 28.

[167] Ibid., p. 30 and p. 27.

harmoniously functioning occupational groups – they have a different understanding of the scope of freedom that is to be allowed to the individual.

The fascistic version sees the corporations as the public organs of the state, to be used to control and dominate society. The state monopolizes and dominates all spheres of life and does not respect autonomy of any sphere. It transmits orders to the corporations, which then transmit them to the individuals who have no prior rights vis-à-vis the state. Individuality is radically negated: the state dominates the individuals to the point of eliminating their abstract status. On the other hand, according to the solidaristic version of corporatism, individuals still possess rights. These rights are limited in comparison to those of the liberal model: they are not supposed to exceed certain boundaries. The emphasis is still on submersion of private interests to the higher, public good, that is, on duties and obligations – to occupation and to society – rather than rights, while the state is imbuing otherwise egotistic individuals with public-spiritedness. But certain individualism and initiative is acknowledged. In solidaristic corporatism, corporations in fact perform a double function: they are there not only to socialize the individual and assimilate him to the state, but also to check and restrain the state from encroaching upon individual members' autonomous domain, thus protecting them. Corporations are sort of buffers between the individual and the state.[168] Here, the state is above all a regulatory and coordinating institution, with jurisdiction primarily in the intercorporational domain.[169] This is also manifested in the way how economy is run. In the fascist variant, state and politics are supreme over the economy (and society), while in the solidaristic variant – although politics still have primacy over economy – the state assumes more a role of an arbiter between labor and capital and between employer and employee by frequently legislating against both strikes and lockouts in the interest of the public good.[170]

[168] Ibid., p. 13.

[169] Ibid., pp. 29-30.

[170] Ibid., pp. 31-32.

5.4.1. Corporatism in Kemalism

Corporatist ideology entered late Ottoman/Turkish theoretical life with the Young Turk ideologue Ziya Gökalp, who found these themes relevant to theorizing politics in the Turkish context at the turn of the century and appropriated solidaristic corporatism of Emile Durkheim. His theory then underwent some changes within the ideological frame of Kemalists, but maintained its main aspects. Kemalism can thus be classified as a solidaristic corporatist ideology, as Parla and Davison have shown.[171]

Evidence for this thesis is abundant. We noted earlier that the Kemalists of the interwar period saw bolshevism as incompatible with the Turkish national character and they inhibited development of socialist movements in Anatolia. As for their opposition to liberal-type individualism, in Kemalism there is no emphasis on the intrinsic worth of the individual. In their discourse, as long as the individual or his value for society is concerned, the stress is not really on the individual as such (his subjectivity, wellbeing etc.), but rather on his attributes that relate to his role in a larger social context – for instance, his work.[172] The following citation is indicative:

> "Ataturkism has … defined their [Turks'] responsibility, which is to work. In Atatürk's view, the survival of society is endangered if the individual refrains from work. … Social order in Turkey can be preserved and maintained by the labor of the individual. The following words of Atatürk clearly point to the direct relationship between populism and the principle of work: 'Let us be fully aware that we are a people who must work for salvation and survival. We all have rights and powers, but we must work for our rights. Those who are idle and shun work have no place or right in our society'."[173]

A TAF officer, author of the quote above, reiterates the crucial nature of individual's work – a tendency consistent with solidaristic corporatism in general. Also, it reflects a

[171] Ibid., pp. 12-13.

[172] Ibid., p. 260.

[173] Birand, *Shirts of Steel*, p. 62.

characteristically corporatist understanding of relationship between rights and duties, according to which individuals' duties and responsibilities come before their rights.

Although Kemalism strongly emphasized solidaristic corporatism, it also partially incorporated fascistic characteristics here and there.[174] Parla and Davison have argued that certain aspects, such as elements of racism, emphasis and high esteem for the nation, or the cult of the great leader, exceed the limits of the solidaristic corporatist ideology and are in fact leanings (although not full-fledged developments) toward fascism.[175] To give one example, in Atatürk's speeches there is very little, if none, emphasis on the autonomous status of the individual as such. If there had been any, his statements would not have had the fascistic tendencies they do. Instead, the emphasis is on 'heroism' of individuals, their devotion to the nation and their discipline. Individual selfhood is irrelevant or inadequate as a building block of social life, and the nation is the single superior identity for all inhabitants of the "fatherland".[176]

In this context, we should mention another conceptualization of relationship and distinction between the Kemalist-type corporatism/fascism and the interwar German-Italian-type fascism – a theory distinguishing between *plebeian fascism* and *patrician fascism*.

Plebeian fascism, with its realization in regimes of Hitler and Mussolini, did not come from elite: it came into existance from parties that were for a long time marginal to the existing political system. These parties were like a "gang" that captured the power. They liked to address the widest possible masses, as in parades which came with a lot of frenzy. On the other hand, patrician fascism, e.g. Kemalism, is generated and conveyed by elite. For example, Atatürk read his speeches in small circles, not to the masses in public squares. They were afraid or unleashing autonomous mass action and they did not like to ramble (unlike Hitler or Mussolini; in this sense, Kemalism also fit nicely into the existing pattern of change from above dating back to the Ottoman Empire).

[174] Parla and Davison, *Corporatist Ideology in Kemalist Turkey*, p. 13.

[175] Ibid., p. 244.

[176] Ibid., pp. 260-261.

Within the Kemalist-type solidaristic corporatism, special status is designated to two social/institutional groups: the youth and the military. In simple terms, they both have almost identical role: to defend the nation, state and society from all threats. Atatürk's views on youth were expressed in the 1935 RPP party program. It speaks about "tight discipline, which is the singular instrument of [national] success", it says that [the most superior duty [is] to protect the homeland", and emphasizes the development of "a clean and sublime love for the fatherland".[177] One cannot but notice that the youth, ideally, is expected to be inculcated with a spirit very close to what we have seen in the education of young military officers: the youth should be brought up with mentality that considers the protection of the homeland as its superior duty and is ready for self-sacrifice for the sake of that duty.[178] The program also mentions other features of education that are remarkably close to the training in military academies, such as emphasis on physical training ("To the whole Turkish youth physical training shall be given. That would nourish their enthusiasm and health, their belief in their person and their nation").[179]

The military is identified as a "great *school* of national discipline".[180] Therefore, the military, with its hieratical structure, its ideological core etc. serves as a model of how the civilian schools should look like. For instance, Atatürk in one of his speeches presented his view on the role of school teachers: they "change their robes and sacrifice their heads when required and march with the army." A sentence later he added: "… the Turkish youth … are ready in thought, in conscience and in science to participate in the national heroism together with the former two [the teachers and the military]".[181]

Thus, the bringing together of the military and the youth (they are "two armies marching forward"), and a lack of essential differentiation between them, ensures dissemination of

[177] Ibid., p. 253.

[178] Ibid., p. 254.

[179] Ibid.

[180] Ibid., p. 239 (words in italics marked by M.T.).

[181] Ibid.

Kemalist ideals throughout the entire society, making people, members of the nation, "a military always marching along the path of national heroism".[182] This has been, of course, translated into governmental policies – Ayşe Gül Altınay quotes a statement of a Minister of National Education Nevzat Ayaz from 1994:

> "In the organizational structure of our state, there are only two ministries that have the term 'national' [*millî*] in their titles: Ministry of National Defense and Ministry of National Education. The Ministry of National Defense has assumed the duty to protect our Republic and to defend our country from outside forces. And the Ministry of national Education has assumed the duty to raise citizens who are committed to Atatürk's principles and revolutions, and to Atatürk nationalism as it is defined in the constitution."[183]

On one hand, this brings us back to our starting question: what is the Turkish military really after? It is after a corporatist society: a well-ordered, disciplined, law-abiding, obedient, ship-shaped, solidaristic and homogenous society, united under Ataturkism, with as little deviations and ideological and cultural pluralism as possible.

On the other hand, this opens another question: how is it possible that the Turkish Armed Forces insist and publicly declare that what they are after is democracy, and not something else (e.g. corporatism) – despite an obvious discrepancy between their idea of democracy and Western ideas of democracy, or despite the fact that the ideology of Kemalism bears a number of fascist elements etc.?

One reason may be that at the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century, when democracy has become the highest, unchallenged political ideal, it is almost impossible for one to officially claim to be against democratic principles. Besides, Turkey has also had strategic and political interests in being part of the Western Block after the World War II and especially during the Cold – an alliance that ensured protection from territorial threats coming from the Soviet Union, and necessitated adopting some of the basic political institutions of the West, including parliamentary democracy.

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[182] Ibid.

[183] Altınay, *The myth of the military-nation*, p. 119.

Secondly, despite of essential differences between liberalism, socialism and corporatism, solidaristic corporatist ideology as such has been historically very closely tied to the two other ideologies – at least on a discursive level. This is because various corporatist regimes have had to justify themselves either in liberal-democratic or socialist terms for the past fifty years, on the one hand, and because of discernable absence of a corporatist vocabulary, on the other:[184]

> "It is not always the case that one finds an explicit rationale for corporatist capitalism in contexts where it is practiced, especially in western Europe today. Policy indicators may be observed, but no *official* corporatist ideological expression need accompany them. … In the Western ideological sphere, where liberal doctrine enjoys a moral authority, corporatists publicly conform to liberal rhetoric while concealing their policy and institutional initiatives that slight, rather than respect, the inviolable integrity of individuality (as, for example, liberal theory posits). Corporatism, then, … may remain as a loose worldview that needs to be analyzed in places other than official statements."[185]

If this applies to corporatist elements within Western Europe, it applies at least equally, if not more for corporatism of Turkey, due to Turkey's well-known age-old aspiration to – at least superficially – adjust itself to the Western regimes and to be accepted by the 'Western club' as one of its own.

Thirdly, we can nonetheless not ignore the various liberalization reforms that the one-party Kemalist regime undertook, such as increased rights for women, or secularism. One also has to admit that democracy and other liberal institutions have been a social reality in Turkey, not just sheer corporatism covered only with liberal rhetoric – no matter how non-Western or peculiar to Turkey they may have been.[186] Yet, Parla and Davison argue that the reforms that amounted to a lessening of the patriarchal chains were only partly liberalizing.

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[184] Parla and Davison, *Corporatist Ideology in Kemalist Turkey*, p. 31.

[185] Ibid.

[186] By "non-Western and peculiar to Turkey" we allude to various criticisms that Turkish democracy has borne, from the military takeovers and the violations of human rights, to the traditional preference of in-groups and disregard for the opposition.

As the main ideological emphasis in Kemalism is solidaristic and cooperative, not individualist and participatory, the partial liberalization may have been an outcome of the reforms, rather than their primary intent.[187] For instance, although Kemalism instituted laicism, it also offered and controlled its own interpretation of Islam, as opposed to liberal concern to disestablish religion in order to ensure freedom in religious belief. Although the cultural reforms and the new civil code increased rights for women, thus seem to be a move against patriarchal relations and arbitrary male activity, it is difficult to discern any explicit interest on Atatürk's part in attacking relations of authority typical of patriarchy. Namely, the one-party regime also issued sartorial requirements for men in all social spheres and for women in state and public institutions. The stress was on harmonious relations between the occupational groups of the solidaristic whole, as opposed to securing liberty for everyone and promoting individual development and political participation as we know it in liberalism.[188]

However, these partial and accidental reforms, liberal islands in a corporatist sea, have been enough for the Turkish political, military etc. elite to claim its affiliation to the prevailingly liberal-democratic West. Even in the West, Kemalism has been overall appreciated as a progressive westernizing movement with an aim to join the ranks of contemporary civilization. The West, however, has largely failed to discern Kemalism's corporatist commitments. Kemalism has indeed participated in some progressive tendencies of the modern age (of the West), but this participation should be defined more specifically: "if the West was the benchmark, then it was the nationalist-corporatist-laicist West in which Kemalism participated, not the democratizing West".[189] Kemalist principle of populism – a concept within the corpus of Kemalist principles that is the closest to the concept of democracy, and most often identified with it – was a form of nationalist, laicist, solidaristic

[187] Ibid., p. 139.

[188] Ibid., pp. 138-139.

[189] Ibid., p. 138.

corporatism, not of liberal or radical democracy: "Goals of freedom, equality, even justice, simply put, were not and are not the explicit emphases of kemalist ideology."[190]

5.4.2. Propensity to Intervene With a Coup

Now, taking all the above-mentioned components of officers' education together – that is, isolation from civilian world and a feeling of superiority, unconditional adherence to Ataturkism with a feeling of duty to safeguard the ideology, and a peculiar image of what civilian politics ought to be – by "putting pieces into the puzzle", what we get is an explosive barrel: a high potentiality and inclination towards a political intervention. Consider, for instance, a high-ranking officer's interpretation of the Kemalist principle of revolutionism:

> "Atatürk envisaged a swift rather than a gradual renewal. If I have sufficient power and authority, I think I will bring about the revolution desired in our society by means of a "coup". … Having spent so many years of my life educating myself, studying civilized society, and enjoying freedom, why should I stoop to the level of the people instead of raising them to my level? They should be like me, not I like them!"[191]

Moreover, it is easy to find the germ of later military interventions already in the RPP ideology of the 1930s. Namely, as far as, on the on hand, the military and the education system are fused in the Kemalist corporatist state (as we saw earlier), on the other hand we have a well known Atatürk's principle of separation between politics and military (Atatürk himself was an officer turned politician). Counter to common interpretations according to which this principle implies an absence of political relation between military and politics, that is to say, noninvolvement of the military in politics or subordination of the military structures to the government, another interpretation posits that the military is in fact not

[190] Ibid., p. 140 and p. 139. Interestingly, among the regimes in the West that Turkish politicians have most easily identified with and have had the best communication with were usually right-wing regimes, for instance, the US during the Reagan era, or Berlusconi's Italy today.

[191] Ibid., p. 63.

separate from politics but positioned *over* politics (which also better explains all the three military interventions in Turkish politics).[192] The military was supposed to take up the role designated to Atatürk, probably after he dies: a role of "looking over the Kemalist state (as Atatürk did) and preserving it as its highest guardian".[193]

Numerous points in Atatürk's speeches show that he does not diminish the role of the military in politics as much as he elevates it to this new, special position. The army was supposed to be a necessary tool for achieving solidaristic and corporatist aims, a tool of social transformation and tranquility, unity and order. [194] In this context, a military intervention is not only possible, but almost expected:

> "Like the leader of unparalleled and unquestionable judgment, the military need not consistently involve itself with the ebb and flow of everyday political life because it effectively oversees the entire context of governance. … Although Kemalism may conceptualize the military as remaining out of ordinary politics, it does not suggest that the military must remain outside the governing administration of the state. In Kemalist terms, therefore, it would be unusual were the military not to involve itself on occasion in governance."[195]

This explains why from 1950 up until today the military has not been a merely passive sideliner but has had its own intergovernmental contacts, and issued judgments related to political currents through media, let alone the three interventions. The military, alongside with the Republic's children, is the embodiments and the expression of the great nation. Atatürk virtually gave the military full symbolic and representative powers, he collapsed the nation and the military and declared the military to be the true owner (not only

[192] Cf. ibid., pp. 235-243.

[193] Ibid., p. 236.

[194] Ibid. For instance, he explicitly stated that the army has a 'high' duty 'above any and all political considerations and interests', and that the military has 'readiness to perform its duty, which consists of protecting the glory and honor of the Turkish fatherland and the community of Turkdom against all kinds of internal and external danger' (ibid., p. 236 and p. 241, respectively).

[195] Ibid., p. 238.

guardian) of the country. Parla and Davison conclude that "this is the foundation for the whole ideology behind the history of coups d'état in Turkey".[196]

Thus the relations between the TAF and the civilian government can be described as a system in which civilian authority is *primary* rather than *supreme*.[197] As long as the civilian government functions within the parameters defined by the Turkish constitution, the military is content and remains within its specific sphere, the defense (where it is in fact autonomous). But if it considers that the civilian government is failing to safeguard against threats to the country, or to the regime, than it believes that is has a legal and moral obligation to intervene. For the vast majority of the Turkish officer corps, failure to take such action would be a violation of an almost sacred duty, even a denial of their *raison d'être*.[198]

The officers deeply internalize this understanding, starting from their cadet years. Although the military schools and academies never explicitly say to their students that they will have to intervene if necessary, the lesson they univocally draw is that the army has a duty regarding the political life of the country. As a matter of fact, not only they learn this in school – we can say that support for military interventions in case of a need is present in a significant section of the Turkish civilian population. A cadet from the 1980s quotes his father who used to say: "Thank God for the army. We can rely on it to save us."[199] He adds that he grew up with this attitude.

What cadets find out in schools is therefore more a sort of a line which the military should protect, that is to say, what are the *specific conditions* under which the military can and should either directly intervene or at least indirectly influence politics. This line goes along the principles of Atatürk. The military will react when they are violated, for example, with

[196] Ibid., p. 241.

[197] Jenkins, *Context and* Circumstance, p. 34 (words in italics marked by M.T.).

[198] Ibid., p. 35.

[199] Birand, *Shirts of Steel*, p. 83.

the threat of political Islam, communism, or ethnic separatism, briefly, by any *internal and external enemies*:

> "In order for the Turkish nation and her Armed Forces to be successful, they must know who their enemies are. There are two forces that prevent Turkey from attaining the Dynamic Ideal. One consists of external threats with colonial intentions who would not like to see us making progress. But … an even more harmful and destructive group consists of traitors who are likely to rise from within us."[200]

The quote above from a textbook compiled for the General Staff then reiterates the known superiority attitude of the officer staff:

> "Such enemies cannot be sensible and patriotic people who are aware of the realities, but those who are stupid and ignorant, or evil and unpatriotic, or blind."[201]

Therefore, the Turkish coups d'état in the second half of 20th do not seem odd at all. The act of coup d'état fits perfectly into the ideological outlook of the military and it can be deduced from Atatürk's principles and speeches. It is inherent in the curriculum of the military academies. Seeing things from this perspective, we should actually turn the question around: not 'Why did the military intervene?', but 'Why did it restore democracy (relatively) soon after every intervention?' How come that the military has time and again decided to step down and return to the barracks, retreat from direct political involvement (what is more, it made a promise to do so at every single intervention and fulfilled its promise), instead of, say, keeping the grip over society at all time time, thus ensuring that society runs the way they want?

One reason, obviously, is that the ideology of coup d'état, emanating from Ataturkism, is counterposed by another crucial component of the military's ideology and world outlook, mentioned earlier – detest for participation in day-to-day politics, politics that is inevitably 'dirty' and 'corrupting'. It seems that a time-limited intervention, a short operation to 'correct the anomalies in the society and tune it back to the desired when it has gone off the

[200] Ibid., p. 86.

[201] Ibid.

right path' is a perfect middle way, an ideal solution to the contradiction inherent in the military's ideology itself.

Another reason is that, although the democratic ideal as such is not immanent to the corporatist ideology, it has nevertheless been an important developmental goal for the Turkish military and Turkish society in general, for it has been a criterion to consider a country as part of the "West". Therefore it has been a sine-qua-non of the Ottoman/Turkish project of 'bringing the country to the level of contemporary civilization' (an important feature of Ataturkism and a phrase often heard in the speeches of commanders).

There also seems to be a third reason, something that also makes the Turkish military special in the Middle Eastern context, or even globally: all the Turkey's military interventions have been driven purely ideologically, without considerations for material self-interest of the military establishment.

Steven A. Cook in his comparative analysis of relationship between the military and politics in three countries, Turkey, Egypt and Algeria, finds that in these countries the military establishment was a progressive force of modernization and democratization; it was an instrument to direct the processes of industrialization, institutionalization, and reform necessary for the development of a modern society. The military was an institution that had an organizational capacity, sense of mission, as well as a national sentiment. However, once the goals of modernization, industrialization etc. were met, the military did not relinquish its prestigious position and the officers became conservative elements clinging tenaciously to regimes that they more or less created. Cook calls these officers, which are mostly of senior rank, the "military enclave":

> "The officers of the military enclave, along with their civilian allies, strategically created political systems that have benefited themselves at the expense of the rest of society. … Over time, the officers sought to conceal themselves behind the veneer of democratic institutions, representative structures, and legitimizing institutions that came to characterize their respective political systems. During periods of crisis,

> however, the military elite tend to strip away this facade, revealing themselves as the locus of power and reinforcing the authoritarian core of the political order."[202]

The facades remain "precisely little more than the pretenses of democracy they represent".[203] These countries, however, are not to be confused with military dictatorships: rather, they are "military-dominated states". The democratic facades "permit the commanders to rule but they leave it to others to govern".[204]

We know this story from the Turkish case. However, there is a crucial difference between the regimes in Algeria and Egypt, on one hand, and Turkey on the other, in terms of what motivates the military to meddle with politics (either directly, with a coup, or exerting influence through some other institutions). Cook postulates that the military – in any given country – possesses different types of interests: core interests and existential interests.[205] Existential interests are basically the military's concern for the regime. When the officers perceive a threat to the political order, the military will almost certainly respond. Core interests, on the other hand, include economic interests, security and foreign policy, and the political and state apparatus; military's reaction, if these interests are jeopardized, can occur, but it is not as likely as in the case of an attack on existential interests. [206]

This distinction applies to the armies in all three countries. However, not all of them are equally concerned for core interests. Let us take economic interests as an example. In Egypt, officers have parlayed predominant positions within the Egyptian state to enhance their personal wealth. After Anwar Sadat's coming to power in 1970, a nexus between economic interests and the military developed. President's economic policy allowed the

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[202] Steven A. Cook, *Ruling But Not Governing: The Military and Political Development in Egypt, Algeria, and Turkey* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), p. 15.

[203] Ibid., p. 26.

[204] Ibid.

[205] He also talks about "lesser-order interests" – they are not as central as the other two categories, and are not likely to provoke the military establishment into repressive policies. For the sake of simplicity we will omit them here. (Cf. ibid., p. 16.)

[206] Ibid., p. 16.

members of the military enclave and the economic elite to benefit mutually from the "commissions game", which enriched the officers and ensured that, in return, contracts from the military continued to flow. Later on, the military as a whole became perhaps Egypt' single most important economic entity due to their portfolio in manufacture of weapons, services in security sectors, even various agribusiness, services in tourism and infrastructure development.[207]

In Algeria, too, the officer corps has particular economic interests that it has protected at the expense of Algerian society. Partial liberalization of the economy in the 1980s provided an opportunity for members of the military establishment to benefit from new sources of rent. When previously public assets were privatized, the new members were often military officers or their civilian allies. Later, in the 1990s, the senior commanders opposed recommendations of the IMF to establish greater economic transparency, while simultaneously seeking to leverage economic reforms to their own benefit. Overall, while rents circulated through the military, public sector and commercial private sector, the general population was forced to contend with limited economic opportunities. [208]

Like in Algeria or Egypt, the Turkish military enclave represents a population with distinctive worldview and a sense of superiority, an elite that is also physically separated from society in facilities exclusively for the military use, such as schools, hospitals, clubs, and residential areas.[209] It is also true that the TGS has had an interest in certain companies and sectors of economy; for example, it has historically had autonomy in the realm of weapons procurement, where it has been directed contracts towards a number of favored domestic and foreign firms.[210] Further, when the officers retire they receive a lump sum

[207] Ibid., p. 19.

[208] Ibid., p. 20.

[209] Ibid., p. 14.

[210] Ibid., p. 21. Additionally, as M. A. Birand has noted, Turkish customs preclude public scrutiny of military budgets and spending. Turkish parliamentary debates on military budgets have always been occasions for displays of patriotic fervor and flag-waving rhetoric – attitudes that can best be described as "praise the army and pass the cash" (Birand, *The Generals' Coup in Turkey*, p. 28.).

which is usually sufficient to pay an apartment, and they receive a pension in addition. Officers, as well as their spouses, receive a free medical care until their death.[211] That is why many families of the lower-middle class find military career attractive for their child. They know that if their child enters a military school, everything would be free, lodging and clothing, even the textbooks, on top of which their child would receive some pocket money. Parents also know that if their son makes enough effort and finishes military academy, he will be receiving a regular income for life and his future will be certain. Although he will not earn much, he will have enough to meet his basic needs.[212]

Nevertheless, economically speaking, it is the *middle* class that the military officers in Turkey belong to. Turkish officers are not rich people, and their salaries are not very generous: they are slightly higher than those in the civilian service but considerably lower than those in the private sector. Furthermore, the instances in which Turkish officers have engaged in corruption or used their status to extract rents from state-owned or private enterprises are relatively few. Therefore it seems that the military enclave in Turkey has been the least concerned with economic gains and privileges: its economic interests are different in both degree and kind from those of their Egyptian and Algerian counterparts.[213]

That is the capital distinction between the military in Turkey and militaries in Egypt and Algeria, or, possibly, between the Turkish military and militaries in other parts of the world that have seen military dictatorships. Turkish officer staff, we claim, is principally concerned with the defense of the Kemalist ideology, while their private economic considerations run secondary or do not even count at all. Indeed, soldiering in Turkey is not a profession leading to a brilliant material future; rather, its moral aspects are emphasized in the academies. The following quote by a commander's speech expresses that well:

> "Lads, you are dedicated to a duty that is too important to be measured in material terms. There is not enough money in the world to buy one's way into the realm you

[211] Jenkins, *Context and Circumstance*, p. 27.

[212] Birand, *Shirts of Steel*, pp. 8-9.

[213] Cook, *Ruling But Not Governing*, p. 21.

> have entered. You all know that money cannot buy happiness. … you are dedicated to our glorious banner and the motherland, expecting nothing in return."[214]

The Turkish military has not had a reason to cling on to power in order to ensure its economic well-being – a fact that has made it more likely for it to step down from power once the social order it favors is restored.

5.5. 1960 and 1971 Military Interventions

In the background of all the three military interventions in the history of Turkey the motives of the military were similar: wish to protect the country from threats, maintain corporatist order etc. (concerns described above). We can consider this as the common denominator of all the three interventions. Yet, each of them had certain specificities of their own. The coups did not differ only because they all happened at different times and in different circumstances (the political parties and ideologies that the military was faced with were not the same) – there are more essential distinctions between them, mainly in terms of the military's strategy applied each time, and partly also the military's motives in a narrower sense.

The 27 May 1960 coup was caused by the tensions between the military establishment and the ruling Democrat Party. The Democrat Party (DP) came to power in the second democratic elections of 1950 (and according to many records, the first truly free and regular elections). That was the first time when an opposition party formed the government, after 27 years of rule of the Republican People's Party. The DP, that was not allowed to challenge any Kemalist tenets of republicanism and secularism when it was established in 1945, formulated its distinctive program largely in the economic field. It offered economic incentives, such as credit, subsidies, road building programs etc., and allowed for more economic freedom, as opposed to the statist tradition of the RPP. In terms of popular support, the DP was a coalition of social groups in small towns and rural farmers and

[214] Ibid., p. 43.

landlords. In other words, it represented the provincial elements of the country (although, in time, increasingly also inhabitants of the cities) that were overall more religious and felt a stronger sense of continuity with the pre-Republican period than the urban bureaucratic class that had undergone an ideological and cultural transformation and modernization.[215]

Although most of its staff, including its president Adnan Menderes, were politically socialized in the RPP from which they separated in 1945, hostility between the two parties grew increasingly during the 1950s. Moreover, the DP as such, and Adnan Menderes in particular had an ambiguous attitude towards the military which remained ideologically closer to the RPP (e.g. the RPP kept the six arrows of Kemalism in its program). Menderes was aware and appreciative of the military's historical role as the defender of the state. However, he also regarded the military as a guarantor of a highly centralized system since the founding of the Republic, a system that was unfriendly to landed notables and other groups that favored a degree of administrative decentralization. In addition, he felt that the military was a non-productive group that demanded a share of the national income illegitimately large.[216]

Therefore Menderes tried to downgrade the role of the military and the bureaucracy by carrying out an extensive purge of the officer corps in an effort to weed out sympathizers of the RPP. At the same time, he was increasing the power and influence of the entrepreneurial groups, businessmen and countryside merchants-landowners. This policy led to a diminishing prestige and influence of the military-civilian bureaucracy.[217] The RPP saw this policy as unacceptable and a threat to the legacy of Atatürk. They challenged the DP forcefully with mass demonstrations and political speeches. Menderes threatened to close down the RPP, and the RPP president, İsmet İnönü, replied by calling for the

[215] Kemal H. Karpat, "Military Interventions: Army-Civilian Relations in Turkey Before and After 1980", in *State, Democracy and the Military: Turkey in the 1980s*, edited by Metin Heper and Ahmet Evin (Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1988), pp. 137-138.

[216] Ibid., p. 138.

[217] Ibid., pp. 138-139.

intervention of the military to "save democracy", or rather the RPP, from the DP leadership.[218]

During their decade in power, the Democrats also tended to ignore the views of the military leadership. This was an irritation all the bigger since members of the TAF were not eligible to vote.[219] In addition, although the Democrats' ties with the military were weaker than those between the military and the RPP, the DP used the army against some of the demonstrations organized by the RPP. This created additional vexation among the officer staff. Especially among certain small sections of the military, or better to say secret associations, anti-DP activities acquired an aura of heroism and patriotism.[220] Eventually, as political contest and squabbling became extremely embittered, the idea of the intervention gained legitimacy within the officer corps.[221]

The military took over on 27 May 1960, under the leadership of General Cemal Gürsel. They removed president Celâl Bayar and prime minister Menderes. Menderes was later executed together with two former ministers from the DP. In October 1961 the military returned the power to civilians. More precisely, partial return of power to civilians already occurred in 1960: since the military felt a great hostility towards the ruling party, and a bond of sympathy with the opposition RPP, there was actually not a full junta installed in

[218] Ibid., p. 140. There is a controversy about İnönü's statement, as to whether he really called for the military intervention, or were his words rather misunderstood. Karpat argues that both Menderes and İnönü were issuing threats with pure bluff: Menderes just tried to compel the RPP to forego mass demonstrations, while İnönü intended to remind the DP that if it went as far as to close the RPP, the army would not permit it; neither party appeared to believe that the army could or would act. (Cf. ibid., p. 140.)

[219] George S. Harris, "The Role of the Military in Turkey in the 1980s", in *State, democracy, and the military*, p. 182.

[220] Karpat, "Military Interventions: Army-Civilian Relations in Turkey Before and After 1980", p. 141.

[221] Harris, "The Role of the Military in Turkey in the 1980s", p. 182.

power, except for a short period of time. By the fall of 1960 the government was virtually in the hands of RPP, but with military personnel in a number of important positions.[222]

Constituent Assembly was convened in late 1960. All former members of the DP, even its voters, were excluded by law from becoming members of the Constituent Assembly. Therefore the Constitution of 1961 was almost exclusively the work of the RPP (though the RPP itself had different fractions).[223] However, it should not be considered as an authoritarian constitution, for the main goal of the military was to dilute government authority. The constitution introduced a system of checks and balances that would prove to be effective in diffusing government power.[224] It openly recognized the existence of some social groups, such as labor, and acknowledged workers' right to organize themselves politically.[225] The following two decades will probably be a period of the largest socio-political pluralism in the post-Second World War Turkey.[226]

At the same time, there were several institutional changes aimed at securing interest and influence of the armed forces in politics. For instance, the military with cooperation of the RPP politicians provided that the members of the armed forces would have the vote. Further and more importantly, they created the National Security Council (established with

[222] Karpat, "Military Interventions: Army-Civilian Relations in Turkey Before and After 1980", p. 141.

[223] Ibid., p. 142.

[224] Harris, "The Role of the Military in Turkey in the 1980s", p. 184.

[225] Karpat, "Military Interventions: Army-Civilian Relations in Turkey Before and After 1980", p. 142.

[226] The extent of freedom that was given to civil society was largely a response to the centralized system that allowed for the authoritarianism of the DP in the preceding decade, and a safeguard against similar developments in future (the declared legitimization of the coup, apart from protecting the legacy of Atatürk, was to safeguard democracy). In fact, this was done to such an extent that, later on, the exercise of decisive rule was severely limited, which became problematic in times of crises. Some analysts argue that the later military moves were in fact directed at redressing the imbalance introduced by the 1961 constitution and at searching for a middle way between the permissiveness introduced after 1960 and the centralization of the 1924 constitution. (Cf. Harris, "The Role of the Military in Turkey in the 1980s", p. 184.)

the 1961 Constitution) as a legal mechanism to assure a voice for the military profession. It was a body that guaranteed the continued involvement of at least the top ranks of the military establishment in the political affairs in general and security matters in particular. Another aspect of the military's weight in politics was a precedent – which would be continued in later decades – that presidency was a position reserved for a senior officer (accordingly, General Gürsel was elected president in 1961).[227]

There are several differences between the 1960, precedent military takeover, and the later two takeovers. The 1960 takeover was in essence a colonels' coup. Colonels, i.e. middle-rank officers were the main plotters against the government, while the rest of the officer corps accepted the action because of a widespread fear that the state was in danger from a breakdown of the constitutional process.[228]

This anomaly in the chain of command had two important consequences. One was that there were new attempts of military moves in the few years after 1960. Following the elections in 1961, when the RPP formed a coalition government with the Justice Party (descendent of the Democrat party), some officers resumed plotting. They were vexed by the continuing agitation by the Justice Party for an amnesty for the members of the old regime, and attempted to take over in 1962 and once more 1963. After both of the attempts had failed, politicization of the middle and lower rank officers more or less ended. This experience, together with the fact that the standard chain of command was infringed, left the commanders with a concern to keep subordinates out of political roles and to confine dealings with politicians to the top-ranking generals.[229] Another consequence was that the military rulers in 1960 had to conduct a much deeper purge of the officer corps than in later military moves. There were massive retirements of senior officers in 1960 (around 90% of the generals and about 40% of the colonels and majors). Compared to this, the moves of

[227] Harris, "The Role of the Military in Turkey in the 1980s", pp. 182-183.

[228] Ibid., p. 183.

[229] Ibid., p. 184.

military leaders in later takeovers were minor – in fact, by 1980 no need was perceived to clean out party partisans from the military corps.[230]

After 1962, the intensity of military involvement in politics decreased gradually, but reappeared towards the end of 1960s when Turkey experienced a growing violence between left-wing and right-wing students on university campuses. Especially after 1968, clashes became murderous, bank-robberies to raise money for extremist political activities occurred and there were kidnappings of members of the American military stationed in Turkey. In 1971, the military intervention was primarily aimed at restoring peace and order within the civil society, thus it curtailed some of the freedoms granted by the 1961 constitution (an instance that would be even more emphasized in the 1980 coup).[231]

On 12 March 1971 military members of the National Security Council issues a demand (a memorandum) to the government of the prime minister Süleyman Demirel to be more decisive or to step down. This ultimatum was not a full military intervention into the political arena. They acted more behind the scenes and dictated the politicians what to do. For instance, Demirel's party retained its majority in parliament. However, Demirel resigned and non-party cabinets ruled the country until the 1973 elections, together with the NSC.[232] In this sense, the 1960 and 1971 takeovers were both different from the 1980 takeover: in both cases, the military either co-ruled with the civilians or directed them behind the scenes, whereas in the 1980-83 period the military was more alienated from all the political groupings and acted as an independent_force, virtually exclusively with the commanders – more precisely, the NSC purged of civilian members – ruling with a heavy hand.

In 1971, the new authorities launched a broad wave of arrests of suspects, closed the Turkish Labor Party (a communist party) and shut down leftist publications. This was the first time that the organs of repression used massive systematic torture in detention and

[230] Ibid.

[231] Ibid., pp. 185-186.

[232] Ibid., p. 187.

interrogation centers. Violations of human rights became publicly known through the press thanks to prisoners who wrote secret notes which they managed to convey out of the prison.

The government enacted a constitutional amendment by which they strengthened the powers of the government against threats to national unity, public order and security. They also increased the autonomy and influence of the military establishment, for instance, by defining the statements of the NSC not merely as "views" but as "recommendations" to the government. However, increased authorities given to the military in securing law and order aside, the commanders did not make a drastic change in the overall position of the military in society, nor was there any thought yet that partisan competition might destabilize society and render the government unable to effectively rule the country.[233] We can say that in 1971 the military performed certain corrections, fine tunings of the system, by making the government a little more effective and powerful; these moves were carried out much more extensively and radically in 1980.

5.6. Military and Politics in the Late 1970s

The military had deteriorating conditions during the 1970s. US arms embargo following the 1974 Cyprus intervention, together with domestic economic trouble deeply hurt the military. They were in need for modernization. Officers were chronically underpaid, frustrated and open targets for political influence; an American report said that almost all major items, tanks, ships, aircraft, communications and support equipment, were obsolete.[234]

The relations between the military elite and political establishment were becoming particularly tense in the last few years of the decade. The military was dissatisfied with Ecevit's government, particularly with its soft approach on Kurdish question – a

[233] Ibid., pp. 188-189.

[234] Birand, *The Generals' Coup in Turkey*, p. 27.

traditionally sensitive issue for the military. They regarded the Kurdish movement as a threat to split Turkey and any compromise was considered as aiding assaults on the national integrity of Turkey. By contrast, for the RPP and Ecevit the problem could be better handled by solving some of the region's cultural and economic problems, while the disciplining, "law and order" approach could be resorted to only when necessary. There were certain incidents that fueled military's impatience, such as slogans "Freedom for the Kurds!" in eastern Turkey (in Kurdish language); same slogan appeared on the May Day 1978 rallies in Istanbul. Furthermore, some RPP members were speaking Kurdish in the National Assembly cafeterias. The armed forces directly blamed Ecevit and his soft-line approach for what was perceived as growing secessionism.[235]

Ecevit also stepped on army's toes by questioning its position in the Turkish polity and its internal organization. In February 1978 he came up with a new concept of national security, inspired by his trip to Yugoslavia (a model of defense force based on partisan experience and rapid civilian mobilization). Right-wing press reported that Ecevit is importing socialist models and humiliating the military establishment.[236] Further, he raised the question of the Counter-Guerilla group that was set up in 1959: civilians were given arms by the High Command (military) to combat a potential communist infiltration into Turkey from the Middle East (similar to Gladio in Europe against the USSR). Ecevit believed that such an extra-legal organization had no place under the rule of law (he already attacked this paramilitary organization during his previous period in office in 1974; now, he insisted that the High Command does something about it). This in itself was a sensitive matter for the military, and as the debates were raised, the relationship between Ecevit and the military, convinced that he made a deliberate attempt to discredit the military, worsened even further.[237]

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[235] Ibid., p. 41.

[236] Ibid., p. 42. Later that year, Ecevit even declared that the real threat to Turkey comes from Greece and not the Soviet Union. This further mounted the critiques according to which he wanted to severe the ties with the West and make the country socialist. Considerable section of the officer corps was influenced by these media reports. (Cf. ibid.)

[237] Ibid.

A serious internal problem of the military establishment was the fact that political polarization of society began to seep into the armed forces as well, mostly among the lower ranked military personnel. One instance of this process was the escape of Mehmet Ali Ağca from his cell in a military prison, a right-wing terrorist who had been sentenced to death for assassinating Abdi İpekçi. Forty one military personnel of the prison were apprehended and charged with aiding the escape of Ağca.[238] In the longer term, infiltration and polarization of the armed forces could result in a fractionalization of the military and could ultimately end up in a civil war.

During this time there was already discussion of a military coup among the officer corps. In 1979, however, they moved from discussing the possibility of an intervention in private gatherings to an open discussion – which was still internal and subject to military secrecy – of its necessity. From the second half of 1979 the question was no longer whether to intervene or not – it was simply "when and how to intervene". In the first few months of 1979 the chief of staff increased his tours of inspection and meetings with local commanders. To a careful observer, this could be more than a clue that something extraordinary was going on in the military.[239] In August 1979 the commanders set the wheels in motion in a characteristically military fashion: first they wanted to define the problem precisely, before searching for possible solutions. Series of seminars and briefings were held, hosting experts and officials whom the officers were asking questions about problems in municipalities, among other things, and taking notes.[240]

Discussions of the timing and tactics of the coup were carefully confined to the top-ranking personnel, more precisely, a group called the Special Planning Group. Main architects of the takeover were chief of staff Kenan Evren and his deputy, general Haydar Saltık (he was

[238] Ibid., p. 63.

[239] Ibid., pp. 61-62.

[240] Ibid., p. 84. Nobody knew why this sudden interest occurred; people were leaving the meetings impressed by how broad minded and interested in everything the soldiers seemed to had become. (Cf. ibid.)

also Evren's executive arm, looking after planning and execution of the decisions). Other services' chiefs played more of a consultative role: these were commander of the navy Bülent Ulusu, commander of the land forces Nurettin Ersin, and the air force commander Tahsin Şahinkaya. Evren was opened to suggestions and discussion prior to his final decision – however, this decision rested upon him and the others dutifully executed his directives. In this process Evren even broadened the range of his consultations, for instance, the commander of the First Army and Istanbul under martial law general Mustafa Necdet Üruğ emerged as an important cosultant.[241]

There was controversy within the officer corps as to the question of how to carry out the coup. Two different strategies were on the table:

a) Mediated approach ("doves"): putting pressure on Prime Minister Demirel through the NSC (Demirel hardly said no to any of the army's demands).

b) "Hard-line approach" ("hawks", no half-way measures). Construction of a new Turkey which would withstand the ravages of civilian politicians; otherwise, the army would have to keep intervening every time things went wrong, like in previous coups.[242]

Among the two groups there was unanimity on the fact they would have to cope with terror. Birand quotes a statement from a discussion of the decision-making group: "Human rights, democracy, all that … hang ten of the terrorists in public and I promise you the whole thing will stop."[243]

A substantial section of the commanders supported the mediated approach. The hardliners, on the other hand, pointed to the failures of 27 May 1960 that brought a constitution granting too much freedom to the civil society and allowing unrest, and 12 March 1971 memorandum that had already curtailed the liberties implied in the 1961 constitution, yet it

[241] Ibid., p. 87.

[242] Ibid., p. 129.

[243] Ibid., p. 130.

could not prevent deeper sinking into crisis and violence.[244] The arguments of the latter group were convincing; they also seemed to be proved by reality, since the influence exerted through the NSC, for instance, proved to be of no significant help in trying to settle disagreements between Demirel and Ecevit.

By the end of 1979 the military was in the midst of preparations for a takeover. Yet they decided to hold back a little longer. A takeover at this stage would be ill-timed, especially because of the Western sensitivities over electoral processes. Namely, there were by-lections in October that year and the new government under Demirel had just taken office the month before. That is why they could not depose it without giving it at least the last chance to deal with the crisis. Kenan Evren had a reputation of being a cautious person, and at a December meeting of the planning group his suggestion to wait a little longer with a coup so that the takeover would be perceived as a last resort was well met. It was obvious that the military wanted the coup to be perfectly justified and vindicated.[245]

Instead, they decided for a letter of warning that was presented to president Korutürk on 27 December 1979. The letter expressed military's dissatisfaction with the situation in the country: danger to national unity, protection of person and property; people are singing the Communist International instead of Turkish National Anthem, agitating for an Islamic state etc.[246] The politicians were not sure how to interpret this text and evaluate army's intentions. They were relieved to see that this was not like the 12 March 1971 ultimatum. Ecevit stated that this would not lead to a military intervention; it is just an expression of army's frustration and a reminder for all constitutional institutions, political parties and the parliament to assume their responsibilities. Demirel said that they just took over the

[244] Ibid., pp. 129-130.

[245] Ibid., p. 96. M.A. Birand summarizes the latent feeling of the meeting: "give the politicians enough rope to hang themselves so that when we intervene nobody inside the country or outside can fault us for what we have done – we will be a hundred percent vindicated" (cf. ibid.).

[246] Ibid., pp. 99-102.

government and cannot be held responsible for the current problems, and continued refusing dialogue with the opposition.[247]

Why did nobody anticipate a military takeover? Demirel, for example, was in power to purge the entire High Command before September 1980. Later, after the 1980 coup, he said that he truly did not understand the letter of warning as an announcement of a takeover – he believed that the letter was delivered to aid the government in its fight against terror. He added that he did not receive any inkling from the army about their intentions to seize the power either.[248] As late as July 1980, Ecevit also believed that "the possibility of a military intervention is almost negligible. … The military accumulated certain experiences. They are intelligent enough to realize by now that military interventions don't work. We can't expect the armed forces to solve the crisis."[249]

The army finished preparing the plan of the takeover around May 1980.[250] The operation was called "Operation Flag" (symbolic: to unite the nation under the Turkish flag). Measures were prepared such as takeover of broadcasting facilities, control of the parliament, controls over the banking system and lists of suspects to be rounded up. The plan was contained in 15 pages; however, no provisions were made for the "morning after", that is, on how to reorganize the country socio-politically and economically. At that point, they were certain only of a few steps (we can say that the post-1980 Turkey is in fact a compilation of these few points in an elaborated form): constitution would have to be amended and Turkey would have to be re-built under the guidance of Atatürk's principles; every single aspect of the nation, state and society would have to be reconstructed; law and order measures would be passed (the military was particularly afraid and prepared for massive retaliation by civilian terrorists and a possibility of a civil war, especially in the shanty-town districts that had become "no go areas"); the civil service and the security

[247] Ibid., pp. 108-109.

[248] Ibid., p. 114.

[249] Ibid., p. 153.

[250] Cf. ibid., p. 137 and p. 139.

forces should be purged of the party militants; elections for a new parliament would follow soon after this cleansing operation.[251]

By the summer of 1980 the JP government began to totter. Ecevit realized that he would not be able to achieve anything with Demirel. He decided to try to form a coalition with the NSP (Erbakan) that would topple the JP government. Operation Flag was put into motion on 17 June: it was set by the command for 11 July 1980. However, on 2 July, the JP got vote of confidence in the assembly (namely, the NSP withdrew from an agreement with Ecevit to overthrow the government; therefore the JP maintained its support from the right-wing parties). Operation Flag was aborted and postponed.[252]

6. 12 September Takeover

On 9 August, the army set the date of intervention for 12 September. The months of the summer of 1980, last few months before the takeover were passing by with terror drifting deeper, and an almost paralyzed economy; the country seemed to be on the verge of chaos. Many had a feeling that something in the military was afoot, and that something was going to break. We will give a brief overview of the most significant events during the last weeks of the Second Turkish Republic that illustrate the perplexity of the situation.

An interesting event that metaphorically foresaw the 12 September coup happened in the summer 1980 in Nevşehir, a town near Ankara. Nevşehir district chairman of RPP, Feyzi

[251] Ibid., pp. 129-130.

[252] Ibid., pp. 142-144. This was a similar postponement as the one after the October 1979 by-elections – for the purpose of good timing and legitimacy of the takeover. This time, Evren considered that the vote of confidence could make people think that the army was biased, helping the RPP to overthrow the JP. Other consideration contributed to this decision, too: it was suggested that the intervention should take place after the Supreme Military Council decisions on the August promotions and retirements, and that the intervention could cause unnecessary complications to the 22 July negotiations with the OECD regarding the country's foreign debt. (Cf. ibid., p. 145.)

Alaoğlu, had been assassinated by right-wing para-militaries. On 18 June 1980, a top RPP delegation attended the funeral. On their way from the deceased's house to the local mosque they were attacked with a hail of stones coming from the side-streets, followed by a spray of bullets. They abandoned the coffin and sought refuge in the adjoining houses. Ecevit rushed to the Nevşehir prefecture. He called the chief of staff from there and informed him that their lives were in danger. Evren dispatched a unit to rescue them. The irony was that even Ecevit had to call the army to protect him and his supporters. [253]

On the celebration of the Victory Day on 30 August, Kenan Evren gave quite a militaristic speech:

> "The traitors who are the instigators of anarchy … will soon get their just deserts. … As in the case of some others encountered in our history who dared to raise their ugly heads, they will be crushed under the fist of the Turkish armed forces…, and the exalted Turkish nation will celebrate Victory Day for ever in affluence and happiness within the security created by the armed forces …"[254]

On Erbakan's speech in Konya on 6 September, on the occasion of Israel's decision to declare Jerusalem as its new capital city, the crowd obstructed the playing of the Turkish National Anthem and demanded recitation of passages from Koran.[255]

On the same day, Ecevit gave a speech at the conference of petrol workers union in Istanbul. It seems that he felt that something was about to breach:

> "It is as if a big soccer match is on. On the field we see the political parties and the politicians. The rest of Turkey is watching from the stands. The game being slogged out in the field is unsavory, vicious and exasperating. Fed up with this spectacle, some of the spectators have started losing patience and getting angry with their own side. … I'm afraid that in the end somebody will blow the whistle and say 'The game is finished, everyone go home' and call an end to a democracy which is indistinguishable from a meaningless game".[256]

[253] Ibid., p. 143.

[254] Ibid., p. 166.

[255] Ibid., p. 169.

[256] Ibid., p. 169-170.

There were jokes among people about the political situation: "Question: Ecevit, Türkeş and Demirel are in a small boat out at sea. The wind picks up, there is a storm. If the boat capsizes, who do you think will be saved? Answer: The Turkish nation."[257]

Finally, in perceptions of the public and politicians, there was a certain relaxation of Martial Law; martial law commanders' went on with their duties but their hearts were not in the job. They were complaining about their soldiers being in the firing line and being labeled Demirel supporters.[258]

In the evening of 11 September, the government was cut off from its mechanisms of control and channels of intelligence and information (this manifested the tenuous relations between the state and the government in the field of security services). On 12 September at 4:00 AM the takeover began. Troops were sent to the streets, TV and radio were taken over, Evren gave a speech on TRT, and an army march was broadcasted on the radio. People close to Ecevit and Demirel were ordered by the military to announce their party leaders the news of the takeover and the leaders were then taken to custody in the company of their wives.[259]

Public reaction was a rather positive one. People were relieved and they embraced Evren and the army as their liberators (some even began comparing Evren with Atatürk).[260] On 13 September, The Times newspaper (London) reported: "The curfew was lifted in the afternoon and people emerged in large numbers, crowding cafés, bars and parks and basking in the sun. Everything was peaceful and calm and there was almost a tangible sense of relief."[261]

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[257] Ibid., p. 181.

[258] Ibid., p. 147.

[259] Ibid., p. 180 and pp. 186-188.

[260] Ibid., p. 195.

[261] Sinan Fisek, "Turkey under martial law after bloodless dawn coup", *The Times*, no. 60,723 (September 13, 1980), p. 1.

Not only the public – a broad spectrum of the population, including former cabinet members in civilian governments, were convinced that the country had been saved from the brink of self-destruction.[262] Majority of Turkish press was on the side of the coup. Interestingly, there was no armed resistance to the intervention: terrorist organizations seemed to have vanished into thin air. In the first day, the takeover was a simple, straightforward operation with no loss of life (it had a "clinical" nature) – indeed, Ecevit's metaphor of a football match turned out to be a good diagnosis ("the game is finished, everybody go home").[263]

The coup was well received among the NATO allies who "had become increasingly worried about the chaotic political situation in this exposed but vital area of Nato's southeastern flank".[264] The US and European countries reacted overall mildly and they both gave green light to the generals' regime, US giving slightly more unconditional support than the European Community. Reagan administration pointed out that the US were always concerned when any democratically elected government was ousted by the military, however, they reacted with considerable sympathy towards the coup. The immediate reaction of Brussels after the coup was that the coup would inevitably stifle discussion on Turkey's wish to become a full member of the EEC. However, they also stated that there will be no automatic freezing of relations between the European Community and Turkey.[265] The communiqué released by the European Community Council of Ministers (15 September) stated that they knew that the Turkish army is not a Latin American army and that the civilian rule would be restored in good time, but it also induced the generals to

[262] Ecevit, for instance, felt relieved that the coup was done by the TAF and was not a pro-Türkeş intervention, as he had first assumed. (Cf. Birand, *The Generals' Coup in Turkey*, p. 184.)

[263] Birand, *The Generals' Coup in Turkey*, p. 190 and p. 195.

[264] Frederick Bonnart, "Coup leader pledges Turkey's continued loyalty to Nato", *The Times*, no. 60,723 (September 13, 1980), p. 5.

[265] Ibid.

provide a time-table of their transition to democracy, and it said that there should be no political arrests or trials and that human rights should be respected.[266]

[266] Birand, *The Generals' Coup in Turkey*, p. 196. Western reactions to the coup were much milder than one could expect during the heyday of concerns about democracy and human rights. (Cf. ibid., p. 196.) The Guardian reported that when the colonels took over in Greece in the early 1960s, the EEC suspended its association agreement, in contrast to the milder reaction to the coup in Turkey. Cf. Jonathan Steele and John Palmer, "Washington given one-hour notice of Ankara coup", *The Guardian* (September 13, 1980), p. 24.

PART II

THE MILITARY JUNTA 1980-1983

> *"I just saw: Three people were dragging a man. The man didn't want to go with them. At one point he managed to free himself from their hands and throw himself to the moat alonside the road. Just then a sound came. Somebody shouted. More precisely, somebody screamed. /.../ The people dragging the man (they had jumped into to the moat and tossed the man to the road in a split second) stopped for a moment and listened to the environment. It means that they also heard the scream. But as if they hadn't given it much importance, they started dragging the man again."*
>
> *Ferit Edgü: Scream (1982)*

The Second Part talks about the actions and reforms that the military government undertook during its three years and three months in power: from their initial uncertainty as to what would be the nature of the necessary systemic changes, to the legislative and institutional framework they finally introduced. The focus is on the 1982 constitution and its reception, the new Party and Electoral laws, and the 1983 elections that concluded the military rule (chapters 7. to 11.); the last chapter is an attempt of a theoretical-speculative evaluation of the military's role in the early 1980s.

7. First Steps Towards Political Reorganization

After having wiped out the existing political establishment, the military commanders found themselves faced with a task of forming a new government. They were in a dilemma whether the government should be comprised of civilians or military people.[267]

Evren's preference for the position of the new prime minister was Turhan Feyzioğlu, a former professor of political science who opposed Ecevit's "left-of-centre" slogan of 1966 and left RPP with his sympathizers to establish the Republican Reliance Party (RRP). The party was noted for its centrism, for its old-styled RPP politics and economic policies favoring bureaucratic planning and mixed economy. However, naming of Feyzioğlu met with opposition.

Within the military some people saw him as a representative of the old generation politicians raised in the spirit of mixed economy that was going to be abandoned. Feyzioğlu himself was glad about the proposal and said that the new cabinet should include representatives of all major political groupings, especially the moderate tendencies in both RPP and JP. But the representatives from the RPP and JP whom the military invited refused the offers, arguing against Feyzioğlu (Orhan Eyüboğlu of the RPP commented that Feyzioğlu was a "leader of a tiny party with almost no support in Turkish public opinion").[268] The invited party functionaries still listened to their party chiefs in custody, waited for their permissions and followed their instructions, to a big displeasure and irritation of the General Staff. It seemed as if the politicians now saw military interventions as a normal ten-yearly cycle in Turkish politics, an occasional "spring cleaning". They

[267] The only name which met with unanimous approval in the NSC was Turgut Özal, the negotiator with the IMF and the constructor of Turkish economic policy under the last government of Demirel. Western banks and financial institutions were also greatly relieved by that fact (also considering that Demirel had softened on the application of the IMF guidelines in the last weeks before the takeover). (Cf. Birand, *The Generals' Coup in Turkey*, p. 198.)

[268] Birand, *The Generals' Coup in Turkey*, p. 202.

thought the army would withdraw soon. If they collaborated with the military this would not be perceived favorably by the public and their future political career could be jeopardized.[269]

The General Staff lost their nerves and abolished their plan to form a civilian cabinet. They decided that the prime minister of the military government should be a civilian with military origins. On 18 September they appointed admiral Bülent Ulusu as the new prime minister (he had been just retired in August prior to the coup). Appointment of retired military personnel to key positions would become a trend during this junta.[270] Other members of the new cabinet swore on the same day in the Grand National Assembly: general Kenan Evren; general Nurettin Ersin; general Tahsin Şahinkaya; admiral Nejat Tümer (he had been promoted to this position in August 1980 after the retirement of Bülent Ulusu); and general Sedat Celasun, commander of the gendarmerie. All five of them were actually members of the NSC.[271] We should also mention the general secretary of the NSC, Haydar Saltık, as one who played an important role in the post-coup military government.[272]

The new government set up six Specialist Commissions comprised of 20-25 experts. There were no active or former politicians in them, only bureaucrats or retired officers.[273] The commissions serviced the General Staff and the NSC. General Haydar Saltık, who had been one of the engineers of the coup, was in charge of them. Their function was to advise the NSC, to suggest amendments to existing laws and propose new legislation. However, in the run up to the November 1983 elections the NSC remained the principal locus of decision

[269] Ibid., p. 153.

[270] Ibid., pp. 207-208.

[271] M. A. Birand notes that this was the smallest legislature ever witnessed in the country's history (ibid., p. 206); other authors, for instance, refer to this government as "the five-man governing National Security Council".

[272] Ibid., p. 206.

[273] Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, p. 279.

making.[274] The NSC also acted through the regional and local commanders, who were given wide-ranging powers under martial law and were in charge of education, press, chambers of commerce and trade unions (and did not hesitate to use their powers).[275]

As for the policies of the junta regarding governance and society, the military basically wanted to make sure that a crisis and political turmoil seen in the 1970s would never happen again. They had to reform the system, yet in the start they did not know exactly how to do it. They were only sure that they should proceed along the path of Ataturkism, but this was problematic in itself: the military had its own down-to-earth definitions of Ataturkism or Kemalism, while in the civilian world there were as many definitions as the number of intellectuals dealing with the subject. They started off, for instance, by making Ataturkism a compulsory subject in all places of education (children had to memorize Atatürk's speech to the Grand National Assembly giving an account of the War of Independence and the basic principle of the new republic).[276]

They also knew that they had to considerably reform the political structure and to replace the existing political establishment with a new generation of politicians, having in mind that a more militarily disciplined society should be formed. So during the three years and two months of the junta, commanders, with the assistance of commissions, made a number of political and institutional reforms. We will take a closer look at some of the political reforms, but before that, we will go over some of the concrete measures of the military: how they dealt with the terror problem, media, universities and trade unions (ataturkisation in social sense is already largely dealt with in chapters 5.3. and 5.4.).

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[274] Birand, *The Generals' Coup in Turkey*, p. 210.

[275] Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, p. 279.

[276] Birand, *The Generals' Coup in Turkey*, p. 211. Things were clearer in the economic field: the junta merely followed the guidelines of the January 1980 program and took care of its implementation. Although in the beginning there was a controversy within the commissions between two factions, one arguing for mixed economy and the other for prominence of the free market, the latter one prevailed (largely because of the influence of Turgut Özal as the deputy prime minister). (Cf. ibid.)

7.1. Military Junta in Action

One issue that had been unanimously acknowledged within the military elite as an urgent problem was coping with terror. It was swiftly coped with immediately after the takeover. A wave of arrests swept the country. In the first six weeks after 12 September 11,500 people were arrested; by the end of 1980 the number grew to 30,000 and after one year 122,600 arrests were made. By September 1982, two years after the coup, 80,000 were still in prison, 30,000 of them awaiting trial. The number of terrorist incidents decreased by over 90%.[277] In concrete figures, it fell to 282 during the first twelve months after the coup. During the same period, 734,000 weapons together with 3 million rounds of ammunition were captured or handed in. The scourge of political violence was virtually ended by 1982.[278]

Although restoration of law and order was fast and efficient, it had its dark side as well. As in 1971-73, there were numerous reports of the use of tortures to extract confessions from suspects. When complaints were made, most of these cases were denied.[279] Torture was endemic primarily during the period during which people can be held in custody before charges are brought. During the junta, this period was 90 day, but it was brought down during the 1980s and 1990s, also thanks to the international human rights organization Amnesty International that was repeatedly drawing attention to the widespread use of torture.[280]

[277] Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, p. 279.

[278] William Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), pp. 251-252.

[279] Ibid., p. 252.

[280] Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, p. 280.

The trials were sped up under the enhanced martial law. Over the two years of the military junta nearly 3,600 death sentences were pronounced, though only 20 were actually carried out. There were also tens of thousands of lesser sentences.[281]

Universities were put under tight centralized control through the Higher Education Council (*Yüksek Öğretim Kurulu)*, established under the Higher Education Law, which directly appointed all rectors and deans. In the late 1982, more than 300 academics were dismissed, followed by a second wave of dismissals early in 1983. Those fired also lost their pensions and the right ever again to hold a job in the public sector.[282] In many cases, the commanders of the martial law broadened their campaign to include those academics who merely expressed radical or critical views, without actively engaging in political violence. The Higher Education Laws therefore practically ended the independence of universities from the government.[283]

Trade unions, an important political actor in the 1970s, were not spared either. DİSK, the radical left-wing labor confederation was dissolved immediately after the coup, and all the members of its executive were put on trial in December 1981. The trial lasted for five years and ended in December 1986, with long prison sentences, but the accused were then provisionally released.[284]

The restrictions on media were severe. There were continuous series of closures of newspapers and arrests of journalists and editors, especially in Istanbul which was the center of intellectual life and of the press.[285]

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[281] Ibid.

[282] Ibid.

[283] Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military*, p. 253.

[284] Ibid.

[285] Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, p. 279. At one time, even the Cumhuriyet newspaper, founded in 1924 under Atatürk was closed. (Cf. ibid.)

8. Abolishment of Political Parties and Bans Regarding Politicians

General Evren made it clear that there was no place for former politicians in the future of Turkey. Demirel and Ecevit were released from their detention in October 1980. Erbakan and Türkeş were brought to trial (charged of planning to change the constitutional order of the country), but in both cases a verdict non guilty was brought. Immediately after the coup, the old parties were suspended. However, in October 1981 the parties were officially dissolved and their possessions were confiscated (so they were not only banned – they were abolished). The archives of the parties, including the RPP archives of the last 30 years disappeared and they were probably destroyed.[286]

In June 1981 all public discussion of political matters was prohibited, and in 1982 the NSC forbade the old politicians to make any statements "about the past or future political or legal system of Turkey".[287] Demirel remained in his home in Ankara and waited for a chance for a political come-back. Privately, he was clear about his opposition to the generals and their works. Ecevit, however, returned to his former profession of journalism. In December 1980 he began editing a weekly magazine (called *Arayış* – "Search") for which he regularly wrote articles critical of the military regime. The 1981 decree of the NSC forbidding public political discussion was in fact a reaction to this kind of criticisms. Under this decree, Ecevit was removed from his editorship and was sentenced to four months imprisonment. Furthermore, after his release, he was arrested twice during 1982 for his statements to various foreign media.[288]

[286] Ibid.

[287] Ibid.

[288] Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military*, pp. 261-262.

9. The 1982 Constitution

Enacting a new constitution was one of the conditions set by the military junta before the regime could be handed over to a civilian government. The process in which the new constitution was brought about began in October 1981, when a Consultative Assembly was convened. The Consultative Assembly and the NSC together made up a Constituent Assembly, responsible for preparing the constitution. We already know the composition of the NSC; more interesting is the story of the Consultative Assembly. In legal terms, the Consultative Assembly shared legislative powers with the NSC, but in practice the final say rested with Evren and hid colleagues of the NSC. It had 160 members who were appointed by the NSC, 40 of them directly and 120 after nomination by the new governors, who had been themselves appointed by the military. [289] The Consultative Assembly elected a fifteen-member committee, headed by Orhan Aldıkaçtı, professor at Faculty of Law at Istanbul University. [290] The main work of preparing the constitutional text was given to this committee. It presented its first draft of the constitution in July 1982. The draft was then amended by the Consultative Assembly and finally by the NSC, which added a number of crucial Provisional Articles. The full text was submitted to a referendum on 7 November 1982. [291] On the same day, electors were voting both for the new constitution and for the presidential candidate Kenan Evren. Moreover, the two different electoral questions were not only held on the same day, but were coupled and brought under the same question: a 'yes' vote for the constitution meant at the same time a 'yes' vote for the presidential candidate.[292] In the referendum, the constitution was accepted by a 91.4% majority and the turn out was a high 91.3%.[293]

[289] Ibid., p. 256.

[290] Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, p. 281.

[291] Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military*, p. 256.

[292] Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, p. 281.

[293] Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military*, p. 256.

The process by which the constitution was introduced received a lot of criticisms. One was that the election of the president and approval of the constitution should have been put to the voters as two separate questions. Another criticism regarded the fact that no candidate was allowed to run against Evren (under the Provisional Article 1).[294] Further, public discussion of the crucial provisional articles was officially banned, in fact, any criticisms of the constitution and criticisms of the speeches that Kenan Evren made in favor of a 'yes' vote were banned by a decree on 20 October 1982.[295] Abstainers from elections were to lose their voting right for the following five years and had to pay a fine.[296]

The constitution itself concentrated power in the hands of the executive and increased the powers of the president and the National Security Council. It also limited the freedom of trade unions: for instance, it banned political strikes, solidarity strikes and national strikes.[297]

Rights and liberties of the individual were curtailed: rights such as freedom of speech and freedom of association, although included in the constitution, could be annulled, suspended or limited on the grounds of a whole series of considerations, including the national interest, public order, national security, danger to the republican order and public health.[298] Further, the Senate, which was generally agreed to have been an unnecessary encumbrance, was abolished. Turkey now had a unicameral parliament with a reduced membership of 400

[294] In fact, Evren himself claimed that he originally proposed that the two questions should be posed separately and that other candidates should be allowed to run against him, but his colleagues in the NSC objected, so he backed down, which he later regretted. (Cf. ibid., p. 257.)

[295] Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, p. 281.

[296] Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military*, p. 257.

[297] Strictly speaking, what was banned were "strikes with political objectives" and those strikes that affected a widely defined range of basic public services. Trade unions as such were allowed to exist, and to sign collective bargains on behalf of their members, but they were not allowed to pursue political cause, engage in political activity, receive support from the parties or give support to them. (Cf. ibid., p. 259.)

[298] Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, p. 281.

(by contrast to the earlier over 600) and an increased term of five years (compared to the earlier four years).[299]

The new constitution gave the president the right to call early general elections if the government lost a vote of confidence – this avoided the previous problematic situations in which the assembly frequently voted a government out of office but could not then agree to vote for early elections. The president would be elected for a seven-year term and could not be reelected. The increased power given to the president also implied the right to appoint all the members of the Constitutional Court and members of the other important judicial bodies. The president had the power to return draft legislation to the assembly if he desired, however, he had no absolute right of veto (if the assembly readopted the draft without change then he was obliged to promulgate it as law). Thus, all in all, the 1982 constitution created a parliamentary rather then presidential republic.[300]

Increased authority was also given to the National Security Council. The number of civilians and the military personnel was to remain as it was under the 1961 constitution. However, the government was now obliged to give "priority consideration" to its decisions. Some have commented that this created an executive that weighted towards the military rather than being responsible to the Grand National Assembly. Among the critics, Bülent Ecevit noted that they merely established "an army regime in mufti" (army regime in civilian clothes) and not a real democracy.[301]

10. New Party and Electoral Laws

The Political Parties Law was passed after the introduction of the new constitution (on 3 June 1983). It was aimed at exerting control over who would enter political scene of the

[299] Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military*, p. 257.

[300] Ibid., p. 258.

[301] Ibid.

reformed Turkey. The new parties were to be subjected to a mass of bureaucratic restrictions. To be legally established they had to have at least thirty founder members. They had to submit to the Ministry of Interior a formal statement including the names and personal details of the members. A provisional section of the Political Parties Law allowed the NSC to veto founder members at it discretion, thus enabling it to deprive parties of sufficient founders and disabling the party to register in the coming elections.[302]

More restrictions were made as to the allowed membership in the parties. Students, teachers and civil servants were banned from party membership. The new parties were not allowed to form roots in society because they were not allowed to have women's or youth branches, or to develop links with the trade unions and to open branches in villages. All in all, in the run up to the 1983 elections, some 15 parties were founded, but the military deemed 12 of them unacceptable, even after several changes were made to the list of founders.[303]

The new law required the parties to win at least 10% of the national vote to qualify for any parliamentary seats. Hence it made it very difficult for fringe parties to reduce parliament to a state of chaos, or for smaller parties to exert exorbitant influence on large parties as would frequently happen during the 1970s (and was interpreted by the lawmakers as one of the reasons for a breakdown of the system). It made it much more likely for a stable majority government to be formed.[304]

11. End of the Junta: Elections of 6 November 1983

The first elections after the military junta were not yet perfectly free elections, mainly because of the fact that the military exerted a considerable control as to what parties were

[302] Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military*, p. 262.

[303] Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, pp. 281-282.

[304] Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military*, p. 259.

allowed to compete in the elections. As mentioned earlier, most of the new parties that applied to register had their members vetoed so they could not even be established. In the end, three parties were allowed to take part in the elections of 6 November 1983:

- Party of Nationalist Democracy (*Milliyetçi Demokrasi Partisi*; PND), led by retired general Turgut Sunalp.
- Populist Party (*Halkçı Partisi*; PP), led by Necdet Calp.
- Motherland Party (*Anavatan Partisi*; MP), led by Turgut Özal.

The military leadership came out in support of the PND.[305] Yet their plan was to let a moderate leftist party run against the PND to give legitimacy to the elections. That is why they also supported the PP – a party closest to the traditional Kemalist wing of the RPP – although to a lesser extent then the PND. The party leader Necdet Calp, a senior civil servant, had links with the former RPP and had served as private secretary to İsmet İnönü. He was afraid that his party would be opposed by former members of the RPP. This came true, but the opposition did not from Ecevit but from the middle-ranking politicians of the former RPP, who established the Social Democracy Party (SDP) in June 1983. Its leader, Erdal İnönü, was the son of İsmet İnönü. In general, the SDP adopted the policies of the former RPP, though İnönü publicly accepted the legitimacy of the 12 September coup. The junta, faced with the new situation had to decide whether to abandon Calp and support the SDP, or to exclude the SDP from the elections. In the end, the NSC vetoed 21 out of 26 founder members of the SDP, including Erdal İnönü.[306] Same thing happened with parties behind which Demirel stood as their engineer, since he was not officially allowed to participate (the Great Turkey Party and the True Path Party, announced in May and June 1983, respectively, were vetoed). Same treatment awaited the Conservative Party, set up by supporters of Alparslan Türkeş, and the Welfare Party, a similar proxy organization for

[305] Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, p. 282.

[306] Following the vetoes, new founding members were registered, but the NSC vetoed them again, and the process was then repeated the third time. The junta was obviously determined to prevent any politicians of the previous era from reentering politics. (Cf. Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military*, p. 266.)

Necmettin Erbakan.[307] Turgut Özal resigned from the cabinet in 1982 after a financial affair.[308] In his own account, in the run up towards the elections he was urged by people to set up his own party. The NSC was not against it – reportedly, the military did not expect his party to win many votes – so the Motherland party was officially established in May 1983.[309]

After having reduced the competing parties to three, the junta then made other moves to keep the election campaign within the desired frame. In September 1983 the NSC issued individual vetoes on 719 parliamentary candidates, of whom 475 were independents, 89 members of the PP, 81 of the MP and 74 of the PND. Any criticism of the NSC's decisions was banned in the election campaign, and those parties which had been prevented from entering the elections were forbidden to make statements which might influence the result.[310]

In the elections the MP won an overwhelming victory – it got over 45%, while the PP scored 30%, and the PND, the generals' party, scored slightly over 23%. It turned out that Turgut Özal, the man behind the economic reform program launched in 1979-80 and who was in charge of the economy under the military regime until he resigned for financial scandals, was perceived as the least close to the military, thus attracted the vote of those who were eager to see the military out of politics after three years.[311] Moreover, for the first

[307] Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military*, p. 266.

[308] The financial market experienced a crash in 1982. Banks were increasing their interests rates because the government abandoned its power to fix the rates, and because of the competition from stock and bond brokers whose activities were virtually unregulated. The prime minister decided to replace Minister of Finance, Kaya Erdem. Özal, a close friend of Erdem, blamed the banks for the crash and said that if Erdem was to be replaced then he will also resign. (Cf. ibid., pp. 254-255.)

[309] Ibid., p. 265.

[310] Ibid., p. 267.

[311] Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, p. 282. An interesting incident confirmed intuitions of the public as to whom the military regime was supportive of and whom the military favored less. Despite the fact that president Evren kept refusing saying which party he supported, because it would not be compatible with his position as president, two days before the election day in his final TV broadcast he indirectly attacked Turgut

time television played a major role in the campaign. Sunalp's performance on television was seen as stiff and uncomfortable; apart from this, his party did not have much to offer to the electorate, other than preventing a resurgence of terrorism (which had largely been taken care of by the military already). On the other hand, Özal was a skilled TV performer, and he demonstrated his competence in economic questions which were probably the main focus of concerns for the voters.[312]

As the new electoral system was in favor of large parties, the MP got an absolute majority in the new assembly.[313] The new assembly was convened on 24 November and Özal, with his cabinet, was installed as the new prime minister on 12 December. Meanwhile, the military used its final weeks of power to issue a decree banning any criticism of any of its pronouncements since 12 September 1980.[314] Thereafter, they continued having a close watch on politics through president Evren and through the NSC.[315]

12. Military Coup in Retrospective: Who's the Real Son of Atatürk?

Somewhere in Critique of Pure Reason Immanuel Kant notes his – as controversial as much as famous – statement that "one ought to understand a writer (author) better than he understood himself".[316] Soon after the Critique became a "bestseller" and the intellectual elite of Prussia started rigorously studying the text, the readers found themselves in difficulty as they were coming across certain unclear and insufficiently explicated places, even contradictions within the text. Thereby emerged a dilemma as to how exactly the text

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Özal and expressed a call to the voters to vote for the PND. (Cf. Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military*, p. 268.)

[312] Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military*, p. 268.

[313] Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, p. 282.

[314] Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military*, p. 269.

[315] Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, p. 282.

[316] Cf. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (New York : Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 310 (B 370).

should be approached: should we read it *according to the letter* or should we read it *according to the spirit*? Concretely, representatives of the first camp were convinced that Kant's metaphysical system laid down in the Critique does not contain contradictions, and those who are finding them did not understand the system properly. Representatives of the second camp, on the other hand, insisted that Kant's system *was* inconsistent.[317] Their assessment was that Kant posed the right questions and defined the right goals (i.e. to ground our knowledge on solid foundations and rescue science from the spreading skepticist critique), but did not answer them well. Thus they wanted to "rewrite the Critique", to formulate a new display that would pursue the same goal, but would at the same time take into consideration all the objections posed to Kant's Critique.[318]

The way how their idea of this project was defined represented the first minimal step away from Kant, yet a step that paved the way for the entire post-Kantian idealist philosophy. The project found its first materialization in the writings of Karl Leonhard Reinhold, one of Kant's most eminent critics. To put it very briefly and schematically: Reinhold's own system, called "fundamental philosophy", was also imperfect and it broke due to numerous critiques. Johann Gottlieb Fichte took the critiques seriously and composed Reinhold's system anew by acknowledging the critiques. His text Foundations of the Entire Science of Knowledge, by this time, represented a considerable dissociation from Kant: for instance,

[317] Among the problems that they discussed was the question of where does the Critiques take its own principles from. Do the principles that the Critique develops in order to ground the knowledge apply to the Critiques itself or not? If yes, we have to carry out a critique of the Critique (a metacritique) in order to ground the principles that the Critique posits. This needs to be followed by another critique, founding the principles of the first metacritique ... *ad infinitum*. If not, that means that the Critiques is exempted from critique, therefore it is dogmatic. Neither of the two solutions are satisfying: the former one implies that Kant's project is impossible (ungrounded), whereas the latter one implies that his project is dogmatic – and Kant strived to avoid dogmatism by all means (in fact, the aim of his Critique was to found knowledge undogmatically).

[318] Hence the demands regarding the new display were, first, that knowledge should be grounded on something which will be certain in itself (acceptable and evident to every subject), and second, all the following propositions of the system will have to be entirely deduced from the previous propositions (essentially, the display would be something like axiomatic systems in mathematics).

Fichte decided to abolish the *Ding an Sich* (thing-in-itself), one of the central concepts of Kant's system.[319]

Interestingly, Kant himself was asked who of all those who claimed to be his followers understood him best. Kant wrote his answer half year later in an article where, surprisingly enough, he denounced and sharply attacked Fichte. As the most adequate interpret he named Gottlob Ernst Shulze – an author who was basically just repeating what Kant had said.[320]

What all the prominent post-Kantian philosophers (Reinhold, Fichte, also Hegel later on) did was simply to take seriously Kant's own motto: they tried to understand Kant better then he understood himself – they applied this motto to their predecessors' theories,

[319] Kant's theory of perception claimed that every object that we experience has two components: on one hand, it carries its own objective attributes; on the other hand, it bares the structure that the subject's mind puts onto the object (Kant calls this structure the *a priori* form; time and space are a priori forms – there is no object that is not perceived in time and space). Thus every perception is affected from two sides: from the object and from the subject. An object that is not affected by subject's *a priori* forms is called the thing-in-itself. Thing-in-itself cannot be perceived, it is unintelligible: we do know how it looks or feels, we only know it does not exist in time and space. A perception occurs when the thing-in-itself affects the subject and is processed by the *a priori* forms. Fichte found the concept of the thing-in-itself redundant and absurd: if we cannot know anything about the thing-in-itself, we cannot even know that it exists. It is a transcendent notion, therefore a mere assumption. Moreover, mind cannot be affected by an external thing-in-itself but only by its own ideas (because of specific rules of causality that Kant himself postulated, but according to Fichte he did not follow them consistently enough). By contrast, Fichte claimed that the subject is the cause of objects (an idea which he elaborated comprehensively in the above-mentioned text).

We should also note that a further step from Fichte – and the last one in the arch of German idealism – occurred with Hegel: his entire Phenomenology of Spirit can be read as a critique and improvement of Fichte's Foundations of the Entire Science of Knowledge.

[320] There are speculations that Kant simply wanted to distance himself from Fichte because a connection with him was politically risky. Fichte had written an essay in which he argued for atheism, in a time not long after the French Revolution where the king had been beheaded. That is why atheism had very real consequences and was condemned by other emperors.

theories they were faced with. Now we can understand what the motto actually means: it simply means that you have only fully understood the author once you have not only studied him in depth and to the full extent, but also realized where he failed. When you read the author, you need not only read what he explicitly says, but also try and catch him in his contradictions. Therein, to truly understand the author is to resolve these contradictions, to bridge the gaps in his theory that the author himself did not realize or was not able to bridge – an operation that ultimately leads to advancement of the theory, possibly even to a new theoretical system.

This explains why the prime philosophical systems of German idealism following Kant – Fichte and Hegel, to an extent also Reinhardt – were on the one hand so profoundly different and in contrast to Kant's system both in content and style (also between each other), yet on the other hand all of these philosophers were essentially claiming that they were after the same thing: to found "the Absolute Knowledge", or "the absolute ground of all knowledge". Paradoxically, those who ultimately failed in understanding Kant and were remembered as a dead end in the arc of German idealism were those who stuck to his system literally and plainly reproduced it, by adding a few interpretative tools here and there (similarly as theologists comment on the holy texts of saints, if we are allowed to make this comparison).

Another example of the same phenomenon – this one being less theoretical and more pertinent to real life and politics – can be traced in Karl Marx's essay on Louis Bonaparte, a less famous nephew of the famous Napoléon Bonaparte. In the essay Marx analyzes actual historical events in post-Napoleonic France that led up to Louis Bonaparte's coup d'état on 2 December 1851. In the introduction, he gives his often quoted statement:

> "Hegel remarks somewhere that all great, world-historical facts and personages occur, as it were, twice. He has forgotten to add: the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce. Caussidière for Danton, Lous Blanc for Robespierre, the Mountain of 1848 to 1851 for the Mountain of 1793 to 1795, the Nephew for the Uncle."[321]

[321] Chapter on Karl Marx's *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, edited by Robert C. Tucker (New York: Norton, 1978), p. 594.

The word "tragedy" should be understood as "drama", as something of a great historical value and range; Marx attributes it to the role of "the Uncle", Napoléon Bonaparte (Napoléon I), who spread the French revolutionary ideals to almost entire Europe during the era of Napoleonic wars (1803-1815). On the other hand, he does not spare attacks and mockery for "the Nephew", Louis Bonaparte.

In many aspects, political careers of Napoleon Bonaparte and Louis Bonaparte were much alike: they both rose high in the political sphere in a democratic way during republican periods, then seized the entire executive by means of coup d'état, proclaimed a monarchy and announced themselves as emperors of the monarchy. Louis Bonaparte came to power during the French Second Republic (1848-52) by a popular vote – a remarkable 75% of the total vote. Much of the upper class supported him as a man who would restore order and end the instability in France following the overthrow of the monarchy earlier in the 1848. During the first few years in office he governed cautiously, pleasing the conservative assembly and trying to gain support from the religious right by allowing for a greater role of the Church in the educational system. As the constitution did not allow the possibility of re-election for the president, in the third year of his four-year mandate, his request to amend the constitution was rejected by the parliament.

At the time, there were several restrictions on universal male suffrage, preventing a large portion of the lower class from voting. Bonaparte surrounded himself with lieutenants loyal to him, secured the support of the army, and started touring the country, making speeches critical of the assembly and presenting himself as the protector of universal male suffrage. After a few months, he staged a coup d'état, seized the power and proclaimed himself Emperor of France on 2 December 1851 – the 47th anniversary of Napoléon I's crowning as emperor.[322] For about a decade, Bonaparte's regime had apparent authoritarian

[322] Cf. entry "Napoleon III" in Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Napoleon_III) [accessed on 14 April 2011].

characteristics, using press censorship to suppress the opposition, manipulating elections, and depriving the parliament of the right to free debate or any real power. [323]

Crucial in Marx's interpretation of Bonaparte's regime is the notion of Bonaparte's self-perception as the true representative of the masses (of the "middle" and the "lower class" in Marx's terms, i.e. the most populous portion of society) and as *the* embodiment of the national will – a mentality that Marx appraises as mere Bonaparte's tool for clinging on to power while practicing authoritarian rule over the very same population that it clams to truly represent:

> "As the executive authority which has made itself an independent power, *Bonaparte feels it to be his mission to safeguard "civil order"*. But the strength of this civil order lies in the middle class. He looks on himself, therefore, as the representative of the middle class and issue decrees in this sense. Nevertheless, he is somebody solely due to the fact that he has broken the political power of this middle class and daily breaks it anew. … At the same time, Bonaparte looks on himself as the representative of the peasants, and of the people in general, against the bourgeoisie… Bonaparte would like to appear as the *patriarchal benefactor of all classes*."[324]

Marx makes many other comments on Louis Bonaparte's rhetorical style and mode of governing: the general impression is that his style "forms a highly comical contrast to the imperious, categorical style of the government decrees, a style which is *faithfully copied from the uncle*".[325]

Now, to bring the account of Bonaparte's self-perception into comparison with the Turkish military's role in 1980, let us take Kenan Evren's television and radio broadcast in the dawn of 12 September 1980:

> "*The aim of this operation is to protect the integrity of the country, to secure national unity and fellowship, to prevent an impending civil war* … I call upon all

[323] Ibid.

[324] *The Marx-Engels Reader* , pp. 614-616 (all the words in italics marked by M.T.).

[325] Ibid., p. 615 (words in italics marked by M.T.).

> citizens to remain calmly by the side of their radios and televisions and to follow the decrees which will be broadcasted, to obey these, and to trust the *Turkish armed forces which have sprung from the bosom of the nation*." [326]

A similar idea about the military's mission and its deep-rootedness in the national body is expressed in Evren's speech on the celebration of the Victory day, 30 August 1980, prior to the coup:

> "The traitors who are the instigators of anarchy, of the chaos through which they seek to eradicate the democratic order and the unity of our state, will soon get their just deserts. As in the case of some others encountered in our history who dared to raise their ugly heads, they will be crushed under the fist of the Turkish armed forces raised in judgment … and the exalted Turkish nation will celebrate Victory Day forever in *affluence an happiness within the security* created by *the armed forces which lie at the bosom of our great nation*.[327]

The analogy seems to be almost perfect: Louis Bonaparte and the TGS were both deeply inspired by their predecessors – either actual (Napoléon I) or symbolic (Atatürk); they were also both notorious for their self-perception as the representative of the nation in its essence and embodiment of its true will, while in fact implementing an authoritarian regime.[328]

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[326] Birand, *The Generals' Coup in* Turkey, p. 187 (words in italics marked by M.T.).

[327] Ibid., p. 166 (words in italics marked by M.T.).

[328] The Turkish military in the 1980 coup therefore seems to have played an emphatically bonapartist role. However, we have to be aware of one important distinction: while Louis Bonaparte kept playing off one class against another, proclaiming at one time to be one the side of the bourgeoisie, and at another to protect the peasants from the bourgeoisie (which is why Marx describes his rule as a "contradictory and confused groping"), the Turkish military did not play off one class against another, nor did it search for support among any of the particular sections of society – their source of legitimacy was far more general and abstract ("the-Turkish-Nation-with-its-political-fiat-materialized-in-the-principles-of-Atatürk"), and in that sense more sophisticated.

It is also important to note here that Louis Bonaparte's rise and rule have been seen as a forerunner of the phenomenon that was to become known in the twentieth century as fascism (Marx's interpretation in the respective essay is therefore of interest as a sort of prologue to later Marxist thought on the nature and meaning of fascism). (Cf. *The Marx-Engels Reader*, p. 594.)

Bonaparte's intention to reach the height and glory of his uncle, and the style that he was consequently literally copying from the uncle turned out to be in a harsh contrast with the actual achievements during his reign.[329] Precisely this contrast between the intention and positive self-perception on one hand, and the actual mediocrity and unoriginality on the other is the reason why Marx labels Bonaparte as a farce.

Coming back to the Turkish military, in some of the accounts of the 1980-83 military regime that are slightly leaning in favor of it, the positive role of Kenan Evren is especially emphasized. Kemal K. Karpat in his article attributes the following virtues to Evren:

> "[Evren] attempted to speak on behalf of the nation as a whole, without attacking by name the old leaders or the political parties but merely condemning the politicians' ineptitude and their disregard for the national interest. He was also able to convey to the public his feelings of trust, respect, and consideration for them by keeping them informed about the important developments concerning the nation as a whole … In sum, Evren's reserved and dignified manners, his carrying attitude toward the public, his ability to rise above political parties and individual concerns in the name of the nation cast him in the image of a charismatic father figure. … the few army commanders in whose hands the power was concentrated with no intermediaries between them and the populace, were seen as incorruptible and dedicated to the national good."[330]

A few paragraphs later Karpat notes:

> "… there is a close resemblance between the methods used by Evren and Atatürk in dealing with the public. The dominant philosophy in both areas was that governmental authority should be exercised strictly in conformity with the political requirements of rulership, eschewing social, economic, or ideological considerations."[331]

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[329] His decade in power lacks the favorable historical reputation that Napoléon I enjoys. For instance, Victor Hugo portrayed Louis Bonaparte as "Napoléon the Small", a mere mediocrity, in contrast with "Napoléon the Great", a military and administrative genius. Cf. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Napoleon_III#Legacy [accessed on 13.04.2011].

[330] Karpat, "Military Interventions: Army-Civilian Relations in Turkey Before and After 1980", p. 150.

[331] Ibid., p. 152.

We should complement this statement: not only there is a close *resemblance* between the political methods and main principles of Atatürk and Evren – the relation between the two is virtually a complete *formal identity*. Evren and the military in 1980 did almost exactly what Atatürk's principles, the corpus of the six arrows dictate: they suppressed the non-secular, Islamist tendencies, separatist movements, non-nationalist (internationalist) organizations, took control over the education and put emphasis on the youth and the youth's internalization of Kemalist ideals etc.

Although, to be fair, not all of the Kemalist principles were left unmodified, particularly those regarding economic matters. The Kemalist model of a mixed economy, encouraging the state to intervene and orientate economic life, apparently contradicted the model of liberal economy which reduced the role of state to minimum, yet it was set as a priority in the agenda of the new military regime. Does this mean that the military carried out re-thinking of the basic doctrine? It does not seem so: when average cadets in military academies are asked about the Atatürk's principles, they name étatism along with other principles and grant it an equal place among them; considering, on the other hand, that the actual economic model is no longer étatist and that they are also aware of it, this issue remains obscure and unclear in their minds, since no study has been undertaken in order to resolve the contradiction and find some sort of synthesis.[332]

Indeed, the tedious, mainly intellectual work of re-questioning and re-evaluating the original set of Kemalist principles has not been carried out in the military Moreover, especially from the mid-1970s onwards these principles have become particularly fixed and rigid. Having said that, can we really claim that Evren was a charismatic father figure, like the one of Atatürk? Was he not rather a farce of Atatürk, an "anti-Atatürk" *par excellence*?[333] If Evren did resemble Atatürk, and had a strong identification with him, his

[332] Cf. Birand, *Shirts of Steel*, p. 67.

[333] We can go even further in this fashion, adding insult to injury, and supplement the original Marx's statement: "All great, world-historical facts and personages occur, as it were, twice: the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce. Caussidière for Danton, Louis Blanc for Robespierre, the Mountain of 1848 to 1851 for the Mountain of 1793 to 1795, the Nephew for the Uncle, and Kenan Evren for Mustafa Kemal."

identification was identification through copying instead of identification through overcoming.

Therefore, somewhat paradoxically, a real identification and continuation can be realized only through a process of antagonism and disruptions; in the context of ideas and ideologies: to be faithful to an ideology means to exceed it through the medium of radical criticism or at times even through disavowal and rejection of it, instead of simply reproducing it – only once you have made that fundamental step you may claim that your system of principles holds a true legacy over the original system.

The problem of the Turkish military of 1980 and post-1980 was that they never "killed the father" – we hereby refer to Freud's notion of patricide, or better, *symbolic* patricide, which teaches that a boy's final identification with his father (i.e. incorporation of his personality characteristics in a resolved Oedipus complex) is only a result of prior antagonism towards the father, and a subconscious wish to kill the father.[334] Kenan Evren and company naively betrayed the legacy of Atatürk precisely by sticking to it too rigidly, by "reading it according to the letter" and identifying with it superficially – they had done nothing to develop and exceed Atatürk and his philosophy (the fact that during their training the soldiers are encouraged to feel an almost physical presence of Atatürk should be taken seriously in this context). It is therefore difficult to say who held the real legacy of Atatürk – recall the remark by M. A. Birand that there were as many definitions of Kemalism before the coup as was the number of intellectuals dealing with the subject – yet we can surely claim that it was not the military. In fact, by degrading its doctrine to the level of mere epigonism, the military was probably the least Kemalist actor on the political scene of the time.

[334] Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (New York : Modern Library, 1994), p. 155.

CONCLUSION

The 1980 military coup took place in a country deeply disturbed by inner conflicts and institutional crisis that had been growing for several years. The factors leading to the crisis were roughly four-fold: malfunctioning of parliamentary democracy, political terrorism, economic crisis and changes in the international political context. Second half of the 1970s saw one fragile coalition government and two weak minority governments. Partisanship in the civil bureaucracy drastically increased and the governments were not able to detain street terror and cope with economic problems. The frequent changes of weak governments went along with inconclusive elections and months of country being run by care-taking governments, continuous disproving of the rules of parliamentary procedures, and parliamentary deadlocks (for example, fruitless voting for new president in 1980). Meanwhile, another type of conflict was taking place in the streets of Turkish cities and university campuses: clashes between civilians, mostly youth and students that were directly or indirectly linked to smaller and extreme political parties, or belonging to different ethnic groups, took form of an armed conflict. Number of death casualties mounted to an average of 20 per day by 1979; 5,000 people lost their lives from 1976 to 1980. Martial law was declared in many Turkish provinces. The governments did not manage to deal with the economic crisis either. The import-substituting industrialization economic model, pursued since the beginning of the 1960s, was a relatively autarkic model based on import of intermediate goods and raw materials like oil, while encouraging domestic production of industrial goods. With the two oil crises in the 1970s and the rising price of oil, cuts of electricity became an everyday reality in Turkey. Inflation was rampant and the living standard (real per capita income) did not grow from 1975 onward and decreased from 1978 to 1980. Governments tried to solve the crisis with reform packages that implied austerity measures, among other things. Austerity measures were resisted by

trade unions that were organizing strikes, so the industry became almost paralyzed. A further destabilizing political factor was the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979 which could strengthen the Islamic currents in Turkey. At the end of the same year the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. This event marked the beginning of the "second Cold War"; NATO and the US now saw Turkey, already an important NATO ally, as a vital partner in the region, a country that was to become the host of military forces which could operate in the geostrategically important Middle Eastern region. This, however, could not be realized in an unstable Turkey with a considerable opposition against the presence of the NATO in the country.

Crisis situation itself was not a sufficient condition for a military takeover as a means of resolving the crisis. The takeover took place because of a peculiar world outlook and self-perception of the Turkish military; moreover, it was precisely the 1980 coup that manifested in an exemplary fashion the world outlook and political ideals of the Turkish military. The military's outlook was largely formed in the early phase of the Turkish Republic (1930s), in a process that went parallel with another process – elaboration of a new narrative of Turkish history, the Turkish History thesis, which placed the origin of Turks into central Asia around 4000 years ago and described them as a nation with essentially military characteristics. Effectiveness of conscription steeply increased, and the military service started to be seen as a moral and patriotic duty of every Turk. The highly esteemed and socially central position given to the military institution has also been reflected in the self-perception of the military staff. The officers tend to see themselves as individuals with better knowledge and qualities than the rest, and the country as something that was put in their care and protection against all kinds of threats. They have a particular despise for politicians, whom they see as egotistic, untrustworthy, and with an inclination to ignore the general interest of the country. These views are basically part of the education they receive in the academies, where they learn and introvert the doctrine of Ataturkism, a comprehensive set of principles covering different aspects of society, from family life to politics. Theoretically speaking, Ataturkism is a variant of corporatist political ideology: it is neither socialist nor a truly liberal democratic ideology. In a corporatist society individuals take part in occupational groups that provide them both with economic means

and offer them a moral and social refuge; the different corporations constitute a harmonious economic and social life of the country. Thus, the military's notion of an ideal society is an orderly, harmonious society, with national interests above individual interests and with as little inner conflicts as possible. This explains why the military after World War II intervened three times: they intervened whenever society became too chaotic and pervaded by antagonisms between the government and the opposition, or between different poles of the civil society. As Turkey in the late 1970s was probably in the deepest economic and social crisis and internal conflict in the post-World War II era, so was the coup and the following military regime from 1980 to 1983 heavier. The military leaders decided to "rebuild" Turkey by radically changing the rules of political game. They enacted a new constitution that concentrated power in the hands of the executive and increased the power of the National Security Council. Rights and liberties of the individual, such as freedom of speech and freedom of association were included in the constitution, but they could be limited or suspended under a series of circumstances. The old parties were dissolved and the old politicians were kept out of public life for a while. Prior to the next democratic elections that took place in November 1983, the military selected and reduced the parties that were allowed to compete in elections to three. Victory of the Motherland Party under Turgut Özal came as a surprise, for it was the least favored by the military. From that moment on, democracy was restored, however, considering the scope of reforms and actions undertook by the junta, some have commented that, especially in the starting phase, the new regime was merely a military regime in civilian disguise.

Among the leading tasks of this thesis was to explain a certain paradox immanent to the military's discourse: how is it that the military claims that they are protecting democracy, yet they have intervened and suspended democracy three times so far? The answer is that they are, in fact, protecting corporatist order, an order that has only sporadic, partial and rather coincidental common points with liberalism and parliamentary democracy. The democratic ideal is subordinate to superior corporatist goals: that is why the military's notion of democracy is so narrowly defined, and that is why the democratic political life in the country can rather easily exceed this tight definition and evoke an intervention. On the other hand, the reasons why the military allowed for democracy in the first place, instead of

ruling the country according to their political ideals and on their own, were the historical and strategic affiliation of Turkey with the western (democratic) regimes, officers' detest for day-to-day conduct of politics, and the fact that the officers' motives have been more or less ideological (protection of Kemalism), that is to say, the military enclave has remained relatively uninvolved in seeking economic and other privileges that can come from position of power.

To conclude, if we truly want to understand Turkish politics, we need to understand the Turkish military, for the ideology the military stands for has had a steadily strong influence over Turkish society in general (moreover, this ideology has remained relatively rigid through time, a problematic fact that we criticize in the last chapter). For one, the entire set of the political elite of the earliest Republican era was socialized in the military and in the party established by the military leaders, the RPP (even when the first opposition party emerged from the RPP, it was allowed to do so under condition of abiding by the basic Kemalist tenets). Further, the military's influence has been continuous via the institution of mandatory military service. And lastly, its influence was reasserted and expanded after 1980, with a constitution and laws that were enacted under scrutiny of the generals and that allowed for a stronger presence of Ataturkism in different institutions, ranging from schools and universities to media.

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