

# The National Outlook Movement's Vision of Capitalist Society in Turkey (1968-1980)

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## Approvals

“The National Outlook Movement’s Vision of Capitalist Society in Turkey (1968-1980),” a thesis prepared by Leman Meral Ünal in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts from the Atatürk Institute for Modern Turkish History at Boğaziçi University, has been approved on 2 June 2020 by:

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## Declaration of Originality

The intellectual content of this thesis, which has been written by me and for which I take full responsibility, is my own, original work, and it has not been previously or concurrently submitted elsewhere for any other examination or degree of higher education. The sources of all paraphrased and quoted materials, concepts, and ideas are fully cited, and the admissible contributions and assistance of others with respect to the conception of the work as well as to linguistic expression are explicitly acknowledged herein.



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## Abstract

The National Outlook Movement's Vision of Capitalist Society in Turkey  
(1968-1980)

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Professor Asım Karaömerlioğlu, Thesis Advisor

As the first openly Islamist movement in the Turkish legal political scene, the National Outlook Movement came into existence with the foundation of the National Order Party under Necmettin Erbakan's leadership in 1970 and, over time, became the symbol of the transformation of Islamism into a bona fide political movement. The movement attempted to produce an anti-capitalist and anti-establishment discourse so as to address the demands of those who felt excluded by the capitalist transformation experienced by Turkey in the late 1940s and 1950s, which led to major changes in the political and socioeconomic fabric. Aside from not a few genuine critiques of capitalism, its economic and social program in the 1970s formulated as "moral and material development" is very similar to capitalism in terms of proposed solutions. For instance, private ownership of the means of production and private property, which were the inherent logic of capitalism, were flatly defended on the basis of the assumption that Islam already recognizes these "rights". Concordantly, while the concept of interest, defined as "non-labor earning", is evidently rejected, other forms of unethical beneficiaries such as working for someone else, hiring of wage labor and income from rent and trade are not condemned. Moreover, owing to the merchant identity of the prophet of Islam, it feels a special admiration for commerce as well as merchants. Parallel to this, since the very beginning, it has attempted to be an enthusiastic supporter of these small and medium-sized capital-owning class against big industrialists. In that regard, during the 1970s the two political parties of the National Outlook Movement refrained from pressing an

anti-establishment or anti-capitalism stance, choosing rather to serve as eager proponents of capitalism without mentioning its name.

32,546 words



## Özet

Milli Görüş Hareketi'nin Kapitalist Toplum Anlayışı (1968-1980)

Leman Meral Ünal, Yüksek Lisans Adayı, 2020

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Profesör Asım Karaömerlioğlu, Tez Danışmanı

Türkiye'nin yasal siyasal alandaki ilk açık İslami hareketi olan Milli Görüş Hareketi, 1970 yılında Necmettin Erbakan liderliğindeki Milli Nizam Partisi'nin kurulmasıyla ortaya çıkmış, zaman içinde İslamcılığın –kelimenin gerçek anlamıyla- bir siyasal harekete dönüşmesinin sembolü olmuştur. Hareket, Türkiye'nin 1940'lar sonu ve 1950'ler boyunca deneyimlediği ve toplumsal dokuda büyük değişimlere neden olan kapitalist dönüşüm nedeniyle kendisini dışlanmış hissedenlere seslenebilmek için kapitalizm ve müesses nizam karşıtı bir söylem üretmeye çalışmıştır. Ne var ki 1970'ler boyunca Milli Görüş'ün “maddi ve manevi kalkınma” olarak formüle ettiği ekonomik ve sosyal programı, kapitalizme sahici bir eleştiri sunmak şöyle dursun sunduğu çözüm önerileri bakımından kapitalizme oldukça benzemektedir. Örneğin, kapitalizmi diğer üretim ilişkilerinden ayıran en temel belirleyicilerden olan üretim araçlarının özel sahipliği ve özel mülkiyet, “İslam'ın bu ‘hakları’ zaten tanıdığı” iddiasına dayanılarak açıkça savunulur. Benzer şekilde, “emek verilmemiş kazanç” olduğu gerekçesiyle faiz kavramı kesin bir dille reddedilirken, emek gücünün kiralanması, birisi için çalışmak ve kira ya da ticaret geliri elde etmek gibi diğer emeksiz kazanç biçimleri oldukça normal karşılanır. Yine İslam peygamberinin tüccar kimliğinin etkisiyle, tüccarlığa ve ticari faaliyete özel bir hayranlık duyulur. Buna paralel olarak, en başından beri büyük sanayiciler karşısında bizzat bu küçük ve orta boy sermaye sahibi sınıfların temsilciliği üstlenilir. Bu bağlamda, Milli Görüş'ün 1970'li yıllardaki iki siyasal partisi, müesses nizam ve kapitalizm karşıtlığının değil, telaffuz edilmekten kaçınılan kapitalizmin hevesli bir savunucusu olmuştur.



32,546 kelime







To my mother and father

## Table of Contents

List of Figures	<i>xiv</i>
Glossary of Non-English Terms	<i>xiv</i>
Abbreviations and Acronyms	<i>xv</i>
Acknowledgements	<i>xviii</i>
1 INTRODUCTION	1
2 THE NATIONAL OUTLOOK MOVEMENT: THE FIRST REPRESENTATIVE OF TURKISH ISLAMISM IN THE LEGAL POLITICAL SCENE	7
2.1 The First Political Party of Islamism: The National Order Party	7
2.2 The National Salvation Party	20
3 POLITICAL MOBILIZATION IN TURKEY IN THE 1970S: THE YEARS OF STRUGGLE UNDER THE CRISIS OF HEGEMONY	37
3.1 The economic background of the decade of the 1970s	39
3.2 Legal framework of the political and social life in the 1960s and 1970s	40
3.3 The intensification of the political crisis and the unstable political environment	43
3.4 From infancy to the class for itself: The Turkish capitalist class in the 1970s	44
3.5 The years when workers stood up as a class	46
4 A SYMBOLIC WINDOW OPENING INTO THE RELATION BETWEEN THE NATIONAL OUTLOOK MOVEMENT AND CAPITALISM: ERBAKAN'S ABORTIVE CHAIRMANSHIP IN THE TURKISH UNION OF CHAMBERS	53
4.1 The impact of great structural transformations in the 1950s on the emergence of the National Outlook Movement	54
4.2 The Union of Chambers as a class organization	56
4.3 Erbakan's short-lived chairmanship in the Turkish Union of Chambers	60

5	THE NATIONAL OUTLOOK'S UNDERSTANDING OF CAPITALISM IN 1970S: CAPITALISM WITHOUT CAPITALISM	75
5.1	The elastic formulation of the National Outlook's anti-capitalist claim: 'Moral and material development'	73
5.1.1	The National Outlook's Islamic critique of the mainstream economics: The condemnation of interest	75
5.1.1.1	A litmus for the National Outlook's anti-capitalist claim: Its view on the question of workers versus employers	80
5.1.2	The Regional Development Companies	82
5.1.3	The pseudo anti-imperialism of the National Outlook: Establishing an Islamic common market	84
5.1.4	'Morality and spirituality first' against capitalist modernization	86
5.1.5	The National Outlook's small businesses representation	88
6	CONCLUSIÓN	95
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	101

## List of Figures

- Figure 1.1 The logo of the National Order Party p. 16  
Figure 1.2 The emblem of the National Salvation Party p. 28

## Glossary of Non-English Terms

Asr-ı Saadet	Age of happiness
Hadis	A narrative record of the sayings of prophet of Islam
Halal	In conformance with Islam
Ummet	Those who believe in Islam and follow prophet Muhammed

## Abbreviations and Acronyms

AMGT	Organizations of the National Outlook in Germany ( <i>Almanya Milli Görüş Teşkilatları</i> )
AP	Justice Party ( <i>Adalet Partisi</i> )
CGP	Republican Reliance Party ( <i>Cumhuriyetçi Güven Partisi</i> )
CHP	Republican People's Party ( <i>Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi</i> )
DGM	State Security Courts ( <i>Devlet Güvenlik Mahkemeleri</i> )
DİSK	Confederation of Revolutionary Workers' Union ( <i>Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu</i> )
DP	Democratic Party ( <i>Demokrat Parti</i> )
ISI	Import-substituting industrialization ( <i>İthal ikameci sanayileşme</i> )
İTÜ	Istanbul Technical University ( <i>İstanbul Teknik Üniversitesi</i> )
MC	Nationalist Front ( <i>Milliyetçi Cephe</i> )
MP	Nation Party ( <i>Millet Partisi</i> )
MHP	Nationalist Action Party ( <i>Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi</i> )
MNP	National Order Party ( <i>Milli Nizam Partisi</i> )
MSP	National Salvation Party ( <i>Milli Selamet Partisi</i> )
MTTB	National Turkish Students' Union ( <i>Milli Türk Talebe Birliği</i> )
ODTÜ	Middle East Technical University ( <i>Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi</i> )
RP	Welfare Party ( <i>Refah Partisi</i> )
TİP	Workers' Party of Turkey ( <i>Türkiye İşçi Partisi</i> )
TİSK	Turkish Confederation of Employer Associations ( <i>Türkiye İşverenler Sendikaları Konfederasyonu</i> )
TKP	Communist Party of Turkey ( <i>Türkiye Komünist Partisi</i> )
TOB	Turkish Union of Chambers' ( <i>Türkiye Odalar Birliği</i> )
TÖBDER	Turkish Teachers Unity and Solidarity Organizations ( <i>Türkiye Öğretmenler Birleşme ve Dayanışma Derneği</i> )
Türk-İş	Confederation of Turkish Workers' Unions' ( <i>Türkiye İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu</i> )

TÜSİAD Turkish Industry and Business Association (*Türk Sanayicileri ve İş Adamları Derneği*)  
YTP New Turkey Party (*Yeni Türkiye Partisi*)







## Acknowledgements

In the mid-1990s, our tiny house was congested with my parent's "friends", who were mostly unionists, leftist political activists, journalists and artists. I owe my interest in politics and literacy to the heated discussions that lasted till the wee hours of the morning at that time. However, my professors, most of whom were expelled from the department of Political Science and International Relations at Yıldız Technical University, played a decisive role in converting my intellectual stimulus into an academic interest. I am deeply indebted to their presence without any ranking in priority.

I immensely benefited from the insights, suggestions and support of many people during the thesis process. It is now a pleasure to express my sincere gratitude to all those who contributed to my thesis work in different ways. I would like to begin by thanking Prof. Asım Karaömerlioğlu, my thesis advisor. I am indebted to him for believing me in this study since its inception. He guides me scrupulously and delicately throughout the whole process.

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Needless to say, although I am aware of how much others have contributed to it, the sin and responsibility for this study is exclusively mine.

NOTE: The in-house editor of the Atatürk Institute has made detailed recommendations with regard to the format, grammar, spelling, usage, syntax, and style of this thesis.





## Introduction

As the first openly Islamist movement in the Turkish legal political scene, the National Outlook Movement is an important symbol of the transformation of Islamism into a genuine political movement. However, this thesis does not simply deal with it as an extension of the debates on Islamism and political Islam. It intends to shed light on how the National Outlook and its historic leader Necmettin Erbakan perceived capitalism and to conceptualize their position with regard to capitalist relations in the late 1960s and 1970s when social questions were at the forefront of public attention. This thesis challenges the argument that the National Outlook has adopted the relations of production that reject capitalist principles or contained anti-capitalist sentiments. Even though, since the very beginning, the National Outlook had always marketed itself as an authentic political representative for those who felt threatened by the exclusionary effects of capitalist modernization, this proposed model is verily similar to capitalism. Concordantly as this study strives to expose, the two political parties of the movement, the National Order Party (*Milli Nizam Partisi*) and the National Salvation Party (*Milli Selamet Partisi*), became an eager follower of “capitalist economy” hiding behind religion and the ideological-political position which I called “capitalism without mentioning its name” was their road map throughout the 1970s.

This study centers around five main research questions as follows: Why was an Islamist political party established in the early 1970s in Turkey? What were the long-term economic, social and class issues that triggered this event? What does the Turkish Union of Chambers' (*Türkiye Odalar Birliği*, TOB) election in 1969, when Erbakan was elected as the chairman, say about his class preference and the relation between the National Outlook Movement and the capitalist class? Is Islamism a sufficient key to understanding the National Outlook considering Erbakan's preferences of social class as embodied in his initial choice that introduced himself to the Turkish society as the chairman of the most prominent employers' organization in the 1960s? Which pillars do the National Outlook's anti-capitalist claims lean on and what are the limits of them?

As part of a wider interest in the conceptual precedents of the current ruling regime and the evolution of the Islamic political movement in Turkey, the National Outlook Movement is one of the widely discussed subjects in the Turkish academia. Nevertheless, it was discovered quite late by the academic circles. As a matter of fact, the first serious academic study on this subject was conducted by Ali Yaşar Sarıbay in 1985, approximately 15 years after the emergence of the National Outlook.<sup>1</sup> In the same year, Türker Alkan published an article (in English) entitled "The National Salvation Party in Turkey".<sup>2</sup> The major factor behind this relatively late discovery of the National Outlook is the fact that a pro-Islamist movement is not taken seriously enough in the intellectual community just like in the political field during that period.

I have come to see the National Outlook literature in general, while of course there are profound differences in political perspectives and sentiments among them, as falling into three distinct categories. Most of these studies evaluate it within the framework of Islamist ideology while some other scholars deal with it in terms of an extension of debate on political Islam, which has a pejorative connotation. Haldun Gülalp, Hakan

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- 1 Ali Yaşar Sarıbay, *Türkiye'de Modernleşme Din ve Parti Politikası: MSP Örnek Olayı*, (İstanbul, Alan Yayıncılık, 1985).
  - 2 Türker Alkan, "The National Salvation Party in Turkey" in *Islam and Politics in the Modern Middle East* ed. Metin Heper and Raphael Israeli, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984).

Yavuz, Ruşen Çakır, Tanıl Bora, Fulya Atacan, Elisabeth Özdalga, Menderes Çınar and Gencay Şaylan can be considered as the prominent names under the first categorization.<sup>3</sup> Binnaz Toprak, Tarık Zafer Tunaya, Türker Alkan and Banu Eligür, for their parts, focus squarely on the question how could it be that, in a country with a secular tradition and culture just like Turkey, Islam possibly has been part of politics.<sup>4</sup>

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- 3 Türker Alkan, "The National Salvation Party in Turkey" in *Islam and Politics in the Modern Middle East* ed. Metin Heper and Raphael Israeli, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984). Haldun Gülalp, *Kimlikler Siyaseti: Türkiye'de Siyasal İslamın Temelleri* (İstanbul: Metis, 2003); Hakan Yavuz, *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey*, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); Hakan Yavuz, *Modernleşen Müslümanlar: Nurcular, Nakşiler, Milli Görüş ve AKP*, (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2005); Hakan Yavuz, *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Ruşen Çakır, *Ayet ve Slogan: Türkiye'de İslami Oluşumlar*, (İstanbul: Metis, 1991); Ruşen Çakır, "Milli Görüş Hareketi" in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce: İslamcılık* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2005); Tanıl Bora, *Türk Sağının Üç Hali: Milliyetçilik Muhafazakârlık İslamcılık*, (İstanbul: Birikim Yayınları, 2015); Tanıl Bora, *Cereyanlar*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2017); Fulya Atacan, "Explaining Religious Politics at the Crossroad AKP-SP" in *Political Islam* ed. Barry Rubin, (London and New York: Routledge, 2007) v.3; Elisabeth Özdalga, *İslamcılığın Türkiye Seyri: Sosyolojik Bir Perspektif*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2006); Menderes Çınar, *Siyasal Bir Sorun Olarak İslamcılık*, (Ankara: Dipnot Yayınları, 2005); Menderes Çınar and Burhaneddin Duran "The Specific Evolution of Contemporary Political Islam in Turkey and its Difference" in *Secular and Islamic Politics in Turkey* ed. Ümit Cizre, (New York: Routledge, 2008); Gencay Şaylan, *Türkiye'de İslamcı Siyaset*, (Ankara: V Yayınları, 1992); Binnaz Toprak, *Islam and Political Development in Turkey*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1981); Binnaz Toprak, "Politicisation of Islam in a Secular State: The National Salvation Party in Turkey" in *From Nationalism to Revolutionary Islam*, ed. Said Amir Arjomand (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984); Binnaz Toprak, "The Religious Right" in *Turkey in Transition: New Perspectives* ed. Irvin C. Schick and Ertuğrul Ahmet Tonak (New York, Oxford University Press, 1987); Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *İslamcılık Cereyanı* (İstanbul: Baha Matbaası, 1962); Türker Alkan, "The National Salvation Party in Turkey" in *Islam and Politics in the Modern Middle East* ed. Metin Heper and Raphael Israeli, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984); Banu Eligür, *The Mobilization of Political Islam in Turkey*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
- 4 Binnaz Toprak, *Islam and Political Development in Turkey*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1981); Binnaz Toprak, "Politicisation of Islam in a Secular State: The National Salvation Party in Turkey" in *From Nationalism to Revolutionary Islam*, ed. Said Amir Arjomand (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984); Binnaz Toprak, "The Religious Right" in

Aside from the two categories mentioned above, I have also benefited from what I see as the third main group of literature that draws attention to how the capitalist mode of production went hand in hand with –in general- Islamism and –in particular- the National Outlook Movement. The early studies by Ahmet Yücekök and Muzaffer Sencer attempted to empirically find the origins of the National Outlook in the contradictions of Turkish capitalism.<sup>5</sup> As regards the contemporary academic writings concerning the link among class, state and religion in Turkey, it would be safe to say that Ayşe Buğra, Osman Savaşkan, Burak Gürel, Sungur Savran, Ziya Öniş, Yasin Durak and Özgür Öztürk are encouraging for the academic explanation that the National Outlook’s social roots are based on the capitalist relations of production rather than purely religious concerns.<sup>6</sup> None of these studies, however, centered on

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*Turkey in Transition: New Perspectives* ed. Irvin C. Schick and Ertuğrul Ahmet Tonak (New York, Oxford University Press, 1987); Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *İslamcılık Cereyanı* (İstanbul: Baha Matbaası, 1962); Türker Alkan, “The National Salvation Party in Turkey” in *Islam and Politics in the Modern Middle East* ed. Metin Heper and Raphael Israeli, (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1984); Banu Eligür, *The Mobilization of Political Islam in Turkey*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

- 5 Ahmet Yücekök, *Türkiye’de Din ve Siyaset* (İstanbul: Gerçek Yayınevi, 1971); Muzaffer Sencer, *Türkiye’de Siyasal Partilerin Sosyal Temelleri*, (İstanbul: Geçiş Yayınları, 1971).
- 6 Ayşe Buğra, *State and Business in Modern Turkey: A Comparative Study*, (Albany, N.Y: State University of New York Press, 1994); Ayşe Buğra and Osman Savaşkan, *New Capitalism in Turkey: The Relationship between Politics, Religion and Business* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgard Pub. Ltd, 2014); Burak Gürel, “1970’ler Türkiye’sinde İslamcı ve Faşist Siyaset: Vaadler ve Sonuçlar” in *Praksis*, No. 12; Burak Gürel, “Islamism: A Comparative-Historical Overview” in *The Neoliberal Landscape and the Rise of Islamist Capital in Turkey*, ed. Neşecan Balkan, Erol Balkan and Ahmet Öncü (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2015); Sungur Savran, “Class, State and Religion in Turkey” in *The Neoliberal Landscape and the Rise of Islamist Capital in Turkey*, ed. Neşecan Balkan, Erol Balkan and Ahmet Öncü, (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2015); Ziya Öniş, “The Political Economy of Islamic Resurgence in Turkey: The Rise of the Welfare Party in Perspective” in *Third World Quarterly*, Vol 18, No 4; Yasin Durak, *Emeğin Tevekkülü: Konya’da İşçi-İşveren İlişkileri*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2011); Özgür Öztürk, “The Islamist Big Bourgeoisie in Turkey” in *The Neoliberal Landscape and the Rise of Islamist*



THE NATIONAL OUTLOOK MOVEMENT'S VISION OF CAPITALIST  
SOCIETY

the National Outlook's criticism of capitalism in spite of the movement's claim that is precisely one of the backbone themes in its ideological foundations, political programs, and the leader's speeches during the decade of the 1970s. Moreover, since many books and articles expounding this movement have been produced in Turkish, we also need sophisticated studies and critiques in English. This thesis, to this end, hopes to mend the current lack of literature as well as to contribute to the English literature.

My methodology is based on the assumption that written documents such as the party programs, the election manifestos, the official reports of the parliament, the newspaper reports, the logos, the posters, and the memoirs as well as the oral documents like the public speeches are key to understanding a political organization. Concordantly, the official documents about the movement<sup>7</sup>, the materials from the scanned daily newspapers<sup>8</sup> and the analysis of the public speeches of Necmettin Erbakan and other prominent names of the movement constitute the core resources of my thesis. As for the background materials, aside from the studies on Turkish political history between the years 1960-1980, I have also benefited from the research and field studies that refer to the capitalism-pietism relations. Similarly, labor-centered studies dealing with the reflection of religiosity onto the worker-capitalist relation and on the production process were inspirational here.

This thesis includes four chapters. The introduction will be followed by a chapter examining the story of the birth of the National Outlook Movement and political developments related to the two political parties of the movement, which distinctly marked the Turkish legal polit-

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*Capital in Turkey*, ed. Neşecan Balkan, Erol Balkan and Ahmet Öncü, (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2015).

- 7 These official documents are the National Order and the National Salvation's foundation declarations, the party programs, the party constitutions and the election manifestos.
- 8 Aside from the mainstream press of that period such as *Cumhuriyet* and *Milliyet*, *Milli Gazete*, *Tercüman* and *Bugün* were examined.

ical tradition in many ways. The third chapter presents a detailed background for understanding the relations between the National Outlook Movement and capitalism. The economic and legal framework that reveals the contentious climate of the 1970s and then how the capitalist class and working class were portrayed in the Turkish political scene are discussed by rethinking the Gramscian concept of “the crisis of hegemony”. As regards the fourth chapter, it mainly focuses on the Union of Chambers presidency of Erbakan in 1969 with a significant support from smaller provincial capital owners and commercial groups and the reasons why he was expelled from the chairmanship of the Union. In this chapter, I argue that both his election as the head of the Union of Chambers and his expulsion from his post open the windows to shed light on state-businessmen relations, the schism between large industrialists and small and medium-sized Anatolian capital owners in Turkey, and also constitute a symbolic example for the relations between the National Outlook Movement and the capitalist class. In the last chapter, for its part, the National Outlook’s own conceptualization of capitalism and the limits of its so-called anti-capitalist world-view are examined. That chapter will attempt to underscore that the concept of “capitalism without capitalism” was the road map for the National Outlook in the 1970s.

## **The National Outlook Movement: The first representative of Turkish Islamism in the legal political scene**

This chapter aims to scrutinize the story of the birth of the National Outlook Movement (*Milli Görüş Hareketi*) and political developments related with the two political parties of the movement in the 1970s, the National Order Party (*Milli Nizam Partisi*, MNP) and the National Salvation Party (*Milli Selamet Partisi*, MSP), which have plainly marked the Turkish political tradition in many ways. First, I will provide a brief background why an Islamist political party emerged in the early 1970s in Turkey according to the existing literature. Then, I will attempt to evaluate the National Outlook's ideological grounds, social and economic programs, and the organizational structures. Lastly, the political developments of the decade of the 1970s around the National Outlook's political parties will be analyzed.

### **§ 2.1 The First Political Party of Islamism: The National Order Party**

As the first openly Islamist movement in the 1970s the National Outlook Movement came into existence in Turkish political life with the

foundation of the MNP under Necmettin Erbakan's (1926-2011) leadership in January 1970. Although this study acknowledges the MNP as the first prominent pro-Islamist party, and, most notably, a key symbol of the transformation of Islamism into a genuine political movement, the presence of an Islamist political party on the Turkish electoral scene is not a novel phenomenon. That is to say, before the National Outlook, a number of political parties had Islamic themes in their programs as of 1946, when the electoral system opened up for multi-party politics.

The National Development Party (*Milli Kalkınma Partisi*, est. 1945), the Social Justice Party (*Sosyal Adalet Partisi* est. 1946), the Farmer's and Peasant's Party (*Çiftçi ve Köylü Partisi* est. 1946), the Purification and Protection Party (*Aritma Koruma Partisi* est. 1946), the Islamic Protection Party (*İslam Koruma Partisi* est. 1946), the Turkish Conservative Party (*Türk Muhafazakar Partisi* est. 1947), the Land, Real Estate and Free Enterprise Party (*Toprak, Emlak ve Serbest Teşebbüs Partisi* est. 1949), and the Nation Party (*Millet Partisi, MP* est. 1948) are the preliminary political parties that openly stressed Islamic mores and values and "used religion as a basis in electoral competition."<sup>1</sup> However, among the eight parties, only one, the Nation Party, was able to attain enough support to join the general elections and to win a single seat in the Grand National Assembly for the first time in 1955.<sup>2</sup> Before the National Outlook Movement, there was no public religious party that was able to be successful in elections because the conservative or Islamic vote went to center-right parties that sought to extend their popularity by appealing to religious notions like the Democratic Party (*Demokrat Parti, DP*) and Justice Party (*Adalet*

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- 1 Binnaz Toprak, *Islam and Political Development in Turkey*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1981) p. 75; Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *İslamcılık Cereyanı* (İstanbul: Baha Matbaası, 1962) pp. 190-192; Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Türkiye'de Siyasi Partiler*, (İstanbul : Hürriyet Vakfı Yayınları, 1984) pp. 693-736. Şerif Mardin, *Türkiye, İslam ve Sekülerizm*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2011) p. 78.
  - 2 Deniz Bölükbaşı, *Türk Siyasetinde Anadolu Fırtınası: Osman Bölükbaşı*, (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2005) pp. 124-125.

*Partisi, AP*). However, with the foundation of the MNP, the Turkish Islamists had an autonomous party through which they could publicize for their political agenda for the first time.<sup>3</sup>

Ali Yaşar Sarıbay, who conducted the first academic study on the National Outlook Movement, asserted that an event observed at a personal level within the Turkish Union of Chambers (*Türkiye Odalar Birliği*), had led to the formation of the MNP in Turkish political life.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, -in general- Islamist movement's "partification" or -in particular- the emergence story of the National Outlook's first political party should have had a more complex aspect based upon social and class reasons.

Another deeper cause of an Islamist party's birth in Turkish politics from the second half of the 1960s onward could be a reaction toward the secularization program of the Republic. Through the legal and institutional change, as early as the late 1920s and the 1930s, secular law was institutionalized; instrumentalization of religion for political objectives was proscribed. Accordingly, Binnaz Toprak has described two groups, which were produced as the consequences of republican secularism. The first group had been committed to minimizing the role of Islam in public life, whereas the latter had been marginalized by the Republic.<sup>5</sup> The second group that gradually gained the dominant counter hegemonic identity and, from the late 1960s onward, played a seminal role in the establishment of the MNP.

As another factor encouraging this trend, the new constitutional arrangements, which has framed the political life and institutional structure after the 1960 coup d'état, provided greater freedom of thought and expression, and freedom of assembly and association. Thus, for the first time in Republican history, various publications that aimed to maximize

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3 Nilufer Narlı, "The Rise of the Islamist Movement in Turkey", in *MERIA Journal*, 1997, Vol. 1, No.3, p.1.

4 Ali Yaşar Sarıbay, *Türkiye'de Modernleşme Din ve Parti Politikası: MSP Örnek Olayı*, (İstanbul, Alan Yayıncılık, 1985) p. 98.

5 Binnaz Toprak, "Islam and Democracy in Turkey" in *Political Islam III*. ed. Barry Rubin (London and New York: Routledge, 2007) p. 327.

the role of Islam in public life came into the existence. Since the new constitutional order allows the emergence of organizational and social responses of political ideologies, Muslims, just like the other social groups, transformed into mass political actors.<sup>6</sup>

The birth story of the MNP, and, of course, the National Outlook Movement can also be read through the process of independence of Islamism, which is excluded by the center-right, as Ruşen Çakır emphasized.<sup>7</sup> Although the AP won the 1965 election with 52.8 percent and 1969 election with 46.5, it has begun to lose its feature of umbrella party of the right. In 1967, a handful of Justice Party parliamentarians, Hasan Aksay and Arif Hikmet Güner, and a senator, Ahmet Tefvik Paksu; the New Turkey Party (*Yeni Türkiye Partisi, YTP*) parliamentarian Süleyman Arif Emre; and Professor Nevzat Yalçıntaş, the chair of the Intellectuals' Hearth (*Aydınlar Ocağı*), initiated efforts to represent the Islamist movement in the form of a political party.<sup>8</sup>

Necmettin Erbakan, who was the head of the Department of Industry of the Turkish Union of Chambers (*Odalar Birliği Sanayi Dairesi Başkanı*), joined this group desiring to represent the "home" of the Islamists in Turkey. In the ensuing year, Erbakan became chairman of the Union of Chambers and stood out as the enthusiastic defender of the class interests of the provincial capital owners - artisans, craftsmen and small businessmen - against the large industrialists and traders in big cities. In Erbakan's view, the prevailing economic mechanism has protected the "comprador-mason minority" and, thus, provincial craftsmen and small traders were treated as poor relation.<sup>9</sup> As Erbakan's pro-small businesses approach demonstrates, he desired to mobilize the small and medium-

6 Türker Alkan, "The National Salvation Party in Turkey" in *Islam and Politics in the Modern Middle East* ed. Metin Heper and Raphael Israeli, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984) p. 82.

7 Ruşen Çakır, "Milli Görüş Hareketi" in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce: İslamcılık* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2005) p. 545-546.

8 Banu Eligür, *The Mobilization of Political Islam in Turkey*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) p. 66.

9 Tanıl Bora, *Cereyanlar*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2017) p. 469; Ruşen Çakır, "Milli Görüş Hareketi" p. 576.

sized capital owners and to gather those who lose but want to win under the umbrella of the National Outlook. Nevertheless, his chairman position in the Union would not last long. He was expelled from his post by the AP government owing to the objections from Izmir and Istanbul Union of Chamber. For the AP, the contradictions between the economic commitments of Erbakan who has a religious background and the demands of the big industrialists cannot be reconciled.<sup>10</sup>

Before the 1969 general elections, the prominent names heavily influenced by Islamist thought sought ways either to be an independent candidate or to be a candidate from the right-wing parties with their own political identity. Meanwhile, Erbakan's parliamentary candidacy in the 1969 general elections from the Justice Party lists was rejected by Süleyman Demirel, the head of the party. Despite the AP's rejection of him as a candidate, he had won a seat as an independent representative from Konya province. However, the other independent candidates of this initiative, which was then called the "independent movement", had not been elected.<sup>11</sup>

Interestingly enough, the founders of the MNP continued to insist on conducting political activity within the AP until the very last moment. It was observed that Erbakan's primary intention was to enter the presidential race within the AP and to play for the leadership of the center-right.<sup>12</sup> As some sources assert, however, Erbakan had also considered joining to the Nation Party, led by Osman Bölükbaşı, before he applied to the Justice Party.<sup>13</sup> In a nutshell, owing to the exclusion of Islamist cadres

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- 10 Ayşe Buğra and Osman Savaşkan, *New Capitalism in Turkey: The Relationship between Politics, Religion and Business* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgard Pub. Ltd, 2014) p. 42; Ruşen Çakır, "Milli Görüş Hareketi" p. 545.
- 11 Ruşen Çakır, *Ayet ve Slogan: Türkiye'de İslami Oluşumlar*, (İstanbul: Metis, 1991) p. 214; Serkan Yorgancılar, "Milli Görüş Hareketinin İlk Göz Ağrısı Milli Nizam Partisi'nin Kuruluşu, Söylemleri ve Politikaları" in *Doğumunun 90. Yılında Erbakan*, (Konya: Necmettin Erbakan Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2017) pp. 167-170; Soner Yalçın, *Erbakan: Eziyet Edilerek Yalnızlığa Yükseltelen Bir Siyasal Liderin Portresi*, (İstanbul: Kırmızı Kedi, 2013) p. 61
- 12 Ruşen Çakır, "Milli Görüş Hareketi" p. 545.
- 13 Kenan Akın, *Milli Nizam'dan 28 Şubat'a: Olay Adam Erbakan*, (İstanbul: Birey Yayıncılık, 2000) p. 25.

from the AP, Turkish Islamists had to open an independent path for themselves in political life.<sup>14</sup> Nonetheless, to be sure, the argument that explains the emergence of the MNP through the exclusion from central-right could be only a partial picture of the nature of the MNP.

Another explanation for the MNP's origin had been regarded as economic discontent rather than purely religious concerns. The decades from 1950 to 1980 were a period of rapid economic growth based on import-substituting industrialization (ISI) for Turkey.<sup>15</sup> While rapid growth led the big business companies in cooperation with the West to flourish, small and medium-sized enterprises with limited capital would be subject to large industrialists. In other words, as of the mid-1960s, rapid economic growth began to dissolve the social and economic alliance between the small enterprises and the large industrialists. As the big industrialists in the early 1960s sought freedom from state bureaucratic controls, the AP started to encourage the free initiatives and private investments. In this setting, although the conservative Muslims support this strategy to reduce the hegemonic power of the Kemalist bureaucracy, the small enterprises who felt threatened with economic and social marginalization, in time, began to seek for new institutions and political representation to express their needs and demands against the AP's pro-big business policies.<sup>16</sup> From the late 1960s onward, Erbakan began to express the conservative ideas of the provincial small and medium-sized capital owners who were adversely affected by the rapid transformation on state and society.<sup>17</sup>

As of the late 1960s, the religious orders, for their parts, had begun to more appear on the political scene in Turkey. Accordingly, the Islamic communities calculated the potential of votes of an independent political

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14 Ibid.

15 Şevket Pamuk, *Uneven Centuries: Economic Development of Turkey since 1820*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2018) p. 214-15; 224; Çağlar Keyder, *State and Class in Turkey: A Study in Capitalist Development*, pp. 150-153.

16 Hakan Yavuz, *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey*, (Oxford;New York:Oxford University Press, 2003). p. 209.

17 Ahmet Yücekök, *Türkiye'de Din ve Siyaset* (İstanbul: Gerçek Yayınevi, 1971) p. 109.



party and thus gained a certain amount of self-confidence.<sup>18</sup> Today, it has been known that the first prominent Islamic political party in Turkey, the MNP, was established through the guidance of Mehmet Zahit Kotku's (1897-1980), a leading Naqshbandi (*Nakşibendi*)<sup>19</sup> leader, promotion and support.<sup>20</sup> Kotku considerably changed the attitudes of *Nakşibendi* traditions and converted "its mosque-based characteristic into a semi-political movement".<sup>21</sup> With his attempt, the *İskenderpaşa* Mosque was not only a place for elders to spend time or pray but also a center for young men.<sup>22</sup> By the 1960s, a group of men, especially university students, was the followers of the *İskenderpaşa* congregation (*dergah*) of the *Nakşibendi* order under the leadership of Mehmet Zahit Kotku; one of whom was Necmettin Erbakan.<sup>23</sup> In addition to being influenced by Kotku's tendency to look for political opportunities to express Islamic impulses, Erbakan was also substantially inspired by Kotku's view of na-

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18 Olivier Roy, *Küreselleşen İslam*, (İstanbul, Metis, 2003) p. 43.

19 The Naqshbandi was one of the most widespread Sufi brotherhoods and also schools of thought and practice in the Islamic world from Central Asia and India to eastern Arab world and contemporary Turkey. The word of "Naqshbandi" derives from the epithet of Bahauddin Naqshband, the fourteenth-century Central Asian Sufi saint. In spite of the secularization policies in the early Republican era, prohibiting Sufi orders, replacing Arabic script with Latin and banning the establishment of a party or organization based on religion or sect, from the second half of the 1920s onward, Turkey was a principal arena of Naqshbandi-based religious and political activity. Shaykh Muhammed Hisham Kabbani, *The Naqshbadi Sufi Way*, (Chicago: Kazı Publications, 1995 pp. 3-5.; Hamid Algar, "A Brief History of the Naqshbandi Order" in *Naqshbandis: Historical Developments and Present Situation of a Muslim Mystical Order*, ed. Marc Gaborieau and Alexander Popovic (Istanbul: ISIS, 1990) pp. 3-45; Mustafa Kara, *Tasavvuf ve Tarikatlar Tarihi* (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 1985) p. 294-296.

20 Gencay Şaylan, *Türkiye'de İslamcı Siyaset*, (Ankara: Verso Yayıncılık, 1992) pp. 157-158.

21 Hakan Yavuz, *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey*, p. 141; Mehmet Emin Yaşar, "Dergah'tan Partiye, Vakıf'tan Şirkete Bir Kimliğin Oluşumu ve Dönüşümü: İskenderpaşa Cemaati." in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce: İslamcılık* p. 328.

22 Hakan Yavuz, *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey*, pp. 141-142.

23 Itzhak Weismann, *The Naqshbandiyya: Orthodoxy and Activism in a Worldwide Sufi Tradition*, (London: Routledge, 2007) p. 153; Şerif Mardin, *Türkiye'de Din ve Siyaset*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2005) p. 30.

tional industrialization that emphasized Islamically-framed consumption norms to design a model of industrial plant on a national level.<sup>24</sup> As a matter of fact, before founding the MNP, Kotku gave his blessing to the establishment of the party at the request of Erbakan: “In the aftermath of the deposition of the Sultan Abdülhamid II, the country’s governance has been taken over by masons. They are a minority group. They cannot represent our nation. It is a historic duty to give the governance of the country to the real representatives of our nation by establishing a political party. Join this already belated endeavor.”<sup>25</sup>

Besides *İskenderpaşa* congregation (*dergah*), the other followers of the *Nakşibendi* and *Nurcu*<sup>26</sup> orders played a seminal role in the party’s establishment.<sup>27</sup>

The MNP, which was socially and culturally rooted in the conservative lower and middle-class families in small Anatolian towns and villages, was established on January 26, 1970. The logo of the party was the squeezing hand showing its index finger, which refers to Shahadah (*şehadet*). This was a symbolic description of the God who is the only creator of the universe and also a figurative testimony to be a Muslim.

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- 24 Şerif Mardin, “The Naqshbandi Order in Turkish History”, in *Islam in Modern Turkey: Religion, Politics, and Literature in a Secular State* ed. Richard Tapper (London and New York: LB. Tauris, 1991) p. 134.
- 25 Süleyman Arif Emre, *Siyasette 35 Yıl*, (Ankara: Keşif Yayınları, 2002) p. 173 transferred Banu Eligür, *The Mobilization of Political Islam in Turkey*, p. 66.
- 26 The *Nurculuk* is one of the most powerful faith movement in modern Turkey. It derives its name from the Quran commentary (Risale-i Nur Külliyyatı– The Epistle of Light) of its founder, Said Nursi (1876-1960). He was the founder of the most remarkable text-based Islamist movement in Turkey. The number of proponents of the Nur movement is estimated between five or six million.
- 27 Şerif Mardin, *Türkiye, İslam ve Sekülerizm*, p. 87; Ruşen Çakır, *Ne Şeriat Ne Demokrasi: Refah Partisi’ni Anlamak*, (İstanbul: Siyahbeyaz/Metis Güncel, 1994) p. 23.

THE NATIONAL OUTLOOK MOVEMENT'S VISION OF CAPITALIST  
SOCIETY



Figure 1.1 The logo of the National Order Party SOURCE:  
ankahukuk.com

Five of the 18 founding members of the MNP were engineers, five were small merchants or craftsmen, and the rest were almost lawyers - it would not be surprising that there was no woman among the founding members.<sup>28</sup> The founding congress of the MNP was convened in Ankara on February 8, 1970 with the voices of “Allahuekber”, “Amin” and “Inshalah”.<sup>29</sup> Just as the MNP was established, two parliamentarians were transferred from the AP and thus the party was represented in the Grand National Assembly by three names, Konya deputy Necmettin Erbakan,

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28 Ruşen Çakır, *Ayet ve Slogan: Türkiye’de İslami Oluşumlar*, pp. 214-215

29 Ali Yaşar Sarıbay, *Türkiye’de Modernleşme Din ve Parti Politikası: MSP Örnek Olayı*, p. 99.

Isparta deputy Hüsametdin Akmumcu and Tokat deputy Hüseyin Abbas.<sup>30</sup> Despite the fact that the establishment of the MNP did not appear in the mainstream media, the party was regarded as the voice of the “oppressed Muslim masses” and the “party of the sacred Muslims” by some Islamist press at that time, such as *Bugün* and *Sabah*.<sup>31</sup>

The MNP published the founding declaration when the official procedures had been completed. Although each section of this -8-page-declaration was quite compendious, this sort of manifesto text could have been a key to understand the party’s characteristic. This founding charter starts as follows: “The National Order Party, which you have missed and waited for centuries, comes from the depths of your soul. It is the re-emergence of your self-existence in the field of “*mana*” (spirit) and “*madde*” (substance), which is grateful for the countless blessings of God (*Cenab-ı Hakk*) while addressing you for the first time on account of its establishment.”<sup>32</sup> The main emphasis and the chief reason for the establishment of the party in the declaration were stated as “to realize the morality (*ahlak*) and virtue (*fazilet*) dream of the nation”.<sup>33</sup> As emphasized in the introduction chapter of this declaration, it referred to the golden age of the Ottoman period. For this section, the roots of Turkish nation were hidden in the Ottoman past, meaning that they could rebuild a great civilization.<sup>34</sup> For the MNP, there were two dominant hegemonic views in the world, which were the capitalist and the socialist systems.<sup>35</sup> It is claimed that these two world-views, which seem to be different, were intrinsically the same on the ground that they were Western-based and, thus, alien to the nation: “(...) Both are self-seeker and imperialist. Both of them wish for enslaving other nations in line with their own culture

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30 Ruşen Çakır, *Ayet ve Slogan: Türkiye’de İslami Oluşumlar*, p. 215; Soner Yalçın, *Erbakan: Eziyet Edilerek Yalnızlığa Yükseltelen Bir Siyasal Liderin Portresi*, p. 62.

31 Ali Yaşar Sarıbay, *Türkiye’de Modernleşme Din ve Parti Politikası: MSP Örnek Olayı*, p. 99; Hakan Yavuz, *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey*, p. 209.

32 *Milli Nizam Partisi Kuruluş Beyannamesi*, (Ankara: Nüve Matbaası, 1970) p. 1

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid.

35 *Milli Nizam Partisi Kuruluş Beyannamesi*, p. 2.

and interests. Both are in spiritual dissatisfaction despite the material progress.”<sup>36</sup>

As for the following section, it mentioned the opposition political parties that have established since 1946 when started the multi-party life in Turkey.<sup>37</sup> For the MNP, after the transition to multi-party life, there were two political parties that emerged with the national yeast, which were the Democratic Party and Justice Party. However, in time, these two parties had “turned their backs on this national excitement.”<sup>38</sup> It is safe to say that this text also explains why the Islamist movement preferred “participation” apart from the central-right.

Needless to say, the most remarkable lines are in the last part of the text: “High morality and virtue in the spirit of our nation (...) will begin to bring welfare (*refah*), felicity (*saadet*) and salvation (*selamet*) spreading to all parts of our country through the regular channels of the National Order Party.”<sup>39</sup> This sentence is quite unforeseen that it includes the names of all the National Outlook movement’s political parties that were established after the MNP. However, considering the symbolic meaning of the concepts of welfare (*refah*), felicity (*saadet*) and salvation (*selamet*) for ordinary Muslims, it is expected that the National Outlook Movement aims at a social order expressed through these terms and uses them as the names of the party in the future.

Moreover, various problems, both economic and non-economic, rapidly existed from its emergence process situated in the program.<sup>40</sup> For instance, “imitative Westernization”, which is frequently used by the party leader Erbakan, and the collapse of the Ottoman-Islamic heritage was regarded as the backbone problems in the country. Similarly, the concepts of “moral and material development” were also widely included in the party program. While dominant literature on this period has not

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36 Ibid.

37 *Milli Nizam Partisi Kuruluş Beyannamesi*, pp. 4-5.

38 *Milli Nizam Partisi Kuruluş Beyannamesi*, p. 5.

39 *Milli Nizam Partisi Kuruluş Beyannamesi*, p. 7

40 Ferruh Bozbeyli, “Milli Nizam Partisi Programı” in *Parti Programları* (İstanbul: Baha Matbaası, 1970) pp. 395-432.

drawn much attention to this aspect, the MNP's party program preferred in a special, implicit and also vernacular terminology as reflecting on the concepts "morality" and "virtue" rather than pronouncing the words "Islam" or "Muslim". This program starts with the "Main Purpose" (*Esas Gaye*) section, which described where the party's position in the political spectrum is, and continues with the democracy approach, social justice, freedom of conscience, nationalism approach, fundamental rights, state administration, education policy, national defense, economic and financial policy, state planning, industrialization, labor rights and foreign policy, respectively.

"The First Grand Congress" of the MNP, just a year after the establishment of the party, was held in Ankara on January 23, 1971. Erbakan was welcomed by an enthusiastic crowd who chanted the slogan "Faithful Turkey" (*İmanlı Türkiye*) at the congress attended by 857 delegates.<sup>41</sup> The most crucial point, beyond any doubt, in the meeting was that the party was organized in many parts of Turkey within a short time. As a matter of fact, until February 1971, the MNP had established its organizational networks in 60 cities and more than 10 districts, and also published its own newspaper *Milli Gazete* in the same year.<sup>42</sup> The Naqshbandis and *Nurcus*, who were mobilized within a short period, could have been one of the main reasons why the MNP was very well-organized in just one year. Nonetheless, the MNP's social base did not only consist of these two communities. According to Olivier Roy, the National Outlook has succeeded in involving and mobilizing many social groups that are excluded from the political scene by some means.<sup>43</sup> Concordantly, considering critical support from small businesses, merchants, artisans, peasants, provincial religious people and also Kurds, the level of organization that the MNP has reached within a short period is not so unexpected.

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41 Serkan Yorgancılar, "Milli Görüş Hareketinin İlk Göz Ağrısı Milli Nizam Partisi'nin Kuruluşu, Söylemleri ve Politikaları" pp. 185-186.

42 Süleyman Arif Emre, *Siyasette 35 Yıl*, p. 183, 192.

43 Olivier Roy, *Küreselleşen İslam*, p. 36.

Owing to being the first pro-Islamist party, the MNP had to deal with a range of problems, one of which was ideological ambiguity. Inexperience of the MNP's political cadres for an autonomous Islamist policy and under the influence of legally prohibited religious references in Turkish politics could be the root reasons for this vagueness. For instance, even the title of the party includes a considerable amount of ambivalence. For the Ottoman social system, the "nation" (*millet* for nation, or *milli* for national) designated Muslim and non-Muslim religious communities and referred to the distinct administrative structures and legal systems. As Cihan Tuğal stated, the National Outlook Movement, for its part, "utilized the ambivalence of this concept" by choosing this term in the name of the party.<sup>44</sup> Needless to say, the word "national" in the name of the party remarked shared "Ottoman" and "Turkish" feeling of pride that had been constructed since Abdulhamit II rather than a principal motto of the secular Turkish Republic.<sup>45</sup>

On May 20, 1971, two months after the military memorandum in 1971, the Constitutional Court outlawed and closed down the MNP on the grounds that it aimed to change the secular principles in the Constitutions (Articles 2, 19, 57) and the Law of Political Parties (Law No. 648, Articles 92, 93, 94) and to restore a theocratic state in the country.<sup>46</sup> After this verdict, Erbakan fled to the European country Switzerland to avoid prosecution. According to Süleyman Arif Emre, who is a prominent member of the party, Erbakan went abroad for recovery of his health because he felt very sad for the MNP's closure and he had a heart attack. It was not about the fear of prosecution.<sup>47</sup>

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44 Cihan Tuğal, *Passive Revolution: Absorbing the Islamic Challenge to Capitalism*, (California: Stanford University Press, 2009) p. 5.

45 Şerif Mardin, "Turkish Islamic Exceptionalism Yesterday and Today" in *Religion and Politics in Turkey* ed. Ali Çarkoğlu and Barry Rubin (New York: Routledge, 2006) pp. 15-16.

46 "Milli Nizam Partisi'nin Kapatılması Hakkındaki Karar" in *Anayasa Mahkemesi Kararlar Dergisi*, (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Basımevi, 1991) No. 9, pp. 3-20; Nilufer Narli, "The Rise of the Islamist Movement in Turkey" p. 2

47 Oral Çalışlar, *Refah Partisi Nereden Nereye?* (İstanbul: Pencere Yayınları, 1995) pp. 30-31.

Süleyman Arif Emre also underscored, in his memories, that the army desired to use Islam as a counter power against the “leftist threat”: “The General Secretary of the National Security Council, General Refet Ülgenalp, was against the abolishment of the MNP. Nuri Emre, an agent at the Turkish National Intelligence Service, showed me the report of Refet Pasha. In this report, the urgency of religious education against leftist anarchy was emphasized. He had even sent an army official to the National Education Convention to prevent an approach against religious education.”<sup>48</sup> In Emre’s view, this was the main argument for reopening the MNP under the name of National Salvation Party (*Milli Selamet Partisi*, MSP) in October 1972.<sup>49</sup>

## § 2.2 The National Salvation Party

After the closure of the National Order Party by the Constitutional Court, the National Salvation Party (*Milli Selamet Partisi*, MSP) was officially founded on October 11, 1972.<sup>50</sup> In fact, the MSP was a continuation of the MNP regarding almost all the significant aspects. In other words, neither the leadership nor the ideology/party program changed -meaning that the MNP was re-created under the name of the National Salvation.<sup>51</sup> At this juncture, how could a party, acting in the same ideological way with its predecessor, be established in a political environment where the MNP was closed? Although Behice Boran, the leader of the Workers’ Party of Turkey (*Türkiye İşçi Partisi*, TİP), which had been abolished by the 12 March regime like the MNP, and the party executives were imprisoned, how could Necmettin Erbakan, the head of another party, which

48 Süleyman Arif Emre, *Siyasette 35 Yıl*, p. 221.

49 Süleyman Arif Emre, *Siyasette 35 Yıl*, p. 237.

50 Suavi Aydın and Yüksel Taşkın, *1960’dan Günümüze Türkiye Tarihi*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2014) p. 249.

51 İhsan Dağı, “Post-Islamism à la Turca” in *Post-Islamism: The Changing Faces of Political Islam*, ed. Asef Bayat (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013) p. 79; Ali Yaşar Sarıbay, *Türkiye’de Modernleşme Din ve Parti Politikası: MSP Örnek Olayı*, pp. 108-109.



had been outlawed by the same coup, be able to go abroad with his passport and plane ticket? More specifically, why had the tolerance of the coup-plotters to Erbakan been refrained from Behice Boran and the other TIP members?<sup>52</sup> Interestingly enough, these questions would be raised by not only the socialist left but also by the Islamists who have any sympathy for the National Outlook Movement: “(They) closed both parties on the grounds that they acted against the Constitution. However, the head of one of these parties was sentenced to 15 years, while the other’s leader was able to go Europe covertly. Then, Necmettin Bey could have come easily and found a new party with another name. Since Behice Hanım had been in prison, there was no such opportunity. If the leaders of both parties committed the same crime, the cause of this discrimination should have been enlightened. Why Erbakan was under protection had been another object of interest.”<sup>53</sup>

The closure of the MNP by the Constitutional Court caused the MSP executives to act more cautiously in order not to be outlawed just like its predecessor.<sup>54</sup> In this setting, the first precaution was that the party held its meetings at party headquarters rather than in public places.<sup>55</sup> Nonetheless, this attitude, in time, has turned to the consensus that there were giant differences between the MSP’s public discourse and its discourse towards the grassroots. Concordantly, it was accompanied by the charges of “hypocrisy” against –in general– the National Outlook movement and –in particular– Necmettin Erbakan.<sup>56</sup> Another precaution regarding unwillingness to recognize the apparent correlation between the two parties is that Erbakan was not even among the founders of the new party.

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- 52 Behice Boran and Necla Fertan, *İki Açıdan Türkiye İşçi Partisi Davası*, (İstanbul: Bilim Yayınları, 1975) pp. 9-37.
- 53 *Yeni Atılım Dergisi*, August 15, 1975 quoted by Soner Yalçın, *Erbakan: Eziyet Edilerek Yalnızlığa Yükseltelen Bir Siyasal Liderin Portresi*, pp. 76-77.
- 54 Binnaz Toprak, “Politicisation of Islam in a Secular State: The National Salvation Party in Turkey” in *From Nationalism to Revolutionary Islam*, ed. Said Amir Arjomand (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984) pp. 122-123.
- 55 Banu Eligür, *The Mobilization of Political Islam in Turkey*, p. 69.
- 56 Fehmi Çalmuk, “Necmettin Erbakan” in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce: İslamcılık* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2005) p. 564.

Even though this is quite startling at first glance, it would be safe to say that he was still recognized as the de facto leader behind the scenes.<sup>57</sup> Accordingly, he initiated a nationwide tour after he returned from Switzerland. Erbakan had asserted that he had a similar mission with “Veysel Karani who had walked the desert with his walking stick”.<sup>58</sup> Besides Erbakan, none of the 19 founding members of the National Salvation Party were from the MNP’s founding cadre. General Executive Board, which consisted predominantly of merchants and engineers, appointed Süleyman Arif Emre, ex-secretary general of the MNP and also a member of *Nakşibendi* order, into the MSP’s chairman. Erbakan would join officially in May 1973 along with two former members, Isparta deputy Hüsametdin Akmumcu and Tokat deputy Hüseyin Abbas.<sup>59</sup>

The ideological framework of the MSP is based on building an Islamic identity on a nationalist-conservative line.<sup>60</sup> The concept of “nationness” (*millilik*), according to Tanıl Bora, is the founding value for the religiously rooted MSP in the ideological oscillation.<sup>61</sup> In that regard, political polarization is constructed on the axis of “national or imitative (non-national- *gayri milli*)” by the party. The term, “nationness”, to which Erbakan attributes an ontological value, emphasizes both Turkishness and Islam and maintains the dated usage of the word, nation (*millet*), which is synonymous with the *ummet* (religious community).<sup>62</sup> This interpretation is accordant with the objective that redefines the political society as an ethical and religious community.<sup>63</sup> The party’s “nationness”

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57 Türker Alkan, “The National Salvation Party in Turkey” in *Islam and Politics in the Modern Middle East*, p. 82.

58 Çetin Demirhan, *Milli Nizam’dan Refah’a: Erbakan Nereye Koşuyor?*, (İstanbul: Tempo Kitapları, 1994) p. 24.

59 Elisabeth Özdalga, *İslamcılığın Türkiye Seyri: Sosyolojik Bir Perspektif*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2006) p. 108.

60 Tanıl Bora, *Türk Sağının Üç Hali: Milliyetçilik Muhafazakarlık İslamcılık*, (İstanbul: Birikim Yayınları, 2015) pp. 130-131.

61 Tanıl Bora, *Cereyanlar*, p. 470.

62 Ibid.

63 Menderes Çınar, *Siyasal Bir Sorun Olarak İslamcılık*, (Ankara: Dipnot Yayınları, 2005) p. 45.

concept is also completely opposed to “Westernization, Western club and Cultural Alienation”, which is described as the cliché of the “crusade mentality” by Erbakan to denote and condemn the opponents of the party.<sup>64</sup> “The leftist and liberal views are based on the Western sources. Fortunately, these influences that attempted to enter our national structure have not affected. Because our structure is durable. (...) We believe that both the leftist and liberal views that neglect moral development by paying attention to only material development are distant from responding to national needs. They also do not prioritize to morality and moral development, as the Constitution states in Article 10-14.”<sup>65</sup>

For the party’s leadership, all the other political parties both on the right and the left, which alienated to local national problems, were in this “Western club”. According to the MSP, Turkey, geographically, historically and culturally, is not part of the West, and all kinds of actors, institutions, processes and objectives regarding the westernization should be questioned. The main orientation of the party was based heavily on the need to resist and to respond to the West.<sup>66</sup> On the other hand, Erbakan had followed an unconvincing discourse that, as opposed to popular belief, Muslims are the main source of modern science and technology developed by West: “Europeans never mention where science (*ilim*) is derived. They have read the Muslims’ books, but they have not referred what information received in their books. When the other Europeans read these books, they had supposed that they wrote by themselves. (...) However, they learned these principles by reading the books of Muslims. (...) Today, all modern sciences, which are physics, chemistry, mathematics, astronomy, medicine, history and geography, have been constructed by Muslims.”<sup>67</sup> As the quoted passage demonstrates, he dedicated to mitigate the Muslims’ oppression and attempted to preach self-confidence against the

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64 Türker Alkan, “The National Salvation Party in Turkey” in *Islam and Politics in the Modern Middle East*, p. 95.

65 Necmettin Erbakan, *Milli Görüş*, (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 1976) pp. 27-28.

66 İhsan Dağı, “Transformation of Islamic Political Identity in Turkey: Rethinking the West and Westernization” in *Turkish Studies*, 6:1, (2005) p. 5.

67 Necmettin Erbakan, *Milli Görüş*, pp. 70-71.

West conceived as “the source of all evils”. With this deficient view of history and society, which exalts the glorious past of the East yet seeks to vilify the West, it offers a hope of salvation from the modernization to the disadvantaged social layers.

The ethno-religious xenophobia, for its part, is another powerful component of the “nationness” of the MSP.<sup>68</sup> In addition to defining the West as an absolute other, the “freemasonry” and “Zionism” are among the popular enemy images and conspiracy subjects: “Although they call themselves Jews, the Torah that today’s Jews hold in the hands is not the Torah that came to Moses, and they have no relation with Moses.”<sup>69</sup> “In the map prepared by a rabbi, Theodor Herzl, whose picture and name is on the Grand Assembly of Israel, our beloved homeland is shown as an Israeli province.”<sup>70</sup> “The Zionists want to dissolve Turkey, the head of the Islamic world, in a 400 million Christian Union including 200 million Catholics and 200 million Protestants.”<sup>71</sup>

The MSP’s political program was loyal to the economic motives which lead to the emergence of it. It formulated its social contract and ideology in two words, “National Outlook” (*Milli Görüş*), and characterized by two slogans: “Morality and spirituality first”, which emphasizes its conservative/Islamist worldview, and “the model of heavy industrialization”, which associated with the developmentalist national discourse in the 1960s and 1970s like the other developing countries.<sup>72</sup> Although the MSP had not presented a detailed economic program, it was one of the political parties that strongly emphasized the necessities of industrialization and the national production of heavy machinery by state-owned enterprises in Turkey.<sup>73</sup> In the first article of the MSP’s party program,

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68 Tanıl Bora, *Cereyanlar*, p. 471.

69 Necmettin Erbakan, *Milli Görüş*, p. 248.

70 Necmettin Erbakan, *Milli Görüş*, pp. 250-251.

71 Necmettin Erbakan, *Milli Görüş*, pp. 252-253.

72 Ruşen Çakır, “Milli Görüş Hareketi” p. 547; İhsan Dağı, “Transformation of Islamic Political Identity in Turkey: Rethinking the West and Westernization” p. 308.

73 Ali Yaşar Sarıbay, *Türkiye’de Modernleşme Din ve Parti Politikası: MSP Örnek Olayı*, pp. 122-129; Hakan Yavuz, *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009) p. 49;

“moral development”, first uttered by Necip Fazıl Kısakürek in 1954, was the basis of “material development” and industrialization, called as “heavy industry”.<sup>74</sup> The moral and material development including the promotion of free enterprise and investments in heavy industry was the only way to reach long-term economic development.<sup>75</sup> Since, in Necmettin Erbakan’s view, industrialization has a deep affiliation with “servitude to *Allah*”, he accuses the comprador-mason minority of founding “assembly line industry” and pursuing imitative mentality in economics. In that regard, Erbakan’s training as mechanical engineering in Germany and pursuing an academic career at one of the best universities in Turkey, Istanbul Technical University (İTÜ), could have been a function that makes his commitment convincing. In accordance with this understanding, Erbakan always was called the “professor” in the MSP’s official program.

Islamic symbols and norms in the program, for its part, which were interpreted and presented in the concept of culture rather than religion, does not mean an explicit Islamic resurgence program but aimed to rebuild Ottoman-Turkish norms and social structures to resist alienating elements of the Republican secularism project.<sup>76</sup> However, the MSP advocated laicism in the framework of freedom of belief – as expanding state control over religion -, which should not mean “the oppression of religion and disrespect towards the pious people”.<sup>77</sup> In this context, the party had desired to establish closer ties with the Islamic countries and fantasized about the creation of a United Muslim Nations, the Muslim Defense Alliance and the Muslim Common Market and issuing an Islamic *Dinar*.<sup>78</sup>

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74 Fulya Atacan, “Explaining Religious Politics at the Crossroad AKP-SP” in *Turkish Studies*, 6:2, 2005 p. 188; Tanıl Bora, *Cereyanlar*, p. 472.

75 Ali Yaşar Sarıbay, *Türkiye’de Modernleşme Din ve Parti Politikası: MSP Örnek Olayı*, p. 111.

76 Hakan Yavuz, *Modernleşen Müslümanlar: Nurcular, Nakşiler, Milli Görüş ve AKP*, (İstanbul:Kitap Yayınevi, 2005) p. 286.

77 Necmettin Erbakan, *Milli Görüş*, pp. 51-53.

78 Necmettin Erbakan, *Milli Görüş*, pp. 265-270.



Figure 1.2 The emblem of the National Salvation Party. Source: Wikipedia.

The MSP's recommended remedy to Turkey's local problems was return to doctrine of Islam and "the Muslim way of life".<sup>79</sup> In other words, despite the fact that the Islamist agenda was expressed in a special and implicit terminology in the legal party documents, the MSP was still an Islamist political party, which promoted the symbols and discourses of Islam to come to power and to establish a non-secular social order based mostly upon shari'a. In this respect, the MSP's party logo itself illustrates a good example of how the party abused Islamic symbolism. The emblem of the party was an old key on the tooth of which a hidden word, *Allah*, was written in Arabic Qufi style.<sup>80</sup> Although the party was obliged to remove this word and to redesign the key by removing the religious refer-

79 Binnaz Toprak, "The Religious Right" in *Turkey in Transition: New Perspectives* ed. Irvin C. Schick and Ertuğrul Ahmet Tonak (New York, Oxford University Press, 1987) p. 228.

80 İhsan Dağı, "Post-Islamism à la Turca" p. 79.

ence because of the notice of the public prosecutor, the prominent members of the MSP often propagated that the key meant the “key to heaven” for some.<sup>81</sup>

Aside from its ideological agenda, the allure of the MSP on the Turkish legal political scene proceeded mostly from its strong organizational skills. Unlike the political parties working only electoral period, the MSP continued to strengthen its ties with the youth out of the elections and even treated this organizational unit as its own paramilitary force as a potential instrument for its ultimate goal of creating an Islamic state.<sup>82</sup> The most prominent of these could be listed as the Raiders (*Akıncılar*) and The National Turkish Students' Union (*Milli Türk Talebe Birliği, MTTB*). The party has also opened numerous youth centers (*MSP Gençlik Lokalleri*), where youth who were sympathy for the MSP were trained in line with the party doctrine.<sup>83</sup> Moreover, there were some professional organization that had close ties with the MSP but are not directly linked to the party: The Society to Disseminate Science (*İlim Yayma Cemiyeti*), The Writers' Union of Turkey (*Türkiye Yazarlar Birliği*), The Union of Technical Personnel (*Teknik Elemanlar Birliği*) and The Organization of Idealist Teachers (*Mefkureci Öğretmenler Derneği*).<sup>84</sup> Similarly, the MSP attempted to establish an organizational link with the working class, and, related for this purpose, it founded the MSP Workers' Commissions (*MSP İşçi Komisyonları*) and Hak-İş Confederation in 1976. On the other hand, another foundation to organize migrant Turkish workers in Germany and the Netherlands could be listed as the Organizations of the National Outlook in Germany (*Almanya Milli Görüş Teşkilatları, AMGT*) and the Dutch

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81 According to Oğuzhan Asiltürk, who is one of the most significant figure of the National Outlook movement, the key opening the doors of goodness and auspiciousness is based on moral and spiritual values. Işıl Arpacı, *Türk Siyasetinde Erbakan*, (İstanbul: Kopernik, 2017) p. 228.

82 Gareth Jenkins, *Political Islam in Turkey: Running West, Heading East?* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008) p. 184; M. Çağatay Okutan, *Bozkurt'tan Kur'an'a Milli Türk Talebe Birliği*, (İstanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2004) pp. 199-200.

83 Binnaz Toprak, “Politicisation of Islam in a Secular State: The National Salvation Party in Turkey” p. 128.

84 Ibid.

National Outlook (Federation of Associations and Communities of Muslims).<sup>85</sup> Consequently, only three months after the establishment of the party, in “The First Grand Congress” of the MSP, which was held on January 21, 1973, its networks had been established in 42 provinces and 300 districts.<sup>86</sup> This number had been increased after the congress and had reached 65 provinces and over 400 districts in “The First Extraordinary Grand Congress” on July 22, 1977.<sup>87</sup> This organizational network, without any doubt, would have been one of the remarkable indicators of massive support for the MSP and its success in the 1973 general elections in nature.

The MSP proved its political maturity in the general elections of October 14, 1973. It obtained 11.8 percent of the vote in the parliamentary election and 12.3 percent in the senatorial election and won 48 seats in the parliament and 3 seats in the Senate, making it the third largest party after the Republican People’s Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, CHP*) and the Justice Party (*Adalet Partisi, AP*).<sup>88</sup> Behind this mass support of the MSP was the Islamic discourse based on criticism of the economic and cultural consequences of capitalist modernization, as it will be discussed in detail in the last chapter. More specifically, the electoral success of the MSP was particularly derived from the small capital owners and merchants, conservative Muslim groups and *tarikât*-based movements like the *Nurcus* and *Nakşibendis*; and economically vulnerable people.<sup>89</sup> The MSP had won the parliamentarians from 36 provinces; however, owing to

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- 85 Gamze Avcı, “Religion, Transnationalism and Turks in Europe” in *Religion and Politics in Turkey* ed. Ali Çarkoğlu and Barry Rubin (New York: Routledge, 2006) pp. 63-65.; Binnaz Toprak, “Politicisation of Islam in a Secular State: The National Salvation Party in Turkey”, p. 128.
- 86 Jacob M. Landau, “The National Salvation Party in Turkey,” in *Asian and African Studies* 11:1 (1976), pp. 6-7; Ali Yaşar Sarıbay, *Türkiye’de Modernleşme Din ve Parti Politikası: MSP Örnek Olayı*, p. 109.
- 87 Ali Yaşar Sarıbay, *Türkiye’de Modernleşme Din ve Parti Politikası: MSP Örnek Olayı*, p. 109.
- 88 1973 Yılı Seçim Sonuçları , <http://www.secim-sonuclari.com/1973> [February 3, 2019]
- 89 Haldun Gülalp, *Kimlikler Siyaseti: Türkiye’de Siyasal İslamın Temelleri*, (İstanbul: Metis, 2003), p. 45; Binnaz Toprak, “Politicisation of Islam in a Secular State: The National Salvation Party in Turkey”, p. 129.



the sectarian religious divisions and tensions between the Sunni and Al-evi communities, it received the most support from the central and eastern Anatolia, such as Malatya, Çorum and Sivas, and Sunni Kurdish provinces, like Elazığ, Bingöl and Diyarbakır.<sup>90</sup>

On the other hand, the limited data on the MSP's social root proves that it has been positioned within the social strata between the organized working class and the big capitalists. Among these social groups, especially, industrialists, engineers, tradesmen and imams have been shined out. According to the research conducted by *Hürriyet* newspaper and a technical consultants group (DATOTEK), the MSP had received support from the industrialists with 14.3 percent; the civil servants with 6.2 percent; the peasants with 5.9 percent; the artisans with 5.4 percent; the workers with 5.1 percent; the merchants with 4 percent; and the aghas with 2.9 percent.<sup>91</sup>

Although the national election of 1973 was a great success for the MSP, it also meant a fragmentation sign for the center-right political parties. Since the total number of the votes of the CHP and the AP had not enough to come to power alone, forming a coalition became the only option. Since the total number of the votes of the CHP and the AP did not come to power alone, the MSP, thus, became a "key party" with its 48 parliamentarians to create a coalition government.<sup>92</sup> Erbakan who had just returned to the MSP and replaced Süleyman Arif Emre's chair was highly enthusiastic to form the coalition with the CHP from the very beginning.<sup>93</sup> However, it wasn't easy to convince the ranks and file cadres of the party, who were against the establishment of a coalitional alliance with the "communist" CHP.<sup>94</sup> Erbakan, eventually, convinced those who opposed

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90 Ali Yaşar Sarıbay, *Türkiye'de Modernleşme Din ve Parti Politikası: MSP Örnek Olayı*, pp.150-156.

91 Ali Yaşar Sarıbay, *Türkiye'de Modernleşme Din ve Parti Politikası: MSP Örnek Olayı*, p. 109.

92 Suavi Aydın and Yüksel Taşkın, *1960'dan Günümüze Türkiye Tarihi*, pp. 251-252.

93 Soner Yalçın, *Erbakan: Eziyet Edilerek Yalnızlığa Yükseltelen Bir Siyasal Liderin Portresi*, pp. 82-83.

94 Ruşen Çakır, *Ne Şeriat Ne Demokrasi*, p. 22-23; Elisabeth Özdalga, *İslamcılığın Türkiye Seyri: Sosyolojik Bir Perspektif*, pp. 108-109.

the coalition with the CHP within the party through the argument that joining the coalition would have increased the legitimacy of the party and secure its position in the state bureaucracy.<sup>95</sup> Therefore, the CHP-MSP coalition government was formally established on January 26, 1974, which lasted until March 1975. Erbakan became deputy prime minister and the MSP controlled six ministries (Interior, Trade, Justice, Food and Agriculture, Industry and Technology, and the State Ministry of Religious Affairs).<sup>96</sup>

The CHP-MSP coalition could be a unique experience in Turkish politics around the question of “how a religious party allied with a Kemalist party”. This extraordinary coalition was explained as an opportunistic attitude to come to power by some of the commentators both on the right and the left.<sup>97</sup> On the other hand, some scholars from both sides regarded this political rapprochement as the “historical reconciliation.”<sup>98</sup> In Ruşen Çakır’s view, the MSP desired to create a coalition with the CHP for several reasons, the most important of which is abolishing the conditions of the closure anxieties as a partner of government.<sup>99</sup> Second, the benefits of sharing power stimulated the party leaderships’ appetite. Moreover, it was calculated that the partial implementation of the party program would have contributed to the final victory.<sup>100</sup> In other words, for the MSP, this coalition was a means to legitimize itself. On the other hand, according to Tanıl Bora, the political gain hoped by Erbakan was to indicate that

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95 Ahmet Akgül, *Erbakan Devrimi*, (İstanbul: Doğu Yayınları, 1995) p. 30; Jacob M. Landau, “The National Salvation Party in Turkey,” p. 39.

96 Serkan Yorgancılar, *Milli Görüş 1969-1980*, (İstanbul: Pınar Yayınları, 2012) pp. 262-263.

97 For details, see Zafer Karib, *Yeni Devrin Eşiğinde MSP*, (İstanbul: Çığır Yayınları, 1977) pp. 103-108.

98 For details, see Suna Killi, *1960-1975 Döneminde Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi’nde Gelişmeler – Siyaset Bilimi Açısından Bir İnceleme* (İstanbul, Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1976) p. 377; Metin Hasırcı, *Bitmeyen Mücadele: Erbakan* (İstanbul: Değişim Yayınları, 1996) p. 44.

99 Ruşen Çakır, *Ayet ve Slogan: Türkiye’de İslami Oluşumlar*, pp. 217-218.

100 Ibid.

he could ally not only with the right-wing parties, but also with the “leftists”, and thus prove his “third way” between capitalism and communism.<sup>101</sup>

The CHP and the MSP’s development-oriented coalition encouraged from the harmony between the export-oriented industrialists and the provincial businesses concerned with monopolistic tendencies. Moreover, it can be claimed that both parties were pleased with the anti-Americanism that the 1968 revolt raised worldwide.<sup>102</sup> This alliance, meant building a bridge between his party and the pious masses for Ecevit’s CHP, seriously affected by a populist restoration of Kemalism and espoused “left-of-center” (*Ortanın Solu*) as a new ideological identity. The CHP, for the first time, openly supported freedom of religion and belief through the proclamation of *Ak Günlere*, which had been published before the general elections of 1973. This text, which stressed that freedom of belief is as indispensable as freedom of thought, depicted being rightist or leftist as follows: “In political terms, the rightism and leftism is a political differentiation based on economic relations, rather than religiosity.”<sup>103</sup>

During the coalition, the MSP began to engage in significant positions within the state via the ministries and it attempted to put the slogans of “morality and spirituality” into practice.<sup>104</sup> In that sense, it initiated the state investments against the big İstanbul-based industrialists under the perspective of “heavy industrialization”. Erbakan thus traveled across Turkey to start the construction of these enterprises, which would be fizzled in time for most of them.<sup>105</sup>

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101 Tanıl Bora, *Cereyanlar*, p. 473.

102 Feroz Ahmad, *Demokrasi Sürecinde Türkiye 1945-1980* (İstanbul: Hil Yayın, 1996) pp. 421-425.

103 Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, *Ak Günlere: 1973 Seçim Bildirgesi*, (Ankara: 1973).

104 Zafer Karib *1975 Türkiyesinde Niçin MSP?*, (İstanbul: İhya Yayınları, 1975) pp. 102-103.; Ali Yaşar Sarıbay, *Türkiye’de Modernleşme Din ve Parti Politikası: MSP Örnek Olayı*, pp. 189-190.

105 Murat Toklucu, *Türk Erkeği ve Diğer Mucizeler: Zihinler Altında 20.000 Fersah*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2014) pp. 160-172.

As for the religion-based practices, enormous resources have been devoted to religious affairs through the Ministry of State, which was under the control of the party. Many new imam hatip schools were instituted and a new course that based on Islamic principles and ethics had been included to the high school curriculum.<sup>106</sup> During the coalition, the MSP also took major steps towards the Islamization of public sphere and daily life. For instance, Şevket Kazan, Minister of Justice, fought against “obscene publications and symbols” and objected the statue of naked women, called “beautiful Istanbul”, from Karaköy square.<sup>107</sup> Similarly, Oğuzhan Asiltürk, the Minister of Interior, issued a limitation on alcohol consumption and allowed to serve it in case of special permission in the restaurants and the coffeehouses.<sup>108</sup>

The first political tensions between the two coalition partners emerged as the issue of an amnesty for political prisoners. In March 1974, CHP suggested a general amnesty that would lead to the release of the socialists and communists incarcerated after the 12 March military intervention.<sup>109</sup> When Ecevit’s proposal came before the Grand National Assembly, 20 *Nurcu* members of the MSP voted “no”, and resigned from the party.<sup>110</sup> In Ruşen Çakır’s view, the question of amnesty for political prisoners caused two major ruptures. First, the CHP comprehended that it should not rely on its coalition partner. Second, a similar unreliability was experienced by the *Nakşibendi*-origin MSP member, who was effective in the top management of the MSP, because of the *Nurcus* who broke the party discipline.<sup>111</sup>

However, the main political challenge that would lead to dissolve the coalition between the two parties was the invasion of Cyprus in July

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106 Hakan Yavuz, *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey*, p. 212.

107 Ali Yaşar Sarıbay, *Türkiye’de Modernleşme Din ve Parti Politikası: MSP Örnek Olayı*, p. 190.

108 Ibid.

109 Muzaffer Ayhan Kara, *Türk Siyasal Yaşamında Koalisyon*, (İstanbul: Cumhuriyet Kitapları, 2007) p. 121.

110 Türker Alkan, “The National Salvation Party in Turkey” in *Islam and Politics in the Modern Middle East*, p. 84; Birol Yeşilada “The Virtue Party” in *Turkish Studies* No. 3, (2002) p. 67; Gareth Jenkins, *Political Islam in Turkey: Running West, Heading East?* p. 133.

111 Ruşen Çakır, *Ayet ve Slogan: Türkiye’de İslami Oluşumlar*, p. 219.

1974, which enhanced the domestic popularity of Ecevit and nominated him to be a national hero. Although Erbakan insisted that the real will behind the Cyprus Operation is its own party and tried to call himself "ghazi" (a Muslim warrior or one fighting against the opponents of Islam or non-Muslims), he, yet, could not achieve taking this reputation away from Ecevit.<sup>112</sup> Owing to Ecevit's expectation that his domestic popularity would bring about more support for vote, in September 1974, he attempted to break the coalition and called early elections.<sup>113</sup>

Ecevit's resignation was followed by a series of political crisis. In November 1974, a technocrat government was established by Sadi Irmak (1904-1990), a former member of the Turkish Senate, which lasted until end of March 1975.<sup>114</sup> In March 1975, the First Nationalist Front (*Milliyetçi Cephe*) coalition was formed, including the AP, the MSP, the Nationalist Action Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*, MHP), and the Republican Reliance Party (*Cumhuriyetçi Güven Partisi*, CGP), which remained in power till the general elections of June 1977. Erbakan became deputy prime minister; and the ministries of state, the interior, justice, industry and technology, construction and food and agriculture were left to the MSP.<sup>115</sup> In Ertuğrul Ahmet Tonak and Irvin C. Schick's words, the new coalition could have provided maneuver right and bargaining power for the small and "key parties" like the MSP and MHP.<sup>116</sup> Consequently, both political parties would have got several positions at the state level.

Before the 1977 general elections, the MSP had tried to construct its propaganda on the theme "Cyprus operation is carried out by their own party despite the CHP and Ecevit".<sup>117</sup> However, considering the elec-

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112 Mümin İslamoğlu, *Erbakan Ecevit'e Karşı*, (İstanbul: Çankaya Matbaası, 1974) p. 17.

113 Feroz Ahmad, *Bir Kimlik Peşinde Türkiye*, (İstanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2014), p. 150.

114 Muzaffer Ayhan Kara, *Türk Siyasal Yaşamında Koalisyon*, p. 136.

115 Muzaffer Ayhan Kara, *Türk Siyasal Yaşamında Koalisyon*, pp. 139-142.

116 Irvin C. Schick and Ertuğrul Ahmet Tonak "Conclusion" in *Turkey in Transition: New Perspectives*, pp. 368-369.

117 Ruşen Çakır, *Ayet ve Slogan: Türkiye'de İslami Oluşumlar*, p. 219.

tion results, it was revealed that this was not as convincing as for the electorate. The votes of the MSP declined to 8.6 percent in the early parliamentary elections of June 5, 1977.<sup>118</sup> Since both the number of voters and the voter turnout increased, the MSP won more than 4,000 votes than four years ago. Nevertheless, it was able to obtain only 24 seats, half the number it had won in the general election of 1973.<sup>119</sup>

One of the main reasons for the MSP's electoral failure could be about the emergence of the MHP, a literally classical neo-fascist party, meaning that the party opposing Alawi and Kurdish communities attracted massive support, especially, in the provinces with Sunni-Turkish-origin dominated majority.<sup>120</sup> Considering the MSP lost a significant number of electoral votes from the central and eastern Anatolian provinces where there was a sizeable Alawi population and the tensions between the Alawi and the Sunni communities, it is clear that the MHP that built its discourse on the theme of Turkishness as well as Islam played a decisive role in decline of the MSP's vote. The other major effect of this failure is the withdrawal of the *Nurcu* groups that had 11 seats in the parliament from the MSP before the 1977 election, which meant the loss of many *Nurcu* votes.<sup>121</sup>

In July 1977, in spite of the fact that Ecevit's CHP had stood out as the most successful party with 41.4 percent vote in the election, the Second Nationalist Front government was formed among the AP, the MSP and the MHP.<sup>122</sup> After the establishment of the coalition, the MSP obtained the ministries of Interior, Foreign Affairs, Food and Agriculture,

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118 1977 Yılı Seçim Sonuçları , <http://www.secim-sonuclari.com/1977> [February 12, 2019].

119 Ali Yaşar Sarıbay, *Türkiye'de Modernleşme Din ve Parti Politikası: MSP Örnek Olayı*, p. 161.

120 Ali Yaşar Sarıbay, *Türkiye'de Modernleşme Din ve Parti Politikası: MSP Örnek Olayı*, pp. 165-166; Ruşen Çakır, *Ayet ve Slogan: Türkiye'de İslami Oluşumlar*, pp. 219.

121 Yıldız Atasoy, Turkey, *Islamists and Democracy: Transition and Globalization in a Muslim State*, (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2005) p. 124; Soner Yalçın, *Erbakan: Eziyet Edilerek Yalnızlığa Yükseltelen Bir Siyasal Liderin Portresi*, p. 118; Hakan Yavuz, *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey*, p. 211;

122 Muzaffer Ayhan Kara, *Türk Siyasal Yaşamında Koalisyon*, pp. 163-164.

Industry and Technology, Labor, Housing and State, and Erbakan became the deputy prime minister.<sup>123</sup>

After the dissolution of the Second Nationalist Front Government, which lasted only 5 months, the CHP minority government (5 January 1978 - 12 November 1979) and Demirel government (12 November 1979 - 12 September 1980), which also called as the Third Nationalist Front, were established respectively.<sup>124</sup> This pre-12 September coup era dominated by “short-lived and ideologically inconsistent coalition governments” can be analyzed as the concept of hegemony crisis, as it will be discussed in the following chapter.<sup>125</sup> This term, inherited from Antonio Gramsci, for the case of Turkey, means that political crisis, symbolized by the attempts to several massacres against the Alawis and the attacks against all the leftist movement and the social opposition, including the CHP, was besieged by a severe economic crisis that showed itself rising unemployment, deterioration of the financial advancement and the current account deficits.<sup>126</sup>

In this time of “double crisis”, the MSP was strongly influenced by the 1979 Iranian Revolution.<sup>127</sup> For instance, in the party conventions, especially in the “March to Rescue Jerusalem” on September 6, 1980, the banners of “We are the followers of shari’a” and “Toward to the Islamic state” were held and the slogans of “Shari’a is Islam, the Constitution is the Quran”, “We are ready for jihad,” “Sharia or death” and “Shari’a will

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123 Muzaffer Ayhan Kara, *Türk Siyasal Yaşamında Koalisyon*, pp. 165-166.

124 Ebru Deniz Ozan, “İki Darbe Arasında Kriz Sarmalı: 1971-1980” in *Osmanlı’dan Günümüze Türkiye’de Siyasal Hayat* ed. Gökhan Atılğan, Cenk Saraçoğlu and Ateş Uslu (İstanbul: Yordam Kitap, 2015) pp. 696-699.

125 Ergun Özbudun, “The Institutional Decline of Parties in Turkey,” in *Political Parties and Democracy*, ed. Larry Diamond and Richard Gunther (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), p. 240.

126 Antonio Gramsci, *Selection from Prison Notebook*, ed. Quentin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1971) p. 20; M. Ufuk Tutan, “1970’li Yılların Küresel Krizinde Türkiye’de Ekonomi Politikalarının Değişimi” in *Modernizmin Yansımaları: 70’li Yıllarda Türkiye*, (Ankara: Efil Yayınları, 2014) p. 83.

127 Sabri Sayarı, “Turkey’s Islamist Challenge” in *Middle East Quarterly*, September 1996, p. 42.

come, brutality will end” were expressed.<sup>128</sup> This radical deviation for the MSP, which once underscored the importance of the legal strategy by keeping away from the act of violence in the low-level civil war environment of the decade of the 1970s, was a symbolic example of how the Iranian Revolution encouraged the party to adopt an anti-system discourse.<sup>129</sup>

As for the MSP’s responsibility on the coup of 1980, the MSP was involved under the January 24 decisions implicitly.<sup>130</sup> That is to say, Demirel government with the external support of the MSP and the MHP had announced a comprehensive and radical policy package of stabilization and liberalization on January 24, 1980. These decisions, which went beyond standard stabilization and liberalization programs and meant a radical change in the mode of accumulation regime in Turkey.<sup>131</sup> It is worth remembering that Turkey is a country where the military intervention had been emerged periodically since the 1960s not only with the aim of the control over social opposition but also with the aim of restructuring the economy. In other words, these decisions would only be implemented in the repressive environment of the military coup of 12 September 1980.

The MSP suffered the similar fate as its predecessor and was closed down in the aftermath of the 1980 military intervention along with other political parties. On February 20, 1981, five months after the coup, a military court commenced a lawsuit against Erbakan and the MSP’s 34

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128 Çetin Demirhan, *Milli Nizam’dan Refah’a: Erbakan Nereye Koşuyor?* pp. 29-30; Ahmet Oğuz, *12 Eylül’den Mamak Hücrelerine*, (Ankara, Gürler Matbaacılık, 2010) p. 74.

129 To be sure, not all groups within the party supported the Iranian Revolution. For more details, see Özlem Akkaya Bayraktar, *The National Outlook and Its Youth in the 1970s in Turkey: At the Periphery or Outside the Social Order?*, (Saarbrücken: Lambert Academic Publishing, 2010).

130 Ebru Deniz Ozan, “İki Darbe Arasında Kriz Sarmalı: 1971-1980” p. 699.

131 Haldun Gülalp, *Kapitalizm, Sınıflar ve Devlet*, (İstanbul: Belge Yayınları, 1993) pp. 39-41; Galip Yalman, *Transition to Neoliberalism: The Case of Turkey in the 1980s*, (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi University Press, 2009) pp. 3-5; Korkut Boratav, *Türkiye İktisat Tarihi: 1908-2009*, (İstanbul: İmge Yayınları, 2011) pp. 147-149; Şevket Pamuk, *Uneven Centuries: Economic Development of Turkey since 1820*, p. 246.



THE NATIONAL OUTLOOK MOVEMENT'S VISION OF CAPITALIST  
SOCIETY

members of General Administrative Board on the grounds that it had become a center for anti-secular activity.<sup>132</sup> As a result of the trial, Erbakan was sentenced to four-year of imprisonment and the MSP's 22 other defendants issued prison sentences ranging from two to three years. Nevertheless, all the convictions by courts were formally acquitted in February 1985 and they rapidly returned to the political arena as the founder of the Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi* -RP).<sup>133</sup>



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132 Serkan Yorgancılar, *Milli Görüş 1969-1980*, pp. 361-365.

133 Stephen Vertigans, *Islamic Roots and Resurgence in Turkey: Understanding and Explaining the Muslim Resurgence*, (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 2003) p. 62.

### 3

## **Political mobilization in Turkey in the 1970s: The years of struggle under the crisis of he- gemony**

*No one  
believes in the tree  
because no plums do they see.  
But it's a plum tree;  
you can tell by its leaf.  
-Bertolt Brecht*

This chapter provides a background guide for understanding the relations between the National Outlook Movement and capitalism, as I will discuss in detail in the following sections. In seeking how the National Outlook Movement perceives capitalist relations of production in the 1970s, it should not be overlooked that the relations and contradictions between the social classes distinctly marked this decade. This chapter begins with the economic and legal framework that reveals the contentious climate of the 1970s, which I describe as the decade of struggle under the crisis of hegemony, and then continues with the capitalist class and working class assessment. The ideological and political opponents of the National Outlook Movement, the mass socialist/communist organizations and far-right fascist organizations, however, are beyond the scope of this chapter.

The general characteristic of Turkey in the late 1960s and 1970s, arguably one of the most eventful periods in terms of transformation on all levels of state and society in Republican Turkey, was often euphemized by the chaotic right-left conflict in the mainstream literature.<sup>1</sup> However, in this chapter, I will argue that, inspired from Antonio Gramsci's conceptualization of hegemony, this decade was dominated by the crisis of hegemony triggered by a deep economic and political crisis and the social unrest.<sup>2</sup>

Gramsci essentially put forward the concept of hegemony for the purpose of analyzing the class relations. The concept, which points out that the reproduction of class relations determines all areas of social life, is also key to understanding how capitalism works as a political-economic system. According to Gramsci, hegemony means that the dominant classes articulate the interests of all other classes and social groups into their own interests by creating "a general interest" or "a collective will", and thus becomes dominant. The prevailing classes, however, should make economic concessions to non-hegemonic classes or social groups,

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1 For more details, see Eric Jan Zürcher, *Modernleşen Türkiye'nin Tarihi*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2011), pp. 380-381; Feroz Ahmad, *Modern Türkiye'nin Oluşumu*, (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2014), pp. 177-213.

2 Antonio Gramsci, *Selection from Prison Notebook*, p. 20.

which are also called “subordinate” or “subaltern” by Gramsci, and establish cultural-ideological superiority to achieve dominance over them. One of the most important components of his concept of hegemony, without any doubt, deals with economic and political crises in the context of the “crisis of hegemony”. For him, “the crisis of hegemony” is described as the situations in which the dominant classes have lost the consent of other social classes and relied solely on coercive power. In the case that the dominant classes are not as foremost as they used to be, the social cohesion established by the hegemony of the ruling classes starts to disintegrate. Concordantly, it would be safe to say that the intertwined economic and political crisis in Turkey in the 1970s was a literally crisis of hegemony, as Gramsci stated “(...) the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appears”.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to Turkey, the decade of the 1970s witnessed the structural crisis of capitalism simultaneously occurring everywhere in the world. This crisis was clearly visible through the 1973 oil crisis, which many scholars have described as a structural crisis of overaccumulation.<sup>4</sup> In the late 1970s, the profound economic and political predicament was aggravated by widespread social turmoil, which I call the crisis of hegemony, also known as the crisis of Fordism-Keynesianism, or of redistributive capitalism in the case of Turkey and other developing countries.<sup>5</sup> Behind these different definitions were both the domestic class structures of the countries and their roles and positions within the international division of labor.

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3 Antonio Gramsci, *Selection from Prison Notebook*, p. 276.

4 Korkut Boratav, “Sunuş” in *Krizin Gelişimi ve Türkiye’nin Alternatif Sorunu*, ed. Korkut Boratav (İstanbul: Kaynak, 1984), p. 10; Çağlar Keyder, “Kriz Üzerine Notlar” in *Toplum Bilim*, No. 14 (1981), pp. 3-4.

5 William Robinson, *Global Capitalism and the Crisis of Humanity*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014) pp. 131-132; Simon Clarke, *Keynesianism, Monetarism and the Crisis of the State*, (England: E. Elgar, 1988).

### § 3.1 The economic background of the decade of the 1970s

As of the late 1950s in Turkey, the import substitution industrialization strategy by fostering industrial capital under heavy protectionism had replaced an agriculture-based economy. One of the primary elements of this typical import substitution model, in which technology, investment goods and inputs were imported and durable consumer goods were produced domestically, was to envisage a kind of compromise between dominant and subordinate classes. For instance, this model foregrounded high wages policy as the redistribution of income to create a domestic market. Parallel to a noticeable increase in the wages, it also guaranteed the right to strike, collective bargain and unionize. In other words, as highlighted by Boratav, Keyder and Güllalp, wages were not obligated to be under pressure.<sup>6</sup> Conversely, Marxist scholar Sungur Savran put a different perspective on this subject. For him, high wages are the natural result of organized labor struggle gains rather than one of the necessities of an import substitution regime.<sup>7</sup> Nonetheless, from the second half of the 1970s onward, the import substitution model would experience a crisis and come to an end owing to the crisis of world capitalism and the frequent changes in the international conjuncture.

### § 3.2 Legal framework of the political and social life in the 1960s and 1970s

As regards the legal institutional aspect in the 1970s, the most fundamental organ drawing the legal framework of the political life and its

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6 Korkut Boratav, *Türkiye İktisat Tarihi*, (Ankara: İmge, 2004) p. 124; Çağlar Keyder, *State and Class in Turkey: A Study in Capitalist Development*, p. 147; Haldun Güllalp, *Kapitalizm, Sınıflar ve Devlet*, p. 37.

7 Sungur Savran, "20. Yüzyılın Politik Mirası" in *Sürekli Kriz Politikaları*, ed. Neşecan Balkan and Sungur Savran (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2003), p. 27.

institutional structure was the 1961 Constitution -although many progressive aspects were changed through the amendment after the military memorandum of 1971. This Constitution heavily embraced the principal values of a bourgeois/liberal democracy, which was based on a concept of citizenship that is defined not only by their duties but also by their rights, and a judiciary independent of executive and legislative branches of the government, but able to control it in case of the necessity.<sup>8</sup>

While the 1961 Constitution can be read as almost totally a result of the development stage of Turkish capitalism, this capital accumulation model adopted by Turkey since the 1960s was neither peculiar to it nor invented by it. With this model as the main way to integrate less developed countries into the world economy, the state was given a central position to create a more modern society in all aspects. Furthermore, the basic social rights, including the right to strike and the right to collective bargaining and unionization, were granted in order to create a domestic market by arranging more fair distribution of income. In other words, the traces of the new capital accumulation model, called the “import substitution industrialization strategy” adopted by developing countries, can explicitly be seen in the 1961 Constitution. It is also possible to say that the assumption that there would be no need for class struggle only if the basic rights and liberties of the working class were recognized and the relatively fair distribution of income were provided lie behind ensuring constitutional guarantees for these social and economic rights.

Despite the fact that the 1961 Constitution, which extended basic human rights and liberties in various aspects and provided freedom to organize labor, established an apparently full-fledged conciliation process on paper<sup>9</sup>, the Unions Law (No. 274) and the Law on Collective Bar-

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8 Bülent Tanör, *Osmanlı-Türk Anayasal Gelişmeleri*, (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2016), pp. 377-411; Taha Parla, *Türkiye’de Anayasalar: Tarih, İdeoloji, Rejim 1921-2016*, pp. 44-61.

9 Günseli Berik and Cihan Bilginsoy “The Labor Movement in Turkey: Labor Pains, Maturity, Metamorphosis” in *The Social History of Labor in the Middle East*, ed. Ellis Jay

gaining Strikes, and Lock-outs Act (No. 275) in July 1963, considerably restricted the right to organize and have collective labor agreements, as opposed to many labor historians' popular consensus that attached importance to these laws as the institutionalization of labor union rights and a collective bargaining regime<sup>10</sup>. As the first comprehensive legal framework for Turkish unionism, the laws of 1963 allowed all workers to establish unions freely in the specific workplaces, known as workplace unionism.<sup>11</sup> Nonetheless, the same laws limited the scope of the right to strike and authorized employers to declare a lockout even though lockout had no legal definition in the Constitution.

Although the 1961 Constitution and subsequently the 1963 Union Laws did not give the ideal legal arrangements for the working class, the 1961-1980 era, however, was the birth of free Turkish unionism in almost all respects. In other words, this period allowed the right for unionization to be socially accepted and used by the masses. Accordingly, not only the organized labor that benefited from the right to collective bargaining and strike but also all wage earners' working and living conditions changed for the better.<sup>12</sup> As a matter of fact, in spite of the different results obtained from different sources, wage statistics is one of the most remarkable ways to observe the economic welfare of individuals over the years. According to the general statistics bureau, as trade unions initiated exercising their right to strike and collective bargaining starting in 1963, the

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Goldberg, (Boulder: Westview, 1996), pp. 37-64; Toker Dereli, *The Development of Turkish Trade Unionism*, (Istanbul: Sermet Matbaası, 1968), pp. 121-122; Alparslan Işıklı, "Sendikal Haklar Açısından İki Farklı Dönem, İki Farklı Anayasa: 1961 ve 1982 in *Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'e: Problemler, Araştırmalar, Tartışmalar*, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1998), pp. 369-371.

10 For more details, see Şükran Soner, "Sendikalizmde Gelişme Yılları: 1963-1980", pp. 360-365; Aziz Çelik, *Vesayetden Siyasete Türkiye'de Sendikacılık (1946-1967)*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2010), pp. 324-332.

11 Oya Baydar, *Türkiye'de Sendikacılık Hareketi*, (İstanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 1998), p. 6.

12 Şükran Soner, "Sendikalizmde Gelişme Yılları: 1963-1980" in *Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'e: Problemler, Araştırmalar, Tartışmalar*, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1998), p. 360.

wage rates of workers began to rise constantly, considering the downward trend of real wages in the period before the right to strike was granted.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, during the period of 1961 to 1980, exhaustive research has been based on the unionized workers for whom collective bargaining provided a significant wage recovery chart.<sup>14</sup>

### § 3.3 The intensification of the political crisis and the unstable political environment

The political crisis, for its part, which accompanied the crisis of the capital accumulation strategy, was another main characteristic of the decade of the 1970s. This unstable political environment often showed itself as the partial political representation, the coalition governments, the clashes between political parties and the deadlock of parliamentary politics.<sup>15</sup> As a matter of fact, the period between 1960 and 1980 experienced three military coups, two military coup attempts, two reform governments, eight coalition governments with the average life span of two years and many ministries' crises.<sup>16</sup> In that regard, the most iconic example of the parliamentary crisis of the late 1970s in Turkey was the abortive presidential election of April 6, 1980, when the term of the sixth president, Fahri Korutürk, was over. Over 100 unsuccessful rounds were held;

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13 Alpaslan Işıklı, "Wage Labor and Unionization" in *Turkey in Transition: New Perspectives*, ed. Irvin C. Schick and Ertuğrul Ahmet Tonak, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 323-325.

14 Şükran Soner, "Sendikalizmde Gelişme Yılları: 1963-1980", p. 360.

15 Çağlar Keyder, *State and Class in Turkey: A Study in Capitalist Development*, pp. 187-188; Faruk Ataay, *Kriz Kıskaçındaki Türk Siyaseti ve 1978-1979 CHP Hükümeti*, (Ankara: De Ki, 2006), p. 207.

16 On the other hand, in the late 1970s, many parliamentary sessions could not be held, as only a few deputies attended the sessions of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey.



however attempts to elect the seventh president of the country, to succeed Korutürk, always failed.<sup>17</sup>

Another essential feature of the decade of the 1970s in Turkey is that political ideologies were diversified and radicalized as a reflection of the deepening economic, political and ideological crisis experienced by the social classes. Parallel to this, the organizational and social counterparts of these main political ideologies, like socialism, fascism and religious fundamentalism, also emerged.

### § 3.4 From infancy to the class for itself: The Turkish capitalist class in the 1970s

In those years when the society became more politicized and organized, class interests and class-based contradictions began to be expressed more on the political scenes. In fact, the priority of the class-based interests did not only motivate the working class struggle but also large industrialists became more visible in both economic and political fields. In other words, the Turkish bourgeois class became aware of their own interests and underwent a significant transformation so as to become a “class for itself”.<sup>18</sup> Parallel to this, the Turkish Industry and Business Association (*Türk Sanayicileri ve İş Adamları Derneği*, TÜSİAD), which represents a new and advanced stage in the process of Turkish bourgeoisie organizing itself as a class, was established in 1971.<sup>19</sup>

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17 The last round was held on September 11, 1980. Deputies intended to “continue the session tomorrow” but, a day later, on September 12, 1980 at 4 AM, a military junta led by General Kenan Evren took over state power. Indeed, one of the so-called justifications for the September 12 military intervention was the presidential crisis after the April 1980 elections. Mehmet Ali Birand, *The Generals' Coup in Turkey: An Inside Story of 12 September 1980*, (London: Brassey's, 1987), p. 132.

18 The term “class for itself”, which is bound up with Karl Marx's theory of class analysis and is closely associated with Marxist theory, is defined as an organized class in active pursuit of its own interests.

19 Ayşe Buğra, *Devlet ve İşadamları*, pp. 336-338.

Throughout the 1970s, the employer organizations, most notably the TÜSİAD, gradually gained momentum of its social influence by standing out in the political arena. It is possible to trace a large number of meetings or statements by some voluntary business associations' members who clearly expressed their views about the basic economic and social problems of the country. For instance, two representatives of the monopolistic capital, Sakıp Sabancı, the chairman of the Union of Industrialists Chambers (*Sanayi Odaları Birliği*), and Halit Narin, the head of Turkish Confederation of Employer Associations (*Türkiye İşverenler Sendikaları Konfederasyonu*, TİSK), called on the CHP and the AP to make a compromise. They vehemently announced that their choice would be early elections before the Second Nationalist Front Government was overthrown with a no-confidence vote in December 1977.<sup>20</sup> Interestingly enough, shortly after, the AP called for an early election. Similarly, the big industrialists desired to reestablish hegemony and severely repress the social opposition via the state security apparatus against the structural crisis. Parallel to this, TİSK and the Union of Chambers demanded the forming of the State Security Courts (*Devlet Güvenlik Mahkemeleri*, DGM) and the extension of powers of the law enforcement officers on the grounds of shielding the country from "anarchy".<sup>21</sup> As these instances demonstrate, the business class representatives perceived the social problems as an essential part of the structural crisis and an obstacle to overcome the economic dimensions of the crisis. On the other hand, the employer organizations, especially TİSK and the Union of Chambers, directly interfered in the parliamentary political process by criticizing the uncompromising attitude of the political parties through periodical reports.<sup>22</sup> Concordantly, TÜSİAD's declaration entitled "Realistic Way Out" (*Gerçekçi Çıkış Yolu*) against the Ecevit government in April 1979,

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20 *Cumhuriyet*, March 12, 1977; March 24, 1977.

21 *Cumhuriyet*, November 16, 1979.

22 Rafet İbrahimoglu, "1977 Yılı'nın Değerlendirilmesi ve 1978 Yılından Beklenenler" in *İşveren* No. 3, 1977 p. 4; Halit Narin, "Türkiye'nin Siyasi, Ekonomik, Sosyal Problemleri ve Çözüm Yolları" in *İşveren*, No. 4, 1978 p. 4 quoted by Ebru Deniz Ozan, *Gülme Sırası Bizde: 12 Eylül'e Giderken Sermaye Sınıfı, Kriz ve Devlet*, (İstanbul: Metis, 2012), pp. 73-74; 78.

which is also known as the announcement to overthrow the Ecevit government, was the symbolic breaking point of the increasing interference of the employer organizations in the political sphere.<sup>23</sup>

Another remarkable characteristic of the decade of the 1970s in terms of the capitalist class is the relatively late discovery of anti-communism in comparison with their counterparts in Western countries.<sup>24</sup> In that vein, social actors and anti-systemic movements were perceived as the greatest threat by the capitalist class, especially in the climate of the post-12 March military memorandum, when acts of violence were mounted throughout the whole country. Consequently, the employer organizations can be described literally as class organizations that express a search for ideological and political hegemony of the bourgeois class. All in all, the capitalist class coming together to organize its interests was inspired mostly from –in general- socialist opposition and –in particular- increasing mobility and the struggle of the working class.

The 1970s was also a decade when the big capitalist groups increased their ideological influence in the field of culture. Some sections of the bourgeoisie, especially *Türkiye İş Bankası*, *Yapı ve Kredi Bankası*, *Akbank*, *Koç*, *Sabancı*, *Eczacıbaşı* and *Çukurova*, focused on ideological and cultural hegemony in the fields of painting, music, cinema, museology and amateur sports.<sup>25</sup> In Buğra's view, businessmen taking on the socially significant role beyond private-interest-oriented action derived mostly from the feeling that threatened its social position as a class.<sup>26</sup> However, aside from an effort by businessmen to acquire a quasi-public role, such activities whetted the appetite of the capitalist class.

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23 *Cumhuriyet*, May 17, 1979; Feyyaz Berker and Güngör Uras, *Fikir Üreten Fabrika: TÜSİAD'ın ilk on yılı 1970-1980*, (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2009).

24 Ayşe Buğra, *Devlet ve İşadamları*, p. 193.

25 Gökhan Atılğan, "Türkiye'de Toplumsal Sınıflar: 1923-2010" in *1920'den Günümüze Türkiye'de Toplumsal Yapı ve Değişim*, ed. Faruk Alpkaya and Bülent Duru, (Ankara: Phoneix, 2012) p. 346.

26 Ayşe Buğra, *State and Business in Modern Turkey: A Comparative Study*, pp. 234-235.

### § 3.5 The years when workers stood up as a class

The other component of the class struggle in the 1970s was the working class. During this period, the Turkish working class developed quantitatively and qualitatively –meaning that both the share of the workers in the total population and the number of strikes and demonstrations that intervened in the political arena increased. The total number of wage earners in Turkey increased from 3 million in 1965 to 4.2 million in 1970, 5.4 million in 1975 and 6.2 million in 1980, respectively. As for the ratio of wage earners to total employees, it was 22.5 percent in 1965, which, compared to industrialized Western countries, was quite low, yet it soared to 27.6 percent in 1970, to 31 percent in 1975, and 33.4 percent in 1980.<sup>27</sup> In spite of the increase in the number of wage earners and the ratio of workers to total job holders in the period of 1961-1980, it can be safely said that there was no significant rupture in the relations of wage earners to the ownership of the means of production. In other words, the process of dispossession or property transfer had not occurred expeditiously. As cited by Keyder and Pamuk, this process was reversed to some extent owing to certain current factors including money sent back home by Turkish migrant workers in Western European countries, a more equal distribution of income and the increase of real wages thanks to collective bargaining.<sup>28</sup>

However, this relatively encouraging picture did come at a cost for the dominant class. The period following the late 1960s witnessed a steady increase in the number of workers on strike and the annual number of working days lost through strikes. According to the Ministry of Labor's data, the number of workers on strike and the days lost in strikes between the years 1963 and 1980 have never been matched at any other time in the Republic's history. To be more precise, according to Yıldırım

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27 Yıldırım Koç, *Türkiye İşçi Sınıfı ve Sendikacılık Hareketi Tarihi*, (İstanbul, Kaynak Yayınları, 2003), pp. 101-102.

28 Çağlar Keyder, *State and Class in Turkey: A Study in Capitalist Development*, pp. 184-187; Şevket Pamuk, *Uneven Centuries: Economic Development of Turkey Since 1820*, p. 231.

Koç's exhaustively documented number, workers on strike jumped from 21,156 to 25,546; and the days lost in strikes went from only under a quarter-million to more than 1 million between 1970 and 1974.<sup>29</sup> Similarly, by the year 1980, almost 85,000 workers went on strike and 1,303,000 thousand days were lost to strikes. This is the highest number for the period of 1963-1980.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, in view of the postponement of strikes involving 131,000 workers in the first 8 months of 1980, the number of workers who went on strike would have reached 200,000 as the year 1980 ended.<sup>31</sup>

It must also be noted that during this period, the labor struggle mostly occurred in the industrial sector, which was vital for restructuring capital, increasing profit rates and ensuring capital accumulation. In other words, the existing working class struggle, which mostly emerged in the private sector dependent on foreign capital support, such as durable consumer goods and the automotive industry as well as the production tools meant a serious obstacle to the restructuring of capital and the inflow of foreign capital.<sup>32</sup> In this setting, it would be safe to say that the organized labor movement was also a significant component of the structural crisis of the 1970s.

The unionization, for its part, was massive in the 1970s. The Confederation of Revolutionary Workers' Union (*Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu*, DİSK), which mobilized the workers to dynamic struggle and activist unionism with the principle of "class and mass trade unionism" against the Confederation of Turkish Workers' Unions' (*Türkiye İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu*, Türk-İş) slogan of "above-party politics", was organized all over the country.<sup>33</sup> The public servants' unions, for its part, especially the Turkish Teachers Unity and Solidarity Organization (*Türkiye Öğretmenler Birleşme ve Dayanışma Derneği*, TÖBDER), also stood out as pressure groups. The State Employee Unions Act (No.624), which

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29 Yıldırım Koç, *Türkiye İşçi Sınıfı ve Sendikacılık Hareketi Tarihi*, p. 186.

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid. p. 187.

32 Çağlar Keyder, *Türkiye'de Devlet ve Sınıflar*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1995), p. 219; Şevket Pamuk, *Uneven Centuries: Economic Development of Turkey Since 1820*, p. 206.

33 Aziz Çelik, *Vesayetden Siyasete Türkiye'de Sendikacılık (1946-1967)*, pp. 450-458.

regulated the basic rights of civil servants even though they did not have the right to strike, played a decisive role in the attainment of public servants' pro-active social position.<sup>34</sup>

Nevertheless, although the right to unionize was exercised with social acceptance, neither employers nor political governments had voluntarily granted it. In other words, there was a discrepancy between the legitimate norms of the rights to unionize and the use of these rights and liberties. One of the major interventions of the political government was the amendment of the Unions Law in 1970, which banned the existence of labor unions only if they represented at least one-third of those working in a certain workplace. This law aimed at de facto eliminating the DİSK.<sup>35</sup> However, the organized labor movement responded to the restrictive Unions Law through a gigantic and unprecedented uprising involving more than a hundred thousand workers, later referred to as the 15/16 June protests.<sup>36</sup>

The emergence of unionization, especially in the private sector, prompted political powers to take measures, some of which were the sacking of workers and the postponement or ban of strikes on the grounds of national security concerns. For example, while a total of 50 strikes were postponed between 1963 and 1975, the number of strikes postponed during the 1976-1980 period increased to 108.<sup>37</sup> Accordingly, workers forced the legal boundaries of the constitutional framework, thereby obtaining new traditions and rights for the working class. Reducing the weekly working hours from 48 hours to 46 hours, increasing the severance benefits over the legal limits, and exceeding the legal upper

34 Yıldırım Koç, "12 Eylül Öncesinde Kamu Kesiminde İşçiler ve Toplu Sözleşmeleri" in *Türkiye İşçi Sınıfı Tarihinden Yapraklar*, (İstanbul: Ataol Yayıncılık, 1992), pp. 274-308.

35 Turgan Arınır and Sırrı Öztürk, *İşçi Sınıfı, Sendikalar ve 15/16 Haziran: Olaylar-Nedenleri-Davalar-Belgeler-Anılar-Yorumlar*, (İstanbul: Sorun Yayınları, 1976), p. 128.

36 Turgan Arınır and Sırrı Öztürk, *İşçi Sınıfı, Sendikalar ve 15/16 Haziran: Olaylar-Nedenleri-Davalar-Belgeler-Anılar-Yorumlar*, pp. 131-144.

37 Yüksel Akkaya, "Düzen ve Kalkınma Kısacığında İşçi Sınıfı ve Sendikacılık" in *Neoliberalizmin Tahribatı: 2000'li Yıllarda Türkiye*, ed. Neşecan Balkan and Sungur Savran, (İstanbul: Metis, 2014), p. 150.

limits in annual pay were some of the new de facto rights for the workers.<sup>38</sup> That is to say, in the proper meaning of the word, the right to strike allowed workers to say whatever they wanted and to change the living and working conditions whatever they sought.

In spite of the significant legal opportunities granted by the 1961 Constitution for the working class, it cannot be asserted that a united struggle of the Turkish organized labor movement in the 1970s was successful. On the contrary, this decade corresponded with the years when the labor union movement was divided by the Türk-İş and the DİSK, which was established by the unionists who espoused a socialist ideology against Türk-İş's "neutrality" policy toward political parties (mimicking the "non-partisan politics" of American unionism).<sup>39</sup> In other words, the split of the Türk-İş and the emergence of the DİSK divided the organized class movement permanently along both sectoral and political lines. Although the schism in the Turkish labor movement triggered fragmentation, competition and vicious conflict within the organized working class, this was also one of the main tools to give labors more freedom to choose the trade union, to expand basic rights and liberties in various respects and to contribute to the intra-union democracy. On the other hand, the competition within unions boosted the rise in the ingenuity and the militancy of the protest repertoire, such as the replacement of indoor meetings with open-air protests, demonstrations with large crowds and factory/workplace occupation. Furthermore, the new protest actions of labor, some of which were intentionally doing damage or faulty work, slowdowns, work stoppage, boycotting lunches, sit-ins, refusal to work or vacating the workplace and growing facial hair in the workplace, would become widespread as a part of their struggle to get their rights.<sup>40</sup>

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38 Şehmus Güzel, *Türkiye'de İşçi Hareketi*, (İstanbul: Sosyalist Yayınlar, 1996) p. 312.

39 Süreyya Algül, "Türkiye Sendikal Hareketinde Solla İlişkiye Geçiş Yılları" in *Tanzimat'tan Günümüze Türkiye İşçi Sınıfı Tarihi 1839-2014*, ed. Doğan Çetinkaya and Mehmet Ö.Alkan, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2015), pp. 358-360; Aziz Çelik, *Vesayetten Siyasete Türkiye'de Sendikacılık (1946-1967)*, pp. 433-446.

40 Yıldırım Koç, *Türkiye İşçi Sınıfı ve Sendikacılık Hareketi Tarihi*, p. 182.

It would be safe to say that the period between 1961 and 1980 was profoundly marked by protest actions, strikes and other mass gatherings of the Turkish working class. In fact, as of 1968, the labor protests mostly inspired by the boycotts and occupations by the university students morphed into large crowds demonstrations concentrating on the political and ideological gains of the class.<sup>41</sup> In this sense, the Great Strike (*Büyük Grev*) in 1977, the MESS strikes in 1978 and 1980 and the Tariş resistance in Izmir were the principal labor revolts and the most massive strikes during the second half of the 1970s.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, beginning from 1976 onwards, the monumental worker marches to celebrate May Day signified the social dynamism of the working class against the government's repression -even though in 1977 it turned to be an utterly bloody carnage due to shots fired from the rooftop of a hotel, killing 37 people and injuring hundreds.<sup>43</sup>

Besides the strikes and huge rallies organized by the working class, the non-strike political demonstrations were also a considerable part of the labor movement and a harbinger of the working class' presence in the Turkish political landscape. For instance, some demands of the 8-hour general strike, "one-day warning", which was the only strike organized by Türk-İş considered "illegal" under the applicable law, in Izmir, on July 16, 1975, carried the political references, such as the cessation of vicious contentions of political parties, the establishment of national war industry and the nationalization of the oil and mines.<sup>44</sup> Parallel to this, on March 20, 1978, the DİSK stopped work for 2 hours to protest the murder of Istanbul University students on March 16, 1978, "Warning to

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41 Yıldırım Koç, *100 Soruda Türkiye İşçi Sınıfı ve Sendikacılık Hareketi Tarihi*, (İstanbul: Gerçek Yayınevi, 1998), pp. 107-108.

42 Can Şafak, "12 Mart'tan 12 Eylül'e: Türkiye'de Sendikalar", in *Toplum ve Bilim*, No. 127, 2013 p. 138; Haluk Yurtsever, *Yükseliş ve Düşüş: Türkiye Solu 1960-1980*, (İstanbul: Yordam Kitap, 2016), pp. 239-243.

43 Unfortunately, the perpetrators of the May Day massacre in 1977 have still not been found.

44 Şehmus Güzel, *Türkiye'de İşçi Hareketi 1908-1984*, (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 1996), p. 249; Yıldırım Koç, "Türk-İş'in İzmir Genel Grevi" (1975) in *Kebikeç* No. 4 (1996), pp. 20-31.



Fascism" (*Faşizme İhtar Eylemi*) and, most importantly, they organized the successful strikes, large crowd marches and demonstrations against the State Security Courts (*Devlet Güvenlik Mahkemeleri*, DGM), hence prevented a draft law from being passed.<sup>45</sup> The protest against the martial law set in 13 cities of the country in December 1978 after the massacre in Kahramanmaraş, which according to official figures left 111 dead and a thousand people wounded, was one of the remarkable instances in which the working class movement acted on purely political grounds.<sup>46</sup> Needless to say, the pathway through which a significant majority of the working class, who concentrated not only on their own workplace-based problems but also on the social and economic troubles of the country, mostly originated from the organized labor movement's deep affiliation with the TIP and the Communist Party of Turkey (*Türkiye Komünist Partisi*, TKP) oriented socialism and the dynamism of social movements by the late 1960s and the 1970s.<sup>47</sup>

Thus we have seen that despite some weaknesses and deficiencies, the organized labor movement indeed had a great impact on the capital accumulation regime as well as the evolution of the political regime in the period of 1963-1980. In other words, although all the labor activities did not achieve the intended purpose, the working class gained a great deal of experience in terms of organization and activism during this period. However, whether or not this experience and accumulation of the organized labor movement will be acceded to in the next decades is one of the most frequently asked questions.

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45 Şehmus Güzel, *Türkiye'de İşçi Hareketi 1908-1984*, p. 251; Haluk Yurtsever, *Yükseliş ve Düşüş: Türkiye Solu 1960-1980*, pp. 238-239.

46 Yıldırım Koç, *Türkiye İşçi Sınıfı ve Sendikacılık Hareketi Tarihi*, p. 185.

47 Süreyya Algül, *Türkiye'de Sendika-Siyaset İlişkisi: DİSK (1967-1975)*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2015), pp. 196-206; 320-359; Yüksel Akkaya, "Düzen ve Kalkınma Kıskaçında İşçi Sınıfı ve Sendikacılık", p. 147.



## **A symbolic window opening into the relation between the National Outlook Movement and capitalism: Erbakan's abortive chairmanship in the Turkish Union of Chambers**

**T**his chapter aims to demonstrate the Turkish Union of Chambers' (*Türkiye Odalar Birliği, TOB*) election in 1969, when Necmettin Erbakan was elected as chairman, as an indispensable guide to understanding the interaction and relationship between one of the most noteworthy independent Islamic movements in Turkey, the National Outlook, and the capital-owning class. Erbakan, who had been the leading political actor of Turkish Islamism and had enabled Islamism to turn into an organized force in the legal political scene since the beginning of the 1970s, has introduced himself to Turkish society first as the chairman of the Union of Chambers. As I will discuss in detail below, the Chambers was the most prominent employers' organization of those years, in which intra class struggle aggregated to dominate it until the Turkish Industry and Business Association (*Türk Sanayicileri ve İş Adamları Derneği, TÜSİAD*) was established in 1971 to separate themselves from the former. However, Erbakan's presidency of the Union with the great support of the small and medium-sized provincial capitalists did not last long. He was dismissed by the police, at the initiative of the Justice Party (*Adalet Partisi, AP*),

about two and a half months later. Both Erbakan's election as the head of the Union of Chambers and his expulsion from his post open the windows to shed light on state-businessmen relations, the schism between the large industrialists and the small and medium-sized Anatolian capital owners in Turkey, and also constitute an emblematic example for the relation between the National Outlook Movement and the capitalist class.

#### § 4.1 The impact of great structural transformations in the 1950s on the emergence of the National Outlook Movement

The transformation of the political and socioeconomic fabric experienced by Turkey in the late 1940s and 1950s provides a significant clue to understanding the relation between the National Outlook Movement and the capitalist class in the 1970s. Although, in the mainstream literature, this genuine era of the Republican history is hinged heavily on the "new atmosphere of the post-1960 era" defined as an environment more open to the participation of various social groups, some scholars point to a specific date as the major turning point in the structural change and economic transformation in the case of Turkey. In that vein, Şevket Pamuk and Roger Owen highlight the year of 1947, when the Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, CHP) decided to abolish the Third Five-Year Development Plan as a beginning of moving in the new direction of greater emphasis on a liberal economy based on capital and agriculture.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, Korkut Boratav attached importance to the same year. According to Boratav, as of 1946 etatism lost some of its meaning in both form and essence, though statist activities still continued somewhat.<sup>2</sup>

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1 Şevket Pamuk and Roger Owen, *A History of Middle East Economies in the Twentieth Century*, (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1999) p. 106.

2 Korkut Boratav, *Türkiye İktisat Tarihi: 1908–2009*, (Istanbul: İmge Yayınları, 2011) pp. 93-106.

Along with the abandonment of the state-led industrialization model and espousal of liberal free market economy, as early as the late 1940s, Turkey started to take a range of considerable steps toward closer cooperation with the capitalist Western allies. Turkey's dispatch of soldiers to the Korean War in 1950 and its subsequent membership in NATO in 1952 were remarkable attempts in institutionalising Turkey's integration into the political-military framework of the Western bloc given the constraints of the Cold War. This new economic and political direction was rapidly put into practice when the Democrat Party (*Demokrat Parti*, DP) government came to power after the election in 1950. Accordingly, the bipolar international conjuncture led by the USA and USSR as well as the phenomenology of religion, whose upshot has been more strongly felt in the political scene since 1947, would occupy an important place in the development of the National Outlook Movement.

This rapid socioeconomic change have had a far-reaching consequence regarding the purpose of this thesis: The remarkably rapid integration of Anatolia with the capitalist market economy. From the early 1950's onward, highways and secondary roads began to be constructed to connect villages with big cities. Thanks to the American technical and financial assistance, the DP government increased these roads from 1,600 km to 7,500 km and expanded the road network from 3,500 km to 61,000 km during the 1950s.<sup>3</sup> The road construction projects that linked the country together were followed by highway transportation increasing considerably the efficiency of marketing and distribution unprecedented in modern Turkish history. As a matter of fact, as Ağaoğulları clearly points out, from the early 1950s onward, the Anatolian landscape had experienced one of the most important and irreversible transformations since the Neolithic period.<sup>4</sup>

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3 William Hale, *The Political and Economic Development of Modern Turkey*, (London: Groom Helm, 1981) p. 90; Eric J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, (London and New York: I.B.Tauris, 1993) p. 227.

4 Mehmet Ali Ağaoğulları, "The Ultrationalist Right" in *Turkey in Transition: New Perspectives*, ed. Irvin C. Schick and Ertuğrul Ahmet Tonak (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987) p. 192.

The National Outlook movement, for its part, was profoundly shaped by the effects of the capitalist modernization in the Turkish countryside. In other words, the emergence of this movement and its political parties seem to act in parallel in the search for new alternatives for those who felt threatened by the dispossessing and exclusionary effects of the transformation of the country to capitalist modernization in the economic and social spheres. Accordingly, the National Outlook attempted to produce the so called anti-capitalist and anti-modern discourse so as to respond to the demand of those social segments. The traces of these attitudes can be seen in the party programs, the power strategies and the organizational structures.

#### § 4.2 The Union of Chambers as a class organization

Necmettin Erbakan, the historic leader of the National Outlook movement, introduced himself to Turkish society as the chairman of the Turkish Union of Chambers in 1969. Before this position, Erbakan had served as the general manager of Gümüş Engine motor factory from 1956 through 1963 and held a series of posts at the Department of Industry of the Turkish Union of Chambers (*Odalar Birliği Sanayi Dairesi*) between the years 1966 and 1968. However, the salient identity that introduced him to the Turkish public was the Union of Chambers' presidency. Indeed, even the materials from which I scanned through the daily newspaper archives demonstrate that Erbakan mainly came to the fore of the Turkish political scene as of his tenure as a chair of the TOB in May 1969. For example, Erbakan was mentioned in the columns of *Milliyet*, one of the mainstream newspapers in those years, for only 33 pieces of news in 13 years, from 1956, when he became founder general manager of the Gümüş Motors Factory until 1969, when he was elected as the president of the TOB.<sup>5</sup> However, from May 1969 through the end of the year he appeared totally 166 times in the same newspaper, which means, after his presidency of the TOB, Erbakan attracted approximately 112 times more media

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5 *Milliyet*, January 1, 1956 - May 24, 1969.

coverage.<sup>6</sup> That is to say, the recognition of Erbakan as a representative of the bourgeois class in Turkish public paints a descriptive picture with regard to its relationship with the capital-owning class.

Before discussing Erbakan's abortive chairmanship of the Turkish Union of Chambers and then the replacement of his group by the Justice Party (*Adalet Partisi*, AP) oriented faction in the Chambers leadership, it is necessary to look at why the Union of Chambers was founded in the 1950s.

Despite the fact that the first Chambers as the voluntary organization were founded during the Ottoman Empire, its institutionalization under the name of "The Turkish Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges" dates to 1950 by the law no. 5590. The most remarkable outcome of the 1950 legislation is that it gathered the local chambers and commodity exchanges under the same roof. Thus, the Union of Chambers' "umbrella character of involuntary business associations" could be expected to achieve simultaneous representation of a wide range of mixed interests.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, The Turkish Union of Chambers' defined itself as the "highest legal entity for representing the private sector in Turkey" and this was coherent with the consequences of the foundational feature of the 1950 legislation bringing together local chambers.<sup>8</sup> However, the Union's organizational principle that was mandatorily based on mandatory geographic rather than sector complicated its claim to equally represent heterogeneous interests of all firms or partnerships from all sectors and of all sizes. Concordantly, the Chambers' influence in representing the interests of the businessmen remained limited due to the nature of their organizational structure.

The second significant point of the 1950 legislation is that it enabled the establishment of the Chambers of Industry as an independent entity within the Union of Chambers and distinct from the Chambers of Trade. In fact, the chief novelty of this point, making it important for this

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6 *Milliyet*, May 24, 1969 - December 31, 1969.

7 Ayşe Buğra, *State and Business in Modern Turkey: A Comparative Study*, (Albany, N.Y: State University of New York Press, 1994) pp. 239-240.

8 <https://www.tobb.org.tr/Sayfalar/Eng/Tarihce.php> (May 26th, 2019)

section, is that the new independent chamber was founded only in big cities rather than small provinces. Even today, while the Chambers of Industry is established in many big cities, the Chambers of Trade continues to exist in smaller units or towns.<sup>9</sup> The main reason why the Chambers of Industry is recognized as a separate entity relied strictly on the conflict of interests between the commercial and industrial capital, not a one-way state dominance or the dominant human activities of a certain region. It is thus possible to talk about the foundation of the Chamber of Industry as an ongoing struggle between the commercial versus the industrial sector reaching new heights.<sup>10</sup>

The five-year period before 1950 when the TOB was founded witnessed a great change in Turkey's political and social formation. The first serious steps were taken in those years to abandon the capital accumulation strategy pursued since the early 1930s. As mentioned above, strong protectionism and industrialization led by the state were pushed aside and liberal economic policies began to be adopted as the basic development strategy, especially since 1946. In a sense, Turkish capitalism has been restructured through the free trade measures. Parallel to this, the commercial capital and big landowners who produced for the market achieved a considerable capital accumulation.<sup>11</sup> The rapid enrichment of some privileged social segments took part in a report published by the TOB: "During the 30-year period, from 1920 to 1950, the private sector that holds a considerable proportion in terms of both capital strength and entrepreneurial ability was born in our country."<sup>12</sup> As a matter of fact, the merchants and the big landowners who prospered during the Second

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- 9 Ayşe Öncü, "Chambers of Industry in Turkey": An Inquiry into State-Industry Relations as a Distributive Domain" in *The Political Economy of Income Distribution in Turkey*, ed. Ergun Özbudun and Aydın Ulusan (New York: Holmes&Meier Publishers, 1980) pp. 459-460.
- 10 For details, see Adnan Giz, "Türkiye'de Odaları Kuruluşlarına Ait İlk Resmi Belgeler" in *İstanbul Sanayi Odası*, No. 42.
- 11 Tolga Tören, *Yeniden Yapılanan Dünya Ekonomisinde Marshall Planı ve Türkiye Uygulaması*, (İstanbul: Sosyal Araştırmalar Vakfı, 2007) p. 119.
- 12 Türkiye Ticaret Odaları, Sanayi Odaları Ve Ticaret Borsaları Birliği, *Türkiye'de Özel Sektör ve Kalkınma*, (Ankara: 1966) p. 36.



World War and shortly afterward were called and satirized as the “black marketeer” (*karaborsacı*) and the “*hacıağa*” respectively.<sup>13</sup>

The groundwork for the establishment of the TOB came in the 1948 Economic Congress in İstanbul. At this Congress, which was held two years before the foundation of the TOB, the commercial capital called for the creation of a semi-official and unitary business association. More specifically, Ahmet Hamdi Başar, the General Secretary of the Association of İstanbul Traders (*İstanbul Tüccar Derneği*) and also the Economic Congress, explained their own goals at the Congress as follows: “(...) Occupational groups must have some duties and responsibilities assigned by law. Today, some of the tasks carried out directly by the state as the public administration should be fulfilled by these organizations.”<sup>14</sup> Meanwhile, in the successive meetings for preparing the act 5590, while the İstanbul Industrial Union (*İstanbul Sanayi Birliği*), the representative of the industrial capital, made genuine efforts to establish the separate Chambers of Industry, the Association of İstanbul Traders (*İstanbul Tüccar Derneği*), one of the representatives of the commercial capital, opposed this demand.<sup>15</sup> In this respect, it can easily be seen that from the very beginning of the foundation the TOB, its main features were expressed by some sections of the capitalist class and the foundation framework of the Union was formed in line with the demands of this certain capitalist faction. In other words, the establishment of the TOB should not be considered as the bourgeoisie’s subjugation of the state power, as many studies claim.<sup>16</sup>

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13 Ateş Uslu, “Çok Partili Hayata Dönüş Dönemi (1945-1950): ‘Hür Dünya’nın Saflarında”, in *Osmanlı’dan Günümüze Türkiye’de Siyasal Hayat*, (İstanbul: Yordam Kitap, 2015) p. 349.

14 *Cumhuriyet*, November 23-28, 1948.

15 Murat Koraltürk, *Türkiye’de Ticaret ve Sanayi Odaları (1880-1952)*, (İstanbul: Denizler Kitabevi, 2002) p. 105.

16 For more details, see Kemali Saybaşılı, *Chambers of Commerce and Industry in the Political Process in Turkey and the United Kingdom with Special Reference to Economic Policy: 1960-1970* (PhD thesis), University of Glasgow, 1975; Robert Bianchi, *Interest Groups and Political Development in Turkey*, (New Jersey: Princeton University, 1984); Metin Heper, “The State and Interest Groups with Special Reference to Turkey”, *Strong State and Economic Interest Groups the Post-1980 Turkish Experience* ed. Metin Heper (New York: De Gruyter, 1991).

The TOB, for its part, was literally the most prominent employers' organization until the early 1970s, when the TÜSİAD was established. It enjoyed broad power and authority in the decades when it was the only representative of the capitalist class. For instance, it was assigned both to the responsibility of registration and to the control of imported goods and to the allocation of quotas; more importantly, it did have the duties of the allocation of foreign currency. On the other hand, its annual budget exceeded 10 million TL, of which approximately 50 percent came from the government in the form of support.<sup>17</sup> Yet, apart from the considerable financial resources of the TOB, its broad powers and duties have raised the simple question of "who gets/who benefited how much?"<sup>18</sup>

The TOB presidency of Erbakan in 1969 with the significant amounts of support from smaller provincial capital owners and commercial groups can also be read through the process by which different bourgeois factions competed with one another for hegemony. In other words, the strong support from the small and medium-sized business owners for Erbakan's presidential candidacy in the TOB shows that the interests of small tradesmen and craftsmen differ emphatically from the interests of large scale industrial enterprises. However, with the foundation of TÜSİAD in 1971, the TOB took a different position in the intra class struggle and remained an organization in which predominantly small and middle-sized entrepreneurs are represented.

### § 4.3 Erbakan's short-lived chairmanship in the Turkish Union of Chambers

One of the most noteworthy moments in the history of the Turkish Union of Chambers, without any doubt, is the process starting with the

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17 Kemali Saybaşı, "Chambers of Commerce and Industry in the Political Process in Turkey and the United Kingdom with Special Reference to Economic Policy: 1960-1970", pp. 113-116.

18 Robert Bianchi, *Interest Groups and Political Development in Turkey*, pp. 251-253; Mustafa Sönmez, *Türkiye'de Holdingler, Kırk Haramiler*, (Ankara: Arkadaş, 1992) p. 153.

Necmettin Erbakan's presidency in 1969. In fact, from the year of 1965, when the Justice Party came to power and formed the government on its own, until almost the 1980 coup, the executive board list of the TOB was always determined by the Justice Party, even by Demirel himself, except for Erbakan's chairmanship.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, the Justice Party added numerous senior officials from the Union to its political cadres; on top of it, it controlled the TOB's executive board list. For example, as of the 1965 elections seven prominent names of the Chambers, some of them more than once, were elected deputies from the AP lists.<sup>20</sup> However, this historic moment, Erbakan's election to the chairman of the Union of Chambers, contained some firsts in many respects. At most, thanks to the support of the Anatolian capital, a political faction that claimed to represent the class interests of the small and medium-sized Anatolian entrepreneurs won the Union elections for the first time. This event depicted that a business association adopting the mission of representing all segments of the capitalist class became a contested field over the state allocation of funds for different fractions within the Turkish bourgeoisie.

Erbakan's expulsion from the chairmanship of the Union of Chambers was officially justified as the illegitimacy of the elections held despite the government's decision of postponement. According to the Council of Ministers' decision No. 7060 on May 22, 1969, the elections of the Union of Chambers were postponed for 6 months on the grounds that the elections of the International Union of Chambers of Commerce and Industry will be held on June 5, 1969, which meant the previous executive board, headed by Sırrı Enver Batur, the former chairman of the TOB and Erbakan's main rival supported by the Justice Party in the presidential elections of the Union, would continue for a while.<sup>21</sup> This decision came

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19 Filiz Demirci Güler, *Türkiye'nin Yakın Siyasetinde Bir Örnek Olay: Adalet Partisi*, (Ankara: Türkiye ve Ortadoğu Amme İdaresi, 2003) p. 139; Mustafa Sönmez, *Türkiye'de Holdingler, Kırk Haramiler*, p. 168.

20 II. Dönem TBMM Albümü (Ankara: TBMM Basımevi, 1966); III. Dönem TBMM Albümü (Ankara: TBMM Basımevi, 1970); IV. Dönem TBMM Albümü (Ankara: TBMM Basımevi, 1974); V. Dönem TBMM Albümü (Ankara: TBMM Basımevi, 1978).

21 *Cumhuriyet*, May 25, 1969.

to the fore at the General Assembly of the TOB on May 25, 1969, which, however unanimously decided to hold elections.<sup>22</sup>

Soon afterwards, this voting would create a ground for the debate that the elections of the Union of Chambers was found “illegitimate” and Erbakan’s presidency was rendered invalid. In other words, within the TOB there was a double-headed structure, namely whereas the government recognized Sırrı Enver Batur’s presidency, the new executive board elected Erbakan as the chairman of the Union. In the words of Batur, “On the one hand there is a governmental decision and on the other there is a man who rebelled against it. (...) The decision of the Council of Ministers with the signature of President Cevdet Sunay is highly apparent that the Union of Chambers election is totally void.”<sup>23</sup> Erbakan explained the possibility of being dismissed from his post with a series of judicial investigations as follows: “With the proposal of members of the Chambers, a new executive board has been elected by the General Assembly. The Ministry of Commerce does not have the authority to extend the former board’s incumbency because the Union of Chambers is not affiliated with the Ministry of Commerce. Unless the General Assembly had elected the board, the government could extend their incumbency.”<sup>24</sup> “I do not know how they will unseat me. They need a court decision to dismiss. We are on duty within the framework of the rights recognized by the Constitution.”<sup>25</sup>

For Erbakan, the primary reason why the AP opposed his chairmanship did not proceed from the so-called unlawful Union election. In fact, it would be safe to say that Erbakan was arguably correct in blaming the AP government for refusal to recognize the legitimate election result of the Union of Chambers due to some other reasons. In a nutshell, the anxiety about Anatolian capital’s “rebellion” against the large industrialists and a radical Islamist group’s capture of a business organization that has great power as the TOB lies behind the AP’s attempt to unseat him.

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22 *Cumhuriyet*, May 25-26, 1969.

23 *Cumhuriyet*, May 30, 1969.

24 *Cumhuriyet*, May 28, 1969.

25 *Ibid.*

The concern of large industrialists about the awakening of small and medium-sized provincial capital was not entirely unfounded. It is possible to observe that the small industrialists and traders developed further and flourished in the Democrat Party era, especially between the years 1954 and 1958, yet the "Golden Age" came to an end from the early 1960's onward.<sup>26</sup> After this period, these segments did not receive equal protection from the government and could not benefit from the support of the investment and loan mechanism in comparison to special incentives provided to the monopolistic capital. Thus, these provincial dominant classes were forced to remain underdeveloped vis-à-vis monopolistic capital. For instance, according to a study carried out in the early 1990s on the small and medium-sized business owners, it was illustrated that almost 90 percent of small enterprises had no access whatsoever to these incentives.<sup>27</sup> However, the small tradesmen and craftsmen did not embark on a quest to organize a viable opposition to the center-right until the late 1960s. The intentional neglect of small enterprises<sup>28</sup> would be effective for these factions to emerge as an independent force outside the control of the center-right in political life, as indicated in the Union elections. The divisions between the large industrialists and the Anatolian-based capital owners should not be considered as one of the least discussed political issues in those years; on the contrary, this conflict of interests among capital owners was widely debated and discussed by different social settings, one of which was the print press.

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- 26 Ali Yaşar Sarıbay, *Türkiye'de Modernleşme Din ve Parti Politikası: MSP Örnek Olayı*, p. 105; Haldun Gülalp, *Kimlikler Siyaseti: Türkiye'de Siyasal İslamın Temelleri*, p. 70; Muzaffer Sencer, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partilerin Sosyal Temelleri*, (İstanbul: May Yayınları, 1974.) pp. 364-365.
- 27 37. İstanbul Ticaret Odası, *Türkiye'de Küçük ve Orta Ölçekli İşletmeler: Yapısal ve Finansal Sorunlar, Çözümler*, (İstanbul, 1991) pp. 102-103 quoted by Ayşe Buğra, *State and Business in Modern Turkey: A Comparative Study*, p. 61.
- 28 For Ayşe Buğra, deliberate neglect of small businesses as a government policy is by no means unique to Turkey. In many other late-industrializing countries, the governments widely share a common "aesthetic concern" based on small enterprises do not look like the modern business elite. Ayşe Buğra, *State and Business in Modern Turkey: A Comparative Study*, pp. 60-61.

Ecvet Güresin, the editor-in-chief of *Cumhuriyet* newspaper in those years, summarized the divisions between the big industrialists and the rest of the business community as follows: “As the conflict of interest between industrialists and the large urban merchants continued, the Anatolian merchants emerged. The provincial merchants and usurers that acted in concert with wholesalers and semi-wholesalers in İstanbul started to take positions on big industrialists. (...) Although, at first, it seemed to be disorganized and rambling, the struggle over time was organized within the framework of the Islamism-Freemasonry, and eventually the Union of Chambers was taken over. Industrialists noticed the danger, but it was too late. Erbakan has won the election.”<sup>29</sup>

Similarly, İlhan Selçuk, one of the prominent leftist-Republican writers in those years, emphasized the anti-communist and “reactionary” worldview of both candidates of the Union of Chambers presidency race in his article assessing the conflict of interest between the small and large entrepreneurs: “On the one hand there is Sırrı Enver Batur, while on the other there is Erbakan. The former is the representative of the Freemason capital and tycoon merchants, and the latter is the representative of the conservative small craftsmen. Many people are already familiar with Batur. ‘Leftism is flourishing throughout the country and our primary aim is the struggle against it’, said Batur as one of the most radical politicians in the Justice Party. As Erbakan pointed out ‘The honor of going to the moon belongs to Muslims at a conference he attended. (...) These two warriors, one of whom is Batur and the other is Erbakan, are competing with each other for the chairmanship of the Union of Chambers. Whoever wins in the long run, the people will lose.’<sup>30</sup>

On the other hand, one of the signs that made the divisions between big industrialists and small and medium-sized capital owners visible was the absence of a single industrialist in the new executive board of the Union of Chambers designated by Erbakan. Daily newspapers at

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29 Ecvet Güresin, “Geç Kaldılar” in *Cumhuriyet*, June 7, 1969.

30 İlhan Selçuk, “Kim Kazanacak” in *Cumhuriyet*, August 8, 1969.

that time presented the elimination of large industrialists from the executive board under such headlines as “Underrepresentation of industrialists caused great sadness”<sup>31</sup> or “It will result in the departure of certain big industrialists from the Union”.<sup>32</sup>

The reason for the uneasiness of a large number of industrialists and also the AP government caused by Erbakan’s chairmanship was not only his claim to represent the class interests of small and medium-sized entrepreneurs against big businesses but also his Islamic political consciousness. His Islamist identity was publicly known even in the very early years when he was just elected as the chairman of the TOB. Erbakan’s labelling as “*sofu*” by his friends was mentioned in the Istanbul Technical University yearbook as follows: “He is pious, religious and hardworking. Half of his life is occupied by prayer and half by engineering projects.”<sup>33</sup> Most importantly, he was follower of Mehmet Zahit Kotku, a leading Naqshbandi (*Nakşibendi*) leader. Aside from being influenced by Kotku’s tendency to seek for political opportunities to express Islamic impulses, Erbakan was also profoundly inspired by Kotku’s national industrialization strategy that stressed Islamically-framed norms and recommendations to construct a model of industrial plant on a national level.<sup>34</sup>

It would be safe to say that Erbakan did not exert a special effort to hide his piousness from public view. Although, from the very beginning, he preferred a special and vernacular terminology rather than pronouncing the words “Islam” or “Muslim” in his public statements, he was willing to make public his Islamic concerns whenever possible by involving in religious rituals or boldly attempting to revitalize the glories of the Ottoman-Islamic ethos. For example, in the 46th Green Crescent (*Yeşilay*) Congress, the meeting was interrupted because of the prayer time, and the group including Erbakan performed prayer. This event was reported

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31 *Cumhuriyet*, May 30, 1969.

32 *Milliyet*, May 27, 1969.

33 Kenan Akın, *Milli Nizam’dan 28 Şubat’a: Olay Adam Erbakan*, p. 17.

34 Şerif Mardin, “The Naqshbandi Order in Turkish History”, p. 134.

by daily newspapers as “Delegates performed prayer at the Yeşilay Congress”.<sup>35</sup> In a similar vein, he called Sultan Abdulhamit II as “the great khan” and “the leader of the Turkish industry” at a conference in the Middle East Technical University (Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi, *ODTÜ*). Given the fact that the repudiation of the Ottoman power symbols was vital for differentiating the republican Turkey from the Ottoman past, Erbakan’s feelings of gratitude and admiration for Abdulhamit meant trying to cross the Republic’s line in the sand. His expressions in praise of Abdulhamit would often be mentioned during his TOB presidential candidacy and short-lived chairmanship.<sup>36</sup> Erbakan explained that the public impression of his Islam-based political sense is the main cause behind the schism within the Union of Chambers election and the pejorative definition of his own faction as “*takunyacılar*” (clog-wearers) as follows: “I understand nothing from this term. If this word comes from the fact that we wear clogs during ablution before prayer, I should state that we are proud of our religion. And we supplicate to *Allah* day and night to increase our *Allah*-consciousness.”<sup>37</sup>

When Erbakan’s reference to nativism without pronouncing the words “Islam” or “Muslim” is handled, the concept of Freemasonry or Masonry should also be considered. The vast majority of Erbakan’s public pronouncements were openly anti-Masonic. According to Erbakan, the Union of Chambers defended only the interests of the non-Muslim Masonic minority to the detriment of small Anatolian tradesmen and craftsmen, meaning that while the smaller provincial capital owners are left out of the Masonic chain, the Masons, one of whom is Batur, live in wealth, even though they do not deserve it at all. Erbakan’s discourse built on the victimization of the small tradesmen and artisans is justified over the specter of a Masonic conspiracy as well as the socio-economic situation of the Masons. However, interestingly enough, Batur, unlike other politicians who have been accused of Freemasonry, defends his Masonic identity instead of denying as follows: “For a mason, it is a big crime to reveal

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35 Cumhuriyet, October 31, 1966.

36 Cumhuriyet, May 19, 1968.

37 Cumhuriyet, May 28, 1969.



his own Masonic identity, but my Masonic pedigree is one of the most honored qualities I have ever carried.”<sup>38</sup>

Here, by opening in brackets, that the accusation of “mason”, which Erbakan often used this concept as a synonym for the “Istanbul capital” or big bourgeoisie, is not limited only to the National Outlook Movement should be noted. In effect, the concept of masonry, among the “enemy” images often mentioned in the nationalist/conservative discourse, is one of the main references that determine the boundaries of the relationship with the “others” for the right-wing politics in Turkey.<sup>39</sup>

Both small capital owners posing a threat to the large industrialists and Erbakan’s religious conservatism urged the AP government to take such measures in the Union of Chambers. At first, with the decision of the Ministry of Commerce, the transactions of the Union’s headquarters in Ankara were confiscated by the Ministry inspectors.<sup>40</sup> Shortly afterward, credit and quota allocation privileges of the Union, which included about 20 million dollars, were withdrawn hence the private sector’s quota demands, which had so far been met by the Chambers, would be met by the Ministry of Commerce as of that date.<sup>41</sup> For Erbakan, the distribution of the private sector’s quotas by the government could only be seen in the communist countries: “All over the world, the private sector determines its own needs. The allocation of private sector’s quotas by the state can only be experienced behind the ‘Iron Curtain’”.<sup>42</sup> In effect, Erbakan’s words do not only aim to criticize the government, but also to address all the business community by reminding them that projecting a political preference in which the privileges of the private sector transferred to the state was not a pro-private sector attitude. The issue of the allocation of import quotas was of the utmost importance to Erbakan to

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38 *Milliyet*, August 10, 1969.

39 Aylin Özman and Kadir Dede, “Türk Sağı ve Masonluğun Söylemsel İnşası: İktidar, Bilinmezlik, Komplo” in *Türk Sağı: Mitler, Fetişler, Düşman İmgeleri*, ed. İnci Özkan Kerestecioğlu and Güven Gürkan Öztan, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2012) pp. 169-203.

40 *Cumhuriyet*, June 22, 1969.

41 *Cumhuriyet*, June 19-July 27, 1969.

42 *Cumhuriyet*, June 25, 1969.

the extent that he unexpectedly announced being prepared to go for re-election in the TOB only if the privileges are given back to the Chambers.<sup>43</sup>

Through all these repressive measures, the government gave a clear message to the private sector about the legitimate frontiers of the activity of business organizations in Turkey, stipulating what they could or could not do, when coming together to organize for their interests. To be more precise, the business organizations and their leaders could acquire the state support and protection only if they shared the same outlook as the government and acted in conformity with the government objectives; otherwise they would confront the coercive apparatus of the state. Concordantly, it is not surprising that the abortive presidency of Erbakan culminated in the seizure of the Union of Chambers by the government and his expulsion from his post by the police.

After the Council of State's decision that Erbakan cannot be recognized as the legal president of the Union of Chambers<sup>44</sup>, Sırrı Enver Batur, former head of the Union, went to the headquarters of the Union on August 4, 1969 and attempted to take over the post.<sup>45</sup> In the wake of his first vain attempt, one day later, this time Batur came to the Union building with the police and announced that he took office.<sup>46</sup> Here, he told the reporters that according to a letter based on the decision of the Council of State, written by the Ministry of Commerce, from now on, he would be official chairman of the Union, and he will encounter the legal, financial and punitive sanctions unless he took over the post: "I took office through the letter of the Ministry of Commerce promulgated on July 31, 1969. I am

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43 *Cumhuriyet*, July 8, 1969.

44 Erbakan appealed to the Council of State demanding the cancellation of the decision of the Ministry of Commerce regarding investment and requirement quotas withdrawn from the Union of Chambers. The Council of State halted the government decision postponing the Union of Chambers elections and dismissed the quota case on the grounds that Erbakan had no competence to sue on behalf of the Union of Chambers. *Tercüman*, June 25-29, 1969.

45 *Milliyet*, August 5, 1969.

46 *Cumhuriyet*, August 6, 1969.

the legitimate head of the Union, who has all the financial, legal and punitive responsibilities.”<sup>47</sup> Thus, the Union of Chambers officially finds itself with two presidents.

The Union of Chambers was officially taken over by the Governor of Ankara on the night of August 8, 1969. The door of Erbakan's room was broken with the help of a locksmith and Sırrı Enver Batur, the former president of Union, was placed to the seat.<sup>48</sup> In the meantime, when it was heard that Batur had come to the Union to take over his post, a group of young men with sticks in their hands, most of whom were the members of the National Turkish Students' Union (*Milli Türk Talebe Birliği*, MTTB) and the Nationalist Movement Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*, MHP), so-called “commandos”, appeared around the building and their numbers increased as time went by.<sup>49</sup> Following Erbakan's entry into the Union of Chambers building, “commandos” often chanted the slogan “*Hak is yours, down with the Freemasons*”. Interestingly enough, some symbolic names of the Turkish Islamist right stand out among these young supporters of Erbakan like Bülent Arınç and Hüseyin Üzmez.<sup>50</sup> In that vein, the defense of Erbakan by the young members of the MHP and the MTTB indicates his far-right political affiliation before the leadership of the National Outlook movement.<sup>51</sup>

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47 Ibid.

48 *Cumhuriyet*, August 9, 1969.

49 Ibid.

50 Bülent Arınç is one of the founders of Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, AKP) and a Speaker of Parliament between the years 2002 and 2007 and a Deputy Prime Minister from 2009 to 2015. He was also a parliamentarian from the National Outlook Movement's political parties of Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi*, RP) and Virtue Party (*Fazilet Partisi*, FP) in the 1990s. Hüseyin Üzmez, for its part, is lawyer and Islamist writer, whose name was involved in the assassination of journalist Ahmet Emin Yalman in 1952 and, after decades, accusation of sexually abusing a child in 2008. <https://www.cnnturk.com/2008/turkiye/04/26/vakit.yazari.uzmez.tecavuzden.tutuklandi/452911.0/index.html>

51 The nationalist groups' support for Erbakan was not limited to their physical presence. After Erbakan's expulsion from the chairmanship, 11 student organizations affiliated to the MTTB made a statement that they were with Erbakan, who was in the forefront of

Soon after, Erbakan came to the building and announced his decision to enter parliamentary politics that he would actively pursue for almost forty years and said: "I will go to the Justice Party headquarters to become a candidate for a Member of Parliament (for 1969 general election to be held on October 12, 1969) and I will fight the Prime Minister (Süleyman Demirel) in the political scene. The Union of Chambers issue will not end here. It will continue for years, like a bleeding wound. People who claim to pursue pro-private sector policies dealt a significant blow to the private business."<sup>52</sup>

According to some, the expulsion of Erbakan from the chairmanship of the Turkish Union of Chambers, at the initiative of the AP, was a symbolic instance of the conflict between large industrialists and small merchants or craftsmen, while to some others, it was a response to the smaller provincial capital owners who rebelled against the big urban bourgeoisie. Another common belief was the prevention of a radical Islamist group's show of force. In fact, the election of the Union of Chambers in 1969 has a kind of quality that would justify all these comments, meaning that it elucidates on state-businessmen and state-religion/Islam relations and the cleavages between large industrialists and small and medium-sized Anatolian capital owners in Turkey.

After the story of his expulsion from the Union, Erbakan announced his decision to take part in politics that would affect his personal history and also the Turkish political life for the coming 40 years. Even though his request for the parliamentary candidacy to the Justice Party was rejected by Süleyman Demirel, it is safe to say that the first openly Islamist movement's initial step to come into existence in the political

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the struggle of Anatolian merchants and tradesmen: "The unfair and illegitimate actions against Professor Erbakan, an immaculate son of this country, reach the end of our rope. This is the struggle between Freemasonry and the Muslim Turkish people." *Cumhuriyet*, August 9, 1969; Besides right-wing Islamist youth, almost 1500 businessmen and craftsmen from Konya, a central Anatolian province, telegraphed to Erbakan and emphasized that they only accepted Erbakan as the chairman of the Union of Chambers. *Cumhuriyet*, August 9, 1969.

52 *Cumhuriyet*, August 9, 1969.

THE NATIONAL OUTLOOK MOVEMENT'S VISION OF CAPITALIST  
SOCIETY

scene would be taken through the discrimination story within the Chambers. In other words, the National Outlook's political parties, which were the most prominent representative of legal Islamism from the early 1970s to the late 1990s, would construct their positions via the political discourse about discrimination against small and medium-sized capital owners and conservative Muslims. This discourse was continually espoused by many Islamist organizations for decades to come.





# 5

## **The National Outlook's understanding of capitalism in the 1970s: Capitalism without capitalism**

*"In political practice, therefore, they join in all coercive measures against the working class; and in ordinary life, despite their high-falutin phrases, they stoop to pick up the golden apples dropped from the tree of industry, and to barter truth, love, and honour, for traffic in wool, beetroot-sugar, and potato spirits."*

– Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*

**T**he mainstream academic productions on the National Outlook Movement in Turkey tend to evaluate it purely within the framework of Islamism. The leading figures of this literature in Turkish academia including Çakır, Toprak, Gülalp, Alkan, Yavuz and Özdalga focus on Islam-based explanations and give less attention to the defining nature

of economic relations.<sup>1</sup> This trend, to be sure, is not only limited to the National Outlook. The dominant perspective on Turkey in the political and intellectual history concentrates heavily on the assumption that theoretical and ideological sources are the basic instruments that guide individuals or organizations. In other words, political and ideological superstructures tend to take precedence over the economic basis. Thus, different intellectual and ideological positions are described as different variations of the same intellectual tradition under the headings of “Islamism” or the “Conservatism” in the academic works. However, in societies where capitalist relations of production have a certain dominance just like Turkey, political parties, social movements and organizations also acquire a historical and social meaning in terms of their positions in capitalist relations.

As Erik Olin Wright reminds us, the concept of “capital” is not only a financial and technical element in the capitalist production process or a category of analysis that makes it possible to understand the functioning logic of national and global capitalism but also has a great explanatory power.<sup>2</sup> In countries where capitalist relations prevail, analyzing how individuals or political organizations interpret capitalism and their relationship with the representatives of the capital-owning class presents a full picture to evaluate them. That is the very reason why I attach great importance in dealing with the National Outlook Movement through its own conceptualization of capitalism and its relations with the capitalist class – rather than evaluate it purely within the narrative of Islamism. In effect, it can be argued that this is not only a voluntary political choice but a necessity at least for the National Outlook.

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- 1 For details, see Ruşen Çakır, “Milli Görüş Hareketi” in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce: İslamcılık*; Türker Alkan, “The National Salvation Party in Turkey” in *Islam and Politics in the Modern Middle East*; Binnaz Toprak, “Islam and Democracy in Turkey” in *Political Islam III*; Hakan Yavuz, *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey*; Elisabeth Özdalga, *İslamcılığın Türkiye Seyri: Sosyolojik Bir Perspektif*; Haldun Gülalp, *Kimlikler Siyaseti: Türkiye’de Siyasal İslamın Temelleri*.
  - 2 Erik Olin Wright, “Foundations of a Neo-Marxist Class Analysis” in *Approaches to Class Analysis* ed. Erik Olin Wright (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 4.



As discussed in greater detail in the previous chapter, the historic leader of this movement, Necmettin Erbakan, introduced himself to the Turkish society first as the chairman of the most prominent employers' organization in the 1960s. As a result of the obvious contradictions within Turkish capitalism, Erbakan was expelled from his post of the Union of Chambers by police force; hence, the National Outlook Movement came into existence with the great support of small and medium-sized provincial capital owners. The two political parties of the National Outlook, the National Order Party (*Milli Nizam Partisi*, MNP) and the National Salvation Party (*Milli Selamet Partisi*, MSP), were representatives of two vague promises during the structural crisis of the 1970s triggered by the deep economic and political crisis. First, they tried to point out an alternative path of development to capitalism without rejecting private property and private ownership of the means of production, which were the inherent propensity of capitalism. In other words, the ideological-political position that Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek tries to explain through the concepts of "capitalism without capitalism" and "capitalism without its excess" was the road map for the National Outlook Movement in the 1970s.<sup>3</sup> The second of these is to offer a stable development base to the Anatolian-based entrepreneurs and small and medium-sized capital owners.

This chapter, therefore, aims to scrutinize these two ambiguous promises to mitigate the social inequalities created by capitalist modernization and to preserve the prevailing values in traditional relations of production. It begins with a review of its economic and social program called moral and material development; and then follows with its specific promises in the 1970s based on the abolition of waste and the elimination of social and geographical inequality. Lastly, I will attempt to explain the meaning of the representation of small businesses for the National Outlook Movement.

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3 Slavoj Žižek, *Tarrying with the Negative: Kant, Hegel and the Critique of Ideology*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), p. 210.

## § 5.1 The elastic formulation of the National Outlook's anti-capitalist claim: 'Moral and material development'

The National Outlook Movement's interpretation of capitalism within an Islamic framework can be summed up as an economic and social program shaped by the concept of "moral and material development".<sup>4</sup> The strong emphasis on the role of development in the model propounded by Erbakan as an alternative to capitalism and as a secret recipe promised to solve any kind of crisis is not a mere coincidence; it evolved under the influence of state-led import substitution accumulation strategy. Accordingly, the National Outlook, which formed its dominant discourse around the axis of development and industrialization, could have theoretically led to "heavy industrialization strategy" based on communally owned free enterprises under state control. Although Erbakan does not deviate from the general characteristics of import substitution industrialization regarding the state's role in supporting and encouraging industrial projects, he has often underscored that the state must be in a position of leverage and be a locomotive for the development of the private sector. According to him, the private sector can become a partner in the investments initiated and carried out by the state if it wishes, and also "it is possible to transfer the shares of these institutions completely to the private sector in the future".<sup>5</sup>

In effect, the National Outlook's anti-capitalist claim of "moral and material development" formulated by Erbakan as an alternative prescription to established order involves overblown exaggerations. For him, Islam has its own reciprocal economic system: "This is neither similar to the Eastern system (*communism*) nor the Western one (*capitalism*) because Islam is two-winged, meaning that it is always hand in hand with the moral and the material. Everyone has property and personal belongings that need protection. This (property rights) is such an important thing that our prophet Mohammad (570-632) advised us that when you

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4 *Milli Nizam Partisi Program ve Tüzük*, (İstanbul: Haktanır Basımevi), p. 5; *Milli Selamet Partisi Program ve Tüzük*, (Ankara: Elif Matbaacılık), pp. 5.

5 Necmettin Erbakan, *Ağır Sanayi*, (İstanbul: Saadet Partisi İl Başkanlığı, 1976), p. 25.

come to hereafter, you shall come to me with other kinds of defects or sin but do not come with the due rights (the right of believers to dignity and respect - *kul hakkı*).”<sup>6</sup> According to him, the meaning of this *hadis* (a narrative record of the sayings of prophet of Islam) is that it is necessary to be extremely respectful of the property and personal possessions of others. As Erbakan’s quoted passage demonstrates, he had trouble showing the “huge differences” between the Islamic economy and capitalism.

As Erbakan might have noticed that the difference between the Islamic economy and capitalism is quite subtle, he said as follows: “Islam that bases on respect for private property seems almost like a Western system. However, the Islamic system is not exactly the capitalist system of the West. There are big differences between them: Muslims should earn, but they must not waste it. Wasting is forbidden by our religion. A Muslim must spend what he earns in a good field. (...) In this respect, the Islamic system wants to eliminate the negative and dark side of the Western system and achieve the ultimate goal that capitalism cannot achieve yet.”<sup>7</sup> We can see here clearly that Erbakan was against “consumptionist” aspect of capitalism while sticking to a productionist dimension of it. As for the communist system, “(it) made the mistake of being against profit and private enterprises; conversely, in our national economic system, profit and legitimate earnings are always encouraged.”<sup>8</sup> Its elusive difference in the fundamental propensity of capitalism, especially its recognition and protection of private property’s legitimacy and stability of capital accumulation, draws the limits of anti-capitalist claim of the National Outlook’s political program. More clearly, in light of the classification of types of property, the economic model advocated by the National Outlook is certainly a capitalist one.

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6 Necmettin Erbakan, *Milli Görüş*, (Istanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 1975), pp.149-150.

7 Necmettin Erbakan, *Milli Görüş*, p. 150. With a little speculation, it is possible that the main aim pronounced by Erbakan, which capitalist system has failed to achieve in practice but has set as a continuous aspiration, might be “equivalent budget” and “low inflation”.

8 *Cumhuriyet*, August 17, 1975.

### 5.1.1 The National Outlook's Islamic critique of the mainstream economics: The condemnation of interest

The prohibition of *riba* (interest/usury), which is almost a founding principle of Islamic economics, is a substantial milestone for the National Outlook Movement's claim to anti-capitalism. In Erbakan's description, interest, which is the price of money, is a basis of the capitalist system. Moreover, "it is the weakest link of the capitalist order and the point where capitalism would break down."<sup>9</sup> For him, interest rate is not only an annual percentage of the principal but also refers to the depreciation of the value of money annually. For example, 20% interest means prices will rise by 20 percent each year.<sup>10</sup> In this sense, "interest is the only reason for the high cost of living (inflation) in the country."<sup>11</sup> He explicitly states that there is a direct relationship between earning interest and the capital-owning class: "This interest system creates economic prosperity only for the rich and the capitalists. (...) The poor have to pay for the full amount of interest due. (However) The rich never pay more than they borrowed because they add the rate of interest when selling the goods or services to consumers."<sup>12</sup> Thus, the National Outlook both reinforces its promise of justice by claiming to prevent unjust enrichment or extravagance and tries to break the power of the monopolistic capital in line with the economic and class dynamics that lead to its emergence.

Interest-bearing debt relations, whose legitimacy is highly controversial in almost all cultures, religions, philosophies and ideologies, are strictly prohibited in religious texts. Along with holy books of different religions, interest or usury is also banned in the polytheistic societies, which do not have the idea of God, due to certain material circumstances. For instance, the Code of Hammurabi in 1760 BC and the statements of Bocchoris, pharaoh of Egypt in eighth century BC, have a clear sign of

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9 Necmettin Erbakan, *Milli Görüş*, p. 153.

10 Ibid.

11 "Erbakan'a Göre Pahalılığın Nedeni Faiz" in *Cumhuriyet*, July 18, 1973.

12 Necmettin Erbakan, *Milli Görüş*, pp. 153-154.

prohibition of usury.<sup>13</sup> As for Plato, the ancient Greek philosopher, in his most famous work in the form of Socratic dialogues concerning the concept of justice, *The Republic*, he argues that usury should be banned owing to its economic and social consequences that ruin the ideal state structure.<sup>14</sup> In Aristotle's view, for its part, money is only a means of exchange; and using interest as a means of income is the most abhorrent act of humanity.<sup>15</sup> Karl Polanyi explains this situation through the fact that economics was embedded in the non-economic institutions in the pre-modern era.<sup>16</sup>

However, the categorical ban and explicit sanctions on earning interest are encountered first in the sacred texts of Judaism. In Jewish sources, interest is depicted as "a snake bite who nibbles at your leg and you do not feel anything until suddenly it swells up to its head", meaning that it sneakily captures the whole economic system but you do not notice till it causes great financial difficulties.<sup>17</sup> Parallel to this, the Torah suggests that "if you lend silver to my people, to the poor among you, do not act toward them as a creditor; exact no interest from them"<sup>18</sup> and "you shall not deduct interest from loans to your kinsman, whether in money or food or anything else that can be deducted as interest."<sup>19</sup>

Christianity, for its part, stands out as one of the monotheistic religions that prohibited interest for a long time. However, with the

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13 Erdoğan Aydın, *İslamiyet Gerçeği*, (Ankara: Öteki Yayınevi, 1995), p. 53.

14 Joshua Vincent, "Historical, Religious and Scholastic Prohibition of Usury: The Common Origins of Western and Islamic Financial Practices" Law School Student Scholarship, 2014, pp. 11-12.

15 Joshua Vincent, "Historical, Religious and Scholastic Prohibition of Usury: The Common Origins of Western and Islamic Financial Practices", p. 12.

16 Karl Polanyi, "Aristotle Discovers the Economy" in *Trade and Market Early Empires: Economies in History and Theory*, ed. Karl Polanyi, Conrad M. Arensberg, and Harry W. Pearson (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co, 1971) pp.64-94.

17 Moşe Farsi, *Türkçe Çeviri ve Açıklamalarıyla TORA ve AFTARA: ŞEMOT*, (İstanbul: Gözlem, 2002) v.5 pp. 518-521.

18 Exod 22:24

19 Deut 23:20

Protestant Reformation that reduced the role of religion in European culture and the existence of spirituality and religiosity in daily life, beginning in the early sixteenth century, the direction of debate on interest began to change. Rather than highlighting the theological or moral content of using interest, questions such as what are the interest rates, which dynamics interest rates depend on and the role and functions of interest in the economic system were focused.<sup>20</sup> At the end of the eighteenth century, in *The Wealth of Nations*, which is the “bible of capitalism”, the foundations of classical interest theory were laid down. Adam Smith (1723-1790), in his work, defines interest as the price of money, meaning the worth of the use of borrowed money.<sup>21</sup> As of the second half of the nineteenth century, interest has begun to be accepted as an essential element of economic and political issues. After a while, it took its place as a purely technical element within the discipline of economics.

As for Islam, it is the only monotheistic religion that maintains the ban on interest (*riba*) -at least theologically- to the present day. The concept of *riba*, one of the main paradigms of Islamic economics, literally means any kind of unjust and exploitative increment, additional wealth and excess in a loan or debt.<sup>22</sup> One of the most famous hadiths regarding this issue is “every loan that attracts an extra benefit is *riba*”.<sup>23</sup> As for the first verse that mentions *riba* from the Qur’an as follows: “Whatever you give for interest to increase within the wealth of people will not increase with *Allah*. However, what you give in *Zakat*, desiring the countenance of

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- 20 Dilek Demirbaş and Sefa Demirbaş, “John Calvin Düşüncesinde Faizli Borç İlişkileri” in *Faiz Meselesi* ed. Murat Ustaoglu and Ahmet İncekara, (İstanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2019) pp. 219-231.
- 21 Adam Smith, *An Inquiry Into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, (New York: Collier, 1902) pp. 104-105.
- 22 Dzuljastri Abdul Razak and Fauziah Md. Taib, “Diminishing Partnership Home Financing Concept As An Alternative to Bai Bithaman Ajil (BBA): Empirical Evidences From The Perceptions Of Shariah Scholars And Bankers” paper presented at Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia 28-29 October 2009, p. 4.
- 23 Süleyman Uludağ, *İslamda Faiz Meselesine Yeni Bir Bakış*, (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2010) p. 82.

*Allah* - those are the multipliers.”<sup>24</sup> With this verse, it decrees the avoidance of *riba* by describing it as a morally and conscientiously unjust benefit. It also offers one of two pathways, either *Zakat* or *riba*. The former is praised to obtain the blessings of *Allah* and the latter is the best avoided.

Erdoğan Aydın, an author who writes about the controversial issues in the Qur'an, Islam, morality in Islam, the place of women in Islam and the Islamic political economy, asserts that opposition to interest in Islam cannot be considered without taking into account social and economic features of the urban settings of the Arabian Peninsula at that time.<sup>25</sup> In Aydın's view, considering one-to-one relationship of Arab society and Arabian Peninsula, interest was one of the main factors of social breakdown. For example, due to the culture of slavery, those who were unable to pay their debts could become a slave, while some were able to prosper rapidly thanks to the institutionalized interest rate. On the other hand, and most importantly, the Jews were quite active in interest-bearing debt relations; in this way, they increased their hegemonic influence on the Arabs. Even though the increase of wealth through the interest rate was in favor of some Arab sovereigns, the empowerment of moneylenders meant disrupting the balance of power based on slave labor and slave trade.<sup>26</sup>

The National Outlook Movement's almost all theoretical arguments, which were inspired by the predecessors of Islamic Orthodoxy, are somehow associated with the prohibition of interest. In other words, the interest rate ban is the first great divergence between the National Outlook and conventional finance. The Islamic condemnation of interest is often justified because making money by borrowing or lending without working/effort was considered illegitimate. That is the very reason why, in Erbakan's own terms, “communism is the offspring of interest rates”. “Due to the interest rate system, the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer. It gets involved as a cost factor and artificially raises

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24 Ar-Rum 30:39 quoted by Süleyman Uludağ, *İslamda Faiz Meselesine Yeni Bir Bakış*, p. 24.

25 Erdoğan Aydın, *İslamiyet Gerçeği*, p. 45.

26 Erdoğan Aydın, *İslamiyet Gerçeği*, pp. 45-46.

prices.”<sup>27</sup> Erbakan was not alone in his view on interest rates. Sezai Karakoç, one of the most prominent names of Turkish Islamism in the fields of thought, art and literature, attributed the illegitimacy of the income obtained through interest to being freed from the labor process: “Both work and labor are sacred. Profit should be based on labor. Capital is legitimate only if labor gets involved in the production process. The interest which is the cost of borrowing money is forbidden. (...) The interest ban draws a line on non-labor earnings.”<sup>28</sup>

Interestingly enough, both Erbakan and Karakoç, who emphasized that sine qua non of the labor force for “*halal* (in conformance with Islam) earning”, do not regard annuity, rent and trading income as a sin just like usury. Whether capital is productive or not emerges here as a provocative question. Since it is agreed that human labor was the source of economic value, all variables that participate in the production process as one of the non-labor elements and, hence, obtain surplus value from the labor are expected to be interpreted as evil. Concordantly, making a profit from buying cheap and selling dear, renting out property to receive an additional income, giving money to another person on the basis of profit partnership or inheriting property and assets from past generations are inherently the same, namely as income obtained through interest.

#### 5.1.1.1 *A litmus for the National Outlook's anti-capitalist claim: Its view on the question of workers versus employers*

The question of whether the National Outlook, which vehemently opposes the concept of interest because it is unfair to make money without effort, objects to other forms of unethical beneficiaries, one of which is the capital-owning class who live off surplus extracted from the toil of the workers should be addressed here. Before giving an answer, it must

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27 Abdi İpekçi's interview with Necmettin Erbakan in *Milliyet*, August 6, 1973.

28 Tufan Karataş “Sezai Karakoç: Bir Medeniyet Tasarımcısı” in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce: İslamcılık* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2005) p. 985.



be admitted, from the outset, that the National Outlook considers working for someone else or hiring of wage labor as a completely ordinary job action and does not condemn surplus extraction. In Erbakan's words, "We do not accept two different groups as workers and employers. Workers and employers help each other within the National Outlook. They work for the same purpose."<sup>29</sup> This attitude, which suggests a quasi-guild organization model in labor-capital relations, is expressed in the MSP's political program as follows: "It is essential that the relations between workers and employers should be affected within the principles of mutual love and respect, and employment disputes should be resolved quickly and without detriment to the rights of either sides."<sup>30</sup> The MSP's program not only envisions a great compromise between workers and capitalists but also a desire to limit the monopolistic capital. In other words, considering the small businesses where the worker-capitalist contradiction is less visible, the National Outlook attempts to generalize this form of employment to the big enterprises.

Aside from the questioning and criticizing the existence of capitalist class, the National Outlook makes a special effort not to confront this economically dominant class earning many times more money than wage laborers without working/effort. According to MSP's rightful criticism of low-level wages in the 1973 election manifesto, while prices rose dramatically, the purchasing power of wages and salaries lagged behind.<sup>31</sup> However, "employers cannot be held responsible" (for the relative impoverishment of workers) since the main explanatory factors that lower the value of money and raise the prices of items are the excessive interest rates and inflationary monetary policy.<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, in 1976, as deputy prime minister and minister of state in the right-wing First National Front coalition, Erbakan told a group of industrialists in the İstanbul

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29 Necmettin Erbakan, *Milli Görüş*, p. 164.

30 *Milli Selamet Partisi Program ve Tüzük*, p. 11.

31 *Milli Selamet Partisi 1973 Seçim Beyannamesi*, (İstanbul: Fatih Yayınevi, 1973) p. 57.

32 *Milli Selamet Partisi 1973 Seçim Beyannamesi*, pp. 57-58.

Chamber of Industry that the wage demands of workers were exaggerated and boldly said “it is time to put a lid on this.”<sup>33</sup> Needless to say, his words meant representing an apparently common class attitude, led by the capital-owning class, towards the rise of working class struggle.

As regards the role of labor unions and unionization within the National Outlook, there is a dramatic change. The concept of union is envisaged as a merely professional solidarity organization among workers rather than an alliance for the collective interest of the working class. This intention mentioned in its political program as follows: “Adjustment of workers’ wage rates must be based on conscience and justice.”<sup>34</sup> “We will take the necessary measures to create an independent (from political influences) trade unionism. We will strive to ensure a harmony between workers and employers based on mutual love, respect and conscience.”<sup>35</sup> On the other hand, neither the MNP nor the MSP’s program pronounce for the right to strike or collective bargaining, which has been one of the most fundamental collective actions of the Turkish working class since the second half of the 1960s. The National Outlook, which conceives harmony and reconciliation in the relations between workers and capitalists, is more reactionary than capitalism in terms of its denial of the existence of social classes and dissidence to the independent stances of the labor union. Henceforth, the movement which often emphasizes that it is neither socialist nor capitalist begins to resemble fascism in view of its corporatist approach to the working class-capitalist relations. I consciously use the term corporatism here, in accordance with Schmitter’s classical definition of corporatism, as he called for insuring harmony at workplace by demobilizing the organized labor movement.<sup>36</sup>

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33 *Cumhuriyet*, March 22, 1976.

34 Necmettin Erbakan, *Milli Görüş*, p. 167.

35 *Milli Nizam Partisi Program ve Tüzük*, pp. 26-27.

36 Philippe Schmitter, “Still the Century of Corporatism?” in *Trends toward Corporatist Intermediation* ed. Philippe C. Schmitter and Gerhard Lehmbruch (London-Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1979) p. 13.

### 5.1.2 *The Regional Development Companies*

Among the alternative prescription to capitalist modernization proposed by the National Outlook Movement, the most prominent promise was “The Regional Development Companies” (*Bölgesel Kalkınma Şirketleri*) aimed at the driving force of Anatolian development. According to this strategy, the state’s role in economic development should not only build and finance the road networks, hospitals and schools or access to drinking water/sanitation but also play managerial roles to establish a number of national enterprises called the Regional Development Companies. To be more precise, the state would prepare the project and infrastructure yet would not be their owner. Local people and factory workers would become partners in the companies.<sup>37</sup> In Erbakan’s words, the need for such a kind of state-led development model was “horizontal etatism (*ufkî devletçilik*)”.<sup>38</sup>

It is asserted by the National Outlook that if a factory is established by the state or by one of the “happy minorities”, Anatolian people are not given an option other than being workers. “Development in Anatolia is only possible with the Regional Development Companies, which were planned to be established with the participation of the workers of these companies and the local population. (...) When we say ‘we will help with incentive scheme whoever brings the project’, the ‘happy minority’, which has 20 factories, would set up another 40 factories. It is necessary to take steps to create that Anatolian people are the rightful owners of the factories.”<sup>39</sup>

According to this state-sponsored cooperative model as an alternative to capitalism, it is theoretically possible that someone who owns shares in a company to become a factory owner or a “capitalist”. The National Outlook, in this way, refers to this so-called “participatory” role of capitalism. Giving symbolic shares to workers will make every employee

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37 Necmettin Erbakan, *Milli Görüş*, pp. 119-130.

38 Necmettin Erbakan, *Milli Görüş*, p. 129.

39 Necmettin Erbakan, *Milli Görüş*, pp. 122-123.

feel like they own the company and identify more closely with the company owners or managers. In this way, an attempt is made at resolving the ongoing conflict between the workers and the capitalists, without explaining the historical process that leads to the existence of the “happy minority”, as Erbakan put it, and those who have nothing to sell but their labor-power.

Although these cooperative initiatives are seen by some scholars, such as Erik Olin Wright and Kristin Wiksell, as a part of the struggle and resistance against capitalism<sup>40</sup>, I insist that the basic characteristics of capitalism still exist in this model. There is almost no critical attitude towards private property and private ownership of the means of production, which were the inherent propensity of capitalism. Aside from destroying capitalist relations of production, it would be safe to say that this model did not even aim to democratize workplace governance or provide stronger de facto worker rights within the workplace, free of the suppression of the capitalist labor process. For instance, the production is expected to be done by the workers yet they are still being excluded from the decision making process – meaning that they are not able to expressively participate in decision that affect their own job roles. Along with not recognizing the right to strike and unionization as mentioned above, the fundamental issues such as minimum/living wage law or health and safety at work were not even addressed in such a detailed and alternative firm model. In short, they purposely attempted to persuade Anatolian workers of the illusion that they would own the factory through these imaginary shares despite showing no concern for their collective and individual rights.

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40 Erik Olin Wright, “How to Be an Anticapitalist Today” in *Jacobin* <https://jacobinmag.com/2015/12/erik-olin-wright-real-utopias-anticapitalism-democracy>, December 1, 2019; Kristin Wiksell, “Campaigning for cooperatives as resistance to neoliberal capitalism” in *Journal of Political Power*, 10:2.

5.1.3 *The pseudo anti-imperialism of the National Outlook: Establishing an Islamic common market*

The concept of imperialism, which has gained meaning in the National Outlook in the form of economic and cultural penetration of the West rather than the highest stage of capitalism, is one of the backbone themes in its political program. Although it is possible to trace the anti-imperialist claim of the National Outlook in the politics of agriculture, industrialization, energy and mining, the most obvious sign appears in its foreign politics.

During the 1970s for the National Outlook one of the most fundamental ways to resist the Western economic penetration and the essential part of its national foreign politics was formulated as “establishing a common market out of the Muslim countries dominated by Turkey (against the economic and cultural hazards of the European Common Market)”<sup>41</sup> Erbakan appears to have hoped that Turkey would rapidly industrialize if it established a common market with the Islamic countries which have common cultural and historical ties: “(Because) there are both strategically important raw materials in these countries like oil, tin, manganese, cotton and rubber and a substantial amount of petro-dollars, forming an Islamic common market will bring great economic benefits to Turkey. Thanks to their vast and enormous market potential, they can buy Turkish goods. (Thus) Turkey gets the opportunity to export the industrial products and to develop in a short time.”<sup>42</sup>

To Erbakan’s mind, the European Common Market, for its part, which is in effect a Western economic and cultural penetration project, attempts to undermine the sovereignty of Turkey: “It is a new instrument of the colonial development of the imperialist Western Europe, which has already been a colonialist for centuries. The very reason why many African countries and also Turkey want to be included in the common market is for the implementation of these new methods of colonialism. This exploitative colonialism in Western countries derives from the fact that

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41 Necmettin Erbakan, *Milli Görüş*, pp. 260-270.

42 Necmettin Erbakan, *Milli Görüş*, p. 266.

they belong to the Jewish-Christian-Greek civilization.”<sup>43</sup> Similarly, the European Common Market membership is perceived as a kind of falling under the rule of colonial governorate: “Its council would rule Turkey just as the central government rules over a governor. (...) It is not possible for the Turkish nation to join the Common Market, whose real intention is to dissolve it within a (Christian and Jewish) cultural and belief system.”<sup>44</sup> Since “Turkey with a population of 36 million is the head of the Islamic world”, it could only be a leader in the market of Islamic countries.<sup>45</sup>

As the above-quoted passage demonstrates, The National Outlook Movement maps out that Turkey will liberate the Middle East from the Zionism and take over the enormous Islamic market, hence it can do much to advance its own development. In other words, it espouses a contradictory political position that sees the Islamic countries as an extensive market and aspires for its control and political leadership. This approach, which also points to the role of subcontracting the exploitation of this region that is already under the imperialist control, exposes the limits of so-called anti-imperialism of the National Outlook.

Another key point in which the National Outlook contradicts its own claim is referring to the foreign capital for financing heavy industrial investments despite often criticizing Turkey’s dependence on Western-oriented organizations. In a press conference in 1976, Erbakan, who had served as the Minister of State and Deputy Prime Minister in the First Nationalist Front coalition government, argued that “heavy industrial investment can easily find foreign credits”.<sup>46</sup> For him, “The Germans and the French were competing with each other for long-term credits for iron and steel projects in Anatolia. (...) For SEKA (Turkey Pulp and Paper Mill) projects, loans can be obtained from the World Bank.”<sup>47</sup>

Indeed, the National Outlook’s opposition to the European Common Market has not only roots in its inconsistent hostility to the West but

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43 Necmettin Erbakan, *Milli Görüş*, p. 236.

44 Necmettin Erbakan, *Milli Görüş*, pp. 240-241.

45 Necmettin Erbakan, *Milli Görüş*, p. 252.

46 *Milliyet*, July 27, 1976.

47 Necmettin Erbakan, *Ağır Sanayi*, p. 32.

also the reflex to protect the financial interests of small businesses. In Erbakan's words, "our petty manufacturers, middling merchants and artisans would go bankrupt in the face of commercial conditions that they cannot compete with".<sup>48</sup> It would be safe to say that he was arguably correct in blaming the common market system for the liquidation of small merchants and artisans. Since the European Common Market means that the economy opens up to foreign trade and investment, in a sense, the small business that cannot compete with major firms could easily be wiped out. In that regard, common market membership would force large industrialists to lean towards creating a competitive environment in foreign trade; therefore the existence of small and medium-sized enterprises would be put in jeopardy. In short, the common market opposition of the National Outlook is in line with the interests of its social base in those years. I will return to this issue later in this chapter.

#### 5.1.4 *'Morality and spirituality first' against capitalist modernization*

It is clear that the National Outlook's superficial criticism towards the capitalist mode of production is more about morality and social values. In Erbakan's view, the missing elements in the Western societies are morality and spirituality and the only way to return to morality/religion is the National Outlook: "If we desire to succeed, we must first revive the national consciousness. (...) That is why, within the next 25 years, a quarter of a century, we have to make morality and spirituality the main backbone of our strategy."<sup>49</sup> Similarly, he addressed the crowd at the Erzincan open air rally in October 1979 as follows: "We leave behind Westoxification and return to the faith of Sultan Mehmet."<sup>50</sup>

Apart from constituting the counter discourse of Islamic morality, as his words crudely show, he also attempts to create a vision of history and society on the East-West axis. With this flawed view of history, which

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48 Necmettin Erbakan, *Milli Görüş*, pp. 262-263.

49 Necmettin Erbakan, *Milli Görüş*, p. 29.

50 *Cumhuriyet*, October 9-10, 1975.

exalts the glorious past of the Ottoman Empire yet seeks to vilify the West, it offers the hope of exit from the capitalist modernization to the disadvantaged social sections. This attitude of the National Outlook's political parties is in line with the Islamist utopia, which refers to *Asr-ı Saadet* (age of happiness) and rejects the idea of a progressive society.<sup>51</sup>

Despite the vague and ambiguous characteristics of the "material" content of the National Outlook's political program, the moral aspect appears to be more non-contradictory than material concerns as it has been constructed on the "virtues of Islam" assumed by Islamist ideology since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In other words, the concept of morality rigorously elaborated by the National Outlook was parallel to the ahistorical assumption of Islamism. Actually, as the MSP concedes, its view of moral development is based heavily on authentic Islamic values. For its election manifesto in 1973, the roots of the nation have already spirituality and religious beliefs: "Throughout history the most important aspect of our nation is its idealism. It has always strived in the way of God and justice. Its creation has supreme morality and virtue. There are the best human qualities in its creation. These traits have shown themselves throughout our entire history."<sup>52</sup> Accordingly, instead of trying to imitate European cultural practices, society should adapt the scientific and technological expertise taken from the West to current Islamic values.<sup>53</sup> In a sense, this essentialist discourse of moral development gains a cultural meaning in terms of mobilizing capital accumulation structures. On the one hand Erbakan aspired to give an impetus to the accumulation of capital without mentioning capitalism through the formula of "material development"; on the other hand, he attempted to give an Islamic character to institutions of superstructure via the conceptualizing of "moral development".

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51 Nilüfer Göle, *Melez Desenler: İslam ve Modernlik Üzerine*, (Istanbul: Metis, 2002) pp. 23-24.

52 *Milli Selamet Partisi 1973 Seçim Beyannamesi*, (Istanbul: Fatih Yayınevi, 1973) p. 12.

53 *Milli Selamet Partisi 1973 Seçim Beyannamesi*, pp. 29-30.



### 5.1.5 *The National Outlook's small businesses representation*

From the 1970s onward, the National Outlook Movement was the political body offering a stable development ground to provincial small and medium-sized capital owners, as was mentioned in the beginning of this chapter. In fact, its class preference is accordant with the socio-economic factors speeding up its emergence process. It is possible to find traces of its formation story in the massive nationwide transformation of the political and socioeconomic fabric from the early 1950s, namely rapid integration of Anatolia within the capitalist market economy, as discussed in the previous chapter.

As is generally acknowledged by scholars, the plunging into the crisis of the capital accumulation strategy based on agriculture and trade during the Democrat Party era and the preferences of world capitalism created the conditions for a new accumulation model favoring import-substituting industrialization.<sup>54</sup> As a matter of fact since the beginning of 1962, the share of industry has been rising in both GDP and productivity, while the share of agriculture has been declining. For example, between the years 1962 and 1971, the share of agriculture in the national income declined from 34 percent to 27.6 percent, whereas the share of industry increased from 17.6 percent to 24.2 percent. Consequently, for the first time, the contribution of agriculture to national income remained limited in comparison to the contribution of industry.<sup>55</sup> In this new era, the industrial bourgeoisie, which could not achieve the status of a hegemonic class despite its growing power through the 1950s, would get the upper

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54 Şevket Pamuk, *Uneven Centuries: Economic Development of Turkey since 1820*, p. 210; Korkut Boratav, *Türkiye İktisat Tarihi: 1908-2002*, (İstanbul: İmge Yayınları, 2005) pp. 117-126; Gülten Kazgan, *Türkiye Ekonomisinde Krizler (1929-2001): "Ekonomi Politik" Açısından Bir İrdeleme*, (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2005) pp. 104-118; Hal-dun Gülalp, *Kapitalizm, Sınıflar ve Devlet*, pp. 33-35.

55 Özlem Ozgur, *100 Soruda Türkiye'de Kapitalizmin Gelişmesi*, (İstanbul, Gerçek Yayınevi, 1972) pp. 121-122.

hand.<sup>56</sup> In other words, starting in the early 1960s, the industrial capitalists attempted to establish hegemony over all the ruling classes and to accelerate the incorporation of the country into the world market.

By the 1960s, owing to the dominance of the big industrial bourgeoisie, cartels and monopolies have been much more prominent. Thus, the contradictions among the dominant class fraction within the bourgeoisie have gradually increased. As of the mid-1960s, self-employed or small capitalists who rapidly entered into the service of big industrialists, felt threatened by the pressure of the monopolistic capital.<sup>57</sup> Especially small businesses in small towns and cities, deprived of equal access to state-granted privileges, supports and encouragements, were faced with the imminent danger of dispossession.

Doğan Avcioğlu, a prominent theorist and political observer in the 1960s, illustrated the generous state-granted privileges to the industrial bourgeoisie in the name of import substitution industrialization as follows: “Here is a market protected from foreign competition. You have plenty of credits and cheap foreign exchange. State-trained managers and technicians are also at your service. (...) Do not concern about what and how you will produce them. You make it happen by collaborating with foreign companies. I will hold your hand with the composite partners if need be. Do not be forced to take risks. You can be sure that your products will be sold at high prices. If having trouble with sales, I print the money and increase the demand for your products.”<sup>58</sup>

Avcioğlu’s epigrammatic narrative revealing how the public resources were transferred to the big industrialists can be proved by some scientific studies on the Turkish business community. For Soral’s study, in spite of the fact that they are still considerable in number, small capitalists have been gradually subordinate both to their place in economy

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56 İzzettin Önder, *İktisat Üzerine Düşünceler*, (İstanbul, Yordam Kitap, 2012) pp. 121-127.

57 Muzaffer Sencer, *Türkiye’de Siyasal Partilerin Sosyal Temelleri*, (İstanbul: May Yayınları, 1974) p. 412.

58 Doğan Avcioğlu, *Türkiye’nin Düzeni (Dün-Bugün-Yarın)*, (Ankara: Bilgi, 1968) p. 397.

and employment.<sup>59</sup> Similarly, another survey of small and medium-sized entrepreneurs conducted by the Istanbul Chamber of Commerce demonstrates that approximately 90 percent of small enterprises had no access whatsoever to the incentives.<sup>60</sup> Consequently, as Sarıbay's calculations indicate, the increase in businesses that had gone bankrupt in 1969 reached 62.5 percent and the number of firms declaring concordat increased by 20 percent.<sup>61</sup>

It should be noted that the National Outlook's claim to represent provincial small entrepreneurs excluded from Turkey's new industrialization model was built on all these dramatic developments. Parallel to this, these recent socioeconomic changes have also determined the demands and pressures of this group that formed the National Outlook's social base in the 1970s. To what extent and how the National Outlook Movement represents these social groups in solving their collective problems are the key questions which should be addressed here.

Throughout the 1970s in Turkey, the permanent cleavages between the large industrialists and the non-monopolistic small and medium capital-owning class were the monetary-credit policy and liberalization or lowering of the interest rates.<sup>62</sup> Many chambers within the Turkish Union of Chambers, which advocates the class interests of the small and medium-sized capital-owning class, asserted that the current monetary-loan policy has left small businesses in a difficult position. It was underlined that small enterprises would be affected adversely by the great money stringency –meaning that this process was in favor of large industrialists and monopolies. For instance, Feridun Alpat, Deputy Chairman of the General Assembly at the Union meeting in 1978, argued that merchants and small industrialists in Anatolia had suffered greatly from

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59 Ertuğrul Soral, *Özel Kesimde Türk Müteşebbisleri*, (Ankara: İktisadi ve Ticari İlimler Akademisi Yayınları, 1974) p. 36 quoted by Ayşe Buğra, *State and Business in Modern Turkey: A Comparative Study*, p. 61.

60 Ayşe Buğra, *State and Business in Modern Turkey: A Comparative Study*, p. 61.

61 Ali Yaşar Sarıbay, *Türkiye'de Modernleşme Din ve Parti Politikası: MSP Örnek Olayı*, p. 96.

62 Ebru Deniz Ozan, *Gülme Sırası Bizde: 12 Eylül'e Giderken Sermaye Sınıfı, Kriz ve Devlet*, p. 116.

the recent monetary policies. For him, although funds provided to Anatolian branches of banks have been steadily shrinking, the government paved the way for large capitalists in Istanbul to make their maximum profit.<sup>63</sup> Parallel to the Union's position, Yavuz Zeytinoğlu on behalf of the Eskişehir Chamber of Industry vehemently condemned the current fiscal and monetary policies that had discouraged small and medium-sized enterprises from investment projects and forced them to lower their production hence causing many businesses to go bankrupt. "Since the big industrialists were integrated into financial institutions, they had the opportunity to sell bonds and find loans. Even if they were in trouble, they could get through it."<sup>64</sup> By the mid-1980, the representative of eight Chambers of Industry, including Aydın, Denizli, Muğla, Konya, Samsun, İçel, Burdur and Eskişehir, applied to the Turkish Union of Chambers because the measures taken to reduce inflation would cause many Anatolian businesses to go bankrupt. The executives of the chambers also remarked on the increase in the number of protest promissory notes.<sup>65</sup>

The National Outlook, for its part, which shares almost the same opinion as the employer organizations representing the class interests of small businesses, argued that the current monetary policy was in favor of big industrialists and, naturally, an integral part of the liquidation of small enterprises.<sup>66</sup> Accordingly, it attempted to take some steps in pursuit of the economic demands of small merchants, tradesmen and artisans. In its election manifesto in 1973, it pointed out the contradictory situation created by the exclusion of small businesses from the vast opportunities enjoyed by large industrialists as follows: "The loans given to tradesmen, artisans and altruistic drivers who serve the National Salvation cause without thought of return are insufficient. In addition, the credit is subject to extremely difficult formalities. Due to their low income, the loans to be taken by tradesmen and artisans should be interest-free. It is essential to prevent large loans from state-owned People's Bank (*Halk Bank*)

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63 Ibid.

64 "Önlemler Üretimi ve Yatırımı Azalttı" in *Yankı* 493 (September 8-14, 1980) p. 23.

65 "Anadolu Sanayiinde Bunalım Doruğa Ulaştı" in *Cumhuriyet* July 23, 1980.

66 Necmettin Erbakan, *Milli Görüş*, pp. 168-169.

to big business enterprises.”<sup>67</sup> Meanwhile, Süleyman Arif Emre, who was the chairman of the MSP at the time, criticized the current monetary policy in an interview published in *Cumhuriyet* newspaper: “As long as the monetary policy based on inflation and excessive interest rate is maintained, high prices cannot be avoided.”<sup>68</sup> And, not surprisingly, one of the most prominent slogans in its political propaganda before the 1977 general elections was “We will not let interest rates and taxes crush the tradesmen.”<sup>69</sup>

The MSP has also occasionally brought the problems of small businesses to the parliamentary agenda. In a parliamentary session on January 23, 1980, Erbakan addressed all other parties’ deputies as follows: “Do not oppress the craftsmen of this nation. Do not make Turkey dependent on foreign capital abuse and creditors.”<sup>70</sup> In a similar vein, MSP Konya Deputy Şener Battal submitted a parliamentary question to Prime Minister Demirel regarding the distressed situation of the small merchants and tradesmen in Konya that is called as the backbone of the small industry. He recalled that small businesses deprivation of equal access to state-granted privileges contradicts the Constitution’s welfare state principle.<sup>71</sup>

Nonetheless, the existence of such examples did not mean that the National Outlook Movement dared to directly confront big capitalists. In other words, it was relatively careful not to face large industrialists evidently while representing the small capital-owning class. For example, Erbakan has put forward various proposals to relieve the capitalist class annoyed with the National Outlook’s long-term promise of “interest-free banking system”.<sup>72</sup> He has also attached great importance to increase its contacts with the big businesses and gain their support, especially before

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67 *Milli Selamet Partisi 1973 Seçim Beyannamesi*, p. 60.

68 *Cumhuriyet*, October 5, 1973.

69 *Milli Selamet Partisi 1977 Seçimleri Afiş ve Sloganları*, p. 15.

70 *TBMM Tutanak Dergisi*, January 23, 1980. p. 49.

71 *Cumhuriyet* July 23, 1980.

72 “Erbakan: İşverenlerin Kuşkusu Yersizdir” in *Milliyet* April 22, 1974.

the general elections. In that regard, in February 1977, he arranged a dinner for 500 industrialists and businessmen at one of the most luxury hotels in Turkey. Erbakan would announce the meeting by saying, “I told the industrialists about our new great industrialization drive.”<sup>73</sup> The National Outlook’s dual approach towards big industrialists can be summarized through the words of Atilla Özdür, the *Milli Gazete*’s pro-Erbakan columnist: “The MSP was not against trusts (a combination of firms or corporations) but against trustify. Because trustify was the basis of immorality.”<sup>74</sup>

The National Outlook Movement, which is considered an extremist defenders of religion in the mainstream academic literature, had also been a representative of small businesses deprived of equal access to capitalist enrichment, as already cited above. In other words, it also provided an economic context to the conception of Islamism “as a form of instrumentalization of religion that pursues political objectives”.<sup>75</sup> Although the National Outlook claims to create its own political and economic system by opposing both the capitalist and collectivist principles, this proposed model is very similar to capitalism. Private property and private ownership of the means of production, which were the inherent logic of capitalism, were openly defended on the basis of the assumption that Islam already recognizes these rights. While the concept of interest, defined as “unjust benefit”, is flatly rejected, other forms of unethical beneficiaries such as rent, trading income, working for someone else and hiring of wage labor are not condemned. Moreover, due to the influence of the merchant identity of the prophet Muhammad, it feels a special admiration for commerce and merchants. As regards the fantasy of establishing an Islamic common market against economic and cultural penetration of the West, it displays the imperial enthusiasm of the National Outlook as it espouses a political position that sees Islamic countries as an extensive

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73 “Erbakan’ın Sanayicilere Verdiği Konferans Gece Yarısına Kadar Sürdü” in *Milliyet* February 4, 1977.

74 Atilla Özdür, “Düzenimizde Ahlak Var mı?” in *Milli Gazete* March 3, 1975.

75 Guilain P. Denoëux, “The Forgotten Swamp: Navigating Political Islam” in *Middle East Policy* vol. 9 No. 2 (June), 2002 p. 61.

THE NATIONAL OUTLOOK MOVEMENT'S VISION OF CAPITALIST  
SOCIETY

market and aspires to its control and political leadership. All in all, it would be safe to say that the two political parties of the National Outlook in the 1970s became an enthusiastic proponent of “capitalism without capitalism” or “capitalism without its excesses”.







## Conclusion

**D**espite the fact that the mainstream academic productions on the National Outlook Movement tend to evaluate it purely within the narrative of Islamism, this thesis set out from a theoretical standpoint that gives more attention to the defining nature of economic relations. This perspective, to be sure, does not mean denying the fact that the National Outlook is the first openly Islamist movement in the Turkish legal political scene.

The National Outlook Movement came into existence in Turkish political life with the foundation of the National Order Party under Necmettin Erbakan's leadership in 1970 and, over time, became a substantive symbol of the transformation of Islamism into a genuine political movement. As this thesis asserts, the emergence story of the National Outlook is about the transformation of the political and socioeconomic fabric experienced in Turkey in the late 1940s and 1950s. Aside from the abandonment of the state-led industrialization model and embracement of liberal economy and free market principles, Turkey also started to take a series of steps toward closer cooperation with the capitalist Western countries as of the late 1940s. This rapid socioeconomic change has had a vital consequence regarding the subject of this thesis: The remarkably rapid integration of Anatolia with the capitalist market economy. The National Outlook, for its part, was profoundly shaped by the impacts of the capitalist

modernization in the Turkish countryside in the real sense of the term. In other words, the emergence of this movement and its political parties seem to act in parallel in the search for the new alternatives for those who felt threatened by the dispossessing and exclusionary effects of the transformation of the country to capitalist modernization in the economic and social spheres. Accordingly, the National Outlook attempted to produce so called anti-capitalist and anti-modern discourse in order to satisfy the demand of those social groups.

The National Outlook has been dealt with as a formation outside the established order by many academic studies especially until the mid-2000s when the sincere effort to examine Islamism substantially increased prompted by the wider interest in the conceptual precedents of the current ruling regime. In fact, the National Outlook has always marketed itself as an authentic political representative of the anti-establishment part of society. However, being an unwanted political actor by the “establishment” does not mean to oppose the existing relations of production and the productive forces or to adopt a wholesale and uncompromising anti-capitalist rhetoric. Conversely, since the very beginning, the historic leader of the National Outlook Movement, Necmettin Erbakan, introduced himself to Turkish society as the chairman of the most prominent employers’ organization in the 1960s. More clearly, Erbakan’s Turkish Union of Chambers is a capitalist organization in which intra class struggle aggregated to dominate it until the early 1970s, when the TÜSİAD was established. Up until this time, it enjoyed broad power and authority. For example, it was assigned both to the responsibility of registration and to the control of imported goods and to the allocation of quotas; more importantly, it does have the duties of the allocation of foreign currency. Moreover, its annual budget, which almost 50 percent came from the government in the form of support, was enormous. Its broad powers and duties have, thus, raised the simple but obstinate question for many at the time and since then: Who receives what, who benefited and how much? In this sense, both Erbakan’s election as the head of the Union of Chambers with the significant amounts of support from

smaller provincial capital owners and his expulsion from the chairmanship can be read through a process by which different bourgeois factions competed with one another for hegemony. Erbakan's early personal history is just like a harbinger of the National Outlook's ultimately coming to represent a certain faction of the capitalist class rather than putting forth any substantial critique of capitalist relations.

From the 1970s onward, the two political parties of the National Outlook Movement, the National Order Party and the National Salvation Party, were representatives of two, as we have seen politically effective, yet each in its way vague, promises. First, they designate an alternative development path to capitalism without rejecting the inherent propensity of capitalism in any way. In other words, the ideological-political position that Slavoj Žižek clarifies through the concepts of "capitalism without capitalism" and "capitalism without its excess" was the road map for the National Outlook in the decade of the 1970s. The second of these is to offer enhancement opportunities for the Anatolian-based entrepreneurs and small and medium-sized capital owners.

The National Outlook Movement's vision of capitalism within an Islamic framework can be summarized in three words called "moral and material development". As its name signifies, this economic and social program attaches importance to the role of development because it evolved under the influence of state-led import substitution accumulation strategy. In Erbakan's view, however, the state must only be in a position of leverage and be a locomotive for the development of the private sector, meaning that the private enterprises should ultimately become a partner in the investments initiated and carried out by the state if it wishes. Thus in addition to its implicit support of the growth of the private sector, there is almost no critical attitude towards private property and private ownership of the means of production, which were the inherent principles of capitalism. In Erbakan's words, "Islam bases on respect for private property, which seems almost like a Western system."

The National Outlook's economic and social program, "moral and material development", includes some implicit criticisms and alternative

prescription to capitalism. These were evaluated under five main categories in this thesis: a) The prohibition of *riba* (interest/usury), b) Establishing “The Regional Development Companies” aiming at the driving force of Anatolian development, c) Establishing a common market out of the Muslim countries to be led by Turkey, d) “Morality and spirituality first” against capitalist modernization, e) Offering a stable development ground to the Anatolian small and medium-sized capital owners against big capitalists who enjoy state privileges.

Even though the National Outlook claims to create its own political and economic system by opposing both the capitalist and collectivist world-view, this proposed model is truly similar to capitalism. Private property and private ownership of the means of production, which were the inherent logic of capitalism, were unapologetically defended on the basis of the assumption that Islam already recognizes these “rights”. While the concept of interest, defined as “unjust benefit”, is openly rejected, other forms of unethical beneficiaries such as income from trade and rent, working for someone else and hiring of wage labor are not condemned. Moreover, owing to the influence of the merchant identity of the prophet Muhammad, it feels a special admiration for commerce as well as merchants. As regards the fantasy of establishing an Islamic common market against economic and cultural penetration of the Western civilization, it displays the imperial enthusiasm of the National Outlook since it embraces a political position that sees Muslim countries as an extensive market and aspires to its political control. Beyond all doubt, it is safe to say that the two political parties of the National Outlook during the 1970s became an eager proponent of “capitalism without capitalism” or “capitalism without its excesses”.





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