

THE REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY:
ORGANIZATION AND IDEOLOGY BETWEEN 1992 AND 2007

Thesis submitted to the
Institute for Graduate Studies in the Social Sciences
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
in
Political Science and International Relations

by
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2009

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis could not be written without the academic support and guidance of my thesis advisor Assoc. Prof. Koray Çalışkan, who read the thesis and gave valuable and insightful advice in the writing of the thesis. Throughout this process, he was always courteous and patient. Most importantly, he helped me to place my case on a strong theoretical and historical basis. Thanks to his guidance, I could write my thesis through a critical eye. I am deeply grateful to him. I also want to thank to the members of my jury, Assoc. Prof Selcan Kaynak and Prof. Hakan Yılmaz for their contributions and encouragement. In our speeches on the thesis, Selcan Kaynak was always a very careful listener and made useful comments. Hakan Yılmaz contributed to my understanding of Turkish politics through his smart assessments. I would also want to thank to TÜBİTAK without the financial support of which it would be very difficult to continue graduate study.

I would also like to thank my interviewees, Ahmet İsvan, Altan Öymen, Erol Tuncer, Tarhan Erdem and Onur Öymen without whose contributions this thesis would not be complete.

In the writing of this thesis, I also want to thank my friends Gül Çatır, Aslı Orhon, Duygu Gül, Mine Yıldırım, Aslı Erdem, Duygu Gül and Yasin Kaya for their support and friendship. I would especially like to express my gratitude to Gül Çatır and Aslı Orhon. At difficult moments throughout this long and arduous process, they emboldened and motivated me.

At the end, I've very grateful to my mother, my father, my sister and my brother who gave me invaluable emotional support throughout my life. In times of despair, they were the reason for me not to give up.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AKP: Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*)

ANAP: Motherland Party (*Anavatan Partisi*)

CHP: Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*)

DYP: True Path Party (*Doğruou Yol Partisi*)

MHP: Nationalist Action Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*)

RP: Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi*)

SHP: Social Democratic Populist Party (*Sosyal Demokrat Halkçı Parti*)

SODEP: Social Democracy Party (*Sosyal Demokrasi Partisi*)

TESAV: Turkish Economic Social Research Foundation (*Türkiye Sosyal Ekonomik Araştırma Vakfı*)

TİP: Turkish Workers Party (*Türkiye İşçi Partisi*)

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This thesis aims to examine the organizational structure and the ideology of the CHP (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi) between 1992 and 2007. The year 1992 was a turning point for those who perceived that the place of the pre-1980 RPP had not been filled satisfactorily neither by SHP (Sosyal Demokrat Halkçı Parti) of Erdal İnönü nor by the DSP (Demokratik Sol Parti) of Bülent Ecevit. The SHP was claiming to be the successor of the pre-1980 CHP, yet its dismal electoral record had not enabled it to play the role of the former CHP. The existence of the SHP had been forced mostly as a result of extraordinary conditions imposed by the military. Most of the former CHP politicians had never accepted the closure of the CHP by a decree of the military rule. For them, the party of Atatürk had not completed its mission and successor center-left parties were unsuccessful in this respect as revealed by election results. Thus, when the law that banned the pre-1980 political parties was abrogated in 1992, they reopened the CHP. We finish our analysis of the CHP in 2007, because of both its importance for Turkish political history and specifically for the CHP. It was a momentous and tumultuous year in which a military memorandum, mass anti-government demonstrations, a parliamentary election and a presidency election took place. The parliamentary elections of 22 July 2007 clearly displayed the transformation of the CHP into a regional and middle-class party. In other words, the two trends of electoral and ideological transformation reached their peaks in 2007. This period under examination was not extended till 2008 or 2009 because such an involvement in very recent developments could adversely affect sound judgment.

The electoral and policy record of the CHP has been far from successful. Even though it merged with the SHP in 1995, it was just a small opposition party in

the 1990s. It even fell under threshold in the 1999 parliamentary elections for the first time in its history. After 3 November 2002 elections, it obtained the position of the main opposition party, however this was more related to the collapse of the incumbent DSP in the elections.

Table.1 The results of parliamentary elections after 1992.

	The 1995 elections	The 1999 Elections	The 2002 Elections	The 2007 Elections
The number of votes	3.011.076	2.716.094	6.113.352	7.318.808
The percentage of the CHP vote	10.7 %	8.71 % (under electoral threshold)	19.39 %	20.88 %
The rank of the CHP in elections	5.	6.	2.	2.
The number of seats won by the CHP	49	-	178	112
The percentage of representation in the Assembly	8.9 %	-	32.36 %	20.36 %

Source: TESAV.

The trends in the electoral geography and vote base of the CHP were dramatically revealed by the 22nd July parliamentary elections. The election results indicated that the CHP is no longer a national party but has turned into a regional party, the electoral support of which is overwhelmingly concentrated in the Western coast of Turkey. The provinces in which it scored the highest number of votes were Kırklareli, Tekirdağ, Edirne provinces of the Thracian region and Izmir and Muğla of the Aegean Region as it is indicated in the Map 1. It could not obtain any seats in 36 provinces compared to 18 provinces in the 2002 elections. Most significantly, its vote in the east of the Euphrates decreased dramatically. Actually, the CHP has been

under the threshold in the Eastern Anatolia and Southeastern region since the parliamentary elections of 1995.¹

It is the party of the socioeconomically most developed regions such as Marmara and Aegean. For instance, the social democrat CHP could only gain the 6.58 % of the votes of people whose personal incomes are between 725 and 1000 dollars, whereas it gained 25.46 % of the votes of people whose personal incomes ranges between 4000 and 7556 dollars. Likewise, it scores the highest number of votes not in the poorer shantytown districts of Istanbul, but the richest parts of the city. Mostly urban, white-collar and older people vote for the CHP. According to a survey made by TÜSES (Türkiye Sosyal Ekonomik Siyasal Araştırmalar Vakfı) in 2002, 57.5 % of the CHP voters live in cities compared 42.5 % in the countryside. The age groups most likely to vote for the CHP are groups of 40-54 and 21-24, the least likely age groups are that of 18-20. Among employees, educated women are most likely to vote for the CHP. Among religious and ethnic minorities, the CHP vote shows important differences. Alawites have been continuous supporters of the CHP. The 36.6 % of Alawites supported it in 2002 (34.4 % in 1996, 39.1 % in 1998). The percentage of Kurdish support for the CHP fell to 4.4 % in 2002 from 8.8 % in 1998.²

The CHP claims itself as a social democratic party. The media and most of the pundits also evaluate it as a social democratic party. Even those who claim that the CHP lost its social democratic identity strive to write prescriptions for it to turn into their desired social democratic party. In the aftermath of each national election and the CHP National Conventions, a series of articles emerge in the newspapers

¹ Erol Tuncer, *2002 Milletvekili Genel Seçimleri, Sayısal ve Siyasal Değerlendirme*. (Ankara: TESAV, 2003), pp. 331-355.

² Erder, Necat, *Türkiye'de Siyasi Partilerin Yandaş/Seçmen Profili (1994-2002)*. (Istanbul: TÜSES Yayınları, 2002), pp. 79-80.

dealing with the question of how the CHP is saved. In the special reports on the situation of leftist politics, most of the attention is focused on the CHP since it is the only electorally viable party that claims itself as social democratic in the Turkish party system. Most of the debates begin with the assumption that the CHP is a social democratic party. As a result, they grapple with the intricate problem of a social democratic party that gains most of its votes from the richest strata of the people and most developed regions of the country. The fact that most of the debate about the CHP takes place in a journalistic setting impedes a genuine historically and theoretically informed evaluation of the CHP.

This thesis questions the prevalent assumption in the public opinion that the CHP is a social democratic party. In other words, it tries to answer the question of whether the CHP displayed traits of a social democratic party in this period. Since this is an issue, which attracts much journalistic attention, yet scarce scholarly interest, the endeavor to this question will proceed in an uncharted area. There are few articles that only deal with the ideological character of post-1992 CHP. In contrast to these works, this thesis argues that attitudes and policies adopted by the CHP in this period do not let it to be labeled as a social democrat party. Its ideology can rather be evaluated as a right-wing ideology that is in line with its founding ideology Kemalism and ideas of conservative republicans such as Turan Feyzioğlu, Coşkun Kırca who left the CHP after it adopted left-of-center stance in 1965. It is also argued that this is because of the fact that it was born as a right wing corporatist party and impossibility or futility of its later efforts to synthesize its original ideology, Kemalism, with social democracy. The deviations from social democracy are mostly because of the still vibrant ideological legacy of Kemalism. This thesis

defines the political ideology of the post-1992 CHP as nationalist, elitist and state-centric.

The increasingly nationalist attitude of the CHP in this period can be attributed to its character as a nation-state founding party. This thesis argues that the contemporary CHP nationalism is a continuation of Kemalist nationalism of 1920s and 1930s. It can also be argued that despite the later adoption of social democratic title, nationalist mindset of the CHP did not change much. The Kemalist nationalism is the cause behind the inability of the party in incorporating identity politics to its social democratic outlook as the social democratic parties of the Western Europe did. This thesis argues that despite emphasis on civic citizenship in its rhetoric, the CHP still embraces an ethnicist understanding of nationalism and citizenship. At best, we can state that its understanding of nationalism still retains the ambiguity present in the Kemalist nationalism of 1920s and 1930: civic in rhetoric but ethnicist in implementation and even its laws. It still perceives all Muslim Turks as citizens in line with the Kemalist formula, which designated all Muslims as Turks, thereby labeling non-Muslims as foreigners. This thesis argues that the RPP still adopts the claim of Kemalist nationalism that the concept 'Turk' does not denote any specific ethnicity, but rather a civic term that includes different ethnic groups. This thesis argues that its approach on minority issues is still affected by the Kemalist denial of the existence of other ethnic groups. In other words, the CHP still cannot free itself from the Pekerian discourse of 'citizens who are inculcated with ideas of Kurdishness, Albanian...'.³ The strong opposition of the CHP to identity politics enables us to characterize it as a party of national integration.

³ Parla, Taha, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Kültürün Resmi Kaynakları: Kemalist Tek Parti İdeolojisi ve CHP'nin Altı Ok'u*. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1991), p.110

The political ideology of the CHP is elitist and statist in its relationship with the society. The priority of the CHP is not to understand and address demands of society but to protect the security of the state. Throughout the period under examination, the concepts of national interest and national security have increasingly governed the attitude of the CHP toward certain issues rather than values of democracy and human rights. For instance, the CHP approached to the issue of minority foundations as a matter of national security rather than as a matter of citizenship. The CHP's perception of threats to national security and secularism defines the nature of its reactions to military interferences in politics rather than a principled attitude based on civilian supremacy over the military. Even the demands of minorities are also viewed in this light. If they are not perceived as a separatist threat to the Republic, their demands for political, social, cultural rights can easily be tolerated.

The CHP does not propose a distinct economic policy than right-wing parties. While the party continues its advocacy for free education and health services, it is obvious that it has even given up any rhetoric of social justice and egalitarianism in its discourse. It is argued that the CHP is unwilling to present such a discourse of social justice because of its fear that this can disturb its significant middle and upper class constituencies. Due to its fragmented electoral base, it tries to be everything to everyone. In effect, its opposition to neo-liberal economics does not go beyond criticism of specific issues such as privatizations. It is acknowledged that there has been a great deal of convergence in economic policies of right-wing and left wing parties in the world. Thus, the adoption of neo-liberal economics is not limited to the case of the CHP.

Today we can define the RPP ideology as conservative Republican. It argues that just as the conservative republicans who opposed to leftist populism of Bülent Ecevit in 1960s were concerned with increasing politicization of the society and emergence of socialist, Kurdish movements in that period and consequently shifted to more right-wing positions, the reopened CHP was also rattled by the rise of identity politics, most importantly Kurdish movement and the rise of the political Islam. Moreover, its vision of state-led economic developmentalism was shattered by the rise of neo-liberal paradigm. Faced with these challenges and burdened with Kemalist assumptions, it was unable to understand the continuously changing Turkish society and the globalizing world and returned to Kemalism. These challenges gradually increased its unease with the fast changing society, so that it has turned into a defender of status quo. In denoting the RPP ideology as a right wing ideology, this thesis also wants to emphasize that it is increasingly difficult to detect policies differences between right wing parties and social democratic labeled CHP. For instance, both the MHP (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi) and CHP opposed to any amendment in the Article 301.

In the part on the history of the CHP, I will further focus on the issue of continuities and differences between Kemalism and the contemporary CHP ideology. This part will not be a simple summary of the CHP history. It will specifically focus on the emergence, development and character of Kemalism as an ideology. Then, it will deal with the issue of how far this ideology changed after the transition to competitive politics in 1950. The conditions of adoption of the leftist label and debates over it will be examined with emphasis on their ramifications for contemporary CHP ideology.

After the part on historical origins of the CHP ideology, I will focus on through what processes policies are formed in the CHP and who forms them. In other words, I will focus on the organizational structure of the party. In this part, I will try to examine the formation of party leadership, the relationship between the party center and party organization, the relationship between the party center and parliamentary group and composition of the party membership. To examine the organizational structure will enable to better understand causes of inconsistencies in the CHP ideology. In this part, the thesis argues that the CHP has a highly undemocratic structure and is a leader-dominated party. However, it is important to remember that this is not something peculiar to the CHP, but all Turkish political parties display similar characteristics, though on differing levels. In this part, we argue that the CHP is a vote seeking and office-seeking party rather than a programmatic party. In other words, the CHP does not aim to come to power to realize its program, but to a certain degree fine-tunes its policies according to perception of what the current mood of the electorate will buy. However, the fact that the CHP lack a program with concrete policies does not mean that the CHP has no ideology. Moreover, the CHP has consistently kept its line on certain issues in this period. This was so in issues related to secularism, such as the wearing of turban in universities, in its opposition to public involvement in the recognition of cultural rights and foreign policy matters such as Cyprus.

In the later part, firstly I will try to define basic characteristics of the CHP ideology. Then, I chose certain dimensions to evaluate the CHP ideology on a more concrete basis. The issues I have chosen are the political dimension, democratization, the economic dimension and the dimension of identity politics. While issues are chosen, the main criterion was that they take place in the Party Program. Since the

Party Program especially focuses on democratization and economy, I chose both subjects in my analysis of the CHP ideology. In addition to that, since journalistic criticism mostly focuses on the idea that the CHP turned nationalist with respect to Kurdish Question and other minorities, we added identity issues to the analysis. Moreover, as ideologies define problems and offers their answers to these problems, the issues under our consideration correspond to issues on Turkey's agenda since 1992: Democratization especially after the Helsinki Summit of 1999 in which Turkey was accepted as a candidate, economy and identity issues especially the Kurdish Question. In the following part, I will dwell on the methods that I used in supporting my arguments with respect to these issues.

Method

In the examination of the CHP organization and ideology, I've relied on a variety of methods. Firstly, I made an extensive literature review. However, most the scholarly sources about the CHP are related to pre-1980 period. Moreover, most of these sources do not deal directly with the CHP, but only as part of their subjects. Even among these sources, there is not a single academically written history of the CHP. Concerning the period under my examination, there is no scholarly source over the political developments in the CHP of post1992 period. Only the book of Hikmet Bila, the CHP(1919-2008) narrates this period, however it is an uncritical journalistic work. Moreover, there are only a few articles dealing with the ideology and organization of the post-1992 CHP.

After completing the literature review, I have begun to search for the party documents. The party program and other papers related to party policies would be a great deal of help to me in my study of party ideology. Firstly, since I live in the Kadıköy district of Istanbul, thus I went to the district center of the CHP there to get

the party documents. After introducing myself to the secretary of the chairman of the district organization, I asked for whether they had the party program, party statutes and other party documents. She said that the district did not have these documents and advised me to go to the Istanbul provincial center. On the following day, I went to the provincial center and asked for the documents to the secretary in the entrance hall of the flat. Her response was also negative. One person there said that the military had seized all the archive of the party after the military coup, although I had told them that I was studying the post-1992 period. Another person, who was from district of Bahçelievler, said that the previous provincial administration had destroyed all documents before leaving the administration. They advised me to go to Ankara to obtain the party documents. In short, there was not even the party program of the CHP in the Istanbul provincial center of the CHP. I phoned the party center in Ankara and they directed me to the communications coordinator of the party, Baki Özilhan. He said that I could obtain most of the documents that I wanted if I go to Ankara.

I thought that while in Ankara I could also make interviews with the administrators of the party that would supplement the examination of primary sources. Firstly, I got into touch with the secretary of Onur Öymen. I've chosen to make an interview with Öymen because as the vice general chairman, he was the primary spokesman of the party on matters of foreign policy, the EU and issues such as minority rights since 2002 parliamentary elections. Moreover, most of the claims in the public opinion that the CHP ideologically turned to nationalist right were made with regard to his role in this process. Thus, to make interview with him was quite relevant to my thesis. His secretary said that his timetable was very intense and she could just arrange a meeting on 21 or 22 May 2008. We agreed on 22 May. I also

called the parliamentary office of Ali Topuz, the vice-chairman of the CHP assembly group to interview with him. He had been in the party since 1970s and assumed important positions, thus knew the party better than most people. However, he was not in Ankara for a week because of meetings in Brussels. I also made contact with Erol Tuncer, the chairman of Social Democracy Foundation. I wanted to make interview with him, because he was the person who had led the reopening process of the CHP in 1992.

On 22 May 2008, in the CHP party center in Söğütözü, Ankara, a secretary in the floor, which included the offices of vice-chairmen, greeted me. She said that Öymen was making a phone call and a few minutes later she would inform him that I came. When these few minutes started to lengthen, she asked me about my thesis. She was a graduate of a Political Science Department in Ankara. During our conversation, she said something very interesting: ‘There is no political debate here. They do not meet to discuss any policy. The general chairman deals with political matters and the party secretary general deals with matters of organization’. Then, after a phone call, she said that I could go to his office. Ten minutes after starting the interview, the mayor of Kadıköy and a few persons came to greet Onur Öymen. They had come to visit the general chairman and had also wanted to greet him. After this short break, we continued our interview. However, after another ten minutes people from a province who were in Ankara for some reasons came to greet him. Our interview continued half an hour more, and then the secretary came in. The general chairman was calling Onur Öymen to join him to go to present condolences to the Chinese Embassy because of the earthquake in China. He said that he was sorry and our interview ended. As a result, I cannot say that my interview with Onur Öymen was very productive. On 23 May 2008, I made the interview with Erol Tuncer in the

building of Social Democracy Foundation. It was a very fruitful interview, for he narrated both the reopening process and answered my questions related to CHP policies.

In the CHP party center, I also went to the library of the party to ask for party documents. The library consisted of a large salon with 4 or 5 series of bookshelves. It was interesting that the contemporary party documents were not in shelves, for the library official went to a depot-like room. Books and documents related to pre-1980 CHP were in the open shelves. Documents related to the post-1992 CHP were in the depot. I said to library official that I needed the reports of the Party Assembly, the election manifestos, the party statutes, the speeches of party general chairman and other party documents. The library official answered that she would look for these documents in the depot, however they did not have copies of most of them. She gave me the Party Assembly reports of 1998, 2001, 2003 and 2005 Congresses, the election manifestos of 1995, 2002, 2004, 2007 and two collections of speeches of Deniz Baykal. However, I still could not find other party documents such as position papers on certain policies published by the party. I also searched for these documents in the web site of the CHP, there were/are links on such documents, however links did not open. Thus, I cannot claim to examine all the party documents of the party.

After examining the party documents, I met with another problem. The reports of the party assembly were mostly narrating political, social and economic developments in the preceding period rather than elaborating CHP policies. For instance, the economy parts of the reports were mostly giving statistics related to Turkish economy. Nonetheless, I used the reports of the party assembly (after 2000 they also include speeches of the general chairman of the party in the media and the meetings of the Party Assembly Groups, which I used in examining dimensions of

the CHP ideology. The objections written to these reports were quite useful in understanding the organization of the CHP. As a result of inadequacy of documents, I decided to continue interviews. On 18 June, 2008, I have interviewed with Altan Öymen, the general chairman of the CHP between 1999 and 2000. He was a member of the pre-1980 General Administrative Council that led the reopening process. Moreover, he had led the organizational restructuring of the party in his brief tenure as the general chairman of the party. I interviewed with him in his office in the Doğan Media Plaza. He courteously answered my questions regarding the reopening of the party, his term in the general chairmanship and evaluated the ideological route that the CHP has taken since 1992. On 25 June 2008, I interviewed with Tarhan Erdem. As secretary general, he had steered the restructuring process in 1999-2000, thus he knew the organization of the CHP quite closely.

I also wanted to see continuities and differences between the pre-1980 CHP and post-1992 CHP. Thus, I interviewed with Ahmet İsvan on 1 July 2008 in Yalova in the Yalova provincial center of CHP. İsvan had taken part in every position in the CHP since 1950s. Moreover, he had also been member of the first Party Assembly of the SHP. This interview helped me better understand the approach of the SHP and CHP to the Kurdish question and nature of ideological disagreements in the CHP.

It is obvious that the interviews that I've made are insufficient. The reason for this is that it's been difficult to arrange meetings with working politicians in Ankara due to their intense programs. I tried to arrange interviews with a number of people in a certain time period due to time and financial constraints, however it was not possible. It lasted one month to take an interview date from Onur Öymen and lasted about two months from Altan Öymen. Apart from elite interviews, I did not make field research since this work would be in the confines of a master thesis. For

this thesis, I also did not undertake an extensive screening of newspapers, thus while I examine the ideology of the party, I only give short references to developments in Turkish politics.

CHAPTER II

THEORY ON POLITICAL PARTY ORGANIZATIONS AND IDEOLOGY

Modern political parties as different from parliamentary groupings, cliques, factions emerged in the 19th century. LaPalombara and Weiner classifies theories regarding the birth of political parties in three groups. Theoretical approaches such as Duverger's explanation relates the emergence of political parties to the development of democracy. In the process of the empowerment of the Parliaments and the extension suffrage, parliamentary groups needed to form electoral committees to attract new voters. Over time, there emerged the need to coordinate their activities, hence the development of party bureaucracies as distinct from parliamentary groups. These parties are mostly middle class parties of 19th century Europe and the US such as American parties. Duverger divides parties into two types according to their origins: parties born in the elections and the parliament and parties born out of the parliament. Parties that were founded outside of the parliament are generally established by the initiative of trade unions, associations or newspapers. Duverger points out that parties originating in the parliament or elections are less centralist and authoritarian than ones born out of the parliament.⁴ Secondly, LaPalombara and Weiner state that historical crises affect both the emergence and development of parties. Thirdly, socioeconomic modernization increases the aspiration in the society for political participation thus leading to the emergence of political parties.⁵

However, there is still no consensus over what is a political party. Political party theorists like Neumann and Sartori do not put single-parties into the category of political party, since the word 'party' means a part, thus necessitating the existence

⁴ Maurice Duverger, *Political Parties: Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State* (London: Methuen, 1964), pp. 1-30.

⁵ Ergun Özbudun, *Siyasal Partiler*, (Ankara Üniversitesi Hukuk Fakültesi Yayınları: 1979), pp. 1-5.

of a whole. On the other hand, LaPalombara and Weiner state that single parties are parties because they also carry out functions such as recruitment of elites that parties perform in democratic regimes. They put forward the condition that political parties should have a permanent structure the operation of which is according to certain rules. Political parties are also defined according to their functions as Janda defines them as ‘organizations, which try to place their representatives into the posts of the state.’ In this thesis, I embrace the definition made by Ergun Özbudun who combines all these definitions: ‘Under the light of these discussions, we can define political parties as political communities which try to seize the control of state mechanism with the support of the people and have a permanent and stabile structure.’⁶

Until the beginning of the 20th century, political party studies were limited to examinations of party ideologies and biographies of party leaders. Moisei Ostrogorski and Robert Michels were the first political scientists who studied the internal party structures, thus the founders of modern political party studies. As Özbudun states, Ostrogorski is the first political scientist who studied political parties through observing their internal workings in real life instead of describing them in a historical or legal way.⁷ The significant methodological innovation that his book ‘Democracy and the organization of Political Parties’ published in 1902 brought to the study of political parties was its focus on the organization of political parties, not their ideologies or histories. The other founder of modern political party studies, Robert Michels, suggested that oligarchy is an inevitable destination for all big and complex organizations, hence the ‘iron law of oligarchy’. Although Michels does not give us a clear definition of this law in his book ‘Political Parties’, this law means that the leaders of an organization are free from all the checks and balances that its

⁶ Ibid, pp. 1-6.

⁷ Ibid, pp. 1-6.

members and chiefs of lower units can exert over them. According to Michels, this disposition that is entrenched in every large organization can be best observed in democratic parties particularly social democratic parties and trade unions, since conservative parties are obviously oligarchic. What makes this propensity toward oligarchy universal is the openness of social democratic parties, which opposes to the oligarchic order. According to Michels, this tendency is the result of three factors: technical and administrative, psychological and intellectual. The rule of large organizations through direct democracy is technically impossible. The size and complexity of such an organization necessitates technical specialization, thus leading to specialized leadership in the organization. Leaders with the necessary expertise to rule the bureaucratic structure of the party also respond to the psychological needs of masses for leadership. We can infer from this psychological need that masses also lack any intellectual competence to rule themselves. As a result, a new class emerges in the organization with its own interests differing from the rank and file members. While these experts turn gradually their rule into a habit, members increasingly become more indifferent to decision making processes as they are further impeded by their lack of expertise, time, financial resources. The larger the party organization is, the higher the concentration of power in the leadership. In other words, members have a lesser say over party affairs as the organization enlarges.⁸

In his book 'Political Parties', Maurice Duverger also emphasizes the importance of studying party organizations as he states that 'In modern parties the organization assumes great importance: it constitutes the general setting for the activity of members, the form imposed on their solidarity: it determines the

⁸ Robert Michels, *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy*, trans. Eden and Cedar Paul, (New York: Collier Books: 1968), pp. 330-367.

machinery for the selection of leaders and decides their powers. It often explains the strength and efficiency of certain parties, the weakness and inefficiency of others.’⁹ For him, the organizational structure is what makes a party distinct from other parties as he notes that ‘Present day parties are distinguished far less by their program or the class of their members than the nature of their organization. A party is a community with a particular structure. Modern parties are characterized primarily by their anatomy.’¹⁰ The distinctness of a party organization is related to the nature of its membership. Duverger makes a distinction between cadre parties and mass parties. These parties differ not in the number of their members or their size, but in their structure. Mass parties try to enroll as many members as possible, since both their activities and finance depend on the contributions of members. In these parties, there is a formal process of member registration and payment of monthly subscriptions. On the other hand, the cadre parties rely on notabilities with expertise and financial resources. They have a minimal organization with a loose structure. Duverger makes distinction between parties according to level of organization. Parties in which all relations are conducted according to certain rules are strongly articulated parties while parties in which the operation of units are not defined and institutionalized are weakly articulated. Mass parties are generally strongly articulated, whereas cadres parties are weakly articulated.¹¹

Since Duverger, new party types were devised, which may contribute to a better understanding of political parties. In 1966, Kircheimer noted that parties of mass integration such as social democratic parties of Western Europe were increasingly unloading their ideological baggage, thus becoming ideologically

⁹ Maurice Duverger, *Political Parties: Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State*, (London: Methuen, 1964), p 25.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 25

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 27-50.

tasteless ‘catch-all’ parties. Giving up their aim of including the masses in the party and instilling in them an ideology, they were turning to players in the market competing for the support of interest groups wherever they could find it. In this endeavor, they were highlighting qualities of their leaders rather than an ideology. In other words, the catch-all party that Kirchheimer theorized displayed some or all of the traits of being highly opportunistic, vote-seeking and leader-centered. However, Kirchheimer’s concept tells us more about what is not a mass-integration party.¹² Wolinetz makes a deeper classification of political parties that is also more relevant to our case. He uses the distinction made between policy-seeking, vote-seeking and office-seeking parties by Strom who analyzed the conditions of participation in minority governments. Policy-seeking parties have sophisticated ideologies and/or programs. They can deal with single issues, but policy has always priority for them. For them, the expression or defense of their policies has preeminence over the maximization of votes or obtaining political office as Wolinetz states that ‘(...) they seek to redefine the political agenda in order to bring about changes in a number of areas (...)’.¹³ The members of policy-seeking party are active and involved in policy-making process. On the other hand, winning elections is the only aim of vote-seeking parties. To increase their support among the electorate, they constantly manipulate their policies. Its members have little influence over policies. This kind of party is very similar to catch-all party. The third type, office-seeking party generally wants to obtain a share in the government, thus for the sake office it can sacrifice its policies or votes. It must be said these are all ideal and polar types and parties may have

¹² Wolinetz, Steven B. ‘Beyond the Catch-all Party: Approaches to the Study of Parties and Party Organization in Contemporary Democracies’. In *Political Parties: Old Concepts and New Challenges*, edited by R. Gunther, J. R. Montero and J. Linz. (Oxford: Oxford University Pres, 2002), pp. 146-150.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p.156.

display features of each in the conditions of electoral competition.¹⁴ According to the criteria of Strom, we shall make an analysis of the CHP in the following chapters.

¹⁴ Ibid., pp.146-155.

Table 2. The classification of parties according to Strom.

Possible Indicators	PARTIES		
	Policy-seeking	Vote-seeking	Office-seeking
Internal Policy Debate			
% of time spent at party meetings	High	Low	Low
Character of debate	Intense, protracted, issue-focused	Pro-forma, diffuse, unfocused	Pro-forma, diffused, unfocused
Extent and level of involvement	Extensive; most levels of party involved	Confined to leadership or policy committee; compartmentalized	Confined to leadership or policy committee; compartmentalized
Consistency of policy positions assumed	High	Medium to low, prone to change depending on leader's directions, electoral opportunity structure	Medium to low
Election Campaigns			
Prominence of policy	High	Varies	Low
Determination strategy	Follows from policies	Policies developed to fit strategy, maximize votes	Varies, preference for low-risk strategies
Use of new electoral techniques	Low to medium	High	Low to medium
Infrastructure to support policies (e.g. research bureaus, think-tanks, affiliated orgs.)	Present	Either minimal or at disposal of leaders, office-holders	Either minimal or at disposal of leaders, office-holders

Another classification that may help to understand our case is that made by Gunther and Diamond. The electoral party is a party type that is close to a catch-all party. The electoral campaigns of these parties, which are ‘organizationally thin’ are run by professionals and rely on television and other mass media. Like opportunistic catch-all parties, these parties are ‘distinguished by their shallow organization, superficial and vague ideology...’.¹⁵ Power is an aim in itself for them, thus they try to attract vote of any social group to come to power. In response to shifts in public mood, they fine tune their viewpoints and present eclectic policies to appeal to various groups. In the elections, they emphasize the personal qualities of candidates in the absence of a coherent ideology. On the other pole stands the programmatic party. Although it is also a ‘thinly organized party’, it has a consistent and discrete program. It aims to come to power to realize its vision that it presents in its program.¹⁶

While studying the party structure, we shall rely on the criteria that Alan Ball offers in the examination of the party structure: ‘1) The role of the leader and the election method of the leader, 2) the degree of centralization in the organization, 3) the power of the party leadership in the organization hierarchy, the scope of its disciplinary powers, the degree of its participation in the decision-making and policymaking processes, 4) the supervision of the party bureaucracy, 5) the relations of the parliamentary group with the other parts of the party, 6) the basis and diffusion degree of the membership.’¹⁷ Here, we must be reminded of the fact that the degree of centralization in a political party is not only dependent on that party but also on

¹⁵ Gunther, Richard and L. Diamond ‘Types and Functions of Parties’. In *Political Parties and Democracy*, edited by R. Gunther and L. Diamond. (Baltimore: John Hopkins University, 2001), pp.3-39.

¹⁶ Ibid., p.16.

¹⁷ Alan Ball, *Modern Politics and Government* (London: Macmillan, 1977), p. 1-32.

political culture. To understand the features of the relation between the party centre and the organization, we must take into account the administrative tradition of the country, the size of the party, attributes of financial and cadre resources of the party, the importance attached to ideology, party leadership, laws about parties and the statute of the party.¹⁸

Party Decline Argument

Many studies show that membership in political parties is declining, their connections with secondary organizations is weakening, that confidence of people in parties fading. Although political parties are challenged by other organizations, there is not enough empirical research that they have failed to address these challenges. While factors such as the emergence of new social movements, increasing levels of personal affluence and increasing participation of women in labor force have caused diminishing levels of affiliation with political parties with mass membership, the decline of the party thesis makes a deterministic evaluation of the effect of these factors on political parties. There is great need for empirical research whether political parties could cope with these challenges and in what ways.¹⁹ Peter Mair argues that while the importance of party grass-roots weakened, the party center and the role of party in public office have not changed. Moreover, there is not a universal development of party decline. For instance, membership fees still contribute a significant amount to party budget in many countries such as Austria, Denmark and Germany. It should be also remembered that parties need their members to legitimize their representative function as a mass party or at least to present such a semblance.

¹⁸ İlder Turan, *Siyasal Sistem ve Siyasal Davranış*, (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi, 1977), p.25.

¹⁹ Mair, Peter. 'Party Organizations: from Civil Society to the State.' In *How Parties Organize: Change and Adaptation in Party Organizations in Western Democracies*, edited by Richard Katz and Peter Mair (London: Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1994), pp. 1-21.

Most importantly, Mair points out that while the power of the ‘organized party on ground’ is declining, intra-party democratization is enhanced through empowerment of ordinary members. Thus, the trend is not a simple decline of party but their organization in Western Europe as Mair notes that

(...) ordinary members, often at home, and via postal ballots, are increasingly being consulted by the party leadership and are increasingly involved in legitimizing the choices of the party in public office ... The more organized membership party on the other hand be it represented in congress or even in central office ...tends to become less relevant.²⁰

Party Ideologies

As McLellan stated, ideology is ‘the most elusive concept in the whole of the social sciences’.²¹ Since it was coined by Destutt de Tracy, the word ideology was interpreted in several ways. Antoine Destutt de Tracy coined ideology to denote science of ideas, which would be used to reveal the origin of ideas. Later Marx attached negative meaning to it. Ideology was the ideas of ruling class. Those who had means of production in society also possessed ‘means of ‘mental production’’. It was disguising exploitation of proletariat.²² Gramsci further developed Marxian theory of ideology. According to Gramsci, it was not only economic and political power that supported the capitalist class system but also the hegemony of bourgeoisie ideas. The ideology of bourgeoisie was hegemonic because it had turned into the commonsense ideology of the whole society.²³ The theorists of the Frankfurt School also pointed out that the role of ideology in creating order through ‘manufacturing consent’. For instance, Marcuse argued that wealth created by

²⁰ Ibid., p.16.

²¹ McLellan, D, *Ideology*, (Milton Keynes: Open University, 1986), p. 5.

²² Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology*, edited by C. J. Arthur. (London: Electric Book, 2001), p. 15-27.

²³ Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, edited by Joseph A. Buttigieg, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), p. 24-46.

industrial society had turned individual into consumers who tried to satisfy endless ‘false needs’, thus abstaining from criticism of the system.²⁴ The experience of totalitarian dictatorships in the World War II led to a limited use of the term ideology only for fascism and communism. Theoreticians such as Karl Popper, Hannah Arendt defined ideology as ‘a closed system of thought which, by claiming a monopoly of truth, refuse to tolerate opposing ideas...’. Ideologies were ‘secular religions’ used to provide for social control like religions. Thus, liberalism was not an ideology because of its openness and tolerance of diversity.²⁵

After 1960s, Seliger detached negative meaning attached to the term ideology describing it as ‘a set of ideas by which men posit, explain and justify the ends and means of organized social action, irrespective of ‘whether such action aims to preserve, amend, uproot or rebuild a given social order’.²⁶ This definition does not make a value judgment on ideology, thus it can be good, bad, false, true, open, close, oppressive or liberating. According to this definition, firstly, ideologies include an explanation of the existing order. They draw a picture of it including its merits, faults, and problems. Then, they envisage a model of ‘good society’. Thirdly, they deal with the issue of change will be realized. There are three different categories of political ideologies according to their approach to change. Firstly, there are status quo ideologies, which defend and rationalize existing economic social political order at a give in any given society. Secondly, radical or revolutionary ideologies support

²⁴ Herbert Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*, (New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 10-58.

²⁵ Popper, Karl, *Open Society and its Enemies*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), pp. 1-34.

²⁶ Martin Seliger, *Ideology and Politics*, (New York: Free Press, 1976), pp.1-24.

radical changes in political and socioeconomic. Thirdly, There are reformist ideologies supporting gradual reforms.²⁷

There is also the issue of what is ideology and what is not. We shall use the criteria composed of four components: coherence, pervasiveness, extensiveness and intensiveness. Coherence means that there must be a set of goals that are clearly defined and an account of through what means they will be realized. Pervasiveness means it should be 'operative' for a period. Extensiveness denotes number of people influenced by it. Intensiveness means whether it has appeal to people to demand their loyalty.²⁸ Based on this criteria, we shall argue in the following chapters that the CHP has an ideology though there are inconsistencies in it. There is both highly consistent aspects and inconsistent aspects of the CHP ideology. The ideological symbols used by the party not only has been known for a long time and still useful in mobilizing the party base.

There is also the issue of how to analyze the content of an ideology. In other words, what we must examine under the title of a party ideology. LaPalombara states that we can grasp a party's ideology through looking at its party statute, platform, special programmatic statements, proceedings of party congresses, press releases, and speeches by the party's leading figures. In examining these documents, dimensions defined by Lijphart in democratic party systems can be used. These are socio-economic, religious, cultural-ethnic, urban-rural, regime support, foreign policy, post materialism. The components of socioeconomic dimension are governmental v. private ownership of the means of production, strong v. weak governmental role in economic planning, support of v. opposition to redistribution

²⁷ Roy C. Macridis and Mark Hulliung, *Contemporary Political Ideologies: Movements and Regimes*, (New York: Harper Collins College Publishers, 1996), pp.1-25.

²⁸ Ibid.

and expansion of v. resistance to governmental social welfare programs. Based on these components, we can also separate right from the left, though there is a considerable level of convergence between two. Sartori's 'four basic cleavage dimensions' are also useful in separating parties in the spectrum of ideologies: left v. right, secular versus denominational, ethnicity v. integration and democratic v. authoritarian. If one is reminded of convergence or blurring lines between left and right economic policy, it is much more useful to add other three dimensions in addition to the left-right dimension.²⁹

Turkish Political Parties

The CHP does not operate in a vacuum and is shaped by the legal framework in Turkey. In Turkey, all parties subscribe to the same organizational model prescribed by law that holds the national headquarters responsible for all party actions and activities and gives it extensive powers vis-a'-vis local organizations. There were guarantees in both the 1961 Constitution and the Law of Political Parties that would safeguard the intra-party democracy. However, these guarantees were made ineffective through subsequent changes in the Law of Political Parties and Electoral Law, so that it allowed anti-democratic practices to take root and grow in the rule of political parties. These amendments to the laws, which had the practical result of entrusting all powers in the party chairman, were especially realized during the prime ministry of Turgut Özal. For instance, According to the Law of Political Parties, members would elect candidates for Parliamentary elections through primaries. The party center would have a quota of 5 % and additionally it would define candidates for the provinces where the party has nor organization or the number of candidates is

²⁹ Lijphart, Arend 'Dimensions of ideology in European Party Systems'. In *The West European Party Systems*, edited by P. Mair. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 253-259.

less than seats given to that province. Özal made legal compliance with this rule voluntary and allowed parties to elect their candidates according to the procedure laid out in their party constitution. The result is that today the party chairmen elect all candidates on their own in all Turkish political parties.

CHAPTER III

THE CHP IDEOLOGY BETWEEN 1923 AND 1980

The CHP, which was founded on 9 September 1923 by Kemal Atatürk, ruled Turkey from 1923 until 1946 as a single party. Atatürk intended the CHP not to become an ordinary party that would compete for the vote of electorate, aggregate their interests and represent them in the parliament. It would rather steer the projects of Westernization and nation building. In other words, the primary function of the new party was not to represent people, rather its function was to modernize the country and become a means of the government in founding the nation state. The first article of the CHP Statute adopted in 1923 entrusted the party with ‘guiding the implementation of national sovereignty by the people and for the people, raising Turkey to the level of civilized state and to make rule of law superior over all other forces in Turkey’.³⁰ Through reading this statement, we can figure out that in 1923 ‘people’ in the eyes of the CHP cadres were not capable of carrying out their citizenship duties bestowed on them by the principle of rule of rule of people by people. Thus, the CHP would lead ignorant people in their voyage to sufficient maturity to exert their sovereignty. In the words of Atatürk, the CHP would serve as a ‘school for people’.³¹

As Şerif Mardin points out, like their predecessors Young Turks, the RPP elites did not have a democratic understanding but perceived their role as one of guidance of passive and ignorant masses.³² The elitist attitude of the CHP was also obvious in its conduct during World War II. During the CHP did not even bother

³⁰ Suna Kili, *1960-1975 Döneminde Cumhuriyet Halk Partisinde Gelişmeler* (The Developments in the CHP between 1960-1975), (İstanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınları Çağlayan Basımevi, 1976), pp. 17-44.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Şerif Mardin, *Jön Türklerin Siyasi Fikirleri (1895-1908)* (The Political Ideas of Young Turks (1895-1908)), (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1983), p.14.

itself with justifying the necessity of oppressive measures such as price controls to people. Modern bureaucrats knew the best for their country. On the other hand, peasants being ignorant and gullible could easily be misled for what is good for them thus they had to be protected from dissidents of regime. In other words, it was a waste of time to endeavor to tell people its policies since the ignorant masses could not understand.³³ This elitist approach to society was also displayed in the reactions of the CHP to the results of elections since 1950. Faced with electoral defeat in 1950 elections, the CHP elite thought that people had made a mistake because of their ignorance, soon they would understand their mistake and return to the CHP. This distrust in people was also displayed in the reactions of the CHP representatives to the elections of 2007 elections as the vice-chairman Onur Öymen expressed his opinion that there was something ‘illogical’ about people’s choices.

Kemalism was the official ideology of the CHP in this period. We adhere to the definition of Kemalism as a right wing ideology by Taha Parla, because of the authoritarian and nationalist character of the Kemalism.³⁴ Kemalism perceived the society as an organism the organs of which was living in harmony with each other. These organs were occupational groups rather than social classes. They were not clashing with each other but complementing one another. Kemalism denied the existence of social classes and their struggle against each other. Populism principle of Kemalism meant the absence of social classes in Turkey and the resulting lack of social conflict. Even before the foundation of the CHP, Atatürk had stated that there were no classes in Turkey, thus there was no need for different parties to represent conflicting interests of different classes. The CHP was representing the whole

³³ Feroz Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Democracy 1950-1973*. (Boulder, Colo: Westview Press.1977, pp. 1-50.

³⁴ Taha Parla, *Ziya Gökalp, Kemalizm ve Türkiye’de Korporatizm*(Ziya Gökalp, Kemalism and Corporatism in Turkey), (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1989), pp. 7-11.

society. In other words, the populism principle was used to legitimize the existence of single party. According to Kemalists, the class struggle was a wasting of national resources, thus national unity and solidarity had to be emphasized.³⁵ The real democracy was single party rule and solidarity of people, since this would prevent harmful effects of class struggles on national unity. As with all corporatist ideologies, Kemalism loathed liberal democracy because of its emphasis on individualism which was perceived as detrimental social harmony. In line with the thought Gökbalp, it put societal interests over individual interests. The pursuit of individual interests was legitimate as long as they do not clash with the harmony and unity of the society.³⁶

Another characteristic that makes Kemalism a right-wing ideology is nationalism. The third article of the first CHP statute which regulated the criteria for membership to the party stated that ‘All Turks and every foreign individual who accept Turkish culture and citizenship can participate in the party.’³⁷ This meant that the CHP did not require its members to belong to a certain ethnicity. This was in line with the cultural nationalism of Ziya Gökbalp. In the fifth article of 1927 statute, the party reiterated its understanding of citizenship was based ‘unity in language, idea and sentiment’ and committed itself to developing and disseminating Turkish language and culture.³⁸ In reality, however, the regime pursued discriminatory policies against the non-Muslim groups as witnessed by laws enacted in this period banning certain professions to non-Muslims. The Kemalists had linked being a

³⁵ Ayşe G. Ayata, *CHP Örgüt ve İdeoloji* (CHP Organization and Ideology), trans. Belkıs Tarhan and Nüvit Tarhan (Ankara: Gündoğan Yayınları, 1992), p. 95.

³⁶ Taha Parla, *Ziya Gökbalp, Kemalizm ve Türkiye’de Korporatizm* (Ziya Gökbalp, Kemalism and Corporatism in Turkey), (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1989), p. 24.

³⁷ Feroz Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Democracy 1950-1973*, (Boulder, Colo: Westview Press. 1977), pp. 47-50.

³⁸ Ibid.

member of nation to the ethnicity.³⁹ Thus, they enlarged the scope of Turkishness as much as possible in line with inclusive Gökaltipian nationalism. As a result of this, while all Muslims were accepted as Turks, non-Muslims inevitably categorized as ‘others’. The categorization of all Muslims as Turks also proved problematic decades as Kurdish Question broke out. The most prominent case of anti-minority practices was the implementation of the Capital Levy in 1943. The capital levy imposed unjust taxes over non-Muslims leading to a transfer of capital from them to Muslims. As Parla says, the Kemalist nationalism always had an ambiguous character. While it emphasized civic citizenship in rhetoric, it was ethnicist in practice. In the chapter on the contemporary CHP ideology, it will be seen that this ambivalent attitude regarding citizenship still continues.

The economic dimension of Kemalism was also in line with solidaristic corporatism. It was not against capitalism, but only classical liberal version of capitalism. Kemalism emerged in a society where capital formation was very inadequate. They strove for the rapid capital formation through the encouragement of private industry and state involvement in economy. In other words, their main goal was the creation of national bourgeoisie through rapid economic development. It was claiming to protect interests of all social groups, however in effect it was suppressing labor to accelerate capital formation. In the 1920s, Kemalists expected that economic development would be realized by efforts of Turkish industrialists and landowners.

⁴⁰In this period, the state tried to create a capitalist class as soon as possible through monopolies and subsidies. When these efforts proved to be futile and the 1929 economic crisis broke out, the CHP turned to statism after 1930. In all party

³⁹ Ayhan Aktar, *Varlık Vergisi ve Türkleştirme Politikaları*, (The Wealth Tax and Policies of Turkification). İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, pp. 97-99.

⁴⁰ Ayşe G. Ayata, *CHP Örgüt ve İdeoloji* (The CHP Organization and Ideology), trans. Belkıs Tarhan and Nüvit Tarhan, (Ankara: Gündoğan Yayınları, 1992), p. 88.

programs, the definitions of statism always emphasized the primacy and importance of private capital. In the program adopted in 1931 Congress, statism was described, as

While holding private enterprise as the fundamental principle, in the cases where the general and high interests of the nation are concerned the involvement of the state in economy to provide welfare of the people and prosperity of the country as soon as possible is a fundamental principle for us.⁴¹

In the Fourth Congress of the CHP on 9 May 1935, the statist led by the general secretary of the Party Recep Peker had the upper hand. In this Congress, statism also acquired its most radical meaning. If the nation's interest requires it, the state would take over any business that it wants. Nonetheless, as Parla points out, the statism of the CHP cannot even be defined as state capitalism because of important it attaches to private capital, but rather it can be defined as an approach of mixed economy.⁴² Its image was one of the protector of capital. When this image was shattered by war-time practices such as capital levy, the CHP lost one of the most important pillars of its support base, the national bourgeoisie. Moreover, the rule of the CHP rested on the alliance of the civil-military bureaucracy with the rural notables in the periphery, thus the CHP had to avoid any reforms that would change the economic and social structure of the country to avoid breaking this alliance. As a result, reforms targeted to change the super-structure (the institutions of law, education...)⁴³ For instance, the CHP adopted a new Civil Code, but could not make Land Reform. In short, Kemalism had nothing to do with the protection of interests

⁴¹ Feroz Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Democracy 1950-1973*. (Boulder, Colo: Westview Press.1977), p. 57.

⁴² Taha Parla, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Kültürün Resmi Kaynakları: Kemalist Tek Parti İdeolojisi ve CHP'nin Altı Ok'u* (The Official Sources of Political Culture in Turkey: Kemalist One-Party Ideology and The Six Arrows of the CHP), (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1991), p. 67.

⁴³ Feroz Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Democracy 1950-1973*, (Boulder, Colo: Westview Press. 1977), pp. 20-23.

of the poor or lower classes. Moreover, the conception of equality was limited to only equality before law with no regard for socioeconomic equality. Thus, this further points out the futility of synthesis efforts of Kemalism and social democracy. This can also explain the relative indifference of the CHP to the matters of socioeconomic justice and absence of egalitarianism in the CHP discourse after 1992.

The Liberalization of Kemalism

The period between 1946 and 1950 was a period of adjustment to democratic politics for the CHP. After the foundation of the DP in January 1946, the CHP had taken measures to adjust itself and the regime to the necessities of multiparty regime. In the Congress of May 1946, the title of National Chief and permanent chairmanship were abolished. In the field of religious freedoms, it introduced religious instruction into primary schools, opened a series of preacher training programs and allowed the establishment of a faculty of Theology at Ankara University. The determination of İnönü and his commitment to transition to democracy was vital in the success of the completion of this process. He stood against those who wanted to reverse opening to democracy and intervened in the process at critical moments on the side of liberalizers. When relations between the government and opposition came on the point of breaking, it was İnönü who saved the transition to democracy.

After 14 May 1950 elections, the CHP was in shock that it could not believe that it had lost the election and thought that this was just an exception. People would understand their mistake over time and correct it in the next elections. They explained the defeat in terms very similar to reactions the reaction the CHP figures gave to results of 2007 elections. According to the CHP, the party had lost to the DP because ignorant and unenlightened rural population who were resenting the secularist and reformist policies of the CHP had acted foolishly encouraged by an

‘unscrupulous party willing to cater to the most obscurantist and reactionary sentiments among the masses’⁴⁴

Until 1955, the CHP tried to assume the role of defender of Kemalist reforms. However, as a result of increasing authoritarianism of the Democrat Party, the CHP assumed the role of defender of democracy, so that it once again began to gain support of the intelligentsia. Moreover, in 1958, the liberal Hürriyet Partisi (Freedom Party) joined in the CHP. They introduced to the CHP new liberal ideas and contributed to the adoption of causes of further deepening of democracy and enlargement of fundamental freedoms. The renewal of the party was also due to rejuvenation of the center in 1957 with the participation of people like Turhan Feyzioğlu, Bülent Ecevit, Coşkun Kırca who founded the CHP Research Bureau. The result of growing power of liberalism in the party was the declaration of Primary Aims in the Fourteenth Congress of January 1959. This declaration became the basis of the 1961 Constitution. The declaration stipulated that all anti-democratic laws, procedures, mentality and practices which impede our democratic development would be abolished and the constitution would be ‘changed in accordance with the demands of a modern democracy, society and a state order based on the principles of people’s sovereignty, rule of law, social justice and security’.⁴⁵ The Declaration included the grant of all fundamental rights and freedoms, right of strike, right of labor union and professional association formation, right of equal treatment before law, right of equal benefits from public services and neutrality of state broadcasting

⁴⁴ Feroz Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Democracy 1950-1973*. (Boulder, Colo: Westview Press.1977), p. 65.

⁴⁵ Suna Kili, *1960-1975 Döneminde Cumhuriyet Halk Partisinde Gelişmeler* (The Developments in the CHP between 1960-1975), (İstanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınları Çağlayan Press, 1976), p. 135.

services and the foundation of a constitutional court to prevent the unlawful curtailment of these rights.

After the coup of 27 May, the CHP did not give up this program and turned it into a reality in the Constitution of 1961. Later, it governed the process of reestablishment of democracy by enacting laws in line with the Constitution. The enactment of Labor Law, which recognized right to strike symbolized more than anything else the split of the CHP from Kemalist corporatism.

In the first half of 1960s, the CHP founded coalition governments with small right-wing parties despite the dominance of the parliament by right wing as a result of military pressure. This led to criticism that the CHP could come to power only with the endorsement of the military. Such an impression that military plus the CHP makes government damaged the political fortunes of the CHP in the eyes of the electorate, but the interest of the state and survival of democracy were the utmost concerns for statesman İnönü. Despite the appearance of development of a symbiotic relationship with the army, the attitude of the CHP towards military is quite different from that of post 1992 period. There were two abortive coups on 22 February 1962 and 20-21 may 1963, both of them were prevented thanks to İnönü. Moreover, as there are those who perceive the military as a solution to perceived threats to secularism today, in 1960s an influential group in the army and intelligentsia was convinced that only a closed regime could protect the Kemalist reforms and carry out reforms such as land reform, envisaged in the constitution. They saw İnönü as an obstacle in realizing their aim through using the CHP. İnönü had made clear its opposition to any regime other than democracy as witnessed by his speech on radio on 17 Jan 1962

To think that Atatürk's reforms can only be protected by a closed regime is a great mistake. Reforms achieved under a closed regime can survive only if they

can withstand storms emerging under a democratic regime. If we had not adopted a democratic regime it would not have been known whether or not Atatürk's reforms would survive ... I will never take part in such a closed regime. I will stand and fight against it.⁴⁶

In the chapter on the contemporary CHP ideology, we shall see that the CHP does not take such a clear stance against similar opinions today.

The adoption of Left of Center Label

After İnönü resigned from the last coalition government, the party started to undergo a fundamental change in its discourse. The emergence of TİP (Türkiye İşçi Partisi) to the left of CHP encouraged the CHP to reform itself and define its position in the spectrum of ideologies and distinguish itself from both the AP (Adalet Partisi) and the TİP.⁴⁷ Actually, the TİP was a very small party and thanks to the electoral system got 15 seats in the parliament after the 1965 elections. However, it was an active opposition party that affected the content of political debate by introducing ideological dimension into the political debate, which was generally shaped by emphasis differences rather than substance between JP and the CHP. In response to the growing popularity of TİP among intellectuals and university students, İnönü defined the place of the CHP as left of center in the spectrum of ideologies.

The CHP is a statist party because of its nature, thus of course the CHP has an economic understanding that is on the left of center. Just as statism was the only and unrivalled cure of development in 1923, it is also the main component of our economic life.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Suna Kili, *1960-1975 Döneminde Cumhuriyet Halk Partisinde Gelişmeler* (The Developments in the CHP between 1960-1975), (İstanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınları Çağlayan Press, 1976), p. 178.

⁴⁷ Tachau, Frank. 'The Republican People's Party 1945-1980'. In *Political Parties and Democracy in Turkey*, edited by Metin Heper and Jacop Landau (London: I.B Tauris, 1991), pp. 45-48.

⁴⁸ Suna Kili, *1960-1975 Döneminde Cumhuriyet Halk Partisinde Gelişmeler* (The Developments in the CHP between 1960-1975), (İstanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınları Çağlayan Press, 1976), p. 186.

In other words, İnönü was just combining classical statism of the CHP with social security and naming it left of center.⁴⁹ What he was constantly emphasizing was the social justice dimension of leftist politics:

Until 1961, a person who had an income of 250 lira would pay tax, but another one with an income of 250.000 lira would not pay any taxes. The current society does not accept this. This is what is left of center. The current society demands state to educate talented children of the country; this is what is left of center. The current state is social state. This is the rule of the Constitution. The conviction that shapes the constitution is left of center. ... It is necessary to provide for justly the security and incomes of workers and other employees, but without harming employers.⁵⁰

As a sign of continuation of Kemalist corporatism, the CHP would still protect all classes. Even it extends social rights of works, it would be careful of its side effects employers.⁵¹ Later on, faced with accusations of communism İnönü took a more moderate stand by stating that ‘The state, the constitution and the CHP are all left of center’.⁵² The statist logic of the CHP had even played a role in the adoption of the leftist label. The CHP was adopting it to protect the country against fascism and communism as İnönü states that

An understanding based on left of center is the sole political understanding that will not lead the country toward fascism and communism. The state has pledged to deal with the needs of poor people in the constitution. Our state with this feature is left of center. It must secure the earnings and security of employees, workers in a just way but without upsetting employers. These can be ensured by adopting a left of center way. Thus, I am pointing the right way by stating that the CHP is on the left of center. We state that we can eliminate communism of which we suffer and feel its penury and danger thanks to this way.⁵³

Most Republicans also believed that the main aim of slogan was to make the CHP an alternative to the left by portraying the party as radical. On the other hand, Bülent Ecevit tried to give it content and did not conceive left of center politics as a tool to

⁴⁹ Ayşe G. Ayata, *CHP Örgüt ve İdeoloji* (The CHP Organization and Ideology), tran.. Belkıs Tarhan and Nüvit Tarhan, (Ankara: Gündoğan Yayınları, 1992), p. 95.

⁵⁰ Suna Kili, *1960-1975 Döneminde Cumhuriyet Halk Partisinde Gelişmeler* (The Developments in the CHP between 1960-1975), Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınları, (İstanbul: Çağlayan Basımevi, 1976), p. 192.

⁵¹ Suna Kili, *1960-1975 Döneminde Cumhuriyet Halk Partisinde Gelişmeler* (The Developments in the CHP between 1960-1975), (İstanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınları Çağlayan Press, 1976), p. 196.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid, p. 98

be used in elections. In his opinion, left of center policies would prevent social change to take a violent direction and would contribute to protection of social peace by providing protection for victims of large scale capitalism.⁵⁴ In reality, despite all the bickering over it, the adoption of left of center label was not even constituting a slightest rupture with the old identity of the party as Ayata puts it

‘actually at this point to be on the left of center did not mean the revision of party program and ideology, rather the existing ideas of party were redefined by fashionable concepts of post 1960 coup. Only İnönü defined the place of program on the spectrum of ideologies as left of center.’⁵⁵

On the other hand, for Ecevit left of center was not just a bulwark against communism, but also meant radical reform and transformation of the existing order. This emphasis on the change of order was increased after Ecevit became the party chairman in 1972. Firstly, the left of center movement led by Ecevit and his friends had a different understanding of populism from classical Kemalism. In contrast to classical republican conception of populism, which denied the existence of classes and class conflict, they accepted the existence of classes and endorsed social justice measures to be taken against effects of class conflict. According to Ecevit, socioeconomic reforms such as the building of a comprehensive welfare state would alleviate class struggles. These would be reforms of the socioeconomic base in contrast to Kemalist reforms that targeted the superstructure. Ecevit was criticizing Kemalist reforms such as the abolition of fez since they had done nothing to improve economic conditions of the masses.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Feroz Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Democracy 1950-1973*, (Boulder, Colo: Westview Press., 1977), p. 115-119.

⁵⁵ Ayşe G. Ayata, *CHP Örgüt ve İdeoloji* (The CHP Organization and Ideology), trans. Belkıs Tarhan and Nüvit Tarhan, (Ankara: Gündoğan Yayınları, 1992), p. 85.

⁵⁶ Suna Kili, *1960-1975 Döneminde Cumhuriyet Halk Partisinde Gelişmeler* (The Developments in the CHP between 1960-1975), (İstanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınları Çağlayan Press, 1976), p. 205.

Under the chairmanship of Ecevit, the CHP replaced left of center label with ‘democratic left’. It would assume the role of defender of interests of the weak in the society as the Program of 1976 states ‘the CHP aims to combine powers of unprivileged, whose income not of exploitation of others, cannot benefit from welfare services and cannot defend their rights.’⁵⁷ Shedding its old elitist attitude toward people, the party leaders were emphasizing their belief in people and claiming that great leader would establish a direct connection with people. However, the CHP was still against any specter of class conflict or revolutionary upheaval.

It is important to note that even in Ecevit’s discourse there was no opposition to capitalist system, but he just wanted to reform it following the examples of European social democrat parties such as that of Sweden. The economic system in his mind was a kind of capitalism in which every individual would have the opportunity to invest his money through a people’s sector. Ecevit defined social democracy as a democratization process as individuals could participate regardless of their class origins at different levels of political process. To reach such a democracy socioeconomic political rights of individual would be extended since social equality was essential to the consolidation of democracy. Social equality would be provided via spread of ownership of means of production, not through nationalization or any restriction of private property. Redistribution would be through guarantees of social security such as unemployment insurance. Workers would be given shares in the factories to be founded. Producers would be organized in cooperatives to eradicate intermediaries such as usurers. The expansion of private property ownership to masses would also give capability to individuals to participate in democratic life.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Ibid., p.274.

⁵⁸ Ayşe G. Ayata, *CHP Örgüt ve İdeoloji* (The CHP Organization and Ideology), trans. Belkıs Tarhan and Nüvit Tarhan, (Ankara: Gündoğan Yayınları, 1992), p. 94.

In short, the CHP was aiming to found a social market economy just as social democratic parties in Western Europe achieve through reforming capitalism rather than destroying it. The problem was that Ecevit had no detailed program or preparation to realize this vision. For realizing these social reforms would require a high level of economic growth to meet expenses of such a program. The main criticism against the CHP was that it could not present a large and detailed plan that would accelerate growth in industry and agriculture. In other words, slogans had not been supported by a tangible program that will work on the ground.⁵⁹

Conservative Republicans

The adoption of left of center politics was not without any opposition in the CHP itself. A group of parliamentarians who belonged to the right of the CHP opposed to left-of-center politics. It is interesting to examine the views of these conservative republican for there are many similarities between their ideas and those of the contemporary CHP. The most prominent members of this group were Turan Feyzioğlu and Coşkun Kırca. 1960s was a decade in which different groups such as socialists, Kurdish nationalists, Islamists were starting to play an active role in the society as a result of the free atmosphere provided by the 1961 Constitution. As they gradually more vocal, a part of the republican elite grew an increasing unease with them. The fact that Kurdish nationalism, socialism and Islamism were the main ideological enemies of the Kemalism aggravated their fears. As the military of 12 March, they were expressing their discontent over the more rapid development of political mobilization over the socioeconomic development. Thus, they were conceiving the CHP's mission as to protect the national unity of the country and not

⁵⁹ Ibid.

allow further politicization.⁶⁰ For instance, Coşkun Kırca was demanding the CHP to take social justice measures with consideration for all social classes. These measures were valid as long as they upheld national unity. In reality, he had no problem with the capitalist system. His emphasis on national unity was in line with Gökalp's and Kemalists' solidarist corporatism.⁶¹

Turhan Feyzioğlu, who founded the right wing Reliance after he left the CHP in 1967, also adhered to Gökalpan notion of a society composing of harmonious organs rather than social classes. Conservative republicans were also quite nationalist. Kırca was even claiming that nationalism was a common point of the CHP with other parties, so that there was no reason for them not to cooperate.⁶² This line of thinking can actually be evaluated as the harbinger of Deniz Baykal's efforts to appeal to right-wing on the basis of republicanism and nationalism in 2000s. For republican conservatives, the protection of the unity of state was important more than anything else as Feyzioğlu once stated that faced with a choice of democracy and state, he would choose the state.⁶³ In the chapter on CHP ideology, it will be seen that the contemporary CHP is more like a continuation of this group of conservative republicans in many respects.

⁶⁰ Yüksel Taşkın 'From Left Populism to Conservative Republicanism: Left Kemalists' Regression from Modernist Optimism' *New Perspectives on Turkey*, no. 37 (2007): 177-201.

⁶¹ Coşkun Kırca, *CHP Sosyalist bir Parti midir?*(Is the CHP a socialist party?) (Ankara: Balkanoğlu matbaası, 1967), p. 72.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Yüksel Taşkın 'From Left Populism to Conservative Republicanism: Left Kemalists' Regression from Modernist Optimism' *New Perspectives on Turkey*, no. 37 (2007): 177-201.

The CHP Organization between 1923-1980

As the Kemalist regime did not tolerate any opposition during the one-party era, the party administration was also in the hands of the chief. Both Atatürk and İnönü had been the eternal chairmen of the party. The most important body of the party was the council of general chairmanship composed of the general chairman, the deputy of the general chairman and the secretary general of the party. This council was electing all the nominees for the Parliament, ministers for the Cabinet and the members of the party organs. Party Congresses were venues in which the achievements of the party would be praised rather than venues for decision making or discussion. Local party units had been based on a committee system in the control of local notables.⁶⁴

After the transition to multi-party politics, the party started to adapt itself to exigencies of competitive politics. After the electoral defeat of 1950, İnönü had to leave his power to elect secretary general and members of party council to the National Congress. The local party organizations influenced by the power of localism in the DP claimed that electoral defeat was a result of wrong candidate selections of the party center. Faced with pressure from local organizations, the Party center left the candidate selection process to local party organizations. Gradually organizations gained vitality and intra-party democracy started to develop despite the domination of the leader. In the administration of the party, İnönü always tried to keep different groups together in the party organs. İnönü was first among equals. As Kili notes, you could a dozen of heavyweight CHP rulers in the CHP's administration.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Arsev Bektaş, *Demokratikleşme Sürecinde Liderler Oligarşisi: CHP ve AP (1961-1980)* (The Olygarchy of Leaders in the Process of Democratization: CHP and AP (1961-1980)), (İstanbul : Bağlam, 1993), pp. 12-35.

⁶⁵ Suna Kili, *1960-1975 Döneminde Cumhuriyet Halk Partisinde Gelişmeler* (The Developments in the CHP between 1960-1975), (İstanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınları Çağlayan Press, 1976), p. 327

Ecevit's style of ruling started a new period in the CHP. In the one-party era, the party was under the rule of national chief and had no claim to democratic rule. However, İnönü tolerated a great deal of intra-party democracy after 1950. On the other hand, Ecevit continuously tried to create an organization dependent on him to consolidate his power in the party. The return to one man rule of the one-party era can be said to be started with him as Isvan states:

(...)And he became so popular, so much loved and so much obeyed in the party that he turned into sole or last decision maker even in matters in which he has not talent or interest. We people around him came under pressure that what he says is true. ...Everyone in the party is strong in proportion to power given to them by Ecevit. No one has a power of his own with the ascendancy and chairmanship of Ecevit in the party ...the only talent is to win his favor and let's say openly his wife ...in that way people could reach higher positions in the party ... to behave as if whatever Ecevit says is the word of God and to be a supporter of Ecevit at this level.⁶⁶

As a result of operation of intra-party democracy, Ecevit could topple İnönü in 1972.

Whether it's possible in today's CHP will be dealt with in the next chapter.

⁶⁶ Ahmet Isvan, interview by author, tape recording, İstanbul, Turkey, 1 July 2008.

CHAPTER IV

THE CHP ORGANIZATION

On 12 September 1980, the military staged a coup with the intention of a complete overhaul of the political, social and economic system of Turkey. They aimed to found the opposite of the regime that was brought by the 27 May Coup. Through a campaign of repression, they started the process of depoliticization of what they perceived as excessively politicized society. In reality, they wanted to destroy the challenge posed by the left against the political system. The junta was neo-liberal in economic policy and conservative in cultural outlook. The cultural reshaping of society was entrusted in conservatives, who were advocating a synthesis of Turkish nationalism and Islam. Islam would be used as a force against the leftist or communist threat and it would strengthen national unity. The spread of consumerism and pop culture as a result of an opening economy would also reduce politicization of the society.⁶⁷

In 1982, a new constitution was introduced that reversed the liberal measures introduced by the 1961 Constitution. It brought various restrictions on fundamental freedoms such as freedom of expression and organization. All pre-existing political parties including the CHP were banned. The leaders of these parties were banned from politics for periods of five or ten years depending on their level of responsibility. The Law of Political Parties banned political parties from maintaining ties of any sort with ‘associations, unions, foundations, cooperatives, and professional organizations in the form of public bodies and their superior organs’.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Ziya Öniş, ‘The Political Economy of Islamic Resurgence in Turkey: the Rise of the Welfare Party in Perspective’ *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 18 No 4, p. 748.

⁶⁸ Turan, İlder. ‘Political Parties and the Party System in Post-1983 Turkey’. In *State, Democracy and the Military Turkey in 1980s*, edited by M. Heper and A. Evin (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1988), pp. 57-65.

The ruling National Security Council defined rules of competition in the 1983 elections. Its plan was that there would be two right parties and one leftist party, so that neither any right wing party would be dominant nor the vote of the weaker left would be split among a number of parties. Every newly organized party had to pass through a review by the NSC, including its formal organization as well as its list of candidates. The winner of elections of 1983 was Anavatan Partisi (ANAP) of Turgut Özal who had governed the process economic liberalization since 1980. The Populist Party founded on the directives of the military came in second in the elections of 1983. The SODEP of Erdal İnönü (Sosyal Demokrat Halkçı Parti) was the successor of the CHP, however the military did not allow it to participate in the elections. When the Populist Party lost its support in the local elections of 1984 to the SODEP, they merged under the name SHP (Sosyal Demokrat Halkçı Parti) in 1985.

The Reopening of the CHP

In the elections of 1991, the SHP came in third behind DYP and ANAP. This was the first that the left had lost the position of main opposition party since 1950. The former CHP politicians were dissatisfied with the performance of the SHP. When the DYP-SDPP coalition government abrogated the law that banned the opening of pre-1980 political parties, the old rulers of the CHP decided to open the CHP again. The last General Administrative Council of a closed party would administer reopening process and the delegates of the last congress before 1980 would decide opening the closed parties. In accordance with the law, in the CHP, the General Administrative Council led by the vice Secretary General Erol Tuncer conducted this process which culminated in the Opening Congress of 9 September 1992. The reopening efforts was led by Erol Tuncer, one of the vice secretary generals.

The reopening was a complicated process, since there were three parties sharing the inheritance of the old CHP. Altan Öymen defines the attitude of the GAC against this divided situation: ‘Our aim is not to increase the number of parties n the left from two to three. On the contrary we aim to achieve the merger of two parties under the roof of the CHP and emerge on the political scene as one party.’⁶⁹ In the process, Erol Tuncer and his friends began tours of two parties, SDPP and DLP to persuade them for a merger. If one of them accepts unification, they would unite with it and try to merge with other later. Altan Öymen tells that the GAC visited both İnönü and Ecevit and reached the idea that merger was possible only one of them though both İnönü and Ecevit did not reject outright the proposal. They reached an agreement wth İnönü that they would designate representatives to further ponder upon conditions of a merger. However, some led by Baykal were supporting the idea that the CHP emerge as a third party and force other two parties to join it as Öymen tells their mentality: ‘Politics is a matter of being powerful. Power is like magnet. The CHP would surpass other parties in the first election thanks to enthusiasm created by its reopening. Others will weaken. Either they will join the CHP as a party or their cadres participate in the CHP leaving their party.’⁷⁰ The law was making it possible for delegates of the last pre-coup congress like Baykal to be both a member of the party that they joined after 1980 and their old pre-coup party for 6 months. Baykal, though a parliamentarian of the SDPP, was against merger with the SDPP.

In the reopening Congress, Baykal won. The main reason why he won was that he had a very experienced electoral team in the SDPP based on his constant struggle for chairmanship against İnönü. Secondly, his thesis of ‘coming thunderously’ had much more appealing force for the delegates compared to merging

⁶⁹ Altan Öymen, interview by author, tape recording, İstanbul, Turkey, 18 June 2008.

⁷⁰ *Radikal*, 28 July 2007.

three parties through negotiations thus not aggravating already divided situation of the left. Rather than pursuing a conciliatory approach and searching a way of merging with other leftist parties, Baykal perceived them as his real rivals. The practical result has been the further disintegration of the leftist vote and the capture of mayoralities in Ankara and Istanbul by the Refah Partisi (RP).

The General Administrative Council of the CHP was formed by Baykal against wishes of Altan Öymen who offered a broad-based administration to be formed. The CHP Program was mostly written by İsmail Cem. The results of 1994 elections in which the CHP score 4.70 % of the vote did not confirm 'gümbür gümbür gelme' thesis of Baykal. Faced with electoral defeat, Baykal immediately started merger negotiations with the SDPP. After much bickering about who will be the chairman of the new party and under which party the merger will take place, Baykal and Karayalçın agreed about the compromise leadership of Hikmet Çetin. In the Congress of September 1995, Baykal won the chairmanship back. Baykal demanded certain conditions to be met to continue coalition government with the DYP and later founded an election coalition with the DYP agreeing that elections would be made in December 1995. In December 1995 elections, the CHP got 10.7 of the vote. When a banking scandal involving Prime Minister Yılmaz emerged, the CHP toppled the government.⁷¹

The minority government of Ecevit led the country toward early elections, which were also demanded by the CHP. In the 18 April 1999 elections, the CHP fell under threshold and stayed outside for the first time in its history. Under pressure, Baykal unwillingly resigned. In the Extraordinary Congress, Altan Öymen was elected the chairman of the CHP in the third round. Since there were irregularities in

⁷¹ Hikmet Bila, *CHP 1919-1999*, (Istanbul: Doğan Publishing Firm, 1999), pp. 329-351.

the elections for the party assembly, the elected members resigned and an extraordinary convention was held three months later in order to elect a new assembly. The supporters of Baykal took a majority of seats in the ensuing Congress for the Party Assembly. Chairman Altan Öymen and Secretary General Tarhan Erdem started a restructuring process in the party. This started with the reform of the membership registration, which was the basis of the problems of the party. However, the local organizations depended on these fake members, thus they opposed the renewal of membership lists. In their opposition they took the support of Baykalists in the Party Assembly. When the party Assembly and the executive Committee as dominated Baykal supporters prevented Öymen from implementing the new program, he decided to call an extraordinary convention to redress the situation. Deniz Baykal again won the general chairmanship against Öymen in the National Convention of September 2000 and is the general chairman of the CHP since then.⁷² In the following part, we will focus on the organizational structure of the party that developed in this period.

The Organizational Structure

In this part, I will examine the organizational structure of the post-1992 CHP. A thorough understanding of the structure will enable us to know through what processes the ideology of the CHP is formed and by whom. It will also clarify the inconsistencies and logic behind the specific policies adopted by the CHP.

The Central and Local Organs of the CHP

In the CHP statute, the central organs of the party consist of the National Convention, the General Chairman, the Party Assembly, the National Executive

⁷² İlder Turan, 'Old Soldiers Never Die: The Republican People's Party of Turkey', *South European Society and Politics*, 11:3, pp. 560-565.

Committee and the High Disciplinary Committee. The provincial and district organizations also have the same organs. The Central Administrative Council (CAC) is composed of 20 members including the General Chairman elected out of the members of the Party Assembly. The general chairman is the president of the CAC. The party assembly is composed of general chairman and 60 members elected by the general congress with secret ballot. The party assembly convenes with the call of the Party chairman once in no later than two months.⁷³

The statute of the CHP stipulates a model of a four-staged representative democracy in the government of the CHP. The officeholders at each level are determined through elections in their proper Congress. All the congresses should convene every two years with the possibility of an extension of one year. At the first stage, the members of the party in the precincts and villages elect delegates to represent them in the Provincial Congress. The number of delegates given out to them is in proportion to their share of the vote in the last election. The total number of delegates sent to the district congress cannot be more than 400. It also convenes once in a year to discuss only political activities. The district congress is composed of district chairman, members of district assembly, mayors around the district, the representatives of ballot box areas, the number of which should be between 200 and 400. Honorable members such as former and current members of the Turkish grand National Assembly, the Central Organization, former mayors of the district and members of larger district congress can also participate in the Congress. The elected delegates in the district Congresses elect all the organs at the district level and elect delegates to be sent to the Provincial Congress. The same electoral process is repeated in the Provincial Congress where delegates elect both the organs of the

⁷³CHP, *The CHP Statute*, Ankara: 8 January 1994, pp.15-40.

provincial organization and delegates to be sent to the General Congress. The members of the provincial congress are: TBMM members of the province, province chairman and member of the provincial assembly, members of the provincial disciplinary council and representatives of district congresses. The honorable members who can join in the district congress are also members of provincial congresses. At the latest stage, in the National Convention, these delegates elect the members of the Party Assembly and the General Chairman through secret ballot and absolute majority of members by the General Congress. If a general chairman cannot be elected by absolute majority in the first two rounds, then the candidate who achieves simple majority is elected in the third round.⁷⁴

The original statute adopted in 1992 draws a model of party administration in which rank-and-file elect the party organs albeit indirectly and have influence on party affairs. The stipulation of a bottom-to-top representative democracy in the statute has nothing to do with the real working of the CHP.⁷⁵ This model is subverted through both the misuse of some of the rules of the statute and anti-democratic amendments made to the statute since Baykal became the chairman of the party in 2000. In other words, the party center need not bother with abusing or ignoring the rules of the statute since the already anti-democratic statute provides ample room for their illegal practices. The party center, in effect the party chairman, elects the delegates that will elect them from the lowest level to the upper level. In other words, intra-party democracy does not operate in the CHP especially since 2000 when Baykal became the chairman of the party again. The destruction of intra-party democracy was provided through both the amendments in the statute and abuse of

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ilter Turan, 'Old Soldiers Never Die: The Republican People's Party of Turkey, *South European Society and Politics*, 11:3, p. 567.

statute rules in practice. The result was that all the nominations for organization and parliament are decided by the party leadership.⁷⁶

Membership Registration in the CHP

The problem starts at the very beginning with the regulation of member registration. In the theory section, it had been emphasized that for intra-party democracy to exist in a party, the regulation of membership registration should be legal, transparent and free from political interference, whereas most of the members of the CHP are fake members who are mostly registered by the center and local units to uphold their position in the Congresses. When Altan Öymen became the party chairman in 1999, he had succinctly summarized the situation: ‘...We have about 1.5 million members in the Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office, but in our records we have 1.150 million members...it is also a reality that a part of these members – a sizeable part- don’t vote for our party... There are such places that there are 50 members in that ballot box area, but we have 15 members...’⁷⁷ This situation is because of the illegal membership registration in the CHP. This is realized through the misuse of the Article 13 in the Statute, which states that the Central Administration Council can register directly persons such as former members of party councils, who are perceived

⁷⁶ Altan Öymen summarizes the working of the party succinctly: ‘Firstly, the party chairman and his friends elect all the candidates for parliamentary and local elections, candidates for provincial general assemblies, mayoral assemblies. Secondly, a party member who want to be a candidate for a party position must have the approval of the chairman and his close friends. The members of the Party Assembly and High Disciplinary Council who are elected with block list in the Congress are chosen by the Chairman and his close friends. Those candidates voice who made any slightest criticism of the Chairman and his friends have no chance of candidacy o any position in local or parliamentary elections. If these persons become candidate in intra-party elections, those provincial chairmen or administrative councils are dismissed. The delegates who support them are also prevented from being elected with every precaution. The highest crime is to ba a candidate against the incumbent. Despite all the precautions, if someone still achieves to be a candidate, then he is handed over to the High Disciplinary Court and expelled from the party. The supporters of him are given disciplinary punishment. Moreover, if any member of the High Disciplinary Council does not vote in favor of this decision, he is also expelled from the Council.’ *Radikal*, 22 November 2005

⁷⁷ CHP, *The Speech of the CHP General Chairman Altan Öymen in the Extraordinary National Convention*, 26 June 1999, p. 158.

as beneficial to the party and proposed by the General Chairman. Thanks to the misuse of this article, thousands of fake members are registered as members before Congresses as Tarhan Erdem narrates one such case: ‘Now I heard that in a district, (previously they would write in the district building) a man brought from his home and declared in the district. He has even no confidence in his friend in the district council or a servant. What congress, what party, what democracy...’.⁷⁸

All the objections to the Reports of the Party Assembly complain of this situation. For instance, Erol Tuncer criticizes this situation in his objection to the Party Assembly Report:

The main aim in the membership registration is to consolidate intra-party power. The number of 250.000 members at the beginning of the year reached 400000 at the end of May(...)there is unanimity in the party base that mass membership registration which was made simultaneously in many parts of the country is an operation to win the congresses.⁷⁹

The relationship between the Party Center and local organizations

The party organizations in districts and provinces which support Baykal also illegally register members both to uphold their position and prepare the delegates that would elect Baykal. The reason why they comply with the demands of the party center is their dependence on the center for the center will decide all the nominations in both local and parliamentary elections.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Tarhan Erdem, interview by author, tape recording, İstanbul, Turkey, 18 June 2008.

⁷⁹ CHP, *The Report of the Party Assembly to the 30. National Convention*. Ankara: 23-24 October, 2003, p. 126.

⁸⁰ Tarhan Erdem explains the deal between them: ‘In the provinces there are people who want to be involved in politics and to be mayor or member of provincial assembly. The tacit agreement between them and the party chairman and his circle is that. This is not a written agreement, but they know it so: ‘You will be party chairman in Adana, Kars etc., you can do whatever you want there and I will approve your practices here. Do whatever you want. But when you come here, you will vote for me and will provide for the election of delegates who will vote for me. This is your duty. My duty is here. While you vote for me, I will legalize and legitimize what you do in the provinces ...If you violate this agreement, I will remove you from office. Moreover, if you do such a thing, I will even not allow you to come to the Congress. Thus, it is not necessary that these people agree with Deniz Baykal on intellectual issues or on political matters such as Cyprus, economy. Of course, since I am in this party, I

If a district or provincial administration turns disobedient, the party center dismisses them. This power of upper levels to dismiss lower levels is provided by Article 43 of the Statute. However, this article is completely applied arbitrarily. It is generally used before Congresses to replace unwanted persons. For instance, if one local provincial chairman does not convene the provincial assembly on time and does not support the center, he is dismissed on for violating the statute. However, if he is a supporter of the party center, he gets no sanction even not convening the assembly once.⁸⁰

It should also be remembered that the financial dependency of local organizations on the center is also a factor in their subordination to the center.⁸² This is due to the Political Parties Law, which authorizes the state give financial aid to the political parties for private donors not to exploit them for their private aims. Under such a close surveillance of the center, the party organization deals with only routine in addition to their ‘party work’. One objection to the Party Assembly report complains of this situation:

‘The internal workings of the CHP has been turned into a rigid top-down and authoritarian centralist structure. In this centralist structure, while the center give all decisions, the local organizations deal with routine such as meetings, meals, receptions and they are remembered only before the congresses.’⁸³

However, it must not be thought that the party administration only stands the party center the actions of which it grudgingly accepts. In other words, even Deniz Baykal leaves the party chairmanship, the structure which rests on this agreement does not let a different person to be chairman and dismantle this structure. For

will say what Deniz says. And he does not say, read, write, study anything. This is such an order, the basis of which is this agreement.’ Tarhan Erdem, interview by author

⁸¹ Tarhan Erdem, *Tıkanan Siyaset*, (Istanbul: Sel Yayıncılık, 2001), p. 33.

⁸² İter Turan, ‘Old Soldiers Never Die: The Republican People’s Party of Turkey’, *South European Society and Politics*, 11:3, p. 574.

⁸³ CHP, *The Report of the Party Assembly to the 28. National Convention*, Ankara: 23-24 May 1998, p.159.

instance, Altan Öymen and Tarhan Erdem tried to renew the membership records of the party and brought rigid rules that guaranteed the non-interference in the records and their transparency. However, the party organization reacted to this by regrouping around Baykal in September 2000 Congress. Even Altan Öymen summoned the Congress over a disagreement about an event involving fake membership in Icel Province. The central İçel district assembly was involved in illegal member registration in collaboration with the İçel provincial assembly. The Secretary General Tarhan Erdem examined the situation upon complaints and found out that the statute had been violated. However, the Central Executive Council did not allow these persons to be handed over to the disciplinary committee. The Council also did not dismiss the central administrative council of that district. When those members of the Council who opposed to the dismissal resigned, they were elected a day later while Erdem and others were not elected in the Party Assembly. These members did not dispute that there took place illegal member registration, but their decision was conditioned by the fact that the illegality had been committed by supporters of Baykal. Later, Baykal included these six persons in his Party Assembly list that he presented in September 2000 Congress.⁸⁴

The first thing after he won the party chairmanship in 2000, he stopped the restructuring process started by Öymen and immediately changed the by-law that regulates the registration of membership. This led previous chairmen of the CHP and SHP to write a letter to him urging him to continue dismantling the structure. In their letter to Baykal, Altan Öymen, Hikmet Çetin, Cezmi Kartay and Erdal İnönü expressed their concerns over the halting of the restructuring process. They criticized the non-compliance with the rules of membership registration in the bylaw of

⁸⁴ Tarhan Erdem, *Tıkanan Siyaset*, (İstanbul: Sel yayıncılık, 2001), p. 208.

membership, fake membership registration through misuse of Article 13 and the unlawful dismissal of local organizations through Article 43.⁸⁵

The event in Içel actually points out another illness in the CHP: deciding on issues according to their ramifications on the intra-party power struggle as Erdem states that ‘...from Hakkari to Edirne, from a district administrative council to the Party Assembly, in the Councils of the CHP, issues are not discussed with regard to their essence, but rather according to their political consequences’.⁸⁶ These members of the Central Executive Committee did not speak about what they really believed but they rejected dismissing Içel organization, because they had to mind their political survival in the next Congress. While decision-making with an eye to one’s prospects in the next Congress started in the CHP in 1970s, it reached its current dimensions in this period.⁸⁷ As Ahmet İsvan told in the interviewe, there were 2,3 dismissals of organizations and 5 or 10 fake member registration, but after numbers got much bigger.⁸⁸

Another feature of this structure is that differences between groups do not emanate from differing policies or opinions. In other words, people do not support factions because of a convergence of opinion but their private interests are the same. Likewise, Altan Öymen was toppled not because of the local organizations disliked, say, his policy over European Union, but because he dared to strike the very essence of their power.⁸⁹ For instance, Haluk Koç, the vice-chairman of the CHP parliamentary group, did not seem to have disagreements with Baykal before the 22nd July Elections, however when Baykal did not reappoint him, he at once started to criticize party policies over European Union and Kurdish Question. In other words,

⁸⁵ *Radikal*, 29 July 2007.

⁸⁶ Tarhan Erdem, *Tıkanan Siyaset*, (İstanbul: Sel Yayıncılık, 2001), pp. 20.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ Ahmet İsvan, interview by author, tape recording, Yalova, Turkey, 1 July 2008.

⁸⁹ Tarhan Erdem, *Tıkanan Siyaset* (Sel Yayıncılık, İstanbul, 2001), p. 59.

all the journalistic effort to attach ideological labels to the groups or persons in the party are far from truth. While the lack of intra-party democracy does not allow any search for intellectual debate, everyone also knows that intellectual knowledge are not valued. The content of debate is limited to who will be elected the chairman of the party, a district or province. While provincial and district chairmen decide on an issue, he gives his decision according to its effect on the election that will take place in the next Congress. The party center does not expect or require them to send information or input peculiar to their region to form policies in the center. Nor is the center expected to send policy papers to the organizations to be discussed. To discuss party policies among themselves, to develop projects or communicate any project sent by the center to the people are not their duty.⁹⁰ As long as their mutual perception of each other as the center being the decision maker on candidates to be nominated in elections and the periphery being the voter in the congresses persists, their relationship will not be affected by any differences of opinion.

As a result of dependence of the periphery on the center, the party chairman guarantees that he mostly becomes the sole candidate in the National Convention and elected with vote rates of more than 80 %. However, the amendments after Baykal resumed chairmanship in 2000 aim to suppress any challenger who could ensure a portion of delegate support. Before 2003, a person who could garner signatures of the 5 % of delegates could be a candidate for chairmanship. This proportion was changed to 20 % of 1250 delegates, thereby making it very hard even to become candidate. Moreover, the rule that one delegate can support more than one candidate was also abolished. As a result of these amendments, no candidate could garner enough signatures to become candidate. When they cannot be candidate, they also

⁹⁰ *Radikal*, 25 October 2007.

have no right to make a speech in the National Convention. In the last two Congresses, only Deniz Baykal delivered a speech in the National Convention. Generally, Baykal supporters prevent other speeches by giving a proposal that the discussions are enough and demand voting process to be started. In 2005, this system was consolidated with additional changes. The process of signature was divided into two stages. In what is called the first signature, delegates are demanded to sign papers on which write ‘We support Deniz Baykal’. In theory, other candidates can also want delegates’ signature, however immediately those delegates come under pressure of the supporters of the party center. Then, in the National Convention delegates again sign a official paper to nominate someone as candidate in front of the Presidency of Congress, so that it becomes obvious that who votes for whom. The fundamental principle of free and fair elections ‘secret ballot’ is violated in this way. If delegates change their mind after giving the first signature, they should dare to give a petition to the first group they support and say that they will not support that candidate and must confirm this before Presidency of the Congress.⁹¹

The Relationship between the Parliamentary Group and the Party Leadership

In the theory section, it had been stated that the Law of Political Parties had been amended and the selection of candidates for parliamentary elections could be made according the method set in the party statue. The expected result is that no party implements primaries to elect their candidates. The CHP also never used primaries in the elections since 1992 as Haluk Özdalga writes in his objection to the Party Assembly Report of 23-24 October:

No primaries were done. Organizations had no say in the making of candidate lists. Eminent members of the party such as Altan Öymen, Ertuğrul Güay, Erol Tuncer,

⁹¹ CHP, *The CHP Statute*, Ankara: November 2005, pp. 52-57.

Hurşit Güneş ... known both by the public opinion and party organization were discriminated from candidate lists.⁹²

As a result, all the parliamentarians are dependent for reelection on the approval of the party chairman. Moreover, many persons such as Kemal Derviş, Yaşar Nuri Öztürk are nominated in the parliamentary elections for their national prominence or expertise. Their dependence on the party chairman is aggravated by the fact they do not have a power base in the party resulting from working in the party organization of their constituency. This also deprives local organizations from the support of parliamentarians against the party center.⁹³ Most of the parliamentarians cannot voice their discontent over any issue even though they disagree with the chairman on those issues, if they care to keep their place in the next election. If they challenge, then they are sent to the disciplinary committee whose members are elected by the chairman of the party. As a result, only Deniz Baykal speaks in the meetings of the Party Assembly and the only duty of the parliamentarians is to listen to him and applaud. Some can display their loyalty to the chairman, but there generally takes place little discussion.⁹⁴

Policy-making in the Central Organs

Apart from the Parliamentary group, the Party Assembly and Central Executive Council are also not venues in which policies are discussed as Erdem states that ‘.. all the organs in the CHP are like to hand over all of their powers to Baykal. Subjects and issues cannot be discussed in the councils of the center and the organization or

⁹² CHP, *The Report of the Party Assembly to the 30. National Convention*, Ankara: 23-24 October 2003.

⁹³ İter Turan, ‘Old Soldiers Never Die: The Republican People’s Party of Turkey’, *South European Society and Politics*, 11:3, p. 571.

⁹⁴ On Tuesdays, the parliamentary groups of the parties convene for their weekly meeting. These meetings are broadcast on TV live. Generally, Deniz Baykal comes, speaks and the parliamentarians applaud.

the Assembly Group of the party. In the decision making bodies policies are not discussed but long speeches of the party chairman is listened to...'.⁹⁵

Since the amendments made in the statute in 2003, bloc lists involving nominees for the Party Assembly of each candidate is used instead of open lists involving all candidates, so that delegates cannot choose candidates from different lists. Because of the bloc list rule rather than open list as before 2003, no dissident can enter into the party organs. Those members of the Party Assembly cannot risk disputing the party leader. If they do, they will not be in the Parliament next time. These councils also do not work properly. This issue also took place in the objections written to the Party Assembly Reports. Although the Party Assembly can meet more than once in two months, the rule is implemented as once in two months.⁹⁶ In reality, these bodies are far from venues for policy debate let alone decision making as one objection states. The function of the Party Assembly is to listen to opinions of the Party Chairman and if necessary give their approval as one objection states: 'In the meetings of Party Assemblies, finger counting was the sole consideration and even in the most important issues serious discussions, proposals and criticisms were disallowed by the votes of majority.'⁹⁷ This objection was written in the report of 1998, when dissidents could still enter the Party Assembly through open list in the National Convention. Thus, there were incidents such as not announcing the agenda of the meetings to the members to obstruct their participation. The sole consideration was finger counting in the meetings. The organization of party meetings was haphazard also because of the fact that there was not much output to present in these councils as

⁹⁵ *Radikal*, 1 February 2007.

⁹⁶ CHP, *The Report of the Party Assembly to the 28. National Convention*, Ankara: 23-24 May, 1998, p. 172.

⁹⁷ CHP, *The Report of the Party Assembly to the 28. National Convention*, Ankara: 23-24 May, 1998, p. 175.

one objection states: ‘(...) The reason behind this situation is not even one single report or project was presented to the party Assembly in this last period.’⁹⁸

When policies are not discussed in the Party council, it’s highly probable that they breed negative consequences. The idea of ‘unity for the Republic’ of the right and left was also misconceived as election results show that a majority of the electorate did not buy the idea that the Republic is in danger. Erdem characterizes Baykal’s process of policy formation

Just as how he formed previous slogans such as opening to the left, right Anatolian Left, national unity for secularism and others, he said the contemporary one after the same ‘work’. The endeavor I mean is not to meet with party administrators, learn tendencies of people , evaluate various reports with his friends, the most he does consists of just reading Bahçeli’s speech from one of papers.⁹⁹

We should also add that apart from the central party organs the party also have no other infrastructure for policy support. Altan Öymen had founded Policy Research Center as part of restructuring, but their operation was halted after Baykal returned. Moreover, the party has no intra-party education at the base as one objection states:

There is no intra-party education for members as Baykal dissolved the unit of intra-party education in 1998. In the name same year, the operation of expertise commissions were also halted ... The working of expertise commissions that helped to solve of problems of society and brought new innovations to the party in the past years were halted. It emerged over time that the commissions that are claimed to be founded and whose number are not obvious are not real. The conferences and meetings, the aims and content of which are even unknown to the Party Assembly are efforts to cover this wrongdoing.¹⁰⁰

In such a structure where there is no free debate, the question comes to mind that what kind of people operates and do not even bother about electoral defeats. Thus, in the next section, it will be focused on the sociological character of membership.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 176.

⁹⁹ *Radikal*, 23 November 2006.

¹⁰⁰ CHP, *The Report of the Party Assembly to the 28. National Convention*, Ankara: 23-24 May 1998, p. 184.

Sociological Character of Membership: Clientelist and Factional

To understand the structure of the CHP, we must also examine its sociological basis. After the CHP adopted the left of center label in 1965, its vote basis also started to change. After 1972, the rural notables who were controlling the CHP organizations in the provinces were replaced by the representatives of newly emerging groups such as professionals, workers. Their expectation was that their involvement in politics would provide them with privileged access to public resources. To meet their demands, clientelistic politics were expanded after 1972. Apart from a 18-month experience in government, the CHP was the first party with a plurality of vote throughout this period. Thus a local CHP politician could find a job in the municipality, a public economic enterprise or state bureaucracy. Before 1980, another parallel process to the extension of clientelism was that members of ultra-leftist groups started to join the party. This was realized through two ways. Their family members, mostly fathers who were members of the CHP, demanded the party to open its doors to their sons to protect them. The rival factions also made use of these groups in their intra-party struggles against each other after the Congress of 1976. The fact that Alawites both were an important constituency of the CHP proper and had a high rate of participation in these groups added a sectarian dimension to the structure of intra-party groups.¹⁰¹

The coup of 12 September shattered them all. The local politicians were fired from their positions in the state institutions. For their livelihood they turned to commercial activities. In other words, what Ayşe Ayata terms a process of ‘embourgeoisement’ took place. The ultra-leftist elements were suppressed by the military. When the military allowed the formation of political parties in 1983, these

¹⁰¹ Ayata, Ayşe G. ‘The Republican People’s Party’. In *Political Parties in Turkey*, edited by Barry Rubin and Metin Heper (London: Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2002), p. 128-132.

groups came together in the SODEP, later SHP of Erdal İnönü. They had no other choice, because Ecevit was determined that his party would not be a place for neither clientelism nor ideological groups. These groups had joined in the SHP with the same aim of reaching to state resources. However, the SHP was not the CHP of 1970s. Being electorally weaker than the CHP, it had a smaller cake of resources to distribute to clientelistic groups. The struggle for resources between these groups was exacerbated by the gradual weakening of the SDPP and parallel diminishing of resources.¹⁰²

As Ayata states, factionalism is related with clientelism and factions can develop out of competing clientelistic groups. Confronted with diminishing resources, the natural tendency for these clientelistic groups was to oppose to new participants. Sectarianism, tribalism and ethnicity were also used in consolidating their in-group solidarity and loyalty. We must remember that personal differences rather than ideological differences were the main factor behind the formation of these groups. The effects of embourgeoisement and its representatives emerged during the SHP rule in the metropolis municipalities between 1989 and 1992. Clientelistic network gained vitality thanks to resources provided by these municipalities and the participation of the SHP in the coalition government. Participation in the party could provide a job in the municipality or licence to build house. The relationship between embourgeoisied local leaders and party leaders inevitably turned corrupt as the SHP was in power. These contractors demanded contract in return for providing for the vote in the Congress. As a result, after 1991 the SDPP was beset by corruption scandals such as that involving Istanbul Water and Sewerage Agency. The party

¹⁰² Ibid.

center did not take any precaution against this situation, on the contrary it was encouraged as Isvan states that

There are people who wants to be involved in politics for interest, material interest. There are such people in the party base. ... And this increased, because the party center did not implement a system of filter in this respect. It encouraged as much as it can.¹⁰³

Bülent Ecevit, who was aware of these problems, founded his party as a minimal party in which factional groups had no place. Deniz Baykal was also aware of the same problem, but since the CHP has already a complex organization, he decided to turn his faction to the only faction in the party, thus getting rid of other groups as Ayata states that ‘He is now attempting to form a party without any internal opposition, where his faction, strengthened with bonds of loyalty, will become the party ... Baykal is developing a model of organization working exclusively for the leader, instead of Ecevit’s minimal organization.’¹⁰⁴

The CHP is still enmeshed in clientelistic networks. For instance, one prominent figure of corruption scandals of 1990s was the mayor of Ümraniye Şinasi Öktem. Öktem was expelled from SHP after a party commission ruled that corruption claims about him are correct. After the CHP was reopened, Baykal invited Öktem to the party and he was the chairman of the Istanbul province between 2004-2006. In CHP, factionalism became more acute than in the SHP, because Baykal had always been a factionalist leader and the party electorally was much more weaker than in the past.¹⁰⁵ The smallness of the electoral base meant that conflicts between factions turned to be more intense. Well after the CHP was founded, the objections to the Party Assembly Reports point out again to the problem of factionalism:

¹⁰³ Ahmet Isvan, interview by author, tape recording, Yalova, Turkey, 1 July 2008.

¹⁰⁴ Ayata, Ayşe G. ‘The Republican People’s Party’. In *Political Parties in Turkey*, edited by Barry Rubin and Metin Heper (London: Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2002), p. 132.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

The factionary mentality (...) is exalted and obviously expressed in different places including the highest organ, the Party Assembly in the Party: 'We are an equip, came to power as an equip and rule the party with this equip. We discriminate those who are not from our equip.' (...) this mentality is supported and encouraged by the highest unit of the party (...) Factional mentality evaluates party members not according to their effort, capability, but according to whose men they are. A person who is not seen as 'our man' by factionalists, even if there is a slightest suspicion, is not let to be involved in politics. ... It is another name of the struggle namely 'I sit at this armchair at all costs.'¹⁰⁶

One result of factionalism as this objection puts it was the divorce of the CHP from brainpower. Compared to 1980, it can even be said that the CHP realized its divorce from intellegentsia. It is no longer the party in which prominent intellectuals join. The party base is also not much affected from the middle class and educated voters, but a process of lumpenization took place as Celal Doğan puts it:

Today if you go to any provinces of Turkey, you can hardly find five persons to speak in television, yet in the past The CHP members were the ones who knew matters of Turkey best. Today the CHP has provincial and district buildings, which are not opened throughout the day (...) The relationship of the CHP with the youth and women is over. Even if you are a graduate of Oxford, you cannot be a delegate in the Eyup district of the CHP. The upper structure is not supportive of qualified men. The CHP is closed to youth women and intellectual and qualified people. It only open to supporters of the center (...)¹⁰⁷

It is obvious that the anti-intellectualism of the 12 September also affected the CHP. One crucial difference between the pre-1980 CHP and post-1992 CHP must be emphasized. Despite all problems, the CHP of the 1970s had achieved to become a mass party, which had support in all parts of the society. On the contrary, contemporary CHP is more like an electoralist party. The problem is that the CHP could not establish a consociational system that would enable all groups a voice in the administration.

¹⁰⁶ CHP, *The Report of the Party Assembly to the 30. National Convention*. Ankara: 23-24 October, 2003, p. 124.

¹⁰⁷ *Radikal*, 17 January 2005.

CHAPTER V

THE IDEOLOGY OF THE CHP

The previous section on the organizational structure of the CHP drew a picture of how policies are formed in the party, by whom and the constraints of policy production. The practical result of the development of the structure with a factionalist leader at its head has been the transformation of the CHP into a simple electoral machine that is only in the pursuit of votes. In other words, the CHP is not a political party that tries to come to power to realize its ideals, but sees power as an aim rather than an instrument. As a result, politics is turned into an art of only vote and office seeking. The tacit agreement between the party center and the organization has no time and place for intellectual debate in the party. The party center even avoids discussion over ideology after electoral defeats. For instance, according to Deniz Baykal, the reason behind the fall of the SHP is involvement in the theoretical discussions:

(...)We would not be in this situation if we found main policies that would meet people's expectations rather than involving in theoretical, ideological discussions (...). One main weakness of the left and intellectuals is to evaluate facts under the influence of ideological dogmas. We should protect ourselves from such a danger of ideological, intellectual deviation(...)¹⁰⁸

As a result of this anti-intellectualism, the party opportunistically uses elements in its ideological inheritance according to the electoral calculations.

The inevitable inconsistencies that are result of futile effort of reconciling irreconcilable ideologies is aggravation of the party's inability to develop concrete policies to address the demands of society. In other words, there are no definite CHP stances on the future of democratization of Turkish polity, the relationship of market-state, the changing position of nation state in a globalizing world and on matters of

¹⁰⁸ CHP, *The Speeches of the CHP General Chairman Deniz Baykal*, Ankara: October 2003, p. 176.

identity politics. This leads the CHP to a position of speechlessness when faced with policies and projects proposed by the government as it has happened since the AKP came to power in 2002. Unable to offer alternative policies against those of the government, the CHP has been content with saying that ‘This policy suggested by government is wrong. Thus, let’s not change anything’. While its inability to offer an alternative policy derives from its ideological malaise and incompetence in personnel, its increasing wariness about changes offered by the AKP government are related to its fear about the supposedly covert intentions of the government. For instance, the CHP opposed to the Public Administration reform, because it perceived it as an attempt by the AKP government to Islamize the public administration. In this respect, the CHP did not mind that this contradicts with its program, which envisages devolution to local administration as part of deepening of participatory democracy in Turkey. As a result, when faced with a policy proposal of the government party, without much deliberation and regard for the consistency with the program, previous party positions and whatever ideological identity the party presents then, Baykal tells the faults of the government proposal without bothering about presenting the alternative account of the CHP. This, of course, destroys whatever credibility the CHP has in the eyes of the electorate. In the absence of a positive narrative presented to people, negative rhetoric through constant criticism of the government does not appeal to people as the election results display.

Reactive style of politics is a result of interrelated factors. We had made it clear that the party did never go through a critical process of ideological review to adjust its ideology to the current realities of Turkish society.¹⁰⁹ Another factor is that the electoral support for the CHP is fragmented. The surveys unanimously show that

¹⁰⁹ Sencer Ayata and Ayşe Ayata, ‘The Center-Left Parties in Turkey’, *Turkish Studies*, 8:2, pp. 211-232.

the CHP voters are most likely professional, managerial and bureaucratic members of the middle class. The CHP is very weak in rural areas. Among the urban middle class, working and educated women are also more likely to vote for the CHP. There is a direct correlation between the likelihood of voting for the CHP and the education level of working women. As in the past, the CHP has weak support among the entrepreneurial parts of the traditional middle class (esnaf) and peasantry. The CHP also lost the support of urban poor living in the shantytowns of the big cities whose support had carried it to power in the 1970s to the nationalist and religious right. Geographically, the CHP vote is concentrated in socioeconomically developed regions of Turkey. The electoral support for the CHP is very low in socioeconomically underdeveloped parts of Turkey, East and Central Anatolia, southeastern region. Actually it can be said that Alawites regardless of their education and social class are the only sizeable constituency of the CHP in many parts of Anatolia. Evaluating the electoral base of the CHP, it is obvious that the support for the party does not solely emanate from neither the rich and center nor the poor and periphery. As a result, the CHP has an ambiguous relationship with major groups in Turkish society, this in turn causes its ideology and policies to be marred by inconsistency and vacillations.¹¹⁰ Since it lacked the capacity to develop concrete policies, the CHP resorted further to symbols of its old ideology, Kemalism. It was at least guaranteeing a certain amount of voter support for the CHP.

The ideological baggage that the post-1992 CHP has inherited included two distinct ideologies that the party pioneered in Turkey: Kemalism and social democracy. However, despite all inconsistencies, the defining ideology has been Kemalism. Moreover, in contrast to the pre-1980 CHP, the contemporary CHP did

¹¹⁰ Sencer Ayata and Ayşe Ayata, 'The Center-Left Parties in Turkey', *Turkish Studies*, 8:2, pp. 211-232.

not make an effort to synthesize them. This led to further increasing of the influence of Kemalism over CHP policies. For instance, Kemalist sensitivities rather than social democracy determined CHP's approach to civil-military relations. In this period, the Kemalist fear that other parties may endanger Kemalist reforms through policies that pander to demands of the reactionaries persisted. This fear determined the CHP's attitude toward recognition demands of Islamists. Thus, when the military acted to prevent supposedly such a behavior of the government as in the case of 28 February, the CHP obviously or not took an approving stance on military interference in politics though this clearly contradicts with the basic premises of democracy. Although the CHP can change its policies quite often depending on the mood of public opinion, the deviations are generally towards social democratic attitudes and policies. In other words, when social democratic stances adopted for some reason are no longer needed, the party returns to its original Kemalist positions. Kemalist nationalism and emphasis on unitary state and national unity informed most of the CHP stances on political issues.

Today the party describes itself as a social democratic party. However, the absence of intra-party democracy prevented the party center and organization to have a meaningful and comprehensive debate over the contemporary meaning of social democracy and its interaction with the Kemalist legacy of the party as Tarhan Erdem states that '...Everyone in the CHP says that we are social democrat, but this just consists of social democrat shell. What it includes, no one knows. Thus, there is no internal consistency. The CHP is only preoccupied with intra-party struggles.'¹¹¹ The effort of integration of distinct ideologies is itself a problem for the party, which we can term as the 'burden of synthesis'. This is because of the fact that any effort for

¹¹¹ Tarhan Erdem, *Tıkanan Siyaset*, (İstanbul: Sel Yayıncılık, 2001), p. 24.

renewal can bring accusation of anti-Kemalizm as in 1960s. Moreover, the increasing volatile behavior of voters and small size of its electoral support makes the CHP nervous that it can even lose its already small constituency if it sails into new ideological waters.¹¹² In addition to this tiresome task of synthesizing, the fixation on glorious days of 1920s and 1930s also distorts understanding of contemporary challenges and has the impact of augmenting the party's deficit of imagination.

Nonetheless, Deniz Baykal offered a new interpretation of social democracy twice since 1992. However, since these policies were the product of his mind, when he decided to give them up, they disappeared without any effect in a few months. In the section on the structure, we had seen that the decision-making organs of the CHP are not venues for the discussion of policies. The process of policy making is that Deniz Baykal 'says' policies and others comply with it because of their political survival.¹¹³ If he deems consultation with the party organs necessary, he asks for their opinion, but he has no such an obligation. Altan Öymen, who was a member of the Party Assembly between 1995 and 1998, succinctly draws the picture of policy making in the party:

Often you wake up morning and see that a policy is formed. How was that policy formed? It goes without any discussion to the party group. There is discussion in the group through right of speaking out of agenda. However, at the beginning the general chairman makes a long speech, then time for meal... There is no one staying to listen to speeches. This has come to a point that there were no longer any attempt to speak.¹¹⁴

Before the party's reopening, Baykal had written a new book named 'New Left' with Ismail Cem. This book also became the basis of the CHP program which is politically liberal and economically social democrat. In this book, it is clearly seen that he and especially Cem were inspired from the Third Way arguments in Britain

¹¹² Sencer Ayata and Ayşe Ayata 'The Center-Left Parties in Turkey' *Turkish Studies*, 8:2, pp. 211-232.

¹¹³ *Radikal*, 13 January 2005.

¹¹⁴ Altan Öymen, interview by author, tape recording, İstanbul, Turkey, 25 June 2008.

and US. However, after he became chairman, New Left was immediately forgotten. Since it was even unknown to the organization, this was normal. Seyfettin Gürsel states that after he saw the resurgence of Kemalist mass reaction to the murder of Uğur Mumcu in 1993, Baykal thought that he would fare better in election if the CHP shifts back to secularism-oriented one dimensional politics.¹¹⁵ After he returned to the CHP in 2000, he put forward a new policy that he devised on his own: ‘Anatolian Left’. Baykal claimed that he was combining social democracy with the thought of 12th century Anatolian mystics such as Mevlana and Yunus Emre. There was no difference between them since ‘human love’ was the most important concept for both of them. Apparently, he wants to emphasize the concept of fraternity in both them, however he these are all empty and vague statements devoid of anything about egalitarianism, social justice that is central to social democracy.

How did they define human? Not with his position, money or diploma, but they based definition human on human love and recognized them as equal brothers. They recognized humans not through the lens of their race ethnic identity, sect or religion but as brothers ... They said brotherhood. Whose brotherhood? Of Turk and Greek, Turk and Armenian, of Kurd and whatever ... They say woman and man are equal.¹¹⁶

He uses the rhetoric of brotherhood of different ethnicities, however does not care about injustices of recognition and misrecognition that formed the foci of social democratic agenda after 1980s in Western Europe. Baykal specifically emphasizes the native character of this new brand of social democracy. Moreover, since it’s rooted in Anatolian culture, so there is no need to learn social democracy from abroad as he states that

As a social democratic party, we correctly had to understand and interpret the historical voyage and historical depth of Turkish society. We don’t understand social democracy as a translation movement. We perceive social democracy as a movement that originates from Turkey’s own historical richness cultural heritage.’

¹¹⁵ *Radikal*, 24 January 2005

¹¹⁶ CHP, *The Speeches of the CHP General Chairman Deniz Baykal*, October 2003, Ankara, p.27.

While Europe lived in the darkness of the Middle Ages and are engulfed in sectarian conflicts, racial conflicts ... what do these people who are pioneers of Anatolian Enlightenment? They rose up and said 'Human' and put human in the center of everything.¹¹⁷

Actually, this was a very superficial approach as his account of state formation shows:

(...) in his will Edebali says that let humans live, so that state will endure to Osman Ghazi. ... 300 cavalry came found a principality and a meadow allocated for Osman Ghazi. (...) Jean Bodin will discover state in 16th century, it is not discovered yet.¹¹⁸

The real aim in the devise of this superficial policy was vote hunting by appealing to centrist or right of center voters by attributing a nativist aspect to the left. When criticisms focus on this aspect, he answers his critics

What kind of a distortion is this? ... That is, shall we learn leftism or social democracy through translation? Is it ingenuity to distance ourselves from our culture so much? There are and will be those who say that 'these are not in the book, we are not accustomed to this. We just recognize the pioneers of universal social democracy.'¹¹⁹

Baykal emphasizes the national character of Anatolian left. This opposition against universalism can be evaluated as yet another search in the Kemalist tradition of 'We resemble us'. It belongs to Turkish culture and history, thus Baykal hopes this dimension of it will appeal to voters. He is against incorporating universal tenets of social democracy in their contemporary from the West. He perceives this nativist character of Anatolian left as key to the CHP's success in elections. In this endeavor, he mentions leftist movements which he sees as exemplary:

Beware of the fact that there lies an opening to its own culture, essence, localization at the basis of all leftist movements which are successful in the world. This is so from Vietnam to China (...) 'We shall do translation leftism, Tanzimat leftism', such a thing is unacceptable. (...)¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 28.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 29.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

Both Ziya Gökalp and Kemalists displayed a strong dislike for the Tanzimat period of the Ottoman Empire, because of Tanzimat's renunciation of nationalism and cosmopolitan character. Baykal in effect rejects cosmopolitan character of the left and expresses his preference for a Third World nationalist leftism.

When it became the main opposition party after 2002, Baykal gave up any talk of synthesis of teachings of Sheik Edebali and social democracy. Between 2002 and 2007, the CHP ideology was purely Kemalist. Faced with moderate Islamists of the AKP, the CHP started to base its policy on supervising the government and safeguarding secularism. The ethnicist color the Kemalism became more obvious. Politics based on the protection of national security and national interest became the norm. The post-2002 period was a period in which the CHP increasingly founded its discourse only on the issues of secularism and increasing nationalist reaction to the EU reforms in the society. It turned to emphasize synthesis of social democracy and Kemalism and detached cosmopolitanism and egalitarian discourse completely from its discourse and reduced social democracy to the defense of 'national interest' as Onur Öymen equates social democracy and defense of national interest

The CHP is a party which tries to realize goals which Atatürk coined in Six Arrows. When populism, nationalism and reformism, which are among these symbols are thought together, it is seen that they are in complete harmony with social democracy. It is difficult to deny that a party which really thinks the interest of people, adopts a reformist attitude for this aim and carries all its work in line with national interests originates from social democracy.¹²¹

In the following parts, we shall focus on certain issues to evaluate the effects of social democracy being incorporated in national interest.

¹²¹ Öymen, Onur. 25 January 2007. Interview in *SKY TÜRK*. Available (online) <http://www.onuroymen.com.c.sadecehosting.com/docs/?C=N%3bO=A> (25 January 2007)

Democratization

The CHP program, which was accepted in 1993 describes the CHP as ‘the representative of a great reformist movement ... that owns the program of renewal and surpassing contemporary age.’¹²² In the introduction of the program, the CHP defines the aim of its existence as turning constitution from ‘a document that makes definition of bans to a document of freedom, to realize democracy with all its components and beauties, to prevent breaks in democracy and to question coups such as 12 September.’¹²³ Under the title of Freedom, the CHP wants the constitution to allow Turkish citizens to enjoy all rights and freedoms of pluralist democracies. It says that ‘in the framework of democracy, human rights and peace all thoughts should be spoken, written and organized freely.’¹²⁴ The goal of the CHP is the creating of liberal and pluralist democracy through the strengthening of the civil society and lessening power concentration in the center through devolution. As part of its goal of abolishing the 1982 Constitution with all its vestiges, the CHP promises to abolish compulsory religious education, laws banning political activity of syndicates, foundations, state officials, youth.¹²⁵

Until 2002, the CHP continues the same attitude concerning liberalization of the regime at least in its party documents. The Report of the Party Assembly presented to the 28. National Convention of 23-24 May 1998 reiterates the desire to abolish 1982 Constitution and all the laws and institutions of 12 September. At the beginning of the Report, there is a statement of Baykal, which is important to show issues emphasized by the CHP in this period. In this statement, Baykal underlines that the main axis of CHP policies are human rights and fundamental freedoms. He

¹²² CHP, *The CHP Program*. Ankara: 1993, p. 78.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid. P. 79

¹²⁵ Ibid.

emphasizes their determination to protect the democracy against any threat, be it majority tyranny, theological totalitarianism or military intervention. In the same report, however, contradicting himself Baykal evaluates the ending of the WP-DYP coalition by the military as a result of ‘democratic, civil and natural reactions of self-defense mechanisms of democratic regime.’¹²⁶ The report has a relatively long part on democratization. It specifically demands specifically demands Articles 8, 311, 312, 158 and 159 of the Criminal Code to be amended in line with Western democracies and abolition of State Security Courts. It demands the end of extraordinary rule in the Southeastern region. It condemns the suing of writers such as Yaşar Kemal, İsmail Beşikçi, Oral Çalışlar, Ahmet Altan as a violation of freedom of expression. It defines the people who were forced to evacuate their homes in the Southeast as people ‘whose rights are most systematically violated in Turkey’. The report acknowledges that there is a terror lobby which includes ‘state in state’ benefiting from terror.¹²⁷

The Report of the Party Assembly presented to the 29. National Convention on 30 June, 2001 is in the same lines. It criticizes the National Program presented to the EU by Ecevit government as inadequate concerning democratization. It criticizes the conditions in F type prisons and demands the government to adopt the sixth Protocol of European Convention which abolishes death penalty in all circumstances and the rule of OHAL to be ended in the Southeastern region. It describes forced village evacuations as the ‘most systematic violation of human rights in Turkey.

¹²⁶ CHP, *The Report of the Party Assembly to the 28. National Convention*. Ankara: 23-24 May 1998, p. 158.

¹²⁷ Ibid

Under the title of ‘the freedom of expression should not be criminalized, the report wants the implementation of the EHRC and Article 159 and 312 to be amended.’¹²⁸

The 30. Congress on 23-24 October 2003 took place while AKP was in power. The change in the content and tone of the Party Assembly Report is very striking. At the beginning of the report, the CHP defines its mission as defender of secularism: ‘the CHP is guarantor of Atatürk revolutions, secular Republic, and the unique model of Turkey in the world’. It can be said after the AKP came to power, the CHP shifted its focus on issues related to values, basically secularism from matters of democratization. In the absence of any alternative project about economy, the CHP politics was reduced to ‘singular political imagination based on protection of the Republic’. Then, the report starts to narrate the actions of the AKP government. The titles such as ‘human rights and freedom of difference: the essence of democracy’ in the previous reports give way to titles such ‘Secular Republic’, ‘Takiyye’ and stuffing of state institutions by the AKP supporters. After emphasizing the role of the CHP as the guarantor of the Republic, the report underlines that Kemalism and social democracy is not antithesis of one another and on the contrary they are complementary. Then, the report draws up a series of warnings about the intentions of the AKP.¹²⁹ For instance, the government plans to conquer universities through YÖK reform , thus the CHP opposes to any reform in the Law of YÖK. The CHP no longer wants the government to enact laws as demanded by the EU. On the contrary, it wants Turkey to implement Copenhagen Criteria not as a part of EU conditionality, but to improve its own democracy. At this point, we can say that the CHP begins to be doubtful of the EU process or EU’s involvement in internal affairs

¹²⁸ CHP, *The Report of the Party Assembly to the 29. National Convention*. Ankara: 30 June-1 July 2001, p. 175.

¹²⁹ CHP, *The Report of the Party Assembly to the 30. National Convention*, Ankara: 23-24 October 2003, p. 164.

of Turkey as part of the accession process. From then on, the official line of the CHP as represented by Onur Öymen: ‘We don’t need your advice. We will make reforms on our own.’¹³⁰

The report of the Party Assembly presented to the 31. National Convention on 19-20 November 2005 starts with Deniz Baykal’s call to everyone to protect Turkey. Here, there are first signs of Deniz Baykal’s policy of uniting non-AKP forces to prevent Erdoğan to be elected president in 2007. This may be evaluated as another sign of Baykal’s efforts to appeal to the right-wing voters in his quest to come to power. The report states that the CHP ‘will not allow the violation of national and modern red lines of the Republic’. Concerning the relationship between democracy and republic, Baykal was upholding the line that ‘It is wrong to strengthen democracy by diluting the Republic or to perceive democracy as a threat to the Republic’ in previous reports. In this report, he only warns that ‘democracy cannot be extended through weakening republic’.¹³¹

The reduction of the CHP politics to defense of secularism reached its culmination in 2007. On 27 April, the military broadcast a memorandum warning the government that it will take action to protect secular Republic if necessary. Baykal took an ambiguous stance stating that the government also bear responsibility for the situation and did not oppose to military interference in politics.¹³² Later, the CHP supported the mass anti-government demonstrations held in April and May of 2007. One of the main organizers of the meeting was Professor Nur Serter. In her speech in the Istanbul meeting, she saluted the army for the memorandum and criticized the

¹³⁰ CHP, *The Report of the Party Assembly to the 31. National Convention*. Ankara: 19-20 November 2005, p. 175.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² CHP, *The Speeches of Deniz Baykal on Secularism*, Ankara: 2008, p.43.

government for calling the chief of staff an official.¹³³The CHP nominated her later in the parliamentary elections. This stance clearly contradicts with the CHP program which demands the ‘absolute supremacy of the civilian authority’ over the military. This was in line with the CHP stances over confrontations between the civilian governments and the military involving issues of secularism.

Another dimension with regard to democratization is relationship between democratization and Republican values, most importantly secularism. The CHP Program states that the CHP secularism is against both any pressure of religious liberties and use of religion as a tool of pressure. Secularism is a precondition for the survival of democracy. The CHP promises to give the control of state over religious life to the civil society over the long term. The Directorate of Religious Affairs should be open to any religious groups, those outside of it not be deprived of state support. The growing strength of the Islamist movement is perceived as fundamental threats against secularism. The CHP Party Assembly Reports are full of criticism employment of AKP supporters in bureaucracy since 2002. Most of the applications of the CHP to the Constitutional Court is related to laws about the organization and personnel of the state institutions. For instance, the CHP applied to the Court for the nullification of the amendment in the TÜBİTAK law which enables the government to appoint its members by arguing that this contradicts with the autonomy of a scientific organization set in the Constitution. The CHP has been tolerant of religious belief and observance as long as they remain in the private realm. For instance, it does not oppose to the wearing of turban in the private realm and non-official places,

¹³³ *Radikal*, 30 April 2007

but it opposes to turban in public places. no statement against the wearing of headscarves in non-official public places.¹³⁴

European Union

In this period, the CHP's attitude toward the European Union constantly changed. As the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Deniz Baykal had played a big role in the entrance of Turkey into the Customs Union with the EU in 1995. Until 2004, the CHP also supported all the democratization packages brought by the AKP to the Turkish Grand National Assembly. However, after 2005, the CHP mostly adopted a critical if not negative attitude toward the EU. According to Onur Öymen, the reason is conditions attached to possible membership of Turkey in the EU Commission Reports and other documents:

We stated after the 2002 elections that we support the EU ...we supported all reform packages. Now, what changed? ...the Progress Report was published in 2004, we saw that it includes conditions that do not apply to other countries. Open-ended negotiation process...then prime minister said that this is a very positive report, then our ways separated.¹³⁵

The CHP increasingly grew critical of the EU process as it emerged that Turkey's accession negotiations would be *sui generis*. We may term the CHP's attitude as Euro-pessimist. A questionnaire experiment on CHP deputies conducted by Gülmez is revealing of the CHP's attitude toward EU. When Gülmez asked them what is 'honorable membership' that the CHP often uses with regard to EU membership, 82 percent of parliamentarians define the term as not experiencing a process different from other candidates and 68 percent of them understand the term as having equal rights with other EU members. 45 percent of them define the concept as preserving

¹³⁴ Sencer Ayata and Ayşe Ayata, 'The Center-Left Parties in Turkey', *Turkish Studies*, 8:2, pp. 211-232.

¹³⁵ Onur Öymen, interview by author, tape recording, Ankara, May 2007.

the unitary structure of the country and not consulting with the EU. Only three percent of the parliamentarians say that Turkey should not be a member.¹³⁶

It is obvious that it did not take a prominent role in the EU process, since as with other subject, the CHP has never made a genuine discussion over the EU process as Ayata states that ‘... it never discussed the role of Turkey in Europe, within its own region, or what kind of integration with the EU was appropriate. The CHP lacks a clear view on globalization. The ideas of the leadership oscillate in a range from xenophobic perspectives to full integration with the globe, even abolishing borders of the nation state’.¹³⁷ However, it can also be said that CHP skepticism is turning into a reactionary and isolationism as Onur Öymen demands Turkey not to look to the West as an example:

We must save ourselves from West complex. Since the the end of the 19th century and 20th century or maybe dates back further, our intellectuals have a West complex. Whatever they do is good, they are great, superior, we are bad poor, wretched. You know famous lines ‘I went to west and saw thriving places, I went to east and saw wreck. The person who write these lines want to say that everything in the West is good, perfect prosperous; everything in the East is desolated. Is it so? When this poem was written 7 year old children were working in mines?’¹³⁸

These statements are very interesting if one remembers that rejecting Gökalpian formula of civilization-culture, the Republican elite had taken Western culture as a whole. This is more 12 Septemberist attitude, deriding the West for it criticizes Turkey because of human rights violations.

¹³⁶ Seçkin B. Gülmez, ‘The EU Policy of the CHP: An Inquiry on the Opposition Party and Euro-skepticism in Turkey’, *Turkish Studies* Vol. 9, No. 3, 423-436.

¹³⁷ Sencer Ayata and Ayşe Ayata, ‘The Center-Left Parties in Turkey’, *Turkish Studies*, 8:2, pp. 211-232.

¹³⁸ Öymen, Onur. 27 April 2006. *Interview in TRT INT*. Available (online) <http://www.onuroymen.com.c.sadecehosting.com/docs/%c3%96ymen-TRT%20INT-%2027%20Nisan%202006.doc> (27 April 2006)

The Economic Dimension of the CHP Ideology

There are some basic characteristics of the economic policies of the CHP in this period. Firstly, the CHP does not seem to give same importance to economic issues as it does to political issues. This is obvious in the CHP program in which the part on economy is quite short compared to part on political issues. Secondly, the ideological character of the CHP economic policies can be evaluated as a kind of Third Way approach popularized by Tony Blair's Labor Party in Britain. Like Third Way, it tries to create both economic growth through a favorable climate for business and social justice through budget and taxation policies. However, Third Way in effect is a softer version free marketist Thatcherism. In other words, Third Way economic policies did not undo privatization and deregulation unleashed by Thatcherite revolution in 1980s. The CHP Program is clearly one kind of Third Way politics in its emphasis of growth, competition and innovativeness. Thirdly, today's CHP does not have clearly a critical stance toward capitalism as it displayed in Ecevit's discourse in 1970s. It is closer to policies of Kemalist economic policies since it in effect desires rapid economic development through market with state playing a helping role. Its opposition to certain aspects of neo-liberal agenda, such as privatizations, is shaped mostly by political considerations. In the following paragraphs, these arguments will be further explained based on the CHP documents.

During the 1980s, the SHP had not made a systematic criticism of the economic program of the ANAP governments. It had rather focused on the results of this program, such as inflation and decline in the wages. In this respect, it was not much different from other opposition parties. There was only a brief period in which

the SHP emphasized social justice in its discourse before the 1989 local elections.¹³⁹ In 1980s, the attention of the SHP was much more focused on political issues such as the 1982 Constitution. The party was not displaying the same interest in the decisions of 24 January as it did to political deeds of the 12 September.¹⁴⁰ It as if had abandoned economic matters to the DYP during the coalition government between 1991 and 1995. In other words, it was as if the DYP was dealing with economic matters and the SHP was responsible for democratization issues. This disinterest may be seen as normal because it was trying to recover democratic freedoms that the junta destroyed. Actually, it is doubtful that whether the CHP was willing to assume a dissident position against neo-liberalism. In the 1980s, neo-liberal paradigm had been dominant both in the world and Turkey. All talk of redistribution was vulnerable to accusations of ‘populism’. As a result, the CHP avoided establishing its discourse on a new policy of redistribution and social justice. The result was that CHP could not be a spokesperson for the losers of the post-1980 structural adjustment programs.¹⁴¹

In the previous paragraph, it was questioned that whether the CHP was willing to challenge neo-liberalism and present an alternative program. Deniz Baykal had presented a program named ‘New Left’ to the 3. Congress of the SHP in 1991. In the report, Baykal was demanding the SHP to abandon its line of leftism based on redistribution and adopt leftism based on production. He demanded social democrats to accept consumption society, high living standards and quality of life as targets of social democracy. Baykal was stating that high living standards of middle

¹³⁹ Harald Schler, *Trkiye’de Sosyal Demokrasi: Particilik, Hemhrilik, Alevilik*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları: 2002), p. 28-36.

¹⁴⁰ Ayata, Ayşe Güneş. ‘The Republican People’s Party’. In *Political Parties in Turkey* edited by B. Rubin and M. Heper (London: Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2002), p. 172-175

¹⁴¹ Sencer Ayata and A. Ayata ‘The Center-Left Parties in Turkey’ *Turkish Studies*, 8:2, pp. 211-232.

classes were their rights, thus any effort to tax them for the sake of redistribution was wrong. In other words, social democrats had to cease to care about the situation of those who could not be part of middle classes.¹⁴²

The Program of the newly opened CHP was also holding this line. The program defines the components of the CHP economics as productivity, rationality and rapid development. In line with the Kemalism, rapid development is the fundamental goal. The economic model of the CHP offers everything to everyone: ‘an economy that produces more, that grows, creates jobs, competitive in world market, redistributive, rationalist, productive’.¹⁴³ The CHP does not only want to redistribute the existing cake but it also wants to make the cake bigger. It aims to realize economic development through market economics but conditioned by social protections. However, one senses that the phrase ‘social protections’ are stated in the text only as part of a protocol. According to a redefinition of statism, the role of state in the economy is of a regulator state that prevents the exploitation of market mechanisms by private interests and the formation of monopolies. The state shall try to provide for the general welfare but not through active involvement in economy such as owning industries but through taxation and budget policies. In the program, it is constantly emphasized that ‘macroeconomic planning is not interventionist but will be corrective of faults of market mechanisms’.¹⁴⁴ Strategic planning will not mean unnecessary state interference in economy but will aim to increase competitiveness of Turkey in world markets. The concern that there will be excessive interference in the markets is often tried to be addressed not to repulse business in the program. The public state enterprises will be active only in strategic areas of

¹⁴² Harald Schuler, *Türkiye’de Sosyal Demokrasi: Particilik, Hemşehrilik, Alevilik*, (İstanbul: İletişim,2002), pp. 25-26.

¹⁴³ CHP, *The CHP Program*, Ankara: 1993, p. 75-77.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

economy or in socioeconomically underdeveloped parts of the country. In line with previous CHP programs, equality is conceived as equality of opportunity. Such an understanding of statism is complemented by populism, which is reformulated as an order in which everyone has social security.¹⁴⁵

In the following Party Assembly reports, these lines of economic policy are kept. However, the developments of each period, the government actions and economic statistics have a big place in these reports rather than the CHP policies: ‘Current-account balance goes bad’, ‘small producers oppressed under inflation’... The Party Assembly report presented to the 28. National Convention proposes the foundation of a social market economy and a regulator state that will intervene in the economy to redress inequalities between regions. However, it hastily ensures that ‘.. interventions should not harm the essence of the system on a level that will lead to destruction of its effectiveness’.¹⁴⁶ This actually reflects the CHP’s desire of seeming market friendly and not statist. Nonetheless, the report underlines that the role of state in Turkey will be different from Western Europe because of limited capital formation and regional inequalities in Turkey. In this report, against the strengthening of capital, it offers the consolidation of labor organizations. It wants to abolish restrictions on labor unions, such as postponing of strikes by courts and public notary approval and right to strike for public workers.

In the Party Assembly report submitted to the 29. National Convention, the CHP criticizes the stabilization program implemented by Kemal Derviş for ignoring public interest. As a solution to Turkey’s economic problems, it claims that the CHP will provide ‘rapid, balanced and sustainable economic development’. In the report,

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ CHP, *The Report of the Party Assembly to the 28. National Convention*. Ankara:23-24 May, 1998, p. 166.

it is repeated that economic growth should be based on savings rather than borrowing, but there is nothing about how that will be realized. The CHP opposes to privatizations involving strategic commodity and public service providers, since this will cause the state lose all its power to control the economy.¹⁴⁷ One year after this Congress, the CHP invited Derviş whose program it had criticized to the CHP and was nominated in the general elections.

In the Party Assembly report presented to the 31. National Convention of November 2005, the CHP reiterates its target of ‘rapid and balanced’ growth. It aims a growth rate of 7 %. It does not give a road map of how growth will be both balanced and rapid, contradictory terms in themselves. The CHP also aims such a rapidly growing economy to reach standards set by the Maastricht criteria. It proposes to narrow the gap between top 20% of the upper income group and 20 % of lower income group by 10 % in five years, but does not specify any measure for this aim. It only puts forward that it will abolish taxes on the minimum wage.¹⁴⁸

The report is especially critical of privatization process, which accelerated after the AKP came to power. However, the CHP does not oppose to the idea of privatization in principle, but rather to the cheap sale of state industries and sales to foreigners. The fear of foreignization of national industry shapes the reaction of the CHP to privatization. For instance, it expresses its contentment over the buying of TÜPRAŞ by ‘national capital’.¹⁴⁹ It evaluates the possibility of sale of Turkish Telecommunications Agency to foreign investors as sale of Turkey. Rather than a problem with neo-liberal economic rationality, nationalism directs the CHP’s attitude toward privatization. Moreover, it is interesting to note that the CHP also opposes to

¹⁴⁷ CHP, *The Report of the Party Assembly to the 29. National Convention*. Ankara: 30 June-1 July 2001, p. 177

¹⁴⁸ CHP, *The Report of the Party Assembly to the 31. National Convention*. Ankara: 19-20 November 2005, p. 216.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

the sale of strategic industries, because these industries can be private monopolies that can disrupt the competitiveness in the market.¹⁵⁰

Identity Politics

The CHP has not incorporated the discourse of identity politics into its program as many social democratic parties in the West did. On the contrary, it always opposed to identity politics. The CHP recognizes only those groups who are recognized as minorities by the Lausanne Treaty, thus it does not accept the definition of the term ‘minority’ in the international agreements. Even in the case of Lausanne minorities, namely Greeks, Armenians and Jews, the CHP’s approach is quite controversial, shaped by consideration of national interest and national security rather than an approach based on democracy and human rights. The CHP supports individual cultural rights for different ethnic, sectarian groups, but is firmly against the notion of recognition of group rights.

On the dimension integration versus identity politics, the CHP can be position on the side of integration. In his speech in the 27. National Convention, Deniz Baykal defines the CHP as the party of *ulusallaşma* (being a nation).¹⁵¹ He claims that Turkey could still not achieve being a nation, which overcomes all local differences, races, tribes and sects. The CHP still retains the Kemalist ambiguity concerning the notion of citizenship. In rhetoric, it adheres to a conception of equal constitutional citizenship, but it has a ethnic definition of citizenship in practice. It has never questioned the belief that the term ‘Turk’ does not denote a specific ethnicity, but an inclusive term of several ethnicities’. Thus, it always emphasizes that people who are a citizen of Turkey

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ CHP, *The Speech of Deniz Baykal in the 27. National Convention*, Ankara: 9-10 September 1998, p. 82.

is a Turk. ¹⁵²In short, like the CHP of the one-party era, the contemporary CHP still holds the formula of ethnicity equal nation in Kemalist nationalism. Like Kemalist nationalism, it includes non-Turkish Muslim groups in the scope of Turkishness, thus it claims its nationalism as inclusive in a Gökalpian fashion. On the other hand, non-Muslims become the eternal ‘others’. For instance, faced with nationalism debates after the murder of Hrant Dink, Deniz Baykal claimed that nationalism was the cement of Turkey. Since it was inclusive, there was no reason to fear the rise of nationalism in society. ¹⁵³The uncritical adoption of this Kemalist formula, in turn, does not allow the CHP to properly understand nature of demands of recognition made by ethnic groups such as Kurds. In the following part, I will focus on two issues, which always haunted modern Turkey as a result of Kemalist nationalism: Kurdish Question and the situation of non-Muslim minorities. The examination of these two cases will enable us clearly perceive the true color of CHP nationalism.

Kurdish Question

The CHP’s attitude toward Kurdish question was shaped by the ‘Southeastern Report’ declared by the SHP on 15 May 1990. Until the report, however, the SHP had remained quite insensitive for an opposition party toward the developments in the Southeast. It had occasionally pointed out to the human rights violations committed by the security forces, however it had paid lip service to the identity dimension of the conflict. While the Kemalist baggage of the CHP was an important factor in this indifference, it was also due to volatile nature of the electoral support in the Southeast as feudalism and Islam influence it. The report was actually reflecting an increase in the emphasis put on democratization in the SHP discourse, because the

¹⁵² CHP, *The Report of the Party Assembly to the 31. National Convention*, Ankara: 19-20 November 2005, pp. 212-213.

¹⁵³ *Radikal*, 31 January 2007.

Kurdish party HEP (Halkın Emeği Partisi) had emerged to defend Kurdish rights. Moreover, other opposition party DYP had founded its discourse on human rights and democratization.¹⁵⁴

Compared to the dominant view in the both state institutions and public opinion that did not even recognized the existence of Kurds, the report was quite radical. It claimed that ‘with the recognition the Kurdish identity, Kurdish-originated citizens should be given opportunities to express their identity freely in every area of life as they wish. In this framework, all bans regarding Kurdish language should be abolished; the rights of citizens to learn their mother tongues, write and teach freely should be guaranteed. Through the abolition of the ban, broadcasting in these languages will also be free.’¹⁵⁵ The report was not calling for the recognition of any group rights for Kurds, however it was proposing Kurds to be given all cultural rights on an individual basis. In a period when even talk of any individual rights, say right to speak mother tongue, was liable to prosecution, the report was very brave and progressive. The SHP may have caught an opportunity to realize these reforms when it became the junior partner in a coalition government led by Demirel’s SDPP. However, both due to strong opposition of state institutions and difficulties of coalition, the SHP could not make good on these promises. On the contrary, during the period of SDPP-DYP coalition, the human rights violations including unknown killings and village evacuations reached a peak in the low-intensity war waged against the PKK in the Southeast.

The program of the newly founded CHP did not adopt a different attitude to Kurdish Question than the SHP. The program has a civic understanding of Turkish

¹⁵⁴ Harald Schüler, *Türkiye’de Sosyal Demokrasi: Particilik, Hemşehrilik, Alevilik*, (İstanbul: İletişim,2002), p. 15.

¹⁵⁵ Hikmet Bila, *CHP 1919-1999*, (İstanbul: Doğan Kitapçılık, 1999), p.386.

citizenship. It emphasizes that the state should be neutral toward ethnic identities as the Program states that ‘Turkish Republic is not based on religion, language, race or ethnicity but on political conscience and unity of ideals’. Opposing assimilation policies, the CHP defends a policy of cultural pluralism that accords to ‘every citizen the right to learn their mother tongues and use every communication facility for this aim.’¹⁵⁶ In his speech in the Party Assembly on 9 December 2000, Deniz Baykal the Chairman of the CHP says that their understanding concerning ethnic issues in the preparation of the Report was shaped by three principles: ‘we are not a republic of race, skull, blood’. The ethnically blind state will not put any restriction on learning and teaching of any language by citizens as Baykal states that

No one can say that ‘don’t teach this language, this is prohibited. No one can say that ‘don’t speak this language. Can’t say that don’t spread this language can’t say that don not make research about your ethnic culture, folklore can’t say that don not develop your dictionary can’t say that do not develop your literature. However, the development of this does not belong to public sphere or is not duty of the state. If we entrust the state with developing this, this causes a great deal of trouble for us as a society, which is at the beginning of nation-building process.’¹⁵⁷

While cultural rights of individuals are recognized, the red line is that state will not involve ethnicity-promotion:

According to our understanding, the duty of the state is not to be involved in official efforts to that would encourage ethnic identities. According to our understanding the state is ethnically blind. It does not see the ethnic origin of its citizen. Moreover it does not need to know it. The state will just see the person as its citizen. It will not see the Kurd, Arabian, Cerhkez, Albanian but just the citizen. It will see just the human and will teach its language, build its road, bring water, provide its education, bring it social security, health but will not deal with differences of identity and ethnicity.’¹⁵⁸

All of these rights would be limited to cultural rights of individuals but would not turn into recognition of cultural group rights for a specific ethnicity since it is dangerous for a nation that is ‘still building itself’. In his speeches, Baykal does not

¹⁵⁶ CHP, *The CHP Program*. Ankara: 1993, p. 48-50.

¹⁵⁷ CHP, *The Speeches of the CHP General Chairman Deniz Baykal*. Ankara: October 2003, p. 64.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

specify through what processes nation-building will be completed. There emerges the logical problem that if the nation-building process in which common language and culture will be emphasized still continues, then it will be contradictory for that state to pursue pluralist cultural policies.

In the following party assembly reports, the CHP persists in its opposition to the grant of group rights to Kurds. There is nothing about state action to redress injustices suffered by minorities. In one of his speeches on social democracy, Baykal makes clear his opposition to identity politics:

The understanding of democracy rejects identity politics directly...you can be leftist, conservative, liberal. All of them are respected, but I will do identity politics, we will organize as 'we' (...) such a thing is unacceptable. If you do identity politics, other will their politics. And the result is chaos (...)¹⁵⁹

It is sensed that after the Party Assembly Report of 30 June 2001, the following two-yearly reports lessen their emphasis on problems in the Southeast and gradually emphasis shifts to the problem of terror. In the Report of May 1998, there is even a part named 'Kurdish Question: Democratic solution to ethnic sensitivities'. It emphasizes opposition to assimilation and states that while Turkey protects unitary state structure, it should adopt features of a multicultural society. In addition to freedom of education and broadcasting in mother tongue, the CHP defends a reform of home rule. The approach to terror is that it should not be excuse in postponing democratization.¹⁶⁰ Village evacuations are criticized in every report. However, the tone or emphasis on these issues diminishes in the reports of 2003 and 2005 despite the decrease in terror incidents compared to 1990s. Especially, the 2005 report focuses only on the issue of terror and demands government to be tougher on terror. Moreover, the word 'Kurdish' disappears in these report and leave its place to the

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ CHP, *The Report of the Party Assembly to the 29. National Convention*, Ankara: 30 June-1 July 2001, p. 182.

‘Southeastern Question’. The increasingly hawkish tone the CHP adopts with regard to Kurdish Question can be attributed to playing to nationalist feelings as Altan Öymen states that ‘..It is not a deliberated policy. It is mostly a result of feelings, reflexes, coincidence... How Ecevit became more successful? For he adopted more nationalist policies...it’s an incoherent policy. It violates the Program. They make policy thinking that what should I do to get more votes?’¹⁶¹ Another explanation is insistence on being a ‘scientific, modern nation’. It can be thought that the Republican policy that would not accept the existence of Kurds or other ethnicities is still influential in the CHP as İsvan states that ‘..the tendency of ignoring the existence of Kurds is in the essence of the CHP. ... Baykal has been defender of this policy in the past and today. He cannot help give up policy of assimilation. He says that ‘we are individuals of the Republic’, but behaves differently in practice.’¹⁶²

Non-Muslim Minorities: An ethnic conception of citizenship

To examine the CHP attitudes toward non-Muslim minorities is quite helpful in grasping what the CHP’s understanding of Turkish citizenship and CHP nationalism. In this part, I will deal with concrete policy issues to understand the meaning of the CHP nationalism in the period under consideration.

The first issue is the stance that the CHP took on the Armenian Genocide claims. In this subject, the CHP was in line with the views of the state establishment and in effect a majority of the population. The CHP dismisses claims that there took place a genocide or massacres of Armenians by Ottomans. On the contrary it believes that Armenians massacred Turks. It even refuses to discuss what happened in 1915 as Onur Öymen states that ‘In Karabag and many places, they massacred many innocent Azeris. ...and they forced 1 million Azeris to leave their homes. This

¹⁶¹ Altan Öymen, interview by author, tape recording, İstanbul, Turkey, 25 June 2008.

¹⁶² Ahmet İsvan, interview by author, tape recording, Yalova, Turkey, 1 July 2008.

is *tehcir*.¹⁶³ According to Öymen, Turkey should also not strive to defend itself in the international arena through opening its archives or finding official documents to prove its innocence. Rather than defending its conduct against Armenians during the WWI Turkey should get rid of its defensive psychology and say ‘one minute’ to anyone mentioning Armenian issue and say that ‘Let’s discuss 1915 but before that let’s talk about today, what is happening today?’ Turkey does not have any fault so it does not need to defend itself or try to justify its deeds as if it made something wrong. On the country it should take the offensive. All Armenian claims are just lies of war that emerged during the World War I. What Turkey needs to do is just to reveal these lies to the world. The initiative of writing a letter to the British Parliament demanding it to declare Blue Book as a war sham was of these diplomatic assaults Öymen had in mind. This ‘active and bold foreign policy’ will not be limited to shouting Turkey’s case to the face of the Westerners. What makes Öymen’s attitude in this respect sound extreme nationalist is that he also wants the dignity of Turkish officials such as Boğazliyan mayor Kemal convicted of war crimes in the Ottoman courts against civil Armenian population to be restored.¹⁶⁴ It emerges from his speeches that even though Turkey did something wrong to Armenians during the war, other states did far worse things in their past, so that firstly they must confront with their past as he states that ‘...when you look at world history as a whole, you see that millions of people were massacred and sent to exile. Most of those who commit these belong to civilized state today....then how ...is all attention paid to Turkey?’

¹⁶⁵ Actually, when we read these sentences with his other speeches, it can surely be said that he believes that Turkey is victim of a conspiracy forged by Great Powers,

¹⁶³ Öymen, Onur. 25 January 2007. Interview in *SKY TÜRK*. Available (online) <http://www.onuroymen.com.c.sadecehosting.com/docs/?C=N%3bO=A> (25 January 2007)

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

which want to weaken Turkey. Not just Armenian issue, but all other ethnic issues are in effect plots of foreign powers which uses ethnic groups ‘to make Turkey small and restrict its sphere of influence’. In dealing with the Armenian issue, Öymen also invokes ‘victimization’ common to many ethnic nationalists. He believes that Turks are an innocent people who are exposed to vicious acts of their enemies as Öymen approvingly quotes a French writer:

Famous French writer Claude Farrare says that ‘Turks are poor. The enemies of Turks are wealthy. Turks do not like to talk much but their enemies love to talk much. Their biggest weapon is lie and they continuously make up lies against Turkey. Now, can you imagine that one can think of Turks as rightful and their enemies as unjust against this reality of the world?’¹⁶⁶

The popular notion that ‘Turks has no friend other than themselves’ is also apparent this discourse.

We are respectful of democracy, everyone can say what he wants...but it hurts us that Turkey is so much humiliated. (...) That is everyone will criticize Turkey abroad Patriarch, minorities, European Parliament, states, Olli Rehn, everyone will hit head of Turkey (...)That is Turk is a person whose head is continually hit(...)¹⁶⁷

Öymen does not see vicious external elements in work only with regard to Armenian issue. Kurdish Question also emerged through provocations of foreign powers ‘Armenian issue is just one dimension...who provoked Kurdish rebellion? One English agent writes about how they worked to separate Kurds from Ottomans, how they worked to establish an independent Kurdish state. We must teach these things to our youth in schools.’¹⁶⁸

The Murder of Hrant Dink and Article 301

The reaction of the CHP to the murder of Hrant Dink discloses the nationalist colour of the CHP’s perception of minorities as represented by Onur Öymen. He expresses the CHP’s dislike about the chanting of ‘we are all Armenians’ in he funeral of Dink:

¹⁶⁶ Öymen, Onur. 27 April 2006. *Interview in TRT INT*. Available (online) <http://www.onuroymen.com.c.sadecehosting.com/docs/%c3%96ymen-TRT%20INT-%2027%20Nisan%202006.doc> (27 April 2006)

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

Some carried banners like ‘Murderer 301’. We said that ‘This is not a correct statement, Article 301 is not responsible for this murder ... to say ‘We are all Armenians’ became a reaction. ...Did anyone say we are all Turks in Armenia when our 40 diplomats, ambassadors were killed by Armenian terrorists?’¹⁶⁹

After condemning the murder, Öymen cautions that this murder should not lead Turkey ‘change its ‘values’, state policies or laws because Dink was killed. He even cannot stand those crowds who shout ‘we all are Hrant, we all are Armenians’ since ‘...unfortunately some people used this event to create psychological terror over those who do not think like them. That is, if you did not support this idea, Hrant Dink would not be killed. Under this influence, you will not change your whole system of thought, policies and laws.’¹⁷⁰ While he sees a simple expression of solidarity with the victim as inimical to Turkey’s interests, he demands those mourning for Dink to remember the national interest and to mourn for the right persons as he states that

(...) we shouldn’t forget persecution, terror endured by our people. Of course Hrant Dink is one of our people but we shouldn’t ignore cruelty done to our people. Does the name Kadir Aydın mean something for you? It is the name of an officer killed by terrorists in the same week of murder of Hrant Dink. Did you read one single article about his death? Or see any demonstration?¹⁷¹

He repeats his party’s view that there is no problem with Article 301 though Dink was publicized as the man insulting Turkishness through the law suit opened because of the violation of Article 301. Applying his argument of ‘national interest’ and reciprocity in defending Article 301, Öymen claims that other EU countries also have similar laws.

Now what do those who want this law to be abrogated want? What are they against? What they say is criticism is not enough for us. We have right of criticism thanks to this law but criticism is not enough we want to humiliate.¹⁷²

As part of insincere and empty rhetoric used also by Baykal, Öymen adds that to solve problems caused by Article 301, a general reform of judiciary should be carried

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid.

out. However, he describes the government as ‘surrendering to the EU’ (teslimiyetçi) when it heeds EU’s call to amend the law. The foreign policy approach based on boldness and resistance maintained by Öymen prescribes what Turkey should do about Article 301. The manifestation of bold and dignified foreign policy is to say to Europeans ‘...there is nothing wrong with the Article 301, this article allows free criticism.’¹⁷³

The fact that the EU advises Turkey to amend Article 301 increases Öymen’s unease with the demands for the amendment of the law since he is generally critical of the EU for dictating to Turkey that it should do this and then that. In Öymen’s opinion, Turkey is capable enough to make reforms on its own, thus does not need advice of anybody to make reforms. Öymen gives the example of reforms of modernization to prove his idea that Turkey does not need external prodding to make reforms. Moreover, Öymen believes that EU should not lecture Turkey about human rights and democracy, because Turkey’s records on these issues are better than the EU as he sates that

Legendijk dared to give advice to us about minority rights, Article 301. I said to him ‘Look, the Inquisition tried to evangelize Jews by force in 1492 in Spain. We saved oppressed Jews then they have lived in peace and security for 500 years. Now, is such a country one that needs to take lessons from you?’¹⁷⁴

Öymen uses the same nationalist cliché that Turks are a tolerant people and invokes practices of the Ottoman period.

The CHP discourse as represented by Öymen shares another feature with the general nationalist discourse: the internal and external wicked forces. These forces are interconnected and internal ones are mostly exploited by the external one:

¹⁷³ Öymen, Onur. 10 March 2007. *Onur Öymen’s Speech in the Chamber of agricultural engineers – Article 301 and its kinds in Europe*. Available (online) <http://www.onuroymen.com.c.sadecehosting.com/arsiv/603> (10 March 2007)

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

These circles, which give advice to Turkey is not just EU or foreigners. They have their internal connections ... what disturbs us most the internal extensions of these foreign circles, which pressurize Turkey. They are situated in the media, in universities. They emerge as its spokesman when a pressure or demand come from abroad (...) they are like slaves of foreigners...they take financial assistance from foreigners (...) they see people who defend interests of Turkey as the enemy (...) these own newspapers, too. We are grieving while reading them.¹⁷⁵

Öymen is quite reactionary against European influence. His reactionary attitude is similar to Kenan Evren's responses to European criticisms of the human rights violations of the junta. His Atatürkism is devoid of Westernist component of Kemalism. Öymen is also like saying to Europe that 'don't meddle with our model of democracy'. Haluk Koç, in an interview with Neşe Düzel, also defends the view that Turkish democracy will be different from that in Europe because of Turkey's dangerous geographical position. Here, one cannot help remembering Recep Peker who was also defending that every country should its own regime: 'orange does not grow in the Zigana'.¹⁷⁶ Here it can be said that the CHP also gave up the flag of modernism and Westernism. The problem with these academicians, journalists, writers is not specifically they hold Article 301 responsible for murder of Dink. Rather, he accuses them of accepting every idea coming from Europe as true.

The CHP attitude concerning the reform of the Law of Foundations clearly shows that the CHP sees its role basically as the guardianship of the state interest as defined by the state. In the viewpoint of the CHP, the problem with the Law of Foundations is that it violates the rule of reciprocity in the Lausanne Treaty by giving rights to them without seeking reciprocity from Greece. There is no reference to universal human rights, let alone rights accorded by Lausanne to the Lausanne-

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Taha Parla, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Kültürün Resmi Kaynakları: Kemalist Tek Parti İdeolojisi ve CHP'nin Altı Ok'u* (The Official Sources of Political Culture in Turkey: Kemalist One-party Ideology and the Six Arrows of the CHP), (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1991), p. 135.

minorities in the discourse of the CHP. Öymen criticizes the government of giving concessions without anything in return. He still uses the rhetoric that they want whatever the most liberal rights in the modern world to be given, but then he cautions that ‘let’s think about people on the other side’. He asks ‘are Muslims Turks living in Greece not human?’ He accuses the government of violating the 1936 Law which according to him brought ‘a very firm order’ and ‘a successful system according to them (the CHP)’. In other words, what Öymen says is that Turkey should follow the restrictive policies of Greece regarding minority rights. As long as Greece persists in its restrictive policies against its Turkish minority, Turkey should apply same policies against the Greek minority. If Turkey acts differently and implements international norms in its dealings with minorities, its behavior is ‘generous’. Such generous behavior without reciprocity is the Article 151 of the Sevr Treaty.¹⁷⁷

The CHP had opposed to amendments in the Law of Foundations which would make minorities equal in that respect. Concerning the demands of the Patriarchy for the opening of Halki Seminary, Öymen also takes common-sense nationalist position in Turkey: ‘It is necessary to talk about something openly. Unfortunately, during the Independence War when Turkey and Istanbul was occupied The Patriarchy played a very negative role. Thus Atatürk and Ismet Pasha tried hard to deport it....’¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁷ Öymen, Onur. 10 March 2007. *Onur Öymen’s Speech in the Chamber of agricultural engineers – Article 301 and its kinds in Europe*. Available (online)

<http://www.onuroymencom.c.sadecehosting.com/arsiv/603>(10 March 2007)

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

In the part on the structure, we saw that there are no proper membership records in the CHP. Most members are falsely recorded by the party center and local organizations which want to strengthen their position in the congresses. In the CHP, there were always interference in the membership records, however the level of manipulation of membership registration is very high today. The reason why we attach so much importance to membership registration is that when there takes place political interference in the membership registration, it is inevitable that intra-party democracy will disappear. Today, the party center and its connections in districts write thousand of false members. Then, these members elect delegates in villages and districts who would go to the district congress to elect the organs of the district and delegates that would be sent to the province. As a result of the abuse of the membership lists, the rule that the party chairman and central organs of the party will be elected through four stages of delegation is reversed. In the CHP, the party chairman and his circle elect delegates who were supposed to elect them.

It may be asked that why local organizations are complying with the demands of the center. Since the party center scored several electoral defeats since 1992, why is the party organization not showing any reaction against the party center? For instance, after the defeat in the 1950 election, the party organization had taken the right of candidate nomination from the party center led by Ismet İnönü. Here, enters into the picture the ‘structure’ that developed since 1972. Ismet İnönü had not needed to create an organization that is dependent on himself. His charismatic authority emanating from history was enough to make him the last decision-maker in the party. Moreover, İnönü was not a factional leader; on the contrary he was a man of balance.

He was especially careful in keeping different groups vying for power in the party together. For instance, while Ecevit group was dominant in the Central Executive Council of the party, another group was dominant in the Party Assembly. He was first among equals. Under his chairmanship, you could count a dozen of prominent personalities in the party. After Ecevit became the chairman of the party, lacking the charismatic authority of İnönü, he tried to create an organization that is dependent on himself. It can be said that the example of one-man rule and effort to create dependent organization was set by Ecevit and Baykal emulates him today. In this period, violations of membership registration and dismissal of party organization that is not in line with the party center started. However, unlike today, he could not be counted as a dictator, since he had the legitimacy that the electoral victories had bestowed upon him.

Today the leadership of the CHP has neither a legitimacy deriving from their historical mission nor from their electoral successes. Thus, the leadership the main goal of which is to cling to power has to apply every anti-democratic measures that it could to protect its position. Another factor that contributed to the formation of the contemporary structure of the CHP was the change in the sociological character of the membership. The leftist rhetoric of the CHP and credibility of Ecevit in conveying this rhetoric to people attracted newly emerging professionals and urban working class to the CHP. The old local notables increasingly left their places to these groups in the CHP organizations through intra-party struggles. They were expecting that the involvement in party politics would provide them with material benefits such as jobs in state bureaucracy, mayoralities. After 1972, in response to these demands, the Ecevit administration spread the base of clientelistic politics in the party. The fact that the CHP was close to power and even came to power for

period provided the material base for the enlargement of clientelism and patronage in the party. However, after the military cut their ties with the state in 1980, they turned into private entrepreneurs. Hence, the enbourgeoisement of the CHP cadres started. They found good opportunities for themselves when the SDPP came to power in a majority of provinces and became part of the coalition government. This closeness with power added corruption to the embourgeoisement. A group of contractors were providing the necessary support for politicians in the Congresses in return for public contracts.

Clientelism has been and is very widespread in Turkish politics since the beginning of the competitive politics. What makes it so problematic in the CHP may be the fact that it was not at the same level in the CHP until 1972 as in other right-wing parties. This is a subject that requires further research. The factional struggles of the 1970s had nothing to do with ideology. The biggest factional group that struggled against Ecevit founded the CHP in 1992. Deniz Baykal, the leader of this group, gradually turned his faction into his own party. It can be said that today this process has reached its culmination as witnessed by Deniz Baykal wins the chairmanship in the National Conventions. After 1980s, factions in both the SDPP and CHP had closed their doors to further participation because the resources they can reach were increasingly getting meager since the electoral power of the parties was in an inexorable decline. It must be remembered that they were basically clientelistic groups buttressed by bonds of ethnicity, family and sectarianism, not groups differing on ideology. Their only aim was to get enough vote to protect their positions in the party. Power itself had turned into a goal.

There are also today no ideological wings in the party. There may emerge sometimes disagreements between the chairman and others, but is not because of any

difference of opinion. The fact that the chairman decides nomination for every level of election is enough to keep everyone quiet. As a result, in the CHP, policies are not discussed in the central party organs. The chairman comes and ‘says’ his policies, others cannot dare to disagree with that for fear of losing their positions. In the Assembly Group, the chairman comes, speaks and parliamentarians applaud him. As in policies such New Left, Anatolian Left or Unity for Republic, policies are solely products of his own mind. If he decides to forget them, they disappear without leaving any impact. For them to leave an impact, they had to be discussed in party organs and organizations. However, such a process did not take place in the CHP, in the central organs of which let alone a process of decision-formation starting from the base, matters of politics are even not debated in the central party organs. This is also because of the fact that prominent personalities of the party were forced to leave the party through purges.

The party center does not see local party organizations as units that send information and policy proposals with regard to their specific regions. Their only duty is to provide delegates to vote for Baykal in the National Convention. Unless they violate this duty, the center can tolerate and legitimize whatever they do. They can illegally dismiss a lower level or violate the statute. This is the tacit agreement between the center and organizations that the structure rests on. It is not necessary for them to agree with the center about party policies. The sociological character of Baykalists in the provinces should be remembered again here. They are mostly contractor-plus-politicians who are mostly involved in politics for material interest. The combination of their factional-clientelism with the absence of intra-party democracy prevents the brainpower of the educated middle class to contribute to the rule of the party. Thus, even it’s given opportunity, it’s in vain to expect that this

structure dominated by incompetence and mediocrity to make intellectual debate and produce sound policy. Then, it can be asked that apart from their usual ‘party work’, what do these people do? What do they believe in? How do they perceive their party, Turkey and the world? To be able to answer these questions, further extensive field research should be undertaken especially to validate the belief that lumpenization dominates the CHP base.

Applying the classification of Strom to the CHP, we can classify it as a vote-seeking and office-seeking party. Firstly, The amount debate taking in the party organs of the CHP is very low. Party organs do not meet on a regular basis and are not venues for debate. The character of debate is not issue-focused, but scattered determined by daily developments. Only the leader and his circle is involved in the policy-making process. Secondly, since policies are not discussed in party platforms, consistency is medium to low. However, on some issues such as secularism and opposition to identity politics, it is obvious that the CHP shows strong consistency. Inconsistency is mostly due to a desire to gain electoral advantage and fluctuations in the attitudes and of the leadership. Thirdly, policy does not play an important role in the conduct of the electoral campaigns of the CHP. The absence of a program involving concrete policies makes the CHP mostly rely on ideological issues and symbols, such as Atatürk and the protection of secular Republic. The strategy for elections is not determined according to policies, but varies according to a perception of public mood. The electoral campaign revolves around the general chairman and the emphasis on the party’s ideological identity as the founder of the Republic and party of Atatürk. Lastly, the party has a very minimal research infrastructure. There are commissions dealing with certain issue-areas, however, they work irregularly and

publish reports on specific events rather than position papers such as the Southeast Report of the SHP.

The transformation of the CHP into an office and vote seeking party led it to rely more on Kemalist ideology and its symbols to mobilize its party base and obtain support of other social groups. In the past, the CHP had presented a program of modernization to the society that is in line with the dominant paradigm in the world. The narrative of the 1920s and 1930s was secularization, Westernization and the building of nation-state. Then, with the changing of the international conjuncture came the transition to competitive politics. This was followed by a narrative of developmentalist economy and regulated democracy in line with the understanding of the modernization theories of 1950s and 1960s. We do not claim that these projects were flawless both in their logic and implementation. For instance, the nationalist logic that determined the process of nation-building proved and proves to be quite problematic for Turkish modernization. What we emphasize is that the CHP lacks such a project today.

Throughout this period, the CHP pursued a coherent policy with regard to Kemalist secularism. It always held the line that there must be strict separation between religion and politics. Opposing to any role for religion or manifestation of religious symbols in the public realm, it respected religion as long as it remains in the private realm. For instance, it dismissed all arguments made on behalf of individual freedoms in the case of headscarf usage in the universities. This was also related to the mission that the CHP assumed for itself. Like the conservative republicans of 1960s, the survival of the state has come before democracy for the CHP. Thus, even though a ban on individual freedoms contradicted with democracy, the CHP opted for the security of secular state. The conservative democrats had been disturbed by

the rapid emergence of new movements such as Kurdish nationalism and socialism in 1960s. The CHP of post-1992 period was perplexed by the rise of Islamic Movement and increasingly reduced its mission to the protection of the Republic against the Islamists.

Kemalist nationalism was also a defining aspect of the CHP ideology in the post-1992 period. Actually, there has never been a period that the main assumptions of Kemalist nationalism were questioned and subjected to vigorous debate. The CHP always emphasized the inclusive aspects of Kemalist nationalism, but never dealt with its ambiguities. It still claimed that Turk is not term defining an ethnic group but an inclusive term that stands for all citizens of Turkey. With regard to Kurdish question, the CHP never went beyond recognition of individual rights for Kurdish citizens. In the 1990s, the CHP emphasized the democratization aspect of the Kurdish question and demanded that terror not be an obstacle before the democratization process. However, after 2003, a change of tone and emphasis took place in the discourse of the CHP as witnessed by the CHP party documents. It gradually dropped the democratization issues from its agenda and shifted its emphasis to the struggle with terrorism. One reason for this was that when the AKP enthusiastically embraced the EU reform process, the CHP took more skeptical and unwilling stances on democratization in opposition. The change in the attitude of the CHP is also related to political and international developments in 2003. After the American intervention in Iraq, terror incidents had started to increase anew and this contributed to the rise of nationalism in Turkey. Moreover, diplomatic efforts for the resolution of Cyprus issue culminated in a referendum in 2004 and this further stirred nationalists in Turkey who opposed to the Annan Plan. Thus, when the existing

nationalist heritage of the CHP came together with political developments in Turkey, the CHP nationalism started to resemble nationalism of the Union and Progress.

The nationalist and statist color of the CHP ideology is most vividly revealed in the attitudes of the CHP toward non-Muslim minorities. The CHP evaluated the problems of non-Muslim minorities such as property of their foundations in the framework of national security. It did not perceive them as equal citizens of Turkey and their rights as a necessity of human rights. They were rather foreigners living in Turkey as a result of the Lausanne agreement. Despite the claim that ‘Turk’ is a civic term, it always referred to Turks living in Balkans as ‘soydaşlarımız’ (people of the same race). It never addressed this ambiguity.

In socioeconomic policy, although the CHP program envisions an economic system along the Third Way lines, in practice it avoided presenting a distinct economic vision or program. While it surely advocated policies such as universal health care and free education, it did not profess an egalitarian discourse. Its economic policy did not go beyond specific election promises before elections. Its nationalism rather than a social concern with the results of neo-liberal economics defined its attitude toward privatization. It opposed to privatizations in which the foreigners were buyers. In the same line, it opposed to sale of land to foreigners. Since the CHP did not come to power in this period, we cannot know how its conduct would be government. However, it’s safe to say that there is clearly no criticism of neo-liberal economics in the CHP discourse. It’s rather concerned with the impact of the globalization on the control of the economy by the nation state.

Concerning the EU process, the attitude of the CHP was quite incoherent. Deniz Baykal and Onur Öymen had played an important role during Turkey’s participation in the Customs Union. The CHP also supported the EU reform

packages enacted by the AKP until 2004. However, the CHP started to change its stance on the EU. This incoherence had partially to do with the fact that it had never thought over issues of character of integration with the EU, economic system, foreign relations. This was also a fine-tuning for electoral advantage in the face of increasing nationalist reaction in 2004 as a result of Cyprus referendum. However, the most important factor expressed in the speeches of Deniz Baykal was that the EU's ambivalent attitude against Turkey. In both party documents and Baykal's speeches, the EU is criticized for issues of permanent derogations, open-ended negotiation process and condition of absorption capacity.

Faced with the rise of identity politics and Islamist politics, it assumed the role of defender of the status quo, defending the Republic against Islamist and Kurdish nationalists. Whether or not real, the CHP perceives the demands of these groups as threats to the unity and secularism principle of the Republic. Thus, I argue that this fear caused it to restrict its discourse to a single issue and adopt a statist approach to problems encountered in the transformation of society and state relations in this period. Its leader reduced politics and social democratic ideology to an issue of image. The resulting gap was tried to be filled by Kemalist shibboleths. It has been long since discourse of a mission of renewal and surpassing contemporary age left the CHP's discourse. The main principle that governs the logic of the leader in his choices of policies and emphasizing one of the ideological legacies that the CHP is his thought of what can appeal to the people in each election. He believes that without appealing to right-wing the CHP cannot come to power. Thus, at least on issues under our consideration he espoused nationalist views to get vote of right wing voters because of his belief that the number of left-leaning voters is too small to advocate policies that would get their support. The fact that the original ideology of

the CHP is a right-wing ideology aggravated the shift to right. This thesis also argued that there is a certain amount of truth to this approach, because all electoral studies show that the shift of the Turkish voters to the right beginning in 1970s reached a peak in 1990s. So there is a link between shift of the CHP to the right and the general shift of the party system.

Based on classification of dimensions of an ideology by Lijphart, the socio-economic dimension of the CHP ideology is very close to neo-liberalism. This is not only valid for the CHP, but there has been convergence of the right-wing and social democrats on neo-liberal economic policies. Firstly, today, the CHP supports private ownership of means of production with the exception of only a few strategic industries. Moreover, it also does not oppose even to their privatization unless they are sold to foreign investors. Secondly, it limits government involvement in the economy to only redressing of regional inequalities and direction of the private capital toward high-tech industries at least in its program. Thirdly, it emphasizes production and competitiveness more than social justice. Apart from supporting free education and health care, redistribution is not on its agenda. Thus, there is no considerable difference between the economic discourse of the CHP and a center right party.

On the dimension of the secular v. denominational, the CHP is strongly secular. This CHP position on this dimension also determines CHP's position on the democratic v. authoritarian dimension. Secularism comes before democracy for the CHP. In principle, it accepts civilian supremacy in politics, but it tolerates military interference in politics when it perceives that secularism is endangered. It is not certain that whether the CHP would act differently if the EU reforms were to be carried out by another party other than moderate Islamist AKP. On the dimension of

the ethnicity v. integration, the CHP is clearly a party that supports integration. It is a staunch supporter of the unitary state and does not want ethnic differences to be represented in the public space as it does not want religious symbols to have a place in public space. The CHP wants these differences to remain in the private sphere and gradually fade away for the consolidation of the nation state. It loathes identity politics which can institutionalize different identities and weaken nation state.

Faced with the emphasis on national security, national interest and national unity in the discourse of the CHP, is it possible to qualify the CHP as a social democratic party. If we conceive leftism as equal to nationalism, we can qualify it as a social democratic party. However, the CHP is clearly not a social democratic party. Its statism and nationalism deriving from its original ideology of Kemalism makes it a rightwing party. Moreover, concerning Westernization, the CHP has a more Gökalpian attitude which derides the influence of Western democracy but accepts only its technique. Since the party has never made a critical and vigorous review of its Kemalist heritage and involved in futile synthesis efforts, it could never become a genuine social democratic choice to the masses.

It is hoped that this study showed the futility of expectations in the public opinion from the social democratic CHP.

APPENDIX

Appendix A

THE CASES THAT THE RPP BROUGHT TO THE CONSTITUTIONAL COURT

- 1) The application for the nullification of the amendment (Number 766, 10.04.03) made in the Bylaw of the Turkish Grand National Assembly on 15 April, 2003.
- 2) The application for the nullification of the amendment (Number 4839, 03.04.03) made in the Law of Turkish Republic Pension Fund on 3 April, 2003
- 3) The application for the nullification of the Law about the Organization and tasks of the Ministry of Tourism (4848, 16.04.03) made on 8 May, 2003
- 4) The application for the nullification of the budget Law of the 2003 fiscal year (4833, 29.03.03) made on 15 May, 2003
- 5) The application for the nullification of the law about additional taxes required for economic stability (4837, 03.04.03) made on 29 May, 2003
- 6) The application for the nullification of the Law about the Organization and tasks of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (Number 4856, 01.05.03) made on 19 June, 2003
- 7) The application for the nullification of the Law about the elimination of the incentive account of employee savings and payments to be made from this account (4853, 24.04.03) made on 19 June, 2003
- 8) The application for the nullification of the Law of Employment (4857, 22.05.03) made on 11 July, 2003
- 9) The application for the nullification of the law that amends the Turkish Republic Pension Fund (4919, 08.07.03) made on 28 July, 2003.
- 10) The application for the nullification of the law that amended the decree law about the Organization and Tasks of the Ministry of Finance (4916, 03.07.03) made 4 August, 2003.
- 11) The application for the nullification of the Law about Foreign Direct Investment (4875, 05.06.03) made on 17 June, 2003
- 12) The application for the nullification of the Law that brought tax exemption to the foundations (4962, 30.07.03). The RPP filed the suit on 11 August 2003.
- 13) The application for the nullification of the Law about amendments in some laws and decree laws (4969, 31.07.03) The RPP filed the suit on 8 October, 2003
- 14) The application for the nullification of the Law about the Foundation and tasks of the General Management of National Lottery Institution (4971,01.08.03) The CHP filed the suit on 9 October 2003
- 15) The application for the nullification of the amendment in the Law of Forestry (4999, 05.11.03). The CHP filed the suit on 21 November 2003
- 16) The application for the nullification of the Law that add a transitory article to the Law of the Scientific and Research Council of Turkey (5016, 10.12.03) The CHP filed the suit on 23 December, 2003
- 17) The application for the nullification of the law about the amendment of the Basic Law of National Education (5005, 03.12.03). The CHP filed the suit on 9 January, 2004.
- 18) The application for the nullification of the Law about the foundation and tasks of the Turkish Institute of Patent (5000, 06.11.03) The CHP filed the suit on 15 January, 2004.

- 19) The application for the nullification of the Law about the transactions related to the Turkish Development Bank (Türkiye İmar Bankası) (Number, 5021, 16.12.03) The CHP filed the suit on 15 January, 2004.
- 20) The application for the nullification of the Law about the public financial administration and control (Number 5018, 10.12.03) The CHP filed the suit on 20 February, 2004.
- 21) The application for the nullification of the Budget Law of the financial year of 2004 (Number 5027, 24.12.03). The CHP filed the suit on 24 February, 2004.
- 22) The application for the nullification of the Law about amendments in some laws (Number 5035, 25.12.03). The CHP filed the suit on 27 February, 2004.
- 23) The application for the nullification of the Law about scholarships to be given to students in higher education (Number 5102, 03.03.04) The CHP filed the suit on 4 February, 2004.
- 24) The application for the nullification of the Law that amends the Law of Cooperatives (5146, 21.04.04) The CHP filed the suit on 11 June 2004)
- 25) The application for the nullification of the Law that amends the Law of Public Housing and the decree law about its general cadre and procedure (Number 5162,21.04.04) The CHP filed the suit on 8 July, 2004.
- 26) The application for the nullification of the Law about the foundation of Ethics Council of Public Servants and amendments in some laws (Number 5176, 25.05.04) The CHP filed the suit on 8 July, 2004.
- 27) The application for the nullification of the Law about Pastures (Number 5178, 27.05.04) The CHP filed the suit on 8 July, 2004.
- 28) The application for the nullification of amendments in the Law of mining and some other laws (Number 5177, 26.05.04). The CHP filed the suit on 23 July 2004.
- 29) The application for the nullification of the Law about the amendment of the decree law about the production, consumption and supervision of food (Number 5179, 27.05.04) The CHP filed the suit on 23 July 2004.
- 30) The application for the nullification of the Law that makes amendments in some laws (Number 5189, 16,06.04) The CHP filed the suit on 23 July 2004.
- 31) The application for the nullification of the amendment in the Law of Forestry (Number 5192, 17.06.04) The CHP filed the suit on 23 July 2004.
- 32) The application for the nullification of the amendment in the Law that regulates the prosecution of civil servants and other public servants (Number 5232, 17.07.04) The CHP filed the suit on 3 August 2004.
- 33)The application for the nullification of the Law of Metropolitan Municipality (Number 5216, 10.07.04). The CHP filed the suit on 12 August 2004.
- 34)The application for the nullification of the Law of Press (Number 5187, 09.06.04). The CHP filed the suit on 17 August 2004.
- 35)The application for the nullification of the amendments in the Basic Law of National Education and the Law of State officials (number 5204, 30.06.04) The CHP filed the suit on 2 September 2004.
- 36)The application for the nullification of amendments in the Law of Health Services (Number 5220, 14.20.04) The CHP filed the suit on 8 September 2004.
- 37)The application for the nullification of the Law of Encouragement of Cultural Investments and Initiatives (Number 5225, 14.07.04) The CHP filed the suit on 8 September 2004.
- 38)The application for the nullification of the Law about the transfer of Pamukbank Company to Turkish People's Bank and amendments in some laws (Number 5230, 16.07.04). The CHP filed the suit on 27 September 2004.

- 39)The application for the nullification of the Turkish Penal Code (Number 5237, 26.09.04). The CHP filed the suit on 14 October 2004.
- 40)The application for the nullification of the amendments made in some laws and decree laws (Number 5234, 17.09.04) The CHP filed the suit on 11 November 2004).
- 41) The application for the nullification of the Law of Foundations (Number 5253, 04.11.04). The CHP filed the suit on 30 November, 2004.
- 42)The application for the nullification of the Law of the Mayoralties (5272, 07.12.04) because of procedural irregularities. The CHP filed the suit on 31 December 2004.
- 43) The application for the nullification of the Budget Law of the 2005 financial year (number 5277, 28.12.04). The CHP filed the suit on 14 January 2005.
- 44)The additional application for the nullification of the Law of Foundations (Number 5253, 04.11.04).The CHP filed the suit on 19 January 2005.
- 45)The application for the nullification of the Law about the pilot application of family medicine (Number 5258, 24.11.04). The CHP filed the suit on 28 January 2005.
- 46) The application for the nullification of the Law about the transfer of some health units that belonged to some public institutions and organizations to the Ministry of Health (Number 5283, 06.01.05). The CHP filed the suit on 4 February 2005
- 47) The application for the nullification of the Law that abolished the General Management of Village Services and amendments made in some laws (Number 5286, 13.01.05). The CHP filed the suit on 17 February 2005.
- 48)The application for the nullification of the Law of Mayoraltiesbecause of its content (5272, 07.12.04). The CHP filed the suit on 17 February 2005.
- 49)The application for the nullification of the Law of Provincial Special Administration (Number 5302, 22.02.05). The CHP filed the suit on 1 April 2005.
- 50)The application for the nullification of amendment made in the decree law about the foundation and tasks of the marine undersecretary (Number 5310, 02.03.05).The CHP filed the suit on 11 May 2005.
- 51)The application for the nullification of the amendment made in the Law of Police Organization (Number 5337, 27.04.05). The CHP filed the suit on 20 May 2005.
- 52)The application for the nullification of the law that make amendments in some laws and decree laws (5335, 21.04.05). The CHP filed the suit on 26 May 2005.
- 53)The application for the nullification of the law that make amendments in some laws (5340, 28.04.05). The CHP filed the suit on 9 June 2005.
- 54)The application for the nullification of the Law about the organization and tasks of the Revenue Administration Chairmanship (5345, 05.05.05).The CHP filed the suit on 23 June 2005.
- 55)The additional application for the nullification of the law that makes amendments in some laws and decree laws (5335, 21.04.05). The CHP filed the suit on 23 June 2005.
- 56) The application for the nullification of the Article 91 of the bylaw of the Turkish Grand National Assembly (855, 30.06.05).The CHP filed the suit on 1 July 2005.
- 57) The application for the nullification of the Law about the occupational organizations of artisans and craftsmen (5362, 07.06.05). The CHP filed the suit on 8 July 2005.
- 58) The application for the nullification of the Law that makes amendments in the Turkish Penal Code (5377, 29.06.05).The CHP filed the suit on 12 July 2005.

- 59) The application for the nullification of the Law about the foundation of the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (5376, 29.06.2005) The CHP filed the suit on 4 July 2005.
- 60) The application for the nullification of the Law about the associations of local administrations (Mahalli İdare Birlikleri) (5355, 26.05.05)The CHP filed the suit on 26 July 2005.
- 61) The application for the nullification of the Law about the land protection and its usage (5403, 03.07.05). The CHP filed the suit on 26 July 2005.
- 62) The application for the nullification of the laws that amends the Law of Metropolitan Mayoralties (5390, 02.07.05).The CHP filed the suit on 28 July 2005.
- 63) The application for the nullification of the Law of Municipality (5393, 03.07.05). The CHP filed the suit on 28 July 2005.
- 64) The application for the nullification of the law that regulates practices of privatization and makes amendments in some laws and decree laws (5398, 03.07.05). The CHP filed the suit on 2 August 2005
- 65) The application for the nullification of the Law that makes amendments in some laws (5397, 03.07.05). The CHP filed the suit on 16 August 2005
- 66) The additional application for the nullification of the law that regulates practices of privatization and makes amendments in some laws and decree laws (5398, 03.07.05).The CHP filed the suit on 16 September 2005.

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