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PARLIAMENTARY OPPOSITIONS IN TURKEY
Oppositional Trends of Parliamentary Parties
(1960-1980)

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

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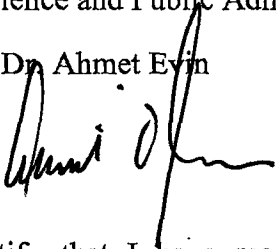
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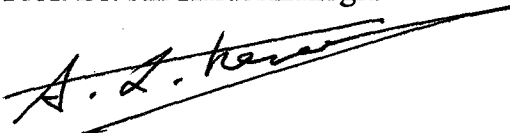
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ABSTRACT

The present study is an attempt to reveal the main policy tendencies held by the opposition parties of the TGNA between the period 1960 and 1980. Especially due to the unfavorable political culture and legal structure of Turkish politics, the political parties of the pre-1960 employed a regime-oriented tendency for the further liberalization of the political system. The program-based competition of the opposition behavior started only after the establishment of a liberal political system which was introduced by the authorities of the military intervention of 1960. In this framework, the increase and eventual decrease of the program-based opposition, in terms of the policy formulation attempts of the parliamentary political parties was discussed.

In this study, it is also intended to determine the factors stemming from the nature of political parties or political system, including party system, Constitutional structure, electoral law, parliamentary procedures, which are influential in determining the opposition behavior in Turkish politics.

ÖZET

Bu çalıřmanın amacı, 1960-1980 dönemi TBMM'inde temsil edilen muhalefet partilerinin politikalarını incelemektir. Esas olarak, Türk siyasal kültürü ve yasal yapısı muhalefetin oluşmasına elverişsizliği nedeniyle, siyasal partiler 1960'a kadar siyasal sistemin liberalleşmesi için rejime yönelik bir politika izlemişlerdir. programa yönelik muhalefet davranışı ancak 1960 darbesinden sonra kurulan, liberal bir siyasal ortamda mümkün olmuştur. Bu çerçevede, programa yönelik muhalefetin, siyasal girişimlerin niteliğine dayanarak, yükselişi ve düşüşleri tartışılmıştır.

Aynı zamanda, bu çalışmada, parti ya da siyasal sistemin yapısından kaynaklanan ve muhalefetin davranışı üzerinde etkili olan anayasal yapı, seçim ve parti sistemleri ve parlamentonun iç kuralları da dahil olmak üzere bazı faktörler gösterilmeye çalışılmıştır.

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to my family



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Introduction

Eva Kolinsky compares the fate of opposition, in any political system, to the loser in the final cup that media attention turns to the victorious team and expect everything from the winner who proved capability gaining the political authority as the locus of the decision making.¹ So, the importance of the opposition is neglected though it is accepted to be an essential element of democratic systems. Today, the existence of opposition is the most distinctive characteristic of democracy itself; and the absence of opposition party is taken as the one evidence that the political system is not democracy.² Because, the conflicts among people, stemming from cultural, economic or political cleavages, can only be managed by increasing the inclusiveness of the political system providing it with a competitive character. Permission of opposition to the ruling party or parties is the basic prerequisite of a competitive democratic system.³

In fact, no government can claim the representation of the whole population over whom it rules, nor it can demand the support of them as a whole. There is no country where all people do have the same preferences to be satisfied by a static government.⁴ People have different political preferences, economic interests, cultural, regional and religious affiliations which multiplied in modern societies. The differentiation between groups of people resulted in different expectations to be satisfied by the responses of government that is attainable only if the right for the

¹ Eva Kolinsky, *Opposition in Western Europe* (London and Sidney: Crom Helm, 1987), 1.

² Robert Dahl "Government and Political Oppositions," in *Handbook of Political Science*, eds. F. I. Greenstein and N. W. Polsby (London, Amsterdam, Don Mills, Ontario, Sydney), 116.

³ Robert Dahl, *Poliarchy: Participation and Opposition* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1971), 105-123.

⁴ Robert Dahl, *Regimes and Oppositions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 1.

organization, expression and representation of the social cleavages is preserved.⁵ Although the responsiveness of the government depends on the extent to which a certain group controls the governmental mechanism, the ability of out groups in organizing against the policies of existing government provides them with the power to enforce changes in the policies of government while producing alternative policies to be considered in the next elections. During the period between elections, the activities of opposition play the major role in checking and limiting governmental authority in a democratic political system.

The above approaches to the concept of opposition is a traditionalist view which treats the opposition as solely as a formal political institution, that is in the sense of parliamentary opposition. At the other extreme, opposition can be taken to include virtually all expressions of dissident in society that directly or indirectly impinge on government,⁶ but they can not be taken as an alternative government. The non-parliamentary opposition intends to preserve interests of some social sectors without posing an alternative personnel or program to those of government.

This study aims at describing the policy tendencies of the parliamentary opposition in Turkey, in the period between 1960 and 1980. The attempts undertaken by the opposing parliamentary political parties, in order to create socio-economic alternatives to the policies of the government as well as to the existing regime, while checking and balancing the power of the ruling party, will be the focus of the study. By regarding to the policy alternatives and strategies of the opposing parties, the nature of these parties in the existing legal and political structure will also be taken into consideration. The main thesis of the study is that since the parliamentary opposition did not have constitutional guarantees until the promulgation of the 1961 Constitution (1876-1960), the locus of the alternative opposition policies were on the

⁵ Kolinsky, *Opposition*. 3.

⁶ Gordon Smith, "Party and Protest: The Two Faces of Opposition in Western Europe," in *Opposition in Western Europe*, ed. Eva Kolinsky (London and Sidney: Crom Helm, 1987), 49.

regime issues (*regime-oriented*), on the further democratization of the political system which would serve to the political opposition to obtain equal opportunities in the competitive political system. When the 1961 Constitution institutionalized the place of opposition in the political system, they began to develop alternative socio-economic policies which are expected to attract the support of the larger population.

In order to test the above mentioned hypotheses, a secondary data analysis will be held. The books, articles and the papers written on the Turkish political developments of the period are the main sources of this analysis. Due to the limited scope of the study, analysing primary data, e.g. parliamentary records, and holding interviews with the living political personalities of the period were excluded.

This study comprises the following parts:

1. In the first chapter, the concept of political opposition is defined; and the types and patterns of oppositions which are determining factors on the nature and effectiveness of the policies of opposing parties are specified.

2. In the second chapter, the aim is to reveal the tradition of political opposition in Turkish socio-economic and political systems, in order to explain the unfavorable historical background.

3. In the third chapter, the process of the establishment of favorable political and judicial structures, for the security of the political opposition, with the promulgation of the 1961 Constitution is explained. The first phase of this chapter (1961-1965) is a transition period which includes also effects of the military existence, in civilian politics, on the nature and actions of political opposition. The second phase (1965-1979) is the period which realized the liberal system established by the transitory military regime of the 1960. The Constitutional guarantees for the legal existence of the political opposition motivated them to develop alternative socio-economic policies to the policies of the government, in order to capture the political

power: The competition of the opposing parties gained a *program-based* character. The emergence of the socialist Labor Party of Turkey (LPT), ultranationalist Nationalist Action Party (NAP), pro-religious National Order Party (NOP), the leftist defection of the Republican Peoples Party (RPP), and the increase of the pro-big bourgeois policies and the eventual split within the Justice Party (JP) are evaluated in this context.

4. In the forth chapter, the decrease of the *program-based* competition in the struggle of the political opposition is discussed through the increasing fragmentation and ideological polarization of the political party system. The chapter is expected to demonstrate that the result of the ideological fragmentation and polarization resulted in the 'politics of absurd' with unfair and irresponsible opposition tendencies.



CHAPTER I.

The concept of Political Opposition and Its Dynamics

What is Political Opposition?

Given the broadness of the concept, it is very difficult to define the opposition precisely. In its general meaning, "opposition is the situation of being against a view, an attitude or a behavior. In political terms, opposition means to be opposing to the existing socio-economic structure, political regime, the policies or the personnel of the government; one or some of them in addition to the function of producing alternative policies to those of government."⁷ For an institutional form, like parliament, Dahl proposes the following definition:

Suppose that A determines the conduct of some aspects of the government of a particular political system during some interval. And during this interval B can not determine the conduct of the government and that B is opposed to the conduct of government by A. Then, B is what we mean by an 'opposition'. Note that during some different interval, B might determine the conduct of the government.⁸

As the definitions make it clear, the term 'political opposition' is used for both the specification of political actions which aims at checking and controlling the policies of the ruling body, and the political institution itself who represents these political oppositions at the governmental level⁹.

The classical means of political opposition are political parties. Obtaining political power in order to articulate the different interests in the society to the governmental level is the goal of the political parties. In multi-party systems, those

⁷ Nükhet Turgut, *Siyasal Muhalefet* (Ankara: Birey-Toplum, 1984), 8.

⁸ Robert Dahl, *Political Oppositions in Western Democracies*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), 18-19.

⁹ Turgut, *Siyasal*, 4.

who could not win enough votes to form the government leave in opposition to check and limit governmental authority while preserving the rights and interests of the social strata they represent, and while providing the people with an alternative in the political system.¹⁰ However, this definition is valid only for the political systems with a multi-party democracy. In a single-party system, where the real opposition is found inside the party, external political party opposition does not exist. In that case, the form of the opposition is as either dissident groups or minority tendencies, which criticize the government at party meetings with varying degrees of freedom, including the parliamentary level as well. The aim of giving way to a limited opposition is, mostly, not to create an alternative to the existing regime or the government, but to control the emergence of such an alternative.¹¹

However, the oppositional activities can not be confined to the political parties only, all social and professional institutions, illegal organizations, even individuals are the potential opposition having certain economic and political preferences. They do also engage in oppositional activities through violent or non-violent strategies like strikes, demonstrations, assassinations or through bargaining with ruling and the opposing parties in the parliament. Such non-parliamentary bodies try to effect the policies of the government. They also try to have their demands accepted as policies by the parties that appeared most hospitable to them, but they avoid establishment of direct links with the existing political parties and do not aim at capturing the political power.¹² Considering this dispersed nature of political opposition, Smith prefers to define all party, par-party and extra-party political activity as 'political opposition'.¹³

¹⁰ Ibid., 8-9.

¹¹ Maurice Duverger, *Political Parties: Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State* (London: Methuen, 1964), 415-416.

¹² Peter Pulzer, "Is There Life After Dahl?," in *Opposition in Western Europe*, ed. Eva Kolinsky (London and Sidney, 1987), 22-26.

¹³ Smith, "Two Faces," 49.

The parties who are institutional form of direct political opposition at the governmental level demonstrates variations in types and patterns that determine their legal existence as well as their potent in a competitive political system. Then, in order to be able to explain the oppositional actions of a political party, we need to, first, elaborate its characteristics stemming from both the political system and the party's nature itself.

Types of Political Opposition

Although all oppositions try to make changes in the system or in the policies and/or personnel of the government, the differentiation in goals, strategies and structures lead to the emergence of different types of political oppositions in the political systems.

Constitutional (Loyal) & Non-Constitutional

If the opposition has a goal differentiation incompatible with the system established by the principles of the constitution, the opposition is non-constitutional.¹⁴ An opposition is non-constitutional in terms of three criteria. First, the foundation of the opposition, the existence, may be contrary to the principles of the Constitution - written or unwritten-. Second, the actions or the strategy held by the opposition would be rejected by the constitution. Third, the goal of the opposition would be incompatible with the established constitutional structures. In fact, this type of opposition is unconstitutional not because it has anti-system goals, but it is likely to employ extreme, violent strategies which would threat the system. In spite of having goals contrary to the Constitution, an opposition is constitutional as long as it functions within the established system of rule.¹⁵ In that case, the strategy and the existence of the opposition are most determining on the constitutionality of the

¹⁴ Otto Kirchheimer, "The Wanishing Opposition," in *Political Oppositions in Western Democracies*, ed. Robert Dahl (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), 237.

¹⁵ Turgut, *Siyasal*, 10-12.

opposition. Although the foundation of the fascist parties was prohibited in many European countries after the World War II, the communist parties whose goals are to change the existing system, are permitted to function since they remained in the borders of the constitutional structure.¹⁶

Structural & Non-Structural

An opposition seeks to achieve changes either in the essential structure of the socio-economic and political system or in the policies and/or the personnel of the government.¹⁷ If the first two are the goals, then the opposition is structural, it is non-structural and when it does not aim a structural change, it is non-structural.

A structural opposition is either reform or revolution oriented in the sense that it seeks to implement the changes through incremental modifications or a radical action, like revolution, replacing the existing socio-economic, political structures with a new system favored by the opposition as an alternative.¹⁸ As it is clear enough, the evolutionary structural opposition works through legal institutions, the revolutionary political oppositions seek to challenge them. In that case, the opposition is constitutional as long as it accepts the rules of the game, the existing legal structure and function within the legally defined borders.

Whatever the long term goal of the opposition, the immediate goal of any constitutional opposition -structural or nonstructural- is to obtain political power through elections in order to achieve the long term goals by implementing incremental reforms.¹⁹ When it fails in elections, the attention turns on the government to force it for the changes suitable to the program of the opposition. The social democrat parties follow a similar strategy: Policy opposition to force the

¹⁶ Smith, "Two Faces," 57-58.

¹⁷ Dahl, *Western*, 341.

¹⁸ Smith, "Two Faces," 56.

¹⁹ Turgut, *Siyasal*, 13.

government for the changes when in the opposition and to implement incremental reforms that would lead to the eventual replacement of the existing structures in the long run, when they are in the power.²⁰

There is a connection between the strategies of the opposition and the sequence of the goals. Turgut argues that:

If the constitutional strategy is employed, getting the political power is the immediate goal, even affecting the policies of the government is the most immediate. But, if strategy is revolutionary, then long term goal always becomes the immediate goal and short term considerations are achieved to the extent that long term goal is realized.²¹

The classical communist parties who support a proletariat revolution; and separatist political parties or movements are cited in this group of oppositions. Because they are not satisfied with modification of the system and try to achieve a radical change. However, such parties tend to suppress the opposition, if it becomes able to hold the office alone. Because, its opposition is over basic principles, over the very foundations of the state and the nature of the regime. If the structural opposition parties accept the basic rules of the game, that is the rules of the competitive democracy, a moderating tendency can be created,²² that they may be permitted, by the power-holders of the existing political system, to compete for the power.

The structural oppositions who has the desire for a degree of goal displacement incompatible with the constitutional requirements of a given system are sometimes called as "the opposition of principle" or "the principled opposition"²³ as against the pragmatism of the non-structural opposition.

²⁰ Ibid., 13.

²¹ Ibid., 13.

²² Duverger, *Parties*, 420.

²³ Kirchheimer, "The Wanishing," 237.

As for the non-structural opposition, the goal is to change either the policy or the personnel of the government or both. Its program is compatible with the existing socio-economic structure and political regime. They are system-loyal political oppositions. In spite of failures and shortcomings of the existing political system, system-loyal opposition finds it better than any other than that might be established and therefore believe in its legitimacy.²⁴

Parliamentary & Non Parliamentary

In parliamentary democracies, political parties as political institutions seek to obtain political power and so all are potentially alternative government. Not considering the place of the opposition -in or outside the parliament- political parties check, control and criticize the government and introduce their own alternatives to the policies they oppose. They are the means of the alternation of the government. The situation of the opposition as an alternative government equates the parliamentary opposition with the political parties. For her, the goal, not the place of opposition, is decisive in the determination of the parliamentary opposition.²⁵

However, because of the limited scope of the study, we will confine the parliamentary opposition to the political parties who had been represented in the Parliament, but not participated in the formation of the government. Parliamentary opposition will mean us 'parties in the parliament'. In that case, it is, as Von Beyme explained: "Parliamentary opposition are those parliamentary groups which are strong enough to obtain the quorum necessary to entitle them to an independent parliamentary status".²⁶

²⁴ Juan J. Linz, "Crisis, Breakdown, and Reequilibration," in *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes*, ed. J. J. Linz and A. Stepan (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 16-17.

²⁵ Turgut, *Siyasal*, 14-18.

²⁶ Klaus Von Beyme, "Parliamentary Oppositions in Europe," in *Opposition in Western Europe*, ed. Eva Kolinsky (London and Sidney: Crom Helm, 1987), 30.

When we define parliamentary opposition, it also implies what is not parliamentary or what is non-parliamentary opposition. All oppositional forces that do not introduce themselves as government alternative and not compete for political power, are non-parliamentary oppositions. So, the political opposition of all non-parliamentary political parties, interest groups, public and private organizations, associations, organized or unorganized movements, is to be taken as non-parliamentary in this study.

Patterns of Political Opposition

Robert Dahl distinguishes some ways which create variations in the oppositional acts of the political parties and serve differentiation of them from each other in different political systems and even within the same system.²⁷ The characteristics of the political systems, stated below, determine the main patterns of oppositions.

Concentration

The concentration of an opposition is determined by looking at whether it is concentrated in a single organization or dispersed among different independent organizations.²⁸ In that case, the number of political parties and internal unity of these parties are the two dimensions of concentration in the political systems. The lower the number of parties is, the higher the concentration of the opposition the system has. This is simply due to political party system. In two party systems, like Britain who has a tradition of "opposition with a capital O", the out party becomes the main agent of the opposition.²⁹ This makes the opposition able to conduct more effective oppositional activities using the opportunities available to the opposition without

²⁷ See Dahl, *Western*.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 340.

²⁹ Allen Potter, "Opposition with a Capital 'O'," in *Political Oppositions in western Democracies*, ed. Robert Dahl (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), 13-16.

confronting any legal or procedural problems, having an enough number in the parliament to conduct oppositional actions, like interpellation or vote of confidence. The existence of more parties would blockade the effectiveness of the opposition since it may lack the number demanded for being able to use the parliamentary opportunities. Still, if the internal cohesion of the opposition party is low, if it has different fractions, the opposition may get into trouble and lose effectiveness against the governing party or parties. It should be noted that there is no one to one connection between the cohesiveness party and the party system. While the two-party system in Britain has a strong cohesion, the US two-party system is less cohesive. On the other hand, the multi-party systems of Norway, Sweden and Netherlands indicate a high internal party unity contrary to the divided unity of Italian and French parties, excluding communist parties with high cohesion.³⁰

Competitiveness

Competition is a natural result of power struggle in a democratic system. Competitiveness of an opposition largely depends on the extent to which opposition is concentrated. Concentration of the opposition means, in terms of competitiveness, that losses of the government will be the gains of the opposition in a zero-sum relation.³¹ Since the seats in the parliament are fixed in number, they are captured by the opposition if lost by the government. The gains or losses of one party can be related to the losses or gains of other parties.³² This situation is the most explicit in the two party systems where opposition is concentrated. Two parties are in strict competitive relation since the gains of one will exactly equal to the losses of the other.

In the multi-party systems, strict competition is unlikely; in fact, unless one party can form a majority by itself, the strict competition is actually impossible unless

³⁰ Dahl, *Western*, 335.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 336.

³² Smith, "Two Faces," 59-60.

two parties are willing to enter into a coalition, no majority can be formed. Moreover, parties may not be strictly competitive even during elections, for they may enter into electoral alliances that limit the competition.³³ Still, parties are competitive during the elections, only, so as to increase their bargaining power in the resulting political table. They are cooperative in the legislation in order to turn every opportunity to the use for participating in a probable new coalition or for effecting the policies of the prevailing coalition.

The national and international conjecture, too, contribute to the behavior of the opposition. During the big internal crisis or war, the approach of the opposition tend to be coalescent. Throughout the major two world wars, the political parties in the Western Europe -France, Sweden, Austria, Britain- substituted collaboration for competition and formed coalitions agreeing on the postponement of elections until the end of the war. Although most of the coalitions were dissolved after the Second World War, some, for example in Austria, continued even long after.³⁴

Site

Any opposition is to specify on what areas (sites) it will focus to bring about a change in the regime or in the policies and personnel of the government. Robert Dahl describes the sites as "the situation or circumstances in which an opposition employs its resources and calls them as sites for encounters between opposition and government".³⁵ The main sites are the public opinion, elections, parliament, bureaucracy, interest groups and process of coalition formation.

The decisiveness of these sites to determine government or process of decision-making vary regarding to the structure of the political system. For Gordon Smith, elections and parliament have priority over the coalition processes and interest groups

³³ Dahl, *Western*, 337.

³⁴ Turgut, *Siyasal*, 119-121.

³⁵ Dahl, *Western*, 338.

and bureaucracy which would be very effective depending on its place in the system.³⁶ Public opinion is very influential means in any democracy and its success in this site increases the chances to be effective in other sites. For example, by raising public opinion, a party can increase the votes in the elections and gains more seats in the parliament that in turn increases its chance to form the government or to take part in a possible coalition. In a parliament, which majority offers little opportunities to the opposition to effect the government decisions, the oppositions tend to turn to the public opinion for both exercising social pressure on government and increasing its chance in the next elections by appealing to the needs of the people who might be dissatisfied with some policies of the government³⁷.

The decisiveness of the sites are closely related to the party system, simply the number of parties in the political system. In a two party system, winning the majority of seats in the parliament is the necessary and sufficient condition to bring about a change in the policies of the government. In that case, elections are decisive and opposition concentrate on gaining majority of the votes. Even the parliamentary activities are intended to influence the public opinion for the next elections rather than creating pressures on the government for policy changes.

Formation of the executive becomes decisive site in the multi-party systems where the parties are cohesive in the parliamentary voting. Political parties, knowing the impossibility of a single party government, try to take a part in the coalition and employ coalescent strategies.³⁸ However, in some multi-party systems, like Sweden and Norway, participation in the coalition may not be enough to achieve policy changes because of the dispersion of the authority among several public, bureaucracy, and social organizations -trade unions, civil society organizations-. The policies are

³⁶ Gordon Smith, *Politics in Western Europe: A Comparative Analysis* (New York: Holmes Meier Publishers, 1973) 106, cited in Turgut, *Siyasal*. 65.

³⁷ Turgut, *Siyasal*, 65-66.

³⁸ Dahl, *Western*, 339.

the result of bargaining between government agencies and major institutions that is called as the "two-tier system" in Norway.³⁹ The parties, whether in opposition or in power, are to be open to bargains, with public and social organizations, for policy determinations.

Distinctiveness

The identifiability of the opposition in the political system is the distinctiveness of the opposition that is the result of other characteristics, like concentration and competitiveness. In classical two-party system, where parties enjoy high internal unity, pursues competitive strategies on certain sites and the opposition can easily be distinguished from the government. So that, the opposition offers a real political alternative since there is a distinct division of functions between the majority (governing) and the minority (opposition) parties. Still, the solid and homogeneous coalitions of the political parties, operating in a multi-party system, may create a close resemblance to a two-party system and make the opposition more coherent and more distinct. On the other hand, a two-party system in which the parties are lacking of discipline, centralization and organization may have an opposition closer to the multi-party than to the two-party model.⁴⁰

It is very difficult to determine who is the governing party and who is the opposition in the multi-party systems where the opposition is dispersed and employ coalescent strategies in the case of the impossibility of a single party government.⁴¹ Further, the ambiguity increases in the multi-party systems if the majority party or the governing coalition has internal oppositions who, on certain occasions, may co-opt with the external opposition within the parliament.

³⁹ Stein Rokkan, "Numerical Democracy," in *Political Oppositions in Western Democracies*, ed. Robert Dahl (New Haven: John Hopkins University Press, 1966), 107.

⁴⁰ Duverger, *Parties*, 418.

⁴¹ Dahl, *Western*, 340-341.

Goals & Strategies

The differentiation between the goals and strategies of the different oppositions is another determining factor on the nature of the opposition. The goals that an opposition want to achieve in the short or long term period, taking into consideration the socio-political conditions and constitutional settings of the country, also implies what strategies it would employ. The strategies may be competitive, coalescent, cooperative, conciliatory or revolutionary.⁴²

Since competitive political systems exhibit differentiation, the chosen strategies which would bring the opposition to power are also different. In the British model of two party, the political system is under the monopoly of two unified parties, the only way to get the power is to win the majority of the parliament in the elections through pursuing a competitive strategy with a moderate stand in the parliament. Because, "the very conditions of political warfare which imply a certain alternation between the parties, and the possibility that today's opposition will tomorrow assume the sole responsibility of office, preserve it from any exaggerated demagoguery which might react to its disadvantage".⁴³ However, the out party maintains its distinctiveness in spite of moderation. That is to say, public opinion can grasp the difference between the points of view of the governing and the opposition parties, so can choose one, being aware of different policies competing for their votes.

In a multi-party system where the election itself is not determinant for obtaining power and coalition government is most probable, opposition parties pursue a strategy to participate in the formation of the coalition.⁴⁴ For this, they prefer not a competitive, but a coalescent, cooperative strategy. Still, they are very demagogic and violent in their opposition, with unlimited criticisms and promises, fighting against

⁴² Ibid., 344-346.

⁴³ Duverger, *Parties*, 415.

⁴⁴ Turgut, *Siyasal*, 65-66.

the nearest neighbor so as to oust the other that would elevate them to a critical position in the next parliament.⁴⁵

The intensity of the conflict will be higher in the parties representing a single social class and relatively homogeneous than a party representing several classes with divergent interests or a heterogeneous class. This tendency of the electoral conflict favors domination of the political system by the extremes, when the moderates pursues a competition strategy based on mutual rivalries and demagogic criticisms other than well-designed political alternatives.⁴⁶

The internal and external conditions are also important in the selection of the strategy to be employed. When the government and the opposition believe that the political entity is under the threat because of severe crisis, subversion, war etc. All oppositional groupings, mostly non revolutionary, commit to preserving the political entity agreeing to enter into a broader coalition for the duration of the crisis. Still they keep open the possibility of reverting to competition when the crisis has passed.⁴⁷

Because the main goal of the revolutionary parties is to replace the existing system with a new one through a radical change, they will try to increase the vulnerability of the political system in order to weaken it for the seizure of the power.⁴⁸ Thus, the revolutionary opposition would choose any strategy -violent or nonviolent- to discredit the system decreasing its legitimacy that would increase the vulnerability.

⁴⁵ Dahl, *Western*, 339-340.

⁴⁶ Duverger, *Parties*, 415-416.

⁴⁷ Tugut, *Siyasal*, 119-121.

⁴⁸ Dahl, *Western*, 346.

CHAPTER II.

Political Opposition in Turkey:

Historical Background

The Turkish socio-economic and political culture did not exhibit a system favorable for the development of political opposition. The state system, economic structure and values and perceptions of society advocated a monocentrist political organization in which political opposition was not realizable.

If political opposition is defined as a mechanism which limits the government authority and produces alternatives to the program and personnel of the ruling body, it was not an initial part of the traditional political system in the Ottoman Empire.⁴⁹ The state system of the Empire was based on the domination of central authority which stemmed directly from the person of the Sultan which was the locus of power. Although the Sultan was limited, in principle, by the religious law (*Sheria*) and traditional expectations (*adab*), his will and delegation used to be the only source of authority in the governmental mechanism.⁵⁰

The civilian-military bureaucrats (*askeri class*) were the direct extensions of the Sultan's personal rule at the centre and in the periphery. The rest of the society (*reaya*) was isolated from the governing apparatus. Further, since the *askeri class* was reduced to the status of slave through a recruitment system (*devsirme*), they would become in no position to oppose to the arbitrary rule of the Sultan.⁵¹ This endowed

⁴⁹ Serif Mardin, "Türkiye'de Muhalefet ve Kontrol," in *Türk Modernleşmesi: Makaleler 4*, ed. M. Türköne and T. Önder (Istanbul: İletisim, 1994), 179.

⁵⁰ see Metin Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey* (The Eothen Press, 1985).

⁵¹ Ergun Özbudun, "State Elites and Democratic Political Culture in Turkey," in *Political Culture and Democracy in Developing Countries*, ed. Larry Diamond (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1994), 247-248.

the Empire with a centrally controlled bureaucratic nature that became the main obstacle before the establishment of representative institutions⁵² which would pave the way to the evolution of oppositional movements or groupings at the centre and in the periphery to the existing political system and/or policies.

The economic structure was not more favorable. The land tenure system (*timar*) of the Empire did not permit establishment of European-like feudalism. Every process of economic life was controlled by the centrally appointed bureaucracy in a patrimonial relationship that avoided emergence of aristocratic and wealthy local leaders who would initiate an opposition to the arbitrary rule of the Sultan⁵³. Still, whenever the central authority weakened, the strong local personalities tended to strengthen their positions vis-à-vis the Sultan's central rule. But, they never sought an independent political status producing an alternative to the political system of the centre. Instead, they established horizontal links with the central bureaucracy⁵⁴ that helped the Sultan to sustain his hegemony in the governmental apparatus.

The monocentrist nature of the classical political system of the Ottoman Empire was defined as:

With no feudalism comparable to that of Western Europe, no hereditary aristocracy, no autonomous church organization, no strong merchant class or artisan guilds, no self-governing cities, and with a ruling institution (i. e. the administration and the army) staffed with slaves, the Ottoman Empire represented a close approximation of an Oriental Despotism.⁵⁵

On the other hand, despite the fact that organization of society in the Empire approached to a multicultural structure with its community life based on religious

⁵² Ergun Özbudun, "Crisis, Interruptions, and Reequilibrations," in *Politics in Developing Countries: Experiences with Democracy*, ed. Larry Diamond, Juan J. Linz and Seymour M. Lipset (Boulder and Colorado: Reinner Publishers, 1990), 177.

⁵³ Çağlar Keyder, *Türkiye'de Devlet ve Sınıflar* (Istanbul: İletisim, 1993), 15-18.

⁵⁴ Heper, *State*, 22, 32-33.

⁵⁵ Özbudun, "Interruptions," 177.

affiliations (*millet system*), it also contributed to the difficulties of political opposition in the Empire. The auto-control mechanisms, the fear of *fitne* (deviation) was one of them, avoided emergence of a plural civil society which would counterweight the power of the state. So, as of the state, the society also displayed intolerant attitudes toward the deviations from the established rules of the existing system. The *fitne* was perceived to be a threat to the healthy working of the community mechanisms which met many socio-economic and political needs of people in the absence of intermediary civil society organizations.⁵⁶ In that case, the society tended to preserve its apolitical structure in the true sense of subjects (*kul*) of the governing authority, namely of the Sultan.

The fear of *fitne* turned to the fear of 'secession' and 'division' at the state level. The oppositional movements and sections used to be seen as secessionist (*ayrılıkçı*) to the unity of country and divisive to the harmonious structure of the society. Any opposition to the regime and/or policies and personnel of the government was treated by the governing authorities to be a treason to the existence of the state. For Mardin, this view of the authority functioned as a rational ground for the suppression of possible oppositions.⁵⁷

A political system is likely to permit opposition if the government believes that an attempt to coerce the opposition is likely to fail or if the attempt were to succeed, the costs of coercion would exceed the gains.⁵⁸ Since the state monopolized all military, political as well as economic power in its hands, with a static society intolerant to changes, the classical Ottoman State was neither ready nor vulnerable to open the way for the oppositional activities. All embracing ruling system of the centre was able to suppress any oppositional group or movement through either coercion or

⁵⁶ Mardin, "Muhalefet," 187-189.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 189, see also Kurtulus Kayali, "Hürriyet ve Itilaf Firkasi" in *Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 5 (Istanbul: İletisim, 1985), 1436-1444.

⁵⁸ Dahl, *Western*, 14.

persuasion as long as it maintained holding socio-economic and political structures in its control.

However, the transformation in Europe, which took place since 16th Century, hit first the traditional military and then economic and administrative system of the Empire. So that, in order to stop the decline of the State before the Western Powers, it initiated a process of modernization, by 18th century, spreading its effects to the social life as well. The reforms transformed classical structures of the basic institutions of the Empire, including administration, military, economy and education.⁵⁹

In order to save the state, the bureaucrats and intellectuals of the Ottoman State introduced alternative political systems and policies which were adopted from the Western models as well as traditional institutions of the Empire. During this process, the views of the Western educated bureaucrats gained more initiative by the 19th century. Under the influence of European political currents and state systems, they sought for the establishment of a constitutionalist parliamentary system. The Young Ottomans, the leading group of constitutionalist opposition, succeeded in proclamation of the Constitution and convening of the first Ottoman Parliament in 1876.⁶⁰ However, in the absence of a favorable political culture as well as a legal structure so as to secure the place of a parliamentary system against the possible absolutist tendencies of the Sultan, the parliament was dissolved and the constitution was suspended by the Sultan in 1877.

⁵⁹ Keyder, *Sınıflar*, 23-38. See Serif Mardin "Türk Siyasetini Açıklayabilecek Bir Anahtar: Merkez-Cevre İlişkileri," in *Serif Mardin: Türkiye'de Toplum ve Siyaset*, eds. M. Türköne and T. Önder, 39-66. (İstanbul: İletişim, 1991).

⁶⁰ For the political views and opposition attempts of the Young Ottomans see, Serif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962). Nükhet Turgut, *Siyasal Muhalefet* (Ankara: Birey-Toplum, 1984). Enver Koray, "Yeni Osmanlılar," in *150. Yilinda Tanzimat*, ed. H. Dursun Yıldız (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1992), 547-567.

Although the first experience of parliamentary opposition in Turkish politics failed, it was a turning point for the development of a parliamentary system to limit the absolute power of the Sultan. In this sense, the restoration of the constitutionalist system was to be the main goal of the Young Turks in their opposition to the autocratic rule of Sultan Abdülhamid II. that culminated in the restoration of the constitutionalist parliamentary system in 1908.⁶¹ However, soon after the reopening of the parliament, the attitudes of the power holders taken toward the competitive politics continued to poison the healthy development of political opposition in Turkish politics. Despite the parliament involved, for the first time, a political party opposition which was represented first by the Liberal Party (LP-*Ahrar Firkası*) and then by the Liberal Union (LU-*Hürriyet ve Itilaf Firkası*) against the majority rule of the Community of Union and Progress (CUP-*Ittihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti*), it was not in a position to perform the functions expected from a political opposition. The opposition aimed at ousting the government regardless of what strategy would be employed rather than checking, balancing the power of the governmental authority as producing alternative policies to those of government. On the other hand, perceiving the power as absolute, the CUP government used to see the opposition as an obstacle before the implementation of the best policies for the good of the state.⁶² So, the competitive politics of Second Constitutionalist regime degenerated into a 'politics of outbidding' that ended with the single-party authoritarian rule of the CUP as early as 1913.

⁶¹ For the policies and strategies of Young Turk opposition see, Sükrü Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995). Sina Aksin, *Jön Türkler ve Ittihat ve Terakki* (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1987).

⁶² For the government-opposition relations of the Second Constitutionalist period see, Tarik Zafer Tunaya, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler: İkinci Mesturitiyet Dönemi (1908-1918)* (Istanbul: Hürriyet Vakfı Yayinlari, 1988). Feroz Ahmad, *Ittihad ve Terakki: 1908-1914* (Istanbul: Sander, 1971), trans. by Nuran Ülken. Ahmed Hilmi (Sehberdenderzade Filibeli), *Muhalafetin İflasi: Itilaf ve Hürriyet Firkası* (Istanbul: Nehir Yayinlari, 1991), first published in 1331 under the same name. Sina Aksin, "Ittihad ve Terakki," in *Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi* Vol. 5 (Istanbul: İletisim, 1985), 1422-1435. Kurtulus Kayali, "Hürriyet ve Itilaf Firkası," in *Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 5 (Istanbul: İletisim, 1985), 1436-1444.

Following the First World War (1914-1918), the Turkish Liberation War resulted in the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923. The Republic inherited an intolerant political culture for the political opposition as well as an institution of political opposition which tended, on occasions, not to recognize the legitimacy of government and ready to defect toward non-constitutionality in its competitive strategy. The office-oriented struggles had weighted the program-based competition in oppositional attempts that led to transformation of the competitive politics into a 'war of political parties' in which conspiracy attempts played a prominent role. For this reason, the progressive wing of the nationalist leaders most of whom were ex-Unionists, headed by Mustafa Kemal, tended to see the political opposition as a counter revolutionary structural challenge to their imminent secular, nationalist, republican regime based on the sovereignty of people. So, even anti-Republican Peoples Party (RPP-Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi), anti-authoritarian policy opposition of the Second Group of the First Parliament (1922-1923), the Progressive Republican Party (1924-1925) and the Republican Free Party (1930) were easily related with the anti-system, non-constitutional goals and strategies. The opposition to the governing party was taken as equivalent to opposition to the state as such making every member of the opposition an enemy of the state, as a traitor that became instrumental in suppressing these opposition struggles.⁶³

Being aware of the social unrest stemming from the radical social reforms as well as economic crisis, the leaders of the single-party authoritarian regime of the Republican

⁶³ For the situation of political opposition in the early Republican period see, Ahmet Demirel, *Birinci Mecliste Muhalefet: İkinci Grup* (Istanbul: İletisim, 1994). Kurtulus Kayali, "I. TBMM'de Muhalefet," in *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 8 (Istanbul: İletisim), 1161-1167. Mete Tuncay, *Türkiye'de Tek Parti Yönetiminin Kurulması: 1923-1931* (Ankara: Yurt, 1981). Esat Öz, *Türkiye'de Tek Parti Yönetimi ve Siyasal Katilim* (Ankara: Gündogan, 1992). Erik J. Zürcher, *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic: The Progressive Republican Party* (Leiden, Kobenhavn, Köln and New York: E.J. Brill, 1991). Walter F. Weiker, *Political Tutelage and Democracy in Turkey: The Free Party and Its Aftermath* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1973). Feroz Ahmad, "Progressive Republican Party," in *Political Parties and Democracy in Turkey*, eds. Metin Heper and Jacop M. Landau (London and New York: St. Martin Press, 1991), 65-80. Tevfik Çavdar, "Serbest Firka," in *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 8 (Istanbul: İletisim), 2052-2059.

period became cautious about any political opposition which would endanger the healthy institutionalization of the Republican reforms. In that case, although the 1924 Constitution foreseen a liberal political system which would fully observe the national sovereignty, it was postponed under the assumption that the Turkish people were not yet ready to rule themselves.

The time seemed to be ripe, for the moderate leaders of the single-party regime, to permit political opposition when Turkey confronted with changing external and internal balances after the Second World War. Against the Russian threat within the bipolarity of the world, Turkey needed to further approach to the Western block where competitive democratic regimes had been widely accepted. Besides, the war-time economic conditions which worked for the good of landed and merchant classes as it deteriorated the life standards of the lower and fixed income groups that heavily hit the social inequalities increasing the social unrest in the country. The resulting dissatisfaction with the single-party regime and policies created disturbance not only among the society but also within the cadres of the RPP itself. It had become clear that the costs of continuation of an authoritarian regime would be higher. On the other hand, the consensus among political elites on the basic principles of the Republic was another incentive to permit, at least, political opposition of the system-loyal groups. The structural, anti-system opposition would not yet be permitted.⁶⁴

Since the transition to a competitive political system where political opposition could function, had been based on the isolation of the structural opposition groups, all anti-RPP opposition concentrated under the roof of the Democrat Party (DP) established

⁶⁴ For the incentives and process of the establishment of multi-party rule in Turkey see Kemal H. Karpat, *Turkey's Politics: The Transition to a Multi-Party System* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959). Cem Erogul, "The Establishment of Multi-Party Rule: 1946-1971," in *Turkey in Transition: New Perspectives*, ed. Irvin Cemil Schick and E. Ahmet Tonak (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 101-143. Cem Erogul, *Demokrat Parti: Tarihi ve Ideolojisi* (Ankara: Imge Kitabevi, 1990). Ahmet Emin Yalman, "The Struggle for Multi-Party Government in Turkey," *The Middle East Journal*. 1 (1947), 46-58.

by the prominent members of the RPP's single party years. This meant that the ruling RPP was to be confronted by a strong and very competitive opposition.

Although the DP obtained a weak representation in the parliament with 1946 elections, it posed a strong opposition against the anti-democratic rules and applications inherited from the single-party regime. The massive social support behind the anti-RPP opposition pushed the DP to focus on the public opinion as a site of its attempts. The strategy of the DP opposition was to criticize the RPP on every occasion. This strategy was so effective that the RPP had become to consider the libertarian claims of the opposition on the nature of the political system. Anti-democratic regulations of the single-party years, like indirect elections, restrictions on press, associational rights, broadcasting sided with government, were amended one by one between 1946 and 1950 that made the DP opposition an equal partner of the political system.⁶⁵

The DP carried on a regime-oriented opposition insisting on the liberalization of political system rather than launching a program-based struggle. The system considerations of the opposition curtailed socio-economic alternatives produced by the DP against the policies of the government. Meanwhile, although the struggle led to occasional polarization between government and opposition in a true nature of zero-sum competition of the two party system, it was eased by the structural concessions of the RPP with the intention to give an end to the single-party authoritarian regime. In contrast to previous experiences, it did not go to suppression of the political opposition even when the increasing social support behind the DP threatened its status in the parliament as well as in the political system.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ See Karpat, *Turkey's Politics*.; Erogul, *Democrat Parti*, and "The Establishment,"; M. Ali Birand, Can Dündar and Bülent Çaplı, *Demirkirat: Bir Demokrasinin Dogusu* (Istanbul: Milliyet Yayinlari, 1991).

⁶⁶ For the opposition behavior of the DP see, Karpat, *Turkey's Politics*., Erogul, *Democrat Parti*., Birand, *Demirkirat*., Tevfik Çavdar, "Demokrat Parti," in *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 8 (Istanbul: İletişim), 2060-2075.

During the DP opposition, the policies of both opposition and government became supportive for a competitive democracy. Neither the DP tended to employ structural, non-constitutional goals and strategies, nor the RPP government defected toward authoritarianism. Those advocated liberalization of the political system weighted the authoritarian tendencies within the RPP.

The RPP delivered the power to the DP in 1950 elections which was held under the newly implemented democratic regulations. It was the first time in Turkish politics that the ruling party peacefully transferred the power to its opponent pertinent to democratic procedures. However, since the political system could not develop appropriate understandings on the way of political opposition as well as the attitudes of governments held toward political oppositions, the government-opposition relations eventually degenerated into a struggle of survival throughout the 1950s.⁶⁷

Unwilling to leave the power, the DP lost its tolerance to the criticisms of the opposition, by the mid-1950s, when it began to lose public support because of economic problems.⁶⁸ Although, it was the champion of the libertarian claims when it was in opposition, steadily increasing power of the opposition in and out of the parliament, pushed the DP to depend more on authoritarian policies. It restricted the voice of the opposition not only in the parliament but also out of the parliament. Now the champion of liberalism was the RPP opposition. But, the DP, claiming on the absolute sovereignty of the 'national will', which had been perceived to be represented by the majority of the parliament, tended not to give a way for the libertarian demands of the opposition. Instead, it strengthened authoritarian policies toward the end of 1950s that was claimed to be a *coup d'état* launched by the DP government toward the opposition in order to establish a single-party rule. In that sense, the 1960

67 Ilter Turan, "Türkiye'de Siyasal Kültürün Oluşumu," in *Türk Siyasal Hayatının Gelişimi*, eds. Ersin Kalaycıoğlu and Ali Yasar Sarıbay, 461-491 (Istanbul: Beta Basım, 1986).

68 For the effects of economic crisis on the authoritarian defection of the DP see, Ilkay Sunar, "Demokrat Parti ve Populizm," in *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 8 (Istanbul: İletisim). 2076-2086.

military intervention was interpreted as a countercoup rather than a coup made by the military.⁶⁹

Since the opposition, which had concentrated in the RPP, was in a struggle for survival against the authoritarianism of the government, it had to stress on the constitutional amendments which would check the authoritarian deflection of the ruling party. So, the opposition focused on the regime considerations in which its alternative socio-economic policy designs disappeared. In this sense, the opposition period of the RPP was important that it revealed deficiencies of the existing competitive political system. The regime-oriented policy formulations of the RPP, declared in its General Congress of 1959 as the 'Memorandum of First Targets', outlined the shortcomings of Turkish democracy in 1950s. The post 1960 regime was to bring parliamentary and non-parliamentary mechanisms so as to secure the existence of political opposition in Turkish political life.

⁶⁹ Erogul, "The Establishment," 118. For the views of Cemal Madanoglu, who was one of the leaders of the Coup, see Birand, *Demirkirat*, 165-166.

CHAPTER III.

Parliamentary Opposition: 1961-1971

During the period between 1961 and 1965, the political system experienced a process for the institutionalization of the mechanisms introduced by the transitory military regime. So, the founders of the new political structure became careful about the healthy development of the system that sustained the military existence in the civilian politics. In that case, the politicians could not act as like they would do otherwise. The Turkish politics could realize the plural nature of the post-1960 political and legal structure only toward and after the 1965 elections. That is why, this chapter was divided into two: First, 'the years of shaky opposition' which covered the period between 1961 and 1965, and the second, the 'plurality in opposition' of the 1965-1971 period.

Years of "Shaky Opposition": 1961-1965

The place of political opposition in Turkish competitive politics experienced a process of crisis in its institutionalization. The political culture, economic system as well as legal structure were not tolerant for the development of peaceful accommodation between political alternatives. That is why, under the impact of monocentrist political experiences, the Turkish political authorities tended to see the political opposition to their policies or personnel as equivalent to anti-system opposition. The program-oriented loyal opposition was assumed to be structural in its claims. In that case, since the legal structure was hardly constrained the actions of the government, political struggle in a competitive ground eventually became impossible. It demonstrated a vicious circle in which competitive political systems ended with

authoritarian regimes. The political movements which defended libertarian claims turned to be authoritarian once they were in power.⁷⁰ Even the peaceful alternation of political power, in 1950, could not help establishment of competitive political system where political opposition would perform its functions without the fear of governmental authoritarianism. So that, the continuation of intolerant attitudes in the political authorities toward the criticisms of alternative political bodies culminated in a single-party-like rule of the DP toward the ends of the 1950s that ended with the military intervention in 1960.

The authoritarian defection of the DP was the main cause of the intervention. Not only it had endangered the competitive political system established in 1945, but also had disturbed the social peace at the elite as well as the mass level. The bureaucratic and military elites needed to intervene the politics since they felt that the country's best interests are being inflicted by the authoritarian policies of the DP government.⁷¹ The uncompromising appeal of the DP, depending on its obvious majority in the parliament which had been vested with the absolute power by the 1924 Constitution, against the parliamentary opposition reached to a peak with the establishment of a Parliamentary Investigation Committee, in April 1960. The intention was to control all intra-parliamentary as well as non-parliamentary activities of the opposition in order to silence it. A peaceful accommodation between the political actors of the government and the opposition had become impossible.

Since the military elites considered democracy as an intellectual debate with the intention of determining the best policy and not as an effort to reconcile and aggregate different views and interests,⁷² the aim of the Coup was to extricate the

⁷⁰ Ilkay Sunar and Sabri Sayari, "Democracy in Turkey: Problems and Prospects," in *Transition From Authoritarian Rule*, eds. G. O'Donnell, P. C. Schmitter and L. Whitehead (Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 172.

⁷¹ Metin Heper, "Introduction" in *Political Parties and Democracy in Turkey*, eds. Metin Heper and Jacob M. Landau (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 1991), 3.

⁷² Heper, "Introduction," 4.

politicians from the irreconcilable situation in which they had fallen. In that sense, stressing on the transitory nature of the military intervention, the military personalities did not reject democracy, but the operation of the Turkish democracy with its ill-designed institutions on which the parliamentary opposition of the previous decade had been carrying out a strong campaign. They assured that the administration would be hand over to the political party which won the election to be held as soon as the restoration of the Turkish democratic system that was to correct the shortcomings of the previous years, was finished.⁷³

The National Unity Committee (NUC-*Milli Birlik Komitesi*)⁷⁴ considered that the DP had come to power legally, but legality of the government laid not in its origins but in its respect for the Constitution and for such institutions as press, the military and the universities.⁷⁵ However, it had imposed limitations on the voice of opposition, both in and out of the Parliament. For the restoration of democratic system, a new constitution and electoral law should have been prepared so as to guarantee the competitive nature of democracy in Turkey.

The post-intervention political life was dominated by the pre-1960 opposition, predominantly by the RPP and its sympathizers in bureaucracy and professional organizations.⁷⁶ So, it tended to reflect the socio-economic assumptions and regime formulations of the previous political opposition.⁷⁷ What it could not realize in the DP-dominated pre-1960 political system, was taken into the political and legal structure during the preparation of the 1961 Constitution.

⁷³ Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (London and New York: Routhledge, 1993), 126.

⁷⁴ The NUC included the leading commands of the Coup under the leadership of Cemal Gürsel who had come out to be the leader by the early hours of the intervention.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 127.

⁷⁶ Tevfik Çavdar, "Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi" in *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*. Vol.8 (Istanbul: İletisim), 2030-2031.

⁷⁷ Kemal H. Karpat, "Military Interventions: Army-Civilian Relations in Turkey Before and After 1980," in *State, Democracy, and the Military: Turkey in the 1980s*, eds. Metin Heper and Ahmet Evin (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1988), 142.

The 1961 Constitution was prepared under the effects of adverse experiences of the previous Constitution. In 1924, the desire was to give the parliamentary majority free reign in order to create a strong executive for the implementation of the reforms which were to transform a political system as well as a traditional society. Further, any limitation on the majority would mean the limitation of the national sovereignty which was the source of legitimacy on which the Republic had been established.⁷⁸ However, in 1960, the principal concern was to curb the power of the majority for the democratization of the political system in which the political opposition can survive so as to check the power of the government. For this, the executive authority was divided among administrative institutions and the power of the legislative was restricted by the establishment of a strict judicial control. The Constitutional Court was designed in order to prevent the government from arbitrary actions. So that, the 1961 Constitution institutionalized the bureaucratic and the military control over elected politicians in the sense that unlike the 1924 Assembly which had been vested with the representation of national sovereignty without any limitation, the 1961 Constitution preserved the national sovereignty in principle, but it would be exercised not only through the parliament but also through the authorized agencies as it prescribed by the principles laid down in the new Constitution.⁷⁹ Since it constrained the actions of the political power, this political structure was to be called later by Süleyman Demirel, the leader of the JP, as 'government by many' and complained that with such a constitution it was impossible to govern.⁸⁰ In fact, the political power had been so dispersed that obtaining the majority in the parliament came to be not enough on itself to govern. The considerations of the civilian-military state elites became also vital in the policy-making process of the government that multiplied the mechanisms in the hands of the parliamentary opposition to be used against the government.

⁷⁸ Teoman Ergül, *Anayasal Düzenimizin Geçirdiği Asamalar* (Ankara: Olgac Basimevi, 1981), 33.

⁷⁹ Karpat, "Army-Civillian Relations," 143.

⁸⁰ Hulisi Turgut, *Demirel'in Dünyası*, (Istanbul: ABC Yayinlari, 1992), 352.

The 1961 Constitution materialized most of the objectives designed by the opposition front of the second half of the 1950s that had been declared by the RPP Congress of 1959 as the 'Manifesto of the Primary Targets'. It had sought security guarantees for elections, establishment of a second parliamentary chamber, of supreme court of justice, and of a Constitutional Court which was to review the constitutionality of legislation, autonomy for universities, adaptation of proportional representation in the electoral system, constitutional guarantee of the freedom of press, inclusion of the principle of social justice into the constitution.⁸¹ Further, the Constitution gave a role to the military in the government through National Security Council. Its function was to assist the cabinet in the making of decisions related to national security and coordination. However, since the limits of the national security is not well defined but all embracing, the military personalities would found a say in every measure of the government.⁸² It would play even a mediating role between the political parties imposing a superficial consensus among them in order to avoid a uncompromising tendencies between government and opposition. Moreover, the economic matters were related to a central planning through the establishment of the State Planning Organization (SPO) which was to designate a balanced and sustainable economic growth that decreased authority of governments on the economy.

More importantly, the 1961 Constitution, for the first time, institutionalized the position and the status of the political opposition in Turkish politics rendering it as "the indispensable element of democratic political life." The political opposition acquired constitutional securities against the possible authoritarian policies of the majority party. In contrast to the previous constitutions which did not mention about this question, the Articles 56 and 57 of the new document accepted political parties as:

⁸¹ Cem Eroglu, " The Establishment of Multi-Party Rule: 1946-1971," in *Turkey in Transition: New Perspectives*, eds. Irvin Cemil Schick and Ahmet Tonak (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 117.

⁸² Nuri Eren, *Turkey Today and Tomorrow* (Pall Mall, 1963), 73.

the indespicable entities of democratic life. Citizens were entitled with broad rights to establish political parties and to join and to withdraw from them pursuing appropriate rules and procedures. Political parties could be founded without prior permission and would operate freely.⁸³

Moreover, it underlined the general principles to which political parties had to obey:

The statutes, programs, and activities of the political parties shall conform to the principles of democratic, secular republic, based on human rights and liberties and to the fundamental principals of the state's territorial and national integrity. Parties failing to conform to these provisions would be permanently dissolved. Political parties would account for their sources of income and expenditures to the Constitutional Court.⁸⁴

Further, the dissolution process of the parties has been placed under the jurisdiction of the Constitutional Court:

Actions in law involving the dissolution of political parties shall be heard by the Constitutional Court and the verdict to dissolve them shall be rendered only by this court'.⁸⁵

Recalling the dissolution of the parties of political opposition in the 1950's and before, that had depended on the whim of the ruling political party, the forgers of the new Constitution had specified the reason for which a party could be dissolved.⁸⁶ The dissolution of political party turned to be a legal process rather than a political struggle. In that case, it is expected that the political opposition would perform its full functions by the resumption of competitive political system. However, the difficulties

⁸³ Turkish Constitution 1961, Article 56.

⁸⁴ Turkish Constitution 1961, Article 57.

⁸⁵ Turkish Constitution 1961, Article 57.

⁸⁶ Eren, *Today*, 75.

stemming from the continuation of the military impact on the civilian politics tended to constraint the limits of opposition in the new system.

With the restoration of competitive politics by February 1961, after the establishment of a new legal and political structure, the inheritance of the outlawed DP votes and organization led to a competition between various political parties. Of those, the Justice Party (JP), which was founded in February 1961, was more likely to succeed the DP and be able to use the DP organization nationwide as soon as it was founded. The Republican Peasant Nation Party (RPNP) and the New Turkey Party (NTP) were to prove their incapability in this competition.

The JP largely succeeded in reclaiming the former power of the DP, as it was first evidenced by the referendum held for the new Constitution in 1961. Through a covert propaganda, it had supported the rejection of the new Constitution and the fact was that almost 40 per cent of the participants voted in this manner indicating the strength gained by this party founded nine months earlier.⁸⁷ It began to obtain the support of a large part of the population from its establishment.

In the way to power, the JP, as a mass party, represented different and sometimes contradictory interests and aggregated them into policy packages acceptable as many people as possible. So, it claimed representation of all classes maintaining DP conservatism in social representation. It tended to defend the DP's liberal policies, although claimed, under the constraints of the new Constitution which defined the Republic as a 'social state', and advocated mixed policies in the economic sphere. However, social justice, for them, did not mean equality in poverty, hostility to capital or equal distribution of income. The way to achieve social justice did not pass through class-struggle, but through a real increase in the national income for which it was necessary to have economic growth first. The JP accorded an important

⁸⁷ Eroglu, "The Establishment," 122

role to the private sector in this economic development strategy. Its liberal anti-etatism was stronger than that of the DP. The party program honored with the ownership rights and considered the private sector and free economy as indispensable for a democratic regime. The program, also, stated that the public sector ends where private sector begins. Further, it rejected nationalization and even called for the sale of the state economic enterprises⁸⁸. It followed a pragmatic policy in its appeal to the social structure of Turkey. In addition to the big bourgeois circles, the JP's greatest support came from small-holder peasants, who were emerging from poverty and a subsistence way of life; and small commercial, industrial, urban labor groups and newly wealthy farmers. These groups represented the rising social groups in competition with an older civil-bureaucratic elite in the centre and the local notables in the periphery who were used to be represented by the RPP.⁸⁹ The JP prepared itself, with its program, to defense the interests which were disturbed with the envisaged etatist policies advocated by the RPP and the 1961 Constitution. So, it posed an opposition, from the beginning, to the socio-economic policies of the RPP who was to dominate the post-intervention civilian politics.

On the other hand, the RPP remained to be the political organization of the older elites, mainly the civilian bureaucratic groups, that came to dominate the latter phases of the Ottoman Empire and early years of the Republic, including the military officers, urban intellectuals and landed notables in the countryside.⁹⁰ So, coming to early 1960s, it continued to be identified with the state, prevailing the image of monoparty years. The principles of these years, like strict secularism, populism, and etatism represented the essence of the party which had been headed by a 'man of state', Ismet İnönü. Since the RPP was equated with the state to which the military was a loyal watchdog⁹¹, it was the only major party who had been permitted to

⁸⁸ Levi, "The Justice Party," 140-41.

⁸⁹ W. B. Sherwood, "The Rise of the Justice Party in Turkey." *World Politics*. 20 (1967-1968), 55.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 55.

⁹¹ Ahmad, *Demokrasi Süreci*, 179.

function even after the military intervention of 'May 27' and, as it was mentioned above, played important roles in the restructuring of the Turkish democracy under the auspices of the military leaders in the early 1960s. Due to this fact, the "circumstances following the military intervention had led skeptics to suggest that the only way the party could stage a comeback was with the help of the military, rather than the free choice of the electorate".⁹²

The free elections was held on October 1961 in which new electoral law with a proportional representation was applied. In the absence of an effective opposition, the expectation was that it would give the RPP a comfortable majority enough to form the government in the Parliament so as to enforce the reforms of the new Constitution. But, it did not go as planned.⁹³ The inheritors of the DP, the JP and the NTP obtained about the majority of the votes cast as the RPP did not poll much better than the scores of the 1950s. The RPNP, which was famous with its religious orientation, also won a rate enough to have representation in the Parliament.⁹⁴ The results were elaborated as a tribute to the power Adnan Menderes continued to exercise from the grave and a vote of refusal against the military regime which had ousted him.⁹⁵

The Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA) contained four parties⁹⁶, but it did not much disturb the domination of the two-party system in Turkish politics. So, the Parliament tended to exhibit competition of the previous decade that was now between etatist-secularist policies of the RPP and the liberal, centre right policies of

⁹² F. Tachau, "The Republican Peoples Party: 1945-1980," in *Political Parties and Democracy in Turkey*, eds. Metin Heper and Jacop M. Landau (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 1991), 107.

⁹³ Karpat, "Army-Civilian Relations," 143.

⁹⁴ Feroz Ahmad and Bedia Ahmad, *Türkiye'de Çok Partili Politikanın Acıklamalı Kronolojisi: 1945-1971* (Istanbul: Bilgi Yayınları, 1976), 239.

⁹⁵ Ahmad, *Demokrasi Süreci*, 137.

⁹⁶ All the four parties, which run in the 1961 elections, obtained representation in the TGNA. The power of the parties in the Parliament as the percentage of the votes cast (V) and the percentage of the seats obtained (S) were: The RPP (V. 36.70, S. 38.40), the JP (V. 34.80, S. 35.10), the RPNP (V. 14.00, S. 12.00), the NTP (V. 13.70, S. 14.20). Ömer Faruk Gençkaya, "Turkey," (forthcoming), in *Encyclopedia of Parliaments and Legislatures* (New York: A Congressional Quarterly Publication), 23.

the JP. However, since the place of the political opposition in the political system was secured by the Constitution and the government has to share the political power with military-bureaucratic institutions, neither it was possible for the government to defect toward authoritarianism nor would the opposition have to focus on the regime oriented struggles with the aim to eliminate the governmental threats. The parliamentary opposition would, now, turn to its essential function which is to check and balance the policies of the government, in the Parliament, as producing socio-economic policies to those of government, in order to obtain the majority in the next election. However, since the military existence in the civilian policies was heavily felt during the early years of 1960s, the opposition was not able to produce alternative policies that it would do otherwise.

Given the results of the 1961 parliamentary elections, the most satisfactory coalition might have been between the JP and NTP who held similar programs and having the appropriate number of seats in the TGNA able to form a coalition government (137 and 65 respectively). However, such a coalition would allow the JP to create a powerful image of itself as the main opposition party.⁹⁷ Because, although the party system was more fragmented regarding the previous decade due to the application of PR system which had rewarded the minor parties, it was obviously seen that the opposition tended to concentrate under the roof of the JP as it gained strength against oppressive policies of the NUC towards the ex-DP successors. On the other hand, it had become fairly clear during this period that the armed forces would not tolerate any coalition that would exclude the RPP who used to be seen by the state elites as the safeguard of the basic principles of the Republic and was the only trusted political institution to enforce the reforms envisaged by the Constitution, in addition to the position of İnönü in the eyes of the military leaders.⁹⁸ As there was no question of permitting a neo-democrat coalition to form the government that would have

⁹⁷ C. H. Dodd, *The Crisis of Turkish Democracy* (The Eothen Press, 1990), 56.

⁹⁸ Levi, "The Justice Party," 144

invited another intervention by the military, the President Cemal Gürsel asked Ismet İnönü, the leader of the RPP, to do so.

Although there was no party in the Parliament to collaborate with İnönü at the beginning, soon military pressures persuaded even extreme Democrats to establish a coalition with the RPP during the 'Comfort Meetings' (*Huzur Toplantıları*) which brought the political party leaders together in the Presidential Palace. The 'Meetings' were to be repeated throughout the first half of the 1960s in order to secure a political system expected by the military. It seems to be that, the main target of the JP-RPP coalition aimed at preventing a stronger parliamentary opposition against the policies to be implemented by the RPP.⁹⁹ Beside this, the political party leaders had become to declare, in the first 'Comfort Meeting', their loyalty to the military intervention and the 1961 Constitution. Obviously, the limits of the opposition was determined in advance that any political opposition, who would threaten the position of the military and the system it established, would not be permitted. The degree of the military existence in the politics tended to draw the borders of opposition, even in the Parliament.

The first coalition of the Republican history was formed on November 1961 and lasted about seven months. In fact, the liberal NTP and conservative RPNP were the opposition in the Parliament, but the real opposition to the government policies came from the reluctant partner, the JP, from within the coalition government. Because, the main concern, which laid in the essence of the party was to achieve an amnesty for the arrested ex-Democrats that contradicted with what social basis and state elites expected from the RPP. Further, many JP members, basically those of extremists, suspected İnönü of collaborating with the military¹⁰⁰. However, an amnesty was not possible under the close monitoring of the military leaders who were cautious about a

⁹⁹ Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 1993), 261. He termed such an imposed coalition as a 'marriage of convenience, not love'.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 261.

democratic revenge. İnönü made good use of a possible military intervention against both intra government and parliamentary opposition and succeeded in suppressing the attacks of the extremist Democrats. The failure of the Aydemir's coup attempts in February 1962, further strengthened the position of the premier İnönü vis-à-vis the opposition. Upon the failure of this coup, İnönü was met in the TGNA like a hero even by the opposition parties. Simply due to the fact that the JP's intra-government opposition was regarded as the cause of the attempt,¹⁰¹ the political parties had become to redeclare their loyalties to the Intervention with a new Comfort Meeting. Still, the amnesty question became the only issue on which the JP could dare to oppose both to the RPP and the military.¹⁰²

It is asserted that İnönü had permitted the coup attempt of Aydemir in order to secure his position in the government and in the Parliament, and to have a strong stand against the demands of the opposition.¹⁰³ The resulting shadow of the military over politicians helped İnönü to create a "very loyal opposition" in the parliament.

However, the amnesty question which raised political crisis both among coalition partners and between politicians and military leaders, curtailed the real differentiation between the RPP and the JP on the socio-economic issues such as 'social state', 'land reform', 'labor rights', the role of the private sectors and, to some extent, the role of the central planning in economy that all had been laid down by the new Constitution. In order to be able to deal with such reforms, İnönü frequently warned the opposition to accept the necessary condition by giving a way the intra-government opposition which had been attributed to be a vote catching attempt. İnönü gave priority to the general socio-economic problems of the country over an amnesty which would be held on when the situation became more appropriate. But, the JP,

¹⁰¹ Tevfik Çavdar, "Adalet Partisi," in *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye Ansiklopedisi* Vol. 8 (İstanbul: İletisim), 2091.

¹⁰² Ümit Cizre Sakallioğlu, *AP-Ordu İlişkileri: Bir İkilemin Anatomisi* (İstanbul: İletisim, 1993), 59-69.

¹⁰³ Ahmad, *Demokrasi Süreci*, 254.

which was still in search of the adherence of the DP, rejected to give any concession from its basic considerations about the ex-Democrat's question as well as socio-economic programs.¹⁰⁴ The end of the coalition came when the JP attempted to attach the pardon of the Aydemir Incident's rebels to the ex-Democrats' amnesty, upon which the Chief of the General Staff Cevdet Sunay, once again, resorted a pressure that persuaded both the JP and NTP to vote for pardon which was to retire the considered personalities from the military. But this increased the disturbance within the JP. The extremists demanded to withdraw not only from the cabinet, but also from the Assembly. Seeing that there was no hope of agreement, the government resigned (30 May 1962).

Since the JP felt the pressure of the military always on itself, it could not behave as it would do otherwise. The JP leaders, confronted with a military threat, had followed pragmatic policies in order not to irritate High Commands of the military.

However, it seemed to be impossible to reformulate another coalition without the appearance of the military. So, İnönü on the authorization to establish the coalition met with the president Gürsel and Chief of the Staff, Sunay, on 19 June. The other day all political party leaders were invited to the President's Palace, again for a 'Comfort Meeting', and a formulation of the coalition was imposed consisting of all political parties, leaving the JP in the opposition. The RPP established the second coalition, in June 1962, with the NTP, the RPNP and independents. For the minor opposition parties, this would be an opportunity to achieve their programs within the limitations set by the military.

Under the impact of the policies of the smaller partners, the coalition protocol accepted the private sector as an equal partner in the economic sphere. The leader of the NTP, Ekrem Alican, who favored free enterprise was given the responsibility of

¹⁰⁴ Levi, "The Justice Party," 60.

economic affairs including the control of the State Planning Organization. In September 1962, the coalition allowed fifty five landed notables to return to Eastern Anatolia from where they had been exiled by the NUC, thus eliminating all chances for land reform in that region. This was met as a victory not only by the minor partners but also by the JP opposition in the Parliament. The followers of the DP, JP and NTP, prepared welcome ceremonies to meet the 'agas' (landed notables). Further, a partial amnesty was agreed upon.¹⁰⁵ These policies were important for the right wing partners of the coalition that would attract the ex-DP votes avoiding the increase of the JP when it was in opposition.

The explicit social support behind the JP opposition was the main factor that had constrained the RPP to make concessions to its opponent. This raised reactions against İnönü within the RPP and its supporters by inviting İnönü to resign from both Prime-Ministership and the leadership of the Party. Even they went on protest demonstrations in the big cities. Interestingly, the opposition JP became the main defender of İnönü against the protests.¹⁰⁶ The reason was that, although the JP had lost some of the issues which would be used against the government, especially the right partners of the coalition, it could not refrain from defending the rightist policies of the RPP-headed government. Because, not only such a reconciliatory policy was expected to contribute to the legitimacy of its 'suspected' opposition attempts in the eyes of the military, but also it would prove its role in the concessionist policies of the government to the ex-Democrat electorate.

However, the rightist policies of the government did not stop the JP's increase in adverse to government's expectations. It continued to gain strength, in the opposition, maintaining an irreconciliatory stand on the defense of the restoration of the full rights of the ex-Democrats. The local elections of November of 1963 produced a clear

¹⁰⁵ Feroz Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Democracy: 1950-1975* (London: C. Hurst Company, 1977), 216-226.

¹⁰⁶ Ahmad, *Demokrasi Süreci*, 256-257.

victory for the JP's opposition, as the small partners of the coalition as well as the RPP suffered with great losses, indicating that the JP began to be perceived as the only inheritor of the outlawed DP.¹⁰⁷ Not its alternative policies formulated and defended before the society, but the stable approaches of the party and its leaders toward the amnesty question made the JP the only alternative of the government by 1963. Beside this, the socio-economic policies of the weak coalitions for which the RPP and its leader İnönü were held to be responsible, seems to be contributed to the increase of the JP. So the social support of the government, mainly those of the right wing partners of the coalition, turned to the opposition, namely the JP. On the other hand, considering the heavy decrease in the votes of the smaller parties, the ex-Democrat electorate had tended to punish these parties, because of their collaboration with İnönü who had been perceived to be imposed by the 1960 intervention.

Having been aware of the causes of their demise the smaller partners of the coalitions withdrew from the government after the 1963 local elections. Upon this, the President Gürsel appointed the leader of the JP, Ragıp Gümüşpala, to form the cabinet. But, since the minor parties were ideologically closer to the JP, they refused formation of a coalition taking into consideration the possibility of disappearance within the policies of the big partner. In fact, this was a maneuver of the JP to force the Parliament for an early election. However, it failed both in the establishment of a coalition or having an early election

The symbolic implication of being authorized with the establishment of government was more important for the JP. It had demonstrated the outcome of the reconciliatory and compliant (*uysal*) opposition strategy of the JP, launched either in or outside the government. The military had begun to regard the JP as a normal and

¹⁰⁷ Walter F. Weiker, *The Modernization of Turkey: From Atatürk to the Present Day* (New York and London: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1981), 123.

acceptable partner of the political system and no longer required it to be held under the tutelage of İnönü.¹⁰⁸

Later, İnönü who was given again the responsibility to form the government, submitted the establishment of a minority coalition government with the independents on 22 December 1963. However, the government was to take a vote of confidence from a fragmented but ideologically closer opposition in the Parliament. But, an external problem, the Cyprus question, which increased the tension between Greece and Turkey and would culminate in a war, provided government with the vote of confidence during the early days of 1964. The opposition parties in the parliament demonstrated a general gesture which had been experienced in the West (the UK, France, Austria, Norway) during the W.W.II., with a need to show a national solidarity against a common enemy that postponed the internal political struggles for a while. However, the support given to the government was superficial and limited to external policies that the real differences were not to be forgotten.¹⁰⁹ Throughout the 1964, the government focused on the Cyprus Problem. That is to say, it enjoyed the support of the opposition. In the parliament, even the JP refrained from any action which would lead to political crisis as long as İnönü did not bring conflicting issues to the Assembly.¹¹⁰ And İnönü was cautious about not to confront with the opposition being aware of the weaknesses of his coalition government against the existing parliamentary opposition who would bring down the government in case of a contradictory policy.

Although the opposition was ready to support the government in foreign policy, the place of Turkey in Western alliance turned out to be the main conflictual issue between government and opposition when the government looked for rapprochement with the USSR against the USA's Greek sided stand in the Cyprus question. İnönü

¹⁰⁸ Zurcher, *A Modern History*, 262.

¹⁰⁹ Cem Erogul, "The Establishment," 127.

¹¹⁰ J. S. Szyliowics, "The Turkish Elections 1965." *The Middle East Journal*. 20 (1966), 486.

had began to make strict declaration against the attitudes of the USA. When the issue came to the Assembly, especially Justice Party heavily criticized the government of having good relations with the communist Russia and strongly defended improvement of the relations with the USA, blaming İnönü of attributing the failures of the coalition to the USA.¹¹¹ Although ideological conflicts began to appear between government and the opposition in the TGNA, the aim of the criticisms was, in fact, to prevent the government from strengthening its position in the eyes of electorate before the coming elections. So, the opposition did not support a pro-USSR or anti-American policies of government even after it heard about the Johnson's letter which warned Turkey upon the Cyprus problem.

In the elections for the Senate, held in June 1964, the JP won a victory against the government and its minor rivals. But, it lost its leader just few days before the elections. The Party would fall in a leadership crisis. In fact, the JP had been suffering from the internal conflicts between extremists and the moderates since its foundation that had decreased internal cohesion of the party affecting the strength of its opposition policies. The JP could not take a permanently strong stand against neither the government nor the military, partly because of these internal conflicts. The same problem appeared itself in the Party Congress convened in November 1964 which was to elect the new party leader. In this Congress, Süleyman Demirel, nominated by the moderate wing defeated Sadettin Bilgic who had been advocated by the extremist democrats and who tried to use anti-1960 feelings through posing attacks on the Coup and its leaders. The statement issued a short time earlier by the Chief of the General Staff Cevdet Sunay who warned against the actions of political parties which were dividing the country and agitating the people against the army facilitated the victory of Demirel. The warning was clearly directed against the JP and the delegates voted overwhelmingly for Demirel.¹¹² The result increased the acceptability of the party in

¹¹¹ Ahmad, *Demokrasi Süreci*, 262.

¹¹² Zurcher, *A Modern History*, 262.

the eyes of the military leadership. But, Demirel preferred to wait in opposition during which his own position would be more secure both in the party and with the high command. Towards the end of 1964, he explicitly began to declare that he would bring the government down as soon as he found 226 votes in the Parliament.¹¹³ So, the JP, with its dynamic leader, increased the pressures on the government in the Parliament. Demirel began to hold meetings with the leaders of the other opposition parties in order to oust the İnönü-headed minority government from the power for an early election or to form a stronger coalition government. In the end, he successfully organized the defeat of the İnönü government during the budget debates and promptly established a coalition without the RPP and İnönü.

The JP advocated formation of a proxy government under the leadership of Suat Hayri Ürgüplü, with Demirel as Vice-Premier, since the leader of the main opposition party was not a deputy in the Parliament at the time. Indicating impact of the military existence in civilian politics, all the issues, like the superiority of the 1961 Constitution, land reform, welfare state policies, central planning in the economy that all had been criticized by the coalition partners when they were in opposition, included in the program. The RPP criticized the program as being to be far away from sincerity, from the real tendencies of the government partners. The RPP claimed that those who were criticizing until yesterday the principles defended by themselves have proposed a program full of ideas resembling those principles.¹¹⁴ In fact, the main goal of the government was to take the country to the general elections rather than implementing reform. It was a guarantee for the JP to compete in a fair election since it could not, yet, establish reliable accommodation with the military. It inevitably had to give place in its program the issues on which military seemed to be insisting,

¹¹³ M. Ali Birand, Can Dünder and Bülent Çaplı, *12 Mart: İhtilalin Pençesinde Demokrasi* (İstanbul: Imge Kitabevi, 1994), 115.

¹¹⁴ Ahmad, *Demokrasi Süreci*, 265.

although it had been carried on an implicit opposition, in the Parliament, in order to avoid their implementation during the previous coalition governments.

Demirel succeeded in arriving at the necessary accommodation. It had been evidenced that a government without the RPP was now possible, not only unacceptable for the military. This decreased the RPP's chance to use civilian-military elite support in the elections. So, it became to develop alternative policies attractive to the larger electorate that would increase its chance in the elections against the JP.¹¹⁵

The campaign of the 1965 elections triggered a type of political competition based on real socio-economic alternatives. The imminent policies of the RPP began to be reflected on the issues like land reform, foreign policy, foreign investment in petroleum and other natural resources, economic planning, the condition of the foreign trade and the capital, which dominated the confrontation between government and the opposition.¹¹⁶ Further, the issues indicated the beginning of an ideological division in the Turkish politics that was increased by the composition of the JP-headed coalition. Although the previous coalitions had included the representatives from all political views, with passing of the RPP into the opposition, the new government had consisted of what were considered to be 'right wing' parties: the JP, the NTP, the RPNP and the NP. The resulting struggle between the government and the opposition took on an ideological flavor which was to increase by the second half of the 1960s.¹¹⁷

The RPP intensified its opposition attempts in this process of the 1965 elections since the record of the fourth coalition was bound to effect the results. As Szyliowicz argued:

¹¹⁵ Levi, "The Justice Party," 62.

¹¹⁶ Szyliowicz, "Elections," 484.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 480.

If the JP had provided a strong and stable government, the RPP would suffer, whereas if the coalition broke apart or proved ineffectual, the RPP would benefit greatly.¹¹⁸

Still, the RPP did not depend not only on the fate of the coalition government but also turned to formulate the leftist elements which would produce an alternative and distinctive stand against the JP's liberal aspirations. Clarifying its stand on the main campaign issues, it emphasized land reform, nationalization of the petroleum companies, reviewing the relations with the USA and strengthening the improving relations with the USSR against the Western attitude toward Turkey's thesis on the Cyprus question. The signs of the new stand further gained strength in the 1964 Party Congress. The Congress adopted a declaration entitled 'Our Ideal of a Progressive Turkey', developed by Turan Fevzioglu and Bülent Ecevit and it defined the place of the party on 'the left of the center', in the eventually emerging ideological spectrum of Turkish politics.¹¹⁹ It was to be the main opposition strategy to be taken against the JP. In contrast to the JP's increase, the gradual erosion of the RPP since 1961 had impelled it to make its first major new policy initiative since the advent of etatism in 1931.¹²⁰

For the majority of the RPP, it would eliminate the elitist perception of the party within the mass society, so that, permanent and more persuasive ties would be established with the larger electorate increasing its chance against the JP in the elections. It was expected that, on the one hand, it would decrease the likelihood of defection from the Party's basis toward the extreme left. On the other, those who complained about social injustices would be taken into the ranks of the RPP. So, the new policy-design directed not only toward the right-wing parties but also against the extreme left alternative. Still, the ideologically oriented politicians within the RPP

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 480.

¹¹⁹ Tachau, "Peoples Party," 107.

¹²⁰ Weiker, *The Modernization*, 123.

tended to see the 'left-of-the centre' as a comprehensive social democrat policy orientation which were to shape the future of the Party rather than a pragmatic opposition policy.¹²¹

Although the centre-left position of the RPP did never imply a structural opposition to the system, it raised strict reactions on the right. Stressing on the liberal, or, at most, mixed policies for economic development, the right parties attacked the etatist, leftist economic program of the opposition leading the debates to the extreme points. The RPP was accused of being communist or, more moderately, rightists politicians stated that the RPP' new Stand would lead to the establishment of communism in Turkey. It was reflected to be a radical threat to the social and religious believes of the Turkish people. The famous slogan of the JP was that 'the left of the center is the road to Moscow' (*Ortanin Solu Moskova Yolu*).¹²²

The leftists, the RPP and the Turkish Labor Party (*Türkiye İşçi Partisi* -TLP) which based its program on socialist orientations and organized within the free atmosphere created by the 1961 Constitution, responded in kind accusing their opponents by being reactionaries, profiteers and responsible for fascist attacks organized by the conservative people.¹²³ However, the attacks of the governing right parties launched against the RPP's leftism was so effective that the whole opposition period of the RPP passed in defense to prove that the 'left-of-the centre' was not communism.¹²⁴

The JP won a great victory in the 1965 elections obtaining simple majority of the votes as its rightist partners and leftist rival decreased further.¹²⁵ The RPP won its

¹²¹ Çavdar, "Halk Partisi," 2032.

¹²² Ibid., 108.

¹²³ Szyliowicz, "Elections," 481.

¹²⁴ Birand, *12 Mart*, 126.

¹²⁵ The 1965 election results as the percentage of the votes cast (V) and the percentage of the seats obtained in the TGNA (S) were: the JP (V. 52.90, S. 53.30), the RPP (V. 28.70, S. 29.80), the NP (V. 6.30, S. 6.90), the NTP (V. 3.70, S. 4.20), the TLP (V. 3.00, S. 3.30), the RPNP (V. 2.20, S. 2.40). Gençkaya, "Turkey," 23.

lowest rate in the elections that was blamed on the slogan of the 'left of the centre' which, for its defenders, could not be well explained to the people under the constant attacks of the right wing who interpreted it as one way of communism. The success of a structural opposition, the TLP, polling enough to have a representation in the TGNA was the most interesting result of the 1965 elections.

General Evaluation of the Period

During the first half of the 1960s, the opposition did not demonstrate its real types and patterns nor performed real functions in a political system where heavily dominated by the military elites. The members of the opposition parties needed to act in accordance with the expectation of the intervenor military leaders, rather than their own policy orientations and programs. They could not develop, particularly early years of the 1960s, socio-economic alternatives to the policies of the government. The survival became the prominent consideration of the opposition policies.

The out party or parties could not pose effective opposition attempts against the governments of the period. The Parliament became the only site for the parties of the parliamentary opposition. Even there, the opposition tried to chose a strategy and issues which would not disturb the military cadres though the opposition struggle of the JP on the amnesty question which was vital to be able attract the ex-DP votes seemed to be more aggressive. However, the amnesty question which laid at the essence of the main opposition party of the period, the JP, heavily contributed to the disappearance of the real policy confrontations between government and the opposition.

Although the 1961 Constitution institutionalized the place of the opposition in the Turkish democratic system, no structural opposition could dare to function in the post-intervention politics. In order to be able to function in this transition period, all

political parties in the system have had to state their loyalties to the new system and the Constitution which had been established by the military junta, the NUC. Further, the non-structural opposition of the period was made 'very loyal' by the government headed by İnönü who had respect and closer ties among military leaders. İnönü made good use of his status in the hot atmosphere of military threats, in order to avoid the demands of the opposition and even to gather the support of the opposition behind the socio-economic policies of the government. Still, the opposition succeeded in blocking radical socio-economic reforms which had been envisaged by the Constitution and included in the programs of the RPP-headed coalitions. Under the impact of military pressures, the opposition of the parliamentary parties remained to be weak against the government of a party, the RPP, which had been advocated by the power holders of the political system in the aftermath of the 1960 Coup. As Tachau argued:

it is doubtful that İnönü could have survived as the prime minister amid this instability (of the weak coalitions) without the covered, and sometimes overt, support of the military command. In the end, when the military withdrew the support paved the way for the JP to come the power.¹²⁶

The proportional representation, which was designed before the 1961 elections in order to overcome the possibility of a party's domination in the parliament, tended to produce a fragmented parliamentary opposition that was to be inefficient against the government. For the 1961 election results created a fragmentation in the parliamentary parties, the opposition fragmented, too. However, since the inheritor of the DP became explicit as early as the referendum, held for the 1961 Constitution and was consolidated this trend throughout the 1961 general and 1963 local elections, the opposition steadily concentrated under the roof of the new democrat JP. So, the

¹²⁶ Tachau, "Peoples Party," 107.

position of the RPP headed coalitions became eventually shaky as the ex-Democrat voters decided which of the newly organized parties was the true heir of the outlawed Democrats.

The opposition of the JP became more consistent and powerful when it solved, for the time being, the problem of moderate-extremist conflicts within the party toward the end of 1964 during which moderate Süleyman Demirel was elected for the leadership of the party upon the death of Ragıp Gümüşpala. The pragmatic reconciliatory policies of Demirel legitimized the party even in the eyes of the military cadres that opened the way to the power being the near alternative to the RPP in the political system.

On the other hand, the right wing nature of the forth coalition triggered the ideological conflicts which further inaugurated by the socio-economic changes, including industrialization and migration, experienced since 1950s. The statist RPP had to redefine itself in respect to its rightist and extreme leftist rivals in order to increase its chance in the elections. The new place of the RPP was on the 'left of the center' based on etatist, social and strictly secular programs. Still, the system remained to be moderate pluralism with four political parties and centripetal tendencies in party competition.¹²⁷ The moderating role of the military and bureaucratic institutions set by the Constitution, had been effective on the centripetal tendencies of the political competition since they deterred opposition from defecting toward irresponsibility in its attempts both in the Parliament and within the society. Expectedly, the opposition exhibited the most responsible trend in the case of an external problem caused by the Cyprus question which was assumed to be a national policy.

¹²⁷ Sartori defines the 'moderate pluralism' as a system which operates on a three-four party basis that is bipolar and centripetal. Giovanni Sartori, "European Political Parties: The Case of Polarized Pluralism," *Political Parties and Political Development*, eds. J. La Palombara and M. Weiner (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), 139.

During the period which was shadowed by the existence of the military in the civilian politics, the opposition always had to consider, in its strategies and policy formulations, what the military cadres would say. So, the successors of the ex-Democrats, which gathered within the JP by 1963, refrained from organizing public meetings, issuing violent criticisms either against the RPP and the military. They tried to solve all problems in the Assembly, including the amnesty question of the ex-Democrats which was to determine the successor of the outlawed DP. The greeting, reconciliatory opposition attempts of the period, carried on mainly by the JP, was termed as the 'shaky opposition'.¹²⁸



¹²⁸ Cited in Cizre Sakalliođlu, *AP-Ordu*, 50. From Cüneyt Arcayürek, *Cüneyt Arcayürek Açıkliyor: 4, Yeni Demokrasi Yeni Arayislar: 1960-1965* (Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, Aralık 1985), 103.

Plurality in Opposition: 1965-1971

The composition of the parliament during the period of JP majority governments came closest to the multi-party system that the number of parties represented in the Assembly increased to six in 1965 and to eight in 1969. More importantly, the Assembly involved, now, more distinctive, both in terms of ideology and program, political parties who articulated the social structure which was in a process of rapid socio-economic transformation. The existence of the LPT which claimed to have a structural policy orientation with a socialist ideology; the defection of the RPP to the further left that "the left-of-the centre" policies began to take more secure roots in the party which defined its place more clearly in the political spectrum; control of the RPNP by the ultranationalist group of ex-colonel Alparslan Turkes; and the JP, who achieved to obtain majority in the Parliament, having more liberal program emphasizing on the private sector that limited the responsibility of the government to providing people with security of property, of life and freedom to work and travel that eventually rendered the party as the political institution of the big industrial interests to which the Anatolian petit bourgeoisie launched an internal opposition toward the end of the period.¹²⁹

Still, the 'predominant' party system, which lasted since 1950 elections, was further strengthened by the 1965 elections in which the issue of succession the outlawed DP was settled when the JP received 53 per cent of the total votes cast that put an undeniable superiority over the NTP and the RPNP who had, too, competed for the votes of the ex-Democrats. The JP and the RPP remained to be the major parties

¹²⁹ Ahmad, *Demokrasi Süreci*, 282.

in the TGNA although the electoral and parliamentary majorities were not as comfortable as those of the 1950s.¹³⁰

The four development contributed to the emergence of a relatively plural parliamentary opposition during and after the 1965 elections. First of all, the industrialization, which had been triggered by the DP governments of 1950s, gained a new momentum with the enforcement of the Five Year Economic Plan in 1963. The resulting economic growth in the cities increased migration toward the industrialized urban centers that began to shake the old social cleavages based on cultural terms. The functional cleavages, inaugurated by the changes in the economic framework, further diversified the cleavages within the society that increased complexity in the electoral periphery of the political parties. So, the political parties felt the need to redefine their electoral base on functional terms. Second, the 1961 Constitution established a democratic legal framework which limited the government authority while aiming at flourishing the civil society that had never before been seen in Turkey. Third, the military ceased to be a constant threat to the civilian initiative of politics that military shadow over politics and the politicians began to disappear.¹³¹ Relating to the second, with the normalization of the regime by 1965, the liberal constitution of the 1961 provided a fortunate climate for the appearance and organization of various political currents, addressing to the differentiation in the social structure. Finally, is the adaptation of a 'national remainder system' to the electoral law, in January 1965, favored minor parties that the system opened the way for the smaller parties to have a voice in the parliament.

¹³⁰ Ü. Ergüder & R. H. Hofferbert, "The 1983 General Elections in Turkey: Continuity or Change In Voting Patterns, in *State, Democracy and the Military: Turkey in the 1980s*, eds. Metin Heper and Ahmet Evin (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1988), 86. Ergun Özbudun, "The Turkish Party System: Institutionalization, Polarization, and Fragmentation." *Middle Eastern Studies*. 17-2 (1987), 229-230.

¹³¹ Erogul, "The Establishment," 131.

In spite of the fragmentation in the parliamentary party structure, the relative strength of the RPP in respect to smaller parties concentrated the opposition in that party. So, the Republicans-Democrats rivalry of the pre-1960 now changed into an equally bitter contest between the RPP and the JP. As in the pre-1960 period, compared with big parties, the smaller parties had little parliamentary influence and little impact in the country as a whole.¹³² However, this does not mean that the other parties, particularly the LPT, disappeared in the parliamentary struggles. The distinctive nature of the LPT's program was to give her a special place in the parliamentary debates that attracted the attention disproportionate to its number in the parliament. Therefore, it is better to have a close look at the structural, but constitutional opposition of the LPT and its opposition efforts in the parliament since it provided the electorate with a distinctive alternative and claimed representation of a definite social sector.

The LPT was founded by a group of trade union leaders, who had broken away from the official trade union federation, Türk-İs, in order to better represent the interests of the labor in the TGNA without having a further goal like the establishment of a socialist system based on labor movement. But, the party acquired a new character by 1962, when socialist intellectual M. Ali Aybar was given the chairmanship of the party by its founding board.¹³³ From then on, the party began to acquire a socialist program. The LPT was defined, in its program adopted in 1962, as:

¹³² Jacop M. Landau, *Radical Politics in Modern Turkey* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974), 17.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 123-125.

democratic, independent and socialist political organization, marching to power through legal means and based on history and science, of the Turkish working class and of the groups which arrived consciously at the happy conclusion of seeing unity of fate with it (the working class), and followed its democratic leadership, such as socialist intellectuals, agricultural workers, insufficiently landed peasants, craftsmen, small businessmen, salary and wage earners, low income professionals, in a word all citizens leading a life based on their own effort.¹³⁴

While the Articles 141 and 142 of the Turkish Penal Code¹³⁵ continued to forbid establishment of legal communist party, the new Constitution had allowed the creation of a socialist party, if the rules of the game in a democratic system was accepted. Then, the party was to be constitutional as long as it maintained the democratic nature of its strategy. Aware of this fact, the program stressed the Party's desire to follow democratic ways and to respect for the Constitution.¹³⁶ The LPT was also careful in its proposals of radical reform to be implemented when the Party comes to power that were justified through illustrating them as a remedy to the socio-economic backwardness of the country. In the end, it asserted that the solutions to the problems of Turkey laid in bringing the labor to power through political education carried on by the party, under the protection of rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution.¹³⁷

The LPT advocated a 'planned etatism' siding with the labor and being implemented and controlled through workers' participation.¹³⁸ The main strategy of the 'planned etatism' is the nationalization of the key means of production and exchange; government investment in big industry; implementing a land reform

¹³⁴ *TIP Programi*, (Istanbul: 1964), 9. Cited in Kemal H. Karpat, "Socialism and the Labor Party of Turkey." *The Middle East Journal*. 21 (1962), 163.

¹³⁵ The Articles prohibited the formation of organizations advocating the supremacy of one social class over another, but in practice, ultra radical leftist and rightist parties could be formed simply by avoiding the term 'communist' and a few technical key words referring to class struggle.

¹³⁶ Murat Belge, "The Tragedy of the Turkish Left," *New Left Review*, 126 (March-April, 1981), 67.

¹³⁷ Sadun Aren, *TIP Olayi, 1961-1971* (Istanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1993), 63.

¹³⁸ Karpat, "Labor Party," 164.

distributing lands of the notables to the landless peasants; harmonizing education with economic development; eradicating unemployment; peaceful international relations and ceasing exploitation of man by his fellow.¹³⁹ Although the private sector, which is assumed to be cooperating with the external capitalist classes in the exploitation of Turkish people, was seen as the major factor behind the development of underdevelopment in Turkey, it was to be auxiliary of the state economy in the planned framework and was to be gradually limited as its functions were taken over by government enterprises.¹⁴⁰

According to Shaw, the stand of the LPT towards the private sector is a lib service. He claimed that the Party could not come about with more radical promises, as long as it remained in opposition, in a society where people had a strong ownership tradition. It had to show flexibility on the private sector whose exploitive attempts, still, were to be controlled by subverting it to the 'planned etatism' and party mechanisms.¹⁴¹

The party's heavy denunciation of exploitation; strong support given to the nationalization of the larger means of production and exchange; state monopoly in heavy industry which is assumed to be the most exploitative sector; central planning in all economic spheres and commitment to the labor class on the road to power that implies a class struggle, made the LPT a structural opposition in the parliament. In Duverger's classification, the LPT held a 'conflict over basic principles' of the existing socio-economic system of the Republic.¹⁴² But, it was constitutional in the sense that it employed legal means to realize its goals. After all, the 1961 Constitution set three preconditions for the establishment of the political parties that their programs and

¹³⁹ Landau, *Radical*, 141.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 138-139.

¹⁴¹ Stanford F. Shaw and Ezel K. Shaw, *Osmanli Imparatorlugu ve Modern Türkiye*, trans. Mehmet Harmanci (Istanbul: E Yayinlari, 1983), 499.

¹⁴² Duverger, *Political Parties*, 418. He classified the types of conflicts between political parties in a multi-party democracy into three: The first one is the 'conflicts without principles'; the second, the 'conflicts over subsidiary principles and third one is the 'conflicts over basic principles'.

statutes would not be contrary to (1) the democratic principles based on human rights and freedoms; (2) the principles of the secular Republic; and (3) the integrity of the state with its nation.¹⁴³

Although the LPT defended policy orientations which would be proved to be contradicting with the Penal Code, if not the Constitution, it was allowed to compete for power in the political system. On the one hand, the LPT's leadership believed that both the military and the advocates of the May 27, 1960 intervention supported the party.¹⁴⁴ On the other hand, their full commitment, on every occasion, to the 27th May and its Constitution, too, contributed to the legitimacy of the party in the new political framework. They always claimed that the 1961 Constitution and the reforms it envisaged would not be realized in the absence of a party, like the LPT.¹⁴⁵

With a distinctive socialist character from other political parties, the LPT attracted the progressive, leftist intellectuals and students who had been disappointed with the RPP's implementations during the İnönü-led coalitions. Although the LPT developed well-designed policy alternatives to the stand of the Republicans as the 'reformist only in word' (*sözde reformcular*), it failed to mobilize its major electorate, the labor. Instead, the upper-middle class intellectuals of the three big cities, namely Istanbul, Izmir and Ankara constituted both the party elite and the major electorate.¹⁴⁶

Despite the fact that, most of the LPT's deputies lacked personal experience or a tradition about the use of parliamentary mechanisms for a socialist struggle simply due to the ban of the socialist activities for years in Turkey, the party group was very active in the parliamentary processes. Except for its proposals about the situation of foreign capital and petroleum companies operating in Turkey, the LPT sought only

¹⁴³ Turkish Constitution(1961), Article 57.

¹⁴⁴ Aren, *TIP*, 87.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 87-88.

¹⁴⁶ Landau, *Radical*, 225.

unessential modifications in the existing rules and applications for the good of the lower classes. It was supposed that, more radical demands beyond this point, like massive nationalization policies, would infringe the seriousness of the party as long as it stayed in opposition.¹⁴⁷

In fact, any opposition against the numerical majority was ineffective as a consequence of the parliamentary procedure. Being aware of the fact, the goal of the party's representatives in the Assembly was to bring alternatives to the proposals brought by the majority or other opposition parties, rather than prompt changes in the government policies. So that, only the failure of the major parties in their policy designs would increase the credibility of the LPT's policies in the next elections. In that case, the public opinion formation became the main objective of the party, including its struggles in the TGNA. The strategy of the party in the Parliament was well explained by Sadun Aren's address on the 1967 budget of the JP government:

...If a state is dominated by capitalist class, it will pursue capitalist policies. But, if a state is weighted by the labor class then it will choose a development strategy other than capitalism. But, this is to be determined by the votes of the people in a democratic society. For this reason, we do not hope that the Justice Party would follow our advises. Because, the initiative is not in their hands. We just explain our views and criticisms...¹⁴⁸

Although they pursued a moderate stand in the TGNA, the system-oriented opposition of the LPT attracted violent reactions from both the JP government and other opposition parties. Their criticisms of the system and the prevailing socio-economic policies were heard and answered. Some of its deputies were heavily beaten in the Assembly. Then, the 'national remainder system' which favored small parties was abdicated was to eliminate the socialist opposition in the parliament.

¹⁴⁷ Aren, *TIP*, 181-182.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 187.

Contrastingly, the structural, political or violent reactions taken against the LPT strengthened the position of those who questioned parliamentary methods for the establishment of socialist system in Turkey. The extreme leftist opposition, adding strategy changes in the socialist movements over the world, began to shift towards the non-parliamentary means by 1968.¹⁴⁹ This trend was also reflected in the LPT. It lost its internal cohesion. The radical 'Aren-Boran clique', who favored scientific socialism and had suspicions about the efficiency of democratic struggle, began to dominate the party executive against the 'Aybar group' who had begun to deviate from scientific Marxism and foresee a 'smiling socialism' (*gülyüzlü sosyalizm*) which committed to the humanitarian aspects of bourgeois democracies like individual rights, electoral processes and separation of powers.¹⁵⁰ From then on, the party radicalized its stand increasing its sympathy toward and strengthening ties with the non-parliamentary leftist movements and separatist Kurdish nationalism upon which the party was closed down by the Constitutional Court in 1971.

As a structural opposition, the LPT was unsuccessful in achieving modifications in the system and/or policies and personnel of government, it did effect the policies on the left of the political spectrum. The RPP, the main opposition party in the TGNA, felt the need to specify further the policies formulated before 1965. They should have been in a form, on the one hand, able to regain the votes lost to the LPT while, on the other, avoiding possible antipathies within the conservative lower classes to whom it desired to approach abandoning its traditional elite structure. Although, as a consequence of the party's failure in the previous elections with the left-of-the centre slogans, there were some opportunists who insisted on the use of the more populist strategies, against the pragmatic policies of the JP, until coming to power after which the left-of-the centre program would be implemented,¹⁵¹ but it did

¹⁴⁹ Birand, *12 Mart*, 145-146.

¹⁵⁰ Landau, *Radical*, 131.

¹⁵¹ Ahmad, *Demokrasi Süreci*, 298.

not take much acceptance. Instead, the left-of-the centre policies began to gain weight within the party cadres. Bülent Ecevit, the head of the group defending the left-of-the centre, was elected as the Secretary General in the 18th Party Congress of the RPP held in 1966. This meant, for the RPP, to defect inevitably toward the left opening the party to the leftist programs which altered the direct of the party's competition from centripetal to centrifugal forms.¹⁵² It seems to be that the RPP began to approach to semi-loyalty¹⁵³ in opposition with the efforts to create a credible alternative to the policies of the right, those of the JP, and the extreme left, the LPT, under the effects of the increasing complexity of the Turkish electorate caused by the socio-economic transformation.

The initiative which gradually transformed the RPP after 1965 is that the inability of an elitist RPP, preserving its old views and structure, to compete with the JP, who achieved integration of larger social groups within itself, had been seen. The process of dissolution of the older cleavages had provided the RPP with an opportunity to achieve a realignment in itself that was possible if credible alternatives are developed addressing to the needs of people. This process is seen as a result of the interconnection between a political party in search of a new identity and a society who experiences fundamental changes in the process of a rapid capitalist development.¹⁵⁴

Actually it was the only way to go. Staying the same, as the guardian of the Republican principles with an elitist structure, was clearly unproductive in competition with the JP. It was the evidence that the RPP had not achieved a majority

¹⁵² Özbudun, "Party System," 231.

¹⁵³ Linz argues that *semiloyalty* can be identified by a basically system-oriented party's greater affinity for extremists on its sides of the political spectrum than for system parties closer to the opposite side. In a highly polarized society, when extremist parties engage in violence and have the power to attract segments of the system parties or their electorate, system parties are likely to behave in such a way that they seem semiloyal even if they are not. Linz, "Breakdown," 33.

¹⁵⁴ Sungur Savran, "CHP ve Sosyal Demokrasi: Bir İliskinin Anatomisi," *Onbirinci Tez*, 4 (Ekim 1986), 97.

enough to form a government since the transition to democracy. The party needed a transformation in order to fully adopt itself to the competitive politics. But, it could not move to the right since it would have been viewed by many of the RPP's strongest supporters as perverting its very *raison d'être*. Moving toward the extreme left also had multiple dangers, including the likelihood of antagonizing the party's strong core of more conservative leaders which had happened anyway.¹⁵⁵ The conservative Kemalist group, headed by Turhan Fevzioglu, found the new policies of the RPP as extreme leftist and anti-Kemalist, left the party to form the Reliance Party (RP-Güven Partisi) in 1967.

On the other hand, blaming on the ongoing reactions coming from within or out of the party, mainly the JP, the defenders of the new stand claimed that communism could only be avoided through not emotional, but rational policies which was the 'left-of-the centre' that would eliminate the physical conditions leading to increase of the extreme left.¹⁵⁶ In the words of Ecevit:

If the measures to avoid injustices, poverty, repression and to implement development policies within social justice are not taken, the unrest, accumulated in the people living in misery, may come to the point of eruption. Then, the extreme left movements may find the basis to create a destructive flood. The 'left-of-the centre' is the safest wall and the most effective barrier against this developments.¹⁵⁷

The left-of-the centre aimed at also attracting votes from the JP's electorate, not only from the extreme left, as evidenced by the emphasis of the new stand. The main focus of the new emphasis, developed against extreme left and the parties of the right, was economic and social, and revolved around promises to continue the rapid growth reached in the DP era. But, the injustices, the RPP claimed, which had been

¹⁵⁵ Weiker, *The Modernization*, 124.

¹⁵⁶ Savran, "Sosyal Demokrasi," 95.

¹⁵⁷ Bülent Ecevit, *Ortanin Solu* (Istanbul: Tekin Matbasi, 1974), 29.

characterized the DP era and was being taken over by the ruling JP, were to be corrected. The investments, for the good of the peasants and the rural areas, done by the DP and then by the JP, were to be accelerated by the implementation of a land reform. However, similar laws had been proposed a number of times in 1945 and during coalition governments between 1961 and 1965 but not passed, it was not likely that many believed in this RPP program. For the urban areas, the program foreseen the continuation of high rate of investment, but returns were to be used for the general good rather than as profits for private entrepreneurs. In order to preserve the Anatolian petit bourgeoisie, a restrictive policy was to be imposed on the importation of foreign capital. More restrictive policies were to be applied on the big foreign companies functioning in the operation of Turkish natural resources, like mining and petroleum.¹⁵⁸

In fact, the stand of the RPP had been widely known in etatism from early 1930s and in labor since its 10th Congress (1953) where the right to strike was accepted and its content was further expanded in the declaration issued just before the 1957 elections. But, confronting with a rival like LPT within the changing social cleavages, it radicalized its views on labor so as to stress on the formation of a social system providing people with social security, social justice and the conditions suitable to develop themselves; and warned about the evils of capitalist economic system which was interpreted as pushing people to egoism, exploitation and social strife.¹⁵⁹ On the other hand, the problems of the peasantry, for the first time, had been heavily taken into the new policy of the RPP since their votes were vital if the JP was to be weakened.

The RPP's loyal opposition in the TGNA was policy-oriented. Although It began to mention about change under the effect of the radical wing, the Party did not

¹⁵⁸ Weiker, *The Modernization*, 123-124.

¹⁵⁹ Ecevit, *Ortanin Solu*, 25.

bring radical demands, like land reform. It was, perhaps, because of the impossibility of oppositional success before a majority JP government who had been demonstrating a strong internal cohesion, for the time being. Its criticisms concentrated on the responsibility of the government for the social unrest in the country caused by the rising prices and inflation on which the JP government had done nothing while, instead, being busy with the vote-catching political issues, like restoration of the political rights of ex-DP members.¹⁶⁰

If the opposition is concentrated in a single political party that today's opposition may tomorrow assume the sole responsibility of office, as in the case of the RPP during the period, it preserves itself from any exaggerated demagoguery which might react to its advantage.¹⁶¹ But, although the etatism, which is the core of the left-of-the-centre policies, was strongly defended by the RPP, its strict criticisms on the state investments raised some questions about the extent of the responsibility of the RPP's opposition policies. Certainly, upon the beginning of the implementation of the Second Five Year Development Plan, launched in 1967, it opposed rightly to the loans and subsidies given to the private sector that would infringe the social justice, but plans for the construction of the first Bosphorous Bridge and the Keban Dam, which were the two of the biggest state investments of the period, were also opposed without any substantive alternative policy design.

Despite such irresponsible tendencies, the RPP cooperated with the JP on the election of the new president upon the death of Cemal Gürsel in 1966. Demonstrating its intention on the normalization of democratic political system with the decrease of the military threat. election of the Head of the General Staff Cevdet Sunay, who had sided with the civilian authorities during the coup attempts of Aydemir, for the post was supported in the Parliament in cooperation with the JP. However, the other

¹⁶⁰ Ahmad, *Demokrasi Süreci*, 283.

¹⁶¹ Duverger, *Political Parties*, 415.

cooperative action of the party with the government contradicted with the first one that would strengthen the military's existence within the politics. This was the rejection of the interpellation given by the TLP about the stand of the government on the Declaration of the new Head of the Staff Cemal Turhal, which was revealed by the press in 1967 and warned the military cadres about the rise of the extreme left that should have been prevented. But, this is to be taken as a pragmatic action so as to weaken the social base of the LPT who was the main rival of the RPP on the left of the political spectrum.

Although the RPP did not succeed in achieving policy regulations in the government policies in the direction of its own program, the party group, especially the radical wing, was very effective in preventing the JP government from exercising full authority by a series of well-planned strategies. Sometimes, the intention of the RPP's opposition in the Parliament seemed to be obstruction of the governability. For this end, the strategy was to make good use of the parliamentary or non-parliamentary mechanisms provided with the 1961 Constitution which had increased the power of the bureaucracy. The bureaucratic mechanisms were turned to be an effective site to be used by the opposition. One of the strategies was that there were delaying tactics in the Assembly, ranging from the introduction of endless amendments to bills to debates amounting to a sort of obstructing legislation. Second, there were constant challenges to the constitutionality of laws, and often the Constitutional Court, would contribute by imposing down the JP legislation, since a good part of its personnel sympathized with the RPP and its radical social views. Third, through the Council of State, the bureaucracy, although officially neutral, could in different ways block the administrative decisions of the JP government.¹⁶² That is why, the political system approached to the 'two-tier' system of Norway that the government decisions were determined through the struggle between the majority party and the authorized public

¹⁶² Karpat, "Army-Civilian Relations," 143-144.

agencies as it was defined in the Constitution and mostly the result turned out with the victory of the bureaucratic sides. The JP could only respond by complaining that it was being prevented from carrying out the power given to it by the 'national will' (*milli irade*) as Demirel Said:

The Constitutional Court was put over the authority of the TGNA and over the elected government was the Council of State. The elections lost their significance. The State was made a 'Republic of the Judges' with an assumption that the elected may do wrong. The Council of State gave six-thousand decisions in four years though it had did six in one-hundred years in France. The working of the government was almost impossible. We tried to work desperately.¹⁶³

Meanwhile, the internal crisis within the extreme left, the LPT, and the domination of the left-of-the centre policies within the RPP after the retire of the conservative group of Turhan Fevzioglu increased the RPP's chance for the power toward the 1969 elections. The RPP would obtain the majority in the 1969 elections with votes to be attracted from the JP's basis. In that case, the RPP leaders did not dare to trust on only the left-of-the centre policies and, taking into consideration the increasing possibility of power, the leader of the main opposition party, İnönü, declared that he would support the law to be proposed for the restoration of ex-Democrats' political rights that had not been achieved, until the time, since the opposition did not support a constitutional change.

Although the RPP's support was reflected to be a friendly rapprochement between İnönü and ex-President Celal Bayar, it was a well-planned political maneuver of the opposition. Still, the decision of İnönü attracted strong reactions from within the RPP and the military who used to see the 27th May intervention as a product of the co-operation between the RPP, particularly İnönü, and the military.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶³ In Turgut, *Demirel*, 353.

¹⁶⁴ Birand, *12 Mart*, 165-166.

But, İnönü did not concede and succeeded in turning the directions of military pressures towards the government and Demirel, since the proposal had been brought by the JP. If Demirel withdrew the proposal in case of a military threat, he would lose the support of rightist electorate, mainly those of the ex-Democrats.¹⁶⁵ The political amnesty was approved in the TGNA. But, İnönü's plan was realized when Demirel had to make a speech in the Assembly, in which he stated 'isn't it our responsibility not to infringe the military as it is to give the political rights back'.¹⁶⁶ So, the proposal was voted out in the Senate by the votes of the JP itself that shocked the ex-Democrats and disturbed also the radical-conservative wing, headed by Saadettin Bilgic, within the party. As İnönü expected, the leader of the ex-Democrats, Celal Bayar, called the ex Democrat electorate not to vote for the JP in the coming elections. On the other hand, in order to assure the support of ex-Democrat groups, the RPP announced, on its official gazette *Ulus*, that it would enact an amnesty if the RPP obtained the majority in the elections.

In that case, the strategy of the main opposition RPP for the election campaign became appeasing the rightist electorate in order not to lose the chance obtained with the failure of the JP in the ex-Democrats' question which had been the main political issue in the post-1960 period. It was stated to all party members with a declaration that they had to refrain from the speeches reviving the old political differences and strife; speeches be evaluated to be against the national will; and the topics like progressive vs. reactionary, Kemalist vs. anti-Kemalist. Instead, the social and economic reforms, against the 'conservative' JP, should have been put in the core of the campaign.¹⁶⁷ So, the RPP preferred to shift the way of competition strategy toward the functional basis, rather than the culturally dominated traditional party competition of the previous years.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 177.

¹⁶⁶ Cizre Skallioglu, *AP-Ordu*, 80.

¹⁶⁷ Ahmad, *Demokrasi Süreci*, 304.

However, the results of the 1969 elections showed that the RPP was far from being an alternative to the JP, the alienated rightist voters preferred not to vote in the elections rather than voting for the RPP in which leftist tendencies had gained a secure place. Ecevit's revolutionary slogans, like 'land belongs to those who plant it and the water is for those who use it' or 'we will fight until all lands are owned by the peasantry' were too radical for the rightist electorate as long as JP achieved a considerable economic development while preserving a lower rate of inflation and that the average growth rate between 1962 and 1970 is 6.6 and the inflation was 5 per cent.¹⁶⁸

The election results did not change the distance in the Parliament between the JP and the RPP who had made great effort, throughout its opposition years, to produce a credible alternative to the government policies. Although the JP performed badly in respect to the 1965 elections, the RPP, too, suffered with the decreasing rate of its votes. Among the smaller parties, only the RP of Fevzioglu obtained a considerable vote.¹⁶⁹ The abdication of the 'national remainder system' before the elections had further weakened the power of the minor parties in the Parliament as the Turkish party system gained, again, a two-party character.¹⁷⁰ The extreme left LPT and the RPNP, who changed its name as Nationalist Action Party (NAP) colored with fascist tendencies before the elections, could win two and one representatives respectively. The opposition concentrated in the RPP in the post-1969 Parliament. That is to say, the system tended to produce a more competitive, polarizing party struggle between the JP and its main opponent the RPP which was standing in the Parliament now with an ideologically colored policy alternatives.

¹⁶⁸ Turgut, *Demirel*, 270.

¹⁶⁹ The 1969 election results as the percentage of the votes cast (V) and the percentage of the seats obtained in the TGNA (S) were: the JP (V. 46.50, S. 56.90), the RPP (V. 27.40, S. 31.80), the RP (V. 6.60, S. 3.30), the NP (V. 3.20, S. 1.30), the NAP (V. 3.00, S. 0.20), the NTP (V. 2.20, S. 1.30), the TLP (V. 2.70, S. 0.40), the TUP (V. 2.80, S. 1.80). Gençkaya, "Turkey," 23.

¹⁷⁰ Shaw, *Osmanli*, 503-504.

Meanwhile the JP was to cope with not only the opposition of the RPP, but also with the intra-party opposition headed by the Bilgiç's religio-conservative group who began to increase their opposition to Demirel's hegemony within the party and his liberal economic policies favoring the big capitalists. Still, they continued to demonstrate a solidarity against the RPP opposition in the Parliament during the aftermath of elections in which Demirel had consolidated his power despite adverse expectations. However, this cohesion was proved to be artificial and steadily weakened the position of the JP majority government before the Republican opposition that culminated in the fall of the JP government when Bilgiç's group voted against the budget in cooperation with the RPP in January 1970.

The cause of the internal opposition within the JP was the result of the socio-economic development though personal conflicts too contributed it. The party had been controlled by the big capitalists toward the end of 1960s. So, Demirel eventually lost the support of the most conservative wing, representative of the interests of the Anatolian, landowners, small traders and artisans.¹⁷¹ The process of the industrialization, in Turkey, had created a more complex periphery of electorate for the political parties, so, the JP had lost the ability to satisfy the interests of each sector within itself through slight policy modifications. The Party had become to choose its exact social basis which was to be the bourgeois of the big industrial sectors..¹⁷²

So that, those who felt the pressure of the increasing capitalist classes began to look for the means to create their own mechanisms of political opposition.¹⁷³ Respect to traditional values, religious beliefs and representation of Anatolian petit bourgeoisie as well as lower classes constrained by the increase of capitalist development were the common themes in the parties of the oppressed sectors of Anatolia. The Democratic Party (DemP) which was founded by the Bilgiç group

¹⁷¹ Zurcher, *A Modern History*, 263-265.

¹⁷² Çavdar, "Halk Partisi," 2101.

¹⁷³ Cizre Sakallioğlu, *AP-Ordu*, 63.

when they retired from the JP, on the rejection of budgeted, the National Order Party (NOP-Milli Selamet Partisi) headed by Necmettin Erbakan with pro-Islamist tendencies; and the Turkes's NAP with fascist aspirations were to become the institutional bodies of the opposition of the Anatolian petit bourgeoisie and religious conservatism.

Although personal conflicts were also effective in the establishment of the DP, the NOP and the NAP came out with distinctive radical alternatives to the policies of JP on its right. As the NAP upheld a corporatist system in economy, like Italian fascism, which denied existence of different social classes but social sectors supporting each other, and a hierarchical social structure,¹⁷⁴ the NOP defended return to a social system based on Islamic brotherhood which was to cure the social deficiencies of the industrialization. The NAP presented 'national economy' against the 'Islamic economic model' of the NOP that, in fact, both accepted a mixed economy where the private sector would in time be favored and gain importance.¹⁷⁵

Although both parties had some anti-system opposition tendencies in the sense that the NAP referred to a 'national state' (*milli devlet*) having a system of 'national democracy' which featured a parliament where all social sectors¹⁷⁶ would be represented as well as a supreme leader endowed with broad powers above those of the parliament¹⁷⁷ that was contrary to the existing democratic system. On the other hand, the NOP stressed on a system where religious values are respected. It classified the RPP as the 'leftist' and the JP as 'liberal' which were rooted in the Western culture and so alien to Turkish people, while the party presented itself as the 'true soul' of the

¹⁷⁴ M. Ali Agaogullari, "The Ultrationalist Right," in *Turkey in Transition: New Perspectives*, eds. Irvin Cemil Schick and E. Ahmet Tonak (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 196.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 195. Binnaz Toprak, "Milli Selamet Partisi," in *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, Vol.8 (Istanbul: İletisim), 2107.

¹⁷⁶ For the NAP, society is consisted of six sectors: Workers, peasants, tradesmen, artisans, salaried workers (memur), employers and liberal professionals. Agaogullari, "Ultrationalist," 195.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 195.

Turkish culture. It would establish a political system where the 'true soul' of the people would find a respectable place.¹⁷⁸ While the Party strongly favored secularism at the official level, the pro-religious sayings of its leaders and writings of its intellectuals tended to exhibit an anti-secular stand contrary to the basic principles of the Republican regime.¹⁷⁹

Although it articulated the differentiation in Turkish society, this fragmentation on the right of the political spectrum dispersed the centres of opposition from the late 1960s that increased parliamentary instability and defected the Turkish party system from a predominantly bipolar system toward a multipolarity.¹⁸⁰ The RPP opposition was, now, stronger and more competitive in a party system which created a fragmented structure on the right. The power of the opposition further increased when the JP lost its majority in the Parliament after the defection of more conservative groups. So, the economic and social situation exacerbated while the government was trying to cope with the intra-party opposition, the RPP's destructive opposition and steadily increasing social strife caused by non-parliamentary extreme leftists and fascists sponsored by the NAP.

Although a strong government was needed for the solution of mounting socio-economic problems, the RPP rejected a coalition with the JP. Because, an early election was expected to give the power to the RPP as the inability of a weak JP government increased the credibility of the RPP's policy alternatives. However, the alternative to the unsuccessful government of the JP became the military intervention on 12 March 1971. The military appeared in the political scene again in favor of an 'above party' cabinet which was expected to be strong enough to solve the socio-economic problems and to materialize the reforms envisaged by the Constitution.

¹⁷⁸ Toprak, "Milli Selamet," 2105.

¹⁷⁹ Türker Alkan, "The National Salvation Party in Turkey," in *Islam and Politics in the Modern Middle East*, eds. Metin Heper and Raphael Israili (New York: St. Martin Press, 1984), 91.

¹⁸⁰ Sartori, *Polarized Pluralism*, 138. He defined *multipolarity* as that the party system pivots upon more than two poles.

Demirel complained about the unfavorable stand of the opposition in the Parliament against the military memorandum. According to him, the military intervention would be prevented if the parliamentary opposition sided with government against the military: He stated that:

You can do nothing on yourself to save democracy and the Parliament. What I did wish is that all rise up. The real responsibility belongs to the opposition. It should have reacted and asked: 'what happens?' However, all were silent like a lamb. I could not feel support, behind me, from the opposition.¹⁸¹

In fact, the main opposition, the RPP, had been divided about the reaction to be given against the military. İnönü accepted the memorandum as a democratic action while Ecevit strongly reacted and stated that it could not be termed democratic. For Ecevit, the actual target of the military action aimed at preventing the rise of the left-of-the centre policies that had been explicit when Nihat Erim, who was critical about the new stand within the RPP, appointed as the prime minister of the technocratic government.¹⁸²

The left-of-the centre policies had been designed to break the historical coalition of the military and the bureaucracy that would strengthen the party's ties with the people and increase its chance for the power against the JP. However, the approval of the military intervention was to consolidate its elitist character in the eyes of the people.¹⁸³ This consistent stand of Ecevit helped him to defeat İnönü in the election for the party leadership in 1972 that was the ultimate victory of the left-of-the centre policies within the RPP as well.

¹⁸¹ in Birand, *12 Mart*, 211.

¹⁸² Ibid., 220-221.

¹⁸³ Ahmad, *Demokrasi Süreci*, 306.

Since the government and the Parliament functioned under the immediate directives of the High Command and ministers were invited from all the parties, the activities of the political parties during the 1971-1973 interim period can not be analyzed as normal policy tendencies of the intra-parliamentary parties. Still, it should be indicated that the LPT and the NOP were dissolved by the Constitutional Court because of their non-constitutional and anti-system policy orientations. Beside this, in contrast to the 1960 Coup, the contribution of the JP to the military attempts for the limitation of constitutional democratic rights, which curtailed individual and associational liberties, strengthened its ties with the state as the RPP's unfavorable stand against the post-1971 regime steadily increased pushing it to a semi-loyal position in the eyes of the military, the guardian of the regime,¹⁸⁴ that was the end of RPP's traditional 'grand coalition'. Still, for the democratization of the political system, the two parties continued to cooperate in blocking the election of a radical military officer in favor of a moderate one. Fahri Korutürk was elected for the presidency through the cooperation of the two parties in order to avoid the election of Faruk Gürler who was one of the prominent leaders of the 1971 semi-intervention.

General Evaluation of the Period

During the reign of the JP majority governments, the opposition in the TGNA displayed attempts not only to check and limit the action of political authority but also to produce alternative policies to those of the government. It began to perform the real functions expected from a political opposition. Since the Constitution secured the place of political opposition in the system, authoritarian defection of government was prevented through a system of non-parliamentary checks and balances. In this case, the opposition parties needed to develop attractive policies to the larger population so as to obtain the majority in the elections.

¹⁸⁴ Cizre Sakallioglu, *AP-Ordu*, 111.

The disappearance, at least, decrease of military tutelage over the civilian politics during the second half of the 1960s, contributed to the way of political opposition. By the decrease of military pressures, they became able to design their own policy formulations and oppositional strategies rather than those advocated or imposed by the military authorities. In that case, since the differentiation of the political preferences, inaugurated by socio-economic transformation, changed the cleavage structure in Turkish society, it initiated a search in the political parties for the ways of articulating new demands. So that, towards the second half of the 1960s, program-based attempts weighted the strategies of the opposition parties. In this process, the RPP defected toward the left by adopting a stand of the centre-left as the JP's pro-big bourgeois nature became more explicit.

However, since the big parties were not able to integrate conflicting interests and political views, both from the left and right, new social groups began to look for their own bodies of political opposition, leading to a fragmentation in the party system. In the free atmosphere of civilian and organizational rights introduced by the 1961 Constitution, new political parties appeared with distinctive radical claims on the socio-economic policies of the government as well as on the nature of the regime. The LPT was one which started the ideological fragmentation with its structural orientation in opposition. They found representation in the TGNA by the 1965 elections simply due to the electoral system which was adopted with a national remainder system favoring the smaller parties. Still, since the opposition concentrated in the system-loyal RPP throughout the JP's majority governments, the competition of the opposition became centripetal despite it had to demonstrate, sometimes, a centrifugal tendency with a semi-loyal character, in competition with its extreme-left rival, namely the LPT.

The abdication of the national remainder system before the 1969 elections further concentrated the opposition in the RPP while it decreased the representation of the minor parties in the TGNA. However, the emergence of the DemP, NOP in the

aftermath of the elections, and religio-nationalist defection of the NAP pushed the bipolar party system toward multipolarity with their ideological orientations. The period of predominant party system ended in the late 1960s. In that case, the inability of the JP government in solving mounting socio-economic problems increased the chance of the RPP whose opposition attempts began to be stronger with the extension of the party fragmentation to the right of the political spectrum.

The site of the opposition had been confined to the Assembly during the first half of the 1960s, since the non-parliamentary struggle was perceived, by the military authority, as a threat to the social order. However, parliamentary procedure had not permitted the opposition to affect the implementations of the government. The parliamentary opposition against the JP majority governments, during which military shadow over the civilian politics released, became able to use the non-parliamentary opportunities in order to increase the power of the opposition. Public meetings, held by the opposition parties, were taken not only as an opportunity to explain their alternative policies but also to impose social pressures on the actions of the governing party.

On the other hand, the civilian-bureaucratic institutions set by the 1961 Constitution had effectively constrained the actions of the political power in the post-1960 Turkish politics. They began to be a very decisive site for the opposition in this period. Especially the supreme judicial courts, like the Constitutional Court and the Council of State, were frequently used by the opposition in order to blockade implementations of the government. However, it was to be an initiative for the colonization of the bureaucratic mechanisms in the post-1970 period, since the political parties realized that in order to exercise full power, the view of the bureaucracy was important.

The period portrayed development of a parliamentary opposition with its real functions. It struggled not only to check the actions of the political power but also to

introduce alternative policies providing the electorate with an opportunity of choice in the elections. In this process, although the party system fragmented in the TGNA, the concentration of opposition in the RPP empowered the opposition as a credible alternative. The smaller parties were not effective in their oppositional attempts though the LPT was more apparent with its distinctive stand in the Parliament.



CHAPTER IV.

Parliamentary Opposition: 1973-1980

This chapter was designed in order to evaluate the process of degeneration of oppositional attempts of the parliamentary parties after 1973 elections. The fragmentation and ideological polarization of the party system during the late 1960s and early 1970s, that appeared also in the post-1973 TGNA, determined the nature of the opposition policies in this period of Turkish politics.

Dispersion and Polarization of Parliamentary Opposition

1973 elections marked the end of the predominant party system in Turkish politics, which had prevailed since 1950. The DP and then the JP were able to stay in power, without being confronted by an immediate political alternative thanks to the electoral support from various groups across the society. However, the 1973 elections produced a party system of extreme pluralism¹⁸⁵ in the TGNA with a multipolar fragmentation and a polarizing, centrifugal tendencies. No party obtained a sufficient majority to form the cabinet. The fragmentation in the party system on the right and left of the political spectrum, in the late 1960s, reflected in the new Parliament. Although the RPP succeeded, this time, to obtain the plurality of the votes, it was not in a position to declare victory against its immediate opponent, the JP, who polled near to the rate of the RPP. The real increase was experienced in the smaller and splinter parties. The National Salvation Party (NSP), who was founded as the successor of the outlawed NOP, and NAP, both were suspected about their loyalties to the regime, obtained considerable representation in the TGNA. The splinter DemP and the RRP (Republican Reliance Party) of Turhan Fevzioglu gained representation

¹⁸⁵ Sartori defined the *extreme pluralism* as a party system with a multipolar, polarized character and a centrifugal competition. Sartori, "The Polarized Pluralism," 139.

in the Parliament affecting the fates of the parties from which they had disintegrated.¹⁸⁶

The leadership of Bülent Ecevit had placed the RPP on the left-of-the centre in a more consistent manner. Leftist socio-economic views, issued under the name of 'Toward Bright Days' (*Ak Günlere*) were the main theme of the RPP's campaign for the 1973 elections.¹⁸⁷ It seems to be that the RPP's opposition strategy appealing to the left-of-the centre policies, maintained since 1965, to reach the majority of the society -the workers and the peasantry- by detaching itself from its traditional 'grand coalition' of the military, bureaucracy and the landed notables, was fruitful in the 1973 elections returning it as the majority party to the TGNA.¹⁸⁸ The RPP achieved to gain the support of urban lower classes, who used to vote for the DP and then the JP, thanks to the energetic leadership of Bülent Ecevit who had well articulated the left-of-the centre image of the party in a time when the Turkish voters were in a process of realignment.¹⁸⁹ Although this is partly true since it increased its rate over 30 per cent for the first time after the normalization of politics in the post 1960 period, the real factor behind the success of the RPP was the dissolution of the coalition made up the JP electorate. The DemP, the NSP and partly the NAP, who once formed the JP basis, polled about 27 per cent in the elections, while the RPP began to regain some of the votes which had been lost to the RP in 1969.

During the period between 1950 to 1971, there was a strong tendency towards electoral domination by the two major parties and the formation of majority governments. Governments used to be formed by one party, except early 1960s when the military constrained the normal workings of the party system in an effort to

¹⁸⁶ The results of the 1973 elections as the percentage of the votes cast (V) and the percentage of the seats obtained in the TGNA (S) are: the RPP (V. 33.30, S. 41.10), the JP (V. 29.80, S. 33.10), the DemP (V. 11.90, S. 11.00), the NSP (V. 11.80, S. 10.70), the RRP (V. 5.30, S. 2.90), the NAP (V. 3.40, S. 0.70), the TUP (V. 1.10, S. 0.20). Gençkaya, "Turkey," 23.

¹⁸⁷ See *Ak Günlere*: CHP Seçim Bildirgesi, 1973.

¹⁸⁸ Erguder & Hofferbert, "The 1983," 87.

¹⁸⁹ Özbudun, "Interruptions," 191-192.

restructure electoral politics. The parliamentary strengths of the minor parties were very limited. But, the composition of the 1973 TGNA made coalition governments inevitable. However, a workable coalition, which would agree on a program able to satisfy each party in the government, was unlikely since the scores of the policy-oriented system parties, the RPP and the JP, had made them feel that it was just one step away from an absolute majority and that cooperation would only harm their chances in the next election.¹⁹⁰ The alternative, the coalition of the system parties with the parties who had anti-system tendencies, would make the government unworkable that would strengthen the social support behind the opposition. So, the resulting antagonistic and non-consensual behavior of the party leaders tended to be a major factor in the polarization of the relations between parties that perpetuated the unwillingness of the system parties to reach an accommodation despite mounting socio-economic problems.¹⁹¹ Instead, the party elites preferred to increase the ideological polarization in the party system through centrifugal tendencies that would secure their basis against both the rival and, at the same time, the parties in the same flank. Otherwise, they would lose votes to the extreme alternatives that would further weaken the major parties.

The ideological polarization in the party system was further sharpened by the effects of the volatility in the bases of party support and frequent deputy transfers from one party to the other in the Parliament. The higher score of volatility was the rule of the 1970s that decreased the ability to predict party fortunes in one election from their performance in the preceding one.¹⁹² When the electoral instability was added to the parliamentary defections, the political leaders sought to maintain party unity and discipline in the Parliament as well as, at least, the continuation of the party's electoral support with an opposition strategy which depended on ideological

¹⁹⁰ Zurcher, *A Modern History*, 276.

¹⁹¹ Sabri Sayari, "The Crisis of the Turkish Party System: 1973-1980," prepared for the Conference on: 'History and Society in Turkey' (Berlin, 1981), 2.

¹⁹² Ergüder & Hofferbert, "The 1983," 84-85.

demagogues increasing polarization between the major system parties as pushing them toward the extremes within a centrifugal competition. The leaders of both parties believed that any attempt in the direction of depolarization would narrow the ideological distance between the two parties, increasing the possibility of defections.¹⁹³ This made the political system very competitive both for the system parties as well as the extremist parties, like the NSP and the NAP which were questionable in their loyalties to the existing system. The result portrayed a polarized multipolar party system in which the type of competition is centrifugal in the lines of ideological themes and there is no real alternative to the government, but an irresponsible opposition leading the political system to the politics of out-bidding and of unfair competition.

The irresponsibility of the opposition during the 1973-1980 period developed alongside the increasing ideological polarization which manifested itself in the polemical exchanges between the competing parties. So that, the intra-elite cleavages became more exacerbated as a result of the increasing ideological distance between parties. Although, both the JP and the RPP proclaimed full commitment to democratic principles, they sought to delegitimize each other on the extremist terms, in the sense, that the JP tried to show the RPP as a party infiltrated by the militant leftists, the RPP, on the other hand, often complained about the JP of collaborating with fascist political forces. The intensity of the accusations were so high that the loyal opponents, too, were attributed with anti-system political goals and strategies.¹⁹⁴

Unwilling to use conciliatory strategies in opposition toward each other, the system loyal parties, the JP and the RPP, became increasingly dependent on the minor parties, particularly those of the NSP and the NAP who, covertly or sometimes overtly, exhibited anti-system policy orientations and strategies, either in opposition or

¹⁹³ Sayari, "The Crisis," 9-10.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 6-7.

in government that tended to produce an unfair competition. This gave them a blackmailing potential on the system parties which provided them with a power disproportionate to their number in the TGNA. The major parties had to give them or their ideas a place in their programs or, at least, in expression in order not to further alienate but even to attract the electorate flowing to the extremes. However, this could not be achieved without making some modifications in the traditional policies and structures that tended to approach the system parties to semi-loyalty. Since the extreme parties, particularly the NSP and the NAP, had the power to attract votes from the system parties, mainly from the JP, these system-loyal parties tended to behave in a semiloyal way even if they were not.

Although the major parties were pulled toward extremes because of the ideologically polarized centrifugal tendencies, the electorate largely remained to be in a form of the centripetal competition. What was expected is that, the lack of the government in efficacy, which is the ability of the government to find solutions to the socio-economic problems, and effectiveness which is the capacity actually to implement the policies formulated, with the desired results, weakens the legitimacy of the government and the regime. In that case, it increases the support for the radical alternatives presented by the extreme opposition parties that ends with the breakdown of the regime.¹⁹⁵ However, in the period between 1973 and 1980, the cooperation of the major parties with those who presented radical alternatives, approached the decentralized multipolar party system, at the electorate level, to a moderate pluralism.¹⁹⁶ The political tendencies of the larger electorate remained to be centre-oriented in which support for the ideological extremes was weak. Although the governments of the period lacked in efficacy and effectiveness, the electoral support

¹⁹⁵ Linz, "Breakdown," 16-24.

¹⁹⁶ Sartori defined moderate pluralism as a system operating on a three-four party basis which is bipolar and centripetal. Sartori, "The Polarized Pluralism," 139.

and parliamentary representation of the extreme parties did not increase to a point which would pose a threat to the existing regime.¹⁹⁷

Still, the existence of the extreme parties in the parliament, even in the key positions, brought a multipolarity to the strategies of opposition in the parliament. The moderate as well as the extreme parties felt the need to stress on their distinctiveness through posing criticisms to some of the policies of their near alternatives while forming a united front to the common enemy situated on the other side of the political spectrum. The expected result is that the ideological front would avoid the defection of the electorate to the other side of the ideologically fixed line as the intra-pole opposition was intended to catch votes from the parties in the same front that would be provided them with a majority or a better score in the elections. The multipolarity of the parliamentary opposition was the major factor which rendered the coalitions, made up of right wing parties in the Parliament, unworkable.

Having been illustrated the structural tendencies of the period that were to determine the nature of opposition of the parliamentary parties, we can turn to the opposition policies of the parties employed against the opponents with the aim to effect the policies of the government and/or to increase their chance in the elections. Although, given the results of the 1973 elections, the most workable coalition would be between the RPP and the JP, who hold similar views on regime issues and that would fix the extreme opposition parties in a trivial position in the TGNA, since the minor parties had either very distinctive system orientations or strict personal rivalries against the leaders of the major parties, Demirel declared that his party preferred not to take place in any coalition and would stay in opposition which was the responsibility given it by the electorate.¹⁹⁸ In fact, he had hoped that the existing party system of the parliament tended to produce a weak and unstable coalition which was

¹⁹⁷ Ergüder & Hofferbert, "The 1983," 87.

¹⁹⁸ Tevfik Çavdar, "Adalet Partisi," in *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 8 (İstanbul: İletişim), 2096.

to be unable to solve the mounting problems of the country that would erode the electoral support of those who took place in the government. So, it would be a chance to regain the votes lost to the extreme right parties who would cooperate with the RPP as they would contribute to delegitimization of the RPP in the eyes of the leftist electorate.

It was an opportunity for the JP to launch its destructive opposition strategies which are mainly based on ideological right-left rivalry, when the RPP managed to form a coalition with the pro-religious NSP. It would, now, gather the rightist support behind the JP, even would take votes from the moderate left if it achieved to make the voters believe that the RPP, in fact, is a communist party. Then, Demirel began to stress on the anti-Kemalist and procommunist nature of the RPP. He asserted that the RPP had deviated from many principles of Kemalism, some of the 'six arrows' had been broken away by the RPP. It, Demirel asserts, was protecting the leftist, communist terrorists despite it used to deny its communist nature and presented itself to be a Kemalist party.¹⁹⁹ The strategy of the JP's opposition began to demonstrate also centrifugal characteristics when it cooperated with the extreme right NAP in opposition to the Ecevit-headed coalition that also indicated the beginning of a rightist front which was to determine the near future of the country.

The rightist opposition increased when the RPP proposed an amnesty, in May 1974, for the prisoners who had been sentenced because of the Articles 141 and 142 of the Turkish Penal Code which prohibited the formation of organization advocating the supremacy of one social class over another. The opposition of the JP and the NAP aimed at also decreasing the conservative basis of the NSP that would pull these votes to their own ranks as well as the JP would regain the votes lost to the NSP. The coalition of the NSP with the leftists, 'communists', was presented to be a betrayal to its 'nationalist' electorate. Although the program of the coalition was moderate in

¹⁹⁹ Cizre Sakallioğlu, *AP-Ordu*, 135.

terms of the support given to the private sector and it refrained from mentioning about the land reform which had been the slogan of the election campaign by Ecevit, the coalition was declared by the rightist opposition, headed by Demirel, as the first 'leftist government' of Turkey.²⁰⁰

Meanwhile, Cyprus crisis on which the right was very cautious, broke out. This increased the responsibility of the opposition parties as it eased the relations between government and the opposition. The Prime Minister Ecevit held meetings with the opposition leaders on the question which heightened the crisis to the level of a 'national problem'. The criticisms of the opposition decreased and stopped as the attitude of the government against this external problem was supported until the extermination of the problem with the victory of the Turkish troops who controlled northern part of the Island. However, the government's success in holding the problem weakened the opposition, especially against Ecevit, the leader of the RPP, who had come out to be a folk hero. The popularity of Ecevit risen rapidly in the eyes of the society.²⁰¹ A possible early election would return the RPP as the majority party able to form the government alone in the Parliament. On the other hand, the fragmentation of the opposition in the TGNA made Ecevit confident that he could force the Parliament to go to renew the elections in which he could gain a comfortable majority. So that, he gave an end to the unstable coalition, in September 1974, that had fell into crisis with the NSP's pro-religious social policies which had been steadily increased in order to differentiate itself from the 'leftist' RPP. It was the time to return the popularity of a victorious war to votes in the polls.

However, the rightist coalition was aware enough not to give a way to Ecevit. They saw the need that elections should have been postponed as far as possible in order to leave the RPP out of the power. If the RPP was left in opposition, the hero

²⁰⁰ Ahmad, *Demokrasi Süreci*, 391-393.

²⁰¹ Çavdar, "Adalet," 2096.

image of Ecevit would be eroded from the minds of the people. In that case, a rightist government should have been established, but it was difficult to reach to an agreement on the leadership since the DemP members, who had personal enmity toward Demirel, tended not to accept the leadership of Demirel.

In fact, the main problem of the right was their bilateral opposition strategies. On the one hand, they had to oppose to the RPP, this time, not only for ideological considerations, but also for avoiding an early election which would eliminate them from the political scene since they depended largely on the uncertain floating votes. The prevention of the early election, on the other hand, was to mean, for the smaller parties, a coalition with the JP that would lead to their loss of identity and eventual absorption; and most certainly a loss of voters to the JP in any election. Such considerations of the minor parties created a series of government crisis and the establishment of the caretaker governments which were unable to solve the socio-economic problems of the country, in the absence of a strong parliamentary support. And no parliamentary party was willing to give support to a government that would weaken its support in the electorate. In the end, Demirel managed to form a rightist coalition, in March 1975, which was to be called as the 'Nationalist Front' government (*NF-Milliyetçi Cephe*) in which the NSP, the NAP, the RRP, who had emerged with integration of the Republican Party disintegrated from the RPP with the RP of Fevzioglu, and splinter deputies from the DP included.²⁰² The 'nationalist' name of the coalition had been chosen to indicate what the other, the RPP-headed government was. The 'Rightist Front against the Left, namely the RPP, was to bring a moral pressure on all the parties of the right in order to isolate the RPP as a minority party²⁰³. Since they could not dare to compete with 'folk hero Ecevit' in the elections, Demirel succeeded in blocking the great opportunity of his main opponent and had enough time to regain the rightist voters under the roof of the JP until the next

²⁰² Ahmad, *Experiment*, 346-350.

²⁰³ Çavdar, "Adalet," 2096-2097.

elections.²⁰⁴ Ecevit claimed that the nationalist' co-action of the right, in fact, was a tactic used by Demirel to by-pass the divisive effects of the PR system in the post-1971 period.²⁰⁵

What was interesting is that the JP had needed to make some changes in the policies of the party in order to strengthen the ties with the people that had been weakened by the RPP's populist defection and fragmentation of its traditional electorate. The RPP had done and gained a momentum since the declaration of the left-of-the centre policies. Otherwise, it would come to urge of disappearance in the next elections. The stress was on the measures to be taken for increasing the life standards of labor; the development of the Eastern provinces through credits to be given to the private sector; control and decrease prices and so inflation. Still, it declared that the poverty was to be curtailed but never to be exploited with which it implied abuses in the RPP's policies. Peace and order would be preserved within the laws and securing the superiority of Law.²⁰⁶

However since the rigid and ideological anti-communism or anti-RPP had made it virtually a coalition against something rather than for something, the ideological colonization of the state apparatus was given the priority in the coalition partners, particularly those of the NSP and the NAP. In fact, this was the result of the process of ideological polarization in Turkish politics, took place since the 1960s. The political preferences of high ranking bureaucrats, including those of higher courts, had become more diversified after 1961 that increased the tendency of political parties to become more distrusting of bureaucrats. Since these bureaucratic mechanisms had effective authority in the exercise of the political power, it prompted political parties to capture the state by their co-ideologists. The civil servants were began to reshuffled in an arbitrary fashion by the members of the coalition partners to

²⁰⁴ Ahmad, *Demokrasi Süreci*, 403.

²⁰⁵ Orhan Duru, *Ecevit'in Çilesi* (Istanbul: AFA Yayıncılık, 1995), 50.

²⁰⁶ Ahmad, *Experiment*, 349-350.

the extent that each ministry was taken under the complete jurisdiction of a political party against which even the Council of State became ineffective.²⁰⁷ In the course, they did not refrain even from violating laws and disrespecting the decisions of the Higher Courts which were to review the legality of the government decisions.²⁰⁸

In that case, although the program of the NF government contained some elements of the RPP's leftist policies, Ecevit started a strong opposition struggle, from its beginning, stressing on the ideological character of the government which had been colored with the fascist elements because of the disproportionate weight of the NAP within the government²⁰⁹. Reminding repeatedly the fascist threat coming from the government partners, particularly the NAP, Ecevit presented the goal of the RPP's opposition as the preservation of the regime which would turn into an authoritarian fascist system. It was the fight for democracy that had been threatened, for Ecevit, by the rightist terror in the streets and rightist colonization of the bureaucracy at the state level.²¹⁰

In fact, not only Ecevit himself, but also party cadres were on the side of carrying on a severe opposition against the Nationalist Front government. Although Ecevit criticized the nature and the policies of the government on every occasion, he had been frequently criticized by the members of the RPP on being too passive against the government. Some members claimed that despite having the opportunity of being as the main opposition party in the TGNA, the RPP seemed, by the such segments of the party cadres, to be not an opposition but a gentle (*'muhalefet degil, mülayim'*) before the NF government. Ecevit was invited to have a stronger (noisy-*'gürültülü'*) stand against the government.²¹¹

²⁰⁷ Heper, *State*, 113-115.

²⁰⁸ Heper, "Recent Instability in Turkish Politics: End of A Monocentrist Policy? *International Journal of Turkish Studies*. 1 (Winter, 1979-1980),106.

²⁰⁹ Two of the NAP' s three deputies were given ministership in the NF government.

²¹⁰ Duru, *Ecevit*, 42-43.

²¹¹ Hakan Tartan, *Son CHP* (Ankara: Verso Yayıncılık, 1992), 8.

In that case, proving the ineffectiveness of opposition in the Parliament where the right demonstrated a coherent solidarity against the RPP in an ideologically polarized party system, Ecevit turned to the society. In order to effect the government and the electorate, he intended to raise the public opinion through the public meetings that would be more decisive to decrease the social support for and to blockade the policies of the government he assumed to be fascist. His speech, in a public meeting in Istanbul, illustrated the intensity and the main theme of the opposition launched by Ecevit against the NF government:

...We did not find democracy in the street, and we shall not abandon it there. Let those pathetic people with a yearning for fascism know this. Some people may have fascist inclinations, but Turkey shall not become fascist. Even if those with fascist inclinations come to power for a while, they will not be able to bring fascism to Turkey. The Turkish people are freedom-loving, people with self-respect, and too proud to live willingly under a regime other than democracy. Those in government today are trying to destroy the state. They are undermining the high courts and constitutional foundations of the state, and they are planning to dress armed hooligans in police uniforms to attack us with state weapons. They are trying to bring anarchy to the country by going outside the institutions of the rule of law.²¹²

Further, he accused the government of being supporting the discriminatory and oppressive policies against the Alevis and the Kurdish population, although it damaged the RPP's traditional Kemalist nature that it tended to reject the Kemalist concept of nation and the idea that Turkey was a homogeneous nation state.²¹³ On these statements, Demirel severely criticized Ecevit of having been identifying himself as a Turkish citizen rather than a Turk.²¹⁴ On the other hand, the sympathetic approach of Ecevit toward the ethno-sectarian social fractions further agitated the NAP- sympathized armed militants who increased their attacks to the RPP meetings

²¹² Ecevit's speech in Istanbul (28 June 1975), cited in Ahmad, *Experiment*, 327.

²¹³ Karpas, "Army-Civilian Relations," 147-148.

²¹⁴ Cizre Sakallıođlu, *AP-Ordu*, 135.

on which the government tended not to take effective measures to avoid. Although it clearly signified an unfair competition of the opposition, the constant attacks to the RPP and the leftists groups, by keeping the issue of communism in the limelight, served mainly to the interests of the JP who would make strong claim on the necessity of a strong rightist government. Further, it seemed to be that the rightist militants were being tolerated and even protected by the JP and its leader Demirel who once declared that 'you can not make me say that rightists are committing murder'.²¹⁵ The approach of Demirel signified how far away were the leaders of the loyal parties from a peaceful accommodation which would bring a solution to the amounting socio-economic problems of the country.

An opposition is expected to be responsible if it knows that it may be called to execute what it has promised. Since, they would not have the effective leadership or the major responsibility in the governing coalition, in a multipolar polarized party system, the extreme smaller parties are likely to engage in irresponsible opposition policies.²¹⁶ However, the major parties of the post-1973 politics too, particularly the JP, exhibited irresponsible opposition policies in its strategy of the centrifugal competition. But, smaller parties, mostly the NAP, being aware of the advantages of highly polarized competition, demonstrated explicit irresponsibility to the degree of sponsoring the nationalist paramilitary organizations. And it contributed to increasing polarization which served avoiding a possible accommodation between the near-centre parties that would, at least, perpetuate their key positions in the political system.

Since the extreme parties decreased the stability of the coalition pursuing policies independent of each other, socio-economic problems, like left-right armed struggle, unemployment and inflation, steadily acquired an unsolvable character.

²¹⁵ Agaogullari, "Ultranationalist," 201.

²¹⁶ Sartori, "Polarized Pluralism," 157-158.

Application of austerity programs had become inevitable. However, It postponed by the governments since an attempt of economic reform would decrease the social support of the governing parties while increasing the chance of the opposition. Unwilling to implement economic reforms, the JP decided for an early election to be held in June 1977.

The campaign of 1977 elections sharpened the polarization, especially between the parties who were closer to the power. Since they had closer scores, any further gain would turn the party as the majority government. So, Ecevit presented the election as a regime preference: the JP and the other right parties, particularly the NAP, meant the domination of fascism in the country as the RPP was presented itself to be the champion of democracy. He organized 'Independence and Peace' meetings which were supported also by the extreme left that seemed to be a search for a front on the left as well. During these meetings, Ecevit demanded cooperation of the democratic forces in the struggle against fascism. He negotiated with Behice Boran, the leader of the LPT, and M. Ali Aybar of Socialist Union Party in order to enlist the extreme leftist votes that would make incremental contribution for the victory of the RPP although he did not seek a permanent partnership with extreme left.²¹⁷

Against the accusations of the opposition, the government parties campaigned also on the ideological terms stressing on socialist tendencies of Ecevit and his party. Demirel blamed of Ecevit of protecting the leftist militants, who were, for him, the main cause of the social instability in the country; of demarcating Kemalism, of provoking ethnic separatism in the country.²¹⁸ That was to delegitimize the RPP both in the eyes of Kemalist electorate as well as the military which was the main guardian of the Kemalist principles. That is to say, the opposition policies of even major parties

²¹⁷ Duru, *Ecevit*, 23-35.

²¹⁸ Cizre Sakallioğlu, *AP-Ordu*, 135.

involved themes which would initiate a military action or an extended social strife based on ethnic cleavages.

In fact, the opposition as well as the government parties engaged in a process of mutual delegitimization. The terrorist actions of the extreme left and right groups provided parties on each side of the ideological spectrum with a convenient argument to undermine the legitimacy of their opponents. Even, the mutual criticisms of those parties who committed to the existing regime were in a high intense that sought to mark them as anti-system parties.²¹⁹

On the other hand, bilateral tendencies of opposition increased in the eve elections. Taking into consideration the volatility of the electorate, the parties of the NF government needed to differentiate themselves from the other parties, who appeal to the similar social bases, so as to secure a safe base for the election that would increase, at least, preserve their position in the next parliament. For example, the NAP made special efforts to delineate itself from the JP and other parties of the right before the 1977 elections on emphasizing its anti-capitalist ideology and claiming the monopoly of the true nationalism. In the public meetings, it addressed itself to the social sectors crushed by the big capital, like lumpen proletariat, workers, tradesmen and artisans. Further, it began to give a special stress on the religious sentiments.²²⁰

The 1977 elections, which was held in the atmosphere of increasing violence and economic crises, exhibited a trend to return to a two-party system in Turkey. The RPP, profiting from the unable, weak coalition of the right parties, increased its electoral score as well as parliamentary representation. The JP also increased its share. The minor parties, except the NAP whose relative success was based on adoption of a new and broad view combining nationality with religion with the purpose of

²¹⁹ Sayari, "The Crisis," 7.

²²⁰ Agaogullari, "Ultrationalist," 202.

redefining the Turk's national identity,²²¹ came closer to disappearance. The NSP lost half of its representatives in the Parliament.²²²

The JP had succeeded in gathering the anti-RPP votes through the campaign which warned the rightist electorate that the division of the rightist votes works only for the good of the RPP. The voters who previously supported the NSP, the DemP came to vote for the JP who was the biggest obstacle and the near alternative to the RPP victory.²²³

Upon the failure of Ecevit's attempt to form a minority government, the President Fahri Koruturk appointed Demirel to form a coalition government strong enough to solve the mounting problems of the country. Showing the signs of depolarization, Ecevit invited the JP for the formation of a grand coalition. For Ecevit, the Turkish political system underwent periodic restorations that had been done by the military authorities so far. This time, it would be achieved by the civilian authorities.²²⁴ But, Demirel, considering the fruitful results of the centrifugal competition that would be lost in case of a depolarization tendency, rejected the RPP's proposal and preferred to form a second National Front' government with the NSP and the NAP.

The sharp polarization between the RPP and the JP and the personal rivalry of the leaders avoided establishment of a stable coalition between them. However, the RPP continued to increase its electoral support in opposition against the JP who had begun to fall into internal crisis. Some deputies of the JP had begun to be disturbed by

²²¹ Kemal H. Karpat, "Turkish Democracy At Impasse: Ideology, Party Politics and the Third Military Intervention, *International Journal of Turkish Studies*. Vol.2-1 (Spring/Summer, 1981), 38.

²²² The 1977 election results as the percentage of the votes cast (V) and the percentage of the seats obtained in the TGNA were: the RPP (V. 41.40, S. 47.30), the JP (V. 36.90, S. 42.00), the NSP (V. 8.60, S. 5.30), the NAP (V. 6.40, S. 3.60), the RRP (V. 1.90, S. 0.70), the DemP (V. 1.90, S. 0.20). Gençkaya, "Turkey," 23.

²²³ Arsev Bektas, *Demokratiklesme Sürecinde Liderler Oligarsisi: CHP ve AP (1961-1980)* (Istanbul: Baglam Yayinlari, 1993), 37.

²²⁴ Duru, *Ecevit*, 43.

the Demirel's NAP-like ultranationalist policies and they claimed that the JP was sliding toward the NAP which was openly supporting national socialism whose time has passed.²²⁵ They advocated the establishment of a coalition with the RPP. The intra-party opposition within the JP reached to a peak when the party fared badly against the opposition in the local elections held toward the end of 1977. The JP lost its internal cohesion. Then, twelve representatives retired from the JP and helped the RPP opposition to bring about the fall of the government in order to form a coalition with the RPP.

All independents were given cabinet posts when they agreed on a coalition with the RPP. The program of the government stressed the preservation of peace and order in the country rather than solutions to be brought exacerbating the economic crisis. However, the opposition, this time, was not as peaceful as the RPP. It was ready to do everything to prepare the basis for the failure of the government in its prominent promises. As the JP questioned the legitimacy of the government which was a 'government by occupation' (*Isgal Hükümeti*) even he refused to call Ecevit as 'prime minister',²²⁶ the NAP's sympathizers increased the social violence against the RPP and other leftist circles. In fact, terrorism worsened beyond control, while both the rightists and the leftists tried to prove the inability of any government to control these evils.²²⁷ The unfairness of the extremist opposition split over the mass society. It turned into sectarian-religious fights in some cities between Alevis who traditionally voted for the RPP and the NAP sympathized Sunnites. About 100 people died in Kahramanmaraş. On the Incident, the RPP accused the opposition, mainly the JP and the NAP, of provoking people to defend themselves against a perceived communism

²²⁵ Agaogullari, "Ultrationalist," 201.

²²⁶ Zurcher, *A Modern History*, 275.

²²⁷ Karpat, "Impasse," 40.

within the RPP that, in fact, was instrumental for them to come to power since they, for Ecevit, would not get the power in a democratic competition.²²⁸

However, the opposition succeeded in destabilizing the government and eroding its social support evidenced with the failure of Ecevit's government in solving the problems stemming from high inflation, unemployment and civil strife on which the society had invested great hope on Ecevit and his party. Further, the RPP lost also leftist support when the government had to declare a martial law to cope with the civil strife and when it had to accept an austerity program imposed by the IMF in order to find foreign credits which were vital to face up to economic problems exacerbated by the effects of the world economic recession and the continuing Western economic embargo since the Cyprus War. Although there was no alternative if the problems are to be solved, the opposition, led mainly by the JP leader Demirel, increased the intensity of parliamentary and extra-parliamentary opposition against the socio-economic regulations of Ecevit government and its inevitable outcomes over the lower classes. The aim of Demirel was to keep the ideological polarization higher so as to further concentrate the anti-RPP rightist votes and those who would alienate from the RPP under the roof of the JP.

Unfortunately, Demirel did not refrain, even, from sending some covert messages to the Armed Forces to intervene to the policies of Ecevit government. He, in evaluating economic measures of the government, said that '*Bülendé*', identifying Bülent Ecevit, was to share the same fate with Allende, implying the end of the socialist leader of Chile who had been deposed by the military.²²⁹ Later, Demirel explained this as a misunderstanding that, in fact, his aim was to show the results of

²²⁸ Duru, *Ecevit*, 91-93.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, 99-100.

the economic regulations which were to be continued, in a more strict manner, by himself after 1979.²³⁰

The results of the partial elections for the Senate and the by-elections for the TGNA marked the success of the destructive, less responsible and sometimes unfair strategy of the opposition. Keeping the social unrest higher and endless criticisms against whatever done by the government brought the failure of the Ecevit-headed coalition. The government could not achieve peace and order staying within the borders of the civilian authorities. It had to declare a martial law, and even prohibit May 1st celebrations in Istanbul. Although, except anti-system radical proposals of the NSP and the NAP, the loyal opposition did not present a reasonable alternative for solution of the socio-economic problems, it had severely criticized the structural economic regulations of the government which had decreased further the life standards of the lower classes.

Taking into consideration the situation of the extreme parties, the NSP and the NAP, who performed no better than the previous elections, it was evident that the Turkish electorate is centre oriented. Even inability of the near-centre parties in dealing with the socio-economic problems, like political violence and economic crisis, did not push the electorate to search for radical solutions. However, it should also be indicated that the centrifugal tendencies of the major system parties which had become able to integrate most of the demands of the parties on their extremes was also effective in return to a 'near two-party system' in Turkey, by 1979 elections.

However, although the only way to stop this centrifugal drive and polarization would have been a rapprochement between the two major parties that would have been welcomed by a large majority of Turkish voters and by many vital institutions, including the military and the business associations, the ideological polarization

²³⁰ Ibid., 99.

intensified with the bilateral opposition strategies (particularly of the JP) deterred them from taking place in a coalition which would have been strong enough to deal effectively with political violence and economic crisis. The lack of cooperation, collaboration, and compromise among political leaders had led to destruction of the political balance, between the two major political parties-the JP and the RPP which had guaranteed the survival of democracy and of the regime in the past.²³¹

Upon the fall of Ecevit government after the 1979 partial elections, Demirel formed a minority government with outside support of the NAP and the NSP. Following the economic regulations of the previous Ecevit government, Demirel declared a new austerity program, called as the January 24, 1980 Decisions, in order to transform the import-substituted economic system into an export-oriented model.

Although implementation of the program necessitated a stable political condition in which the opposition was weaker or silent, the government had to satisfy its outer supporters as well as to cope with the destructive policies of the RPP who frequently came out with the interpellations to vote out the government that would be possible if the JP could not satisfy the partners. In spite of being aware that there was no alternative, the RPP, in an irresponsible manner, managed to organize a united opposition front with the NSP, who began to exhibit explicit anti-secular, pro-religious tendencies in the Assembly in order to depose the JP government.²³² This increased the political instability further decreasing the ability of the JP government, from its establishment, in dealing with the socio-economic problems.

On the other hand, although the major parties in the TGNA used to cooperate in the issue of presidential elections since 1961, the polarization between the two parties had reached to a point that they were incapable of electing a successor to the President Korutürk, when his term expired in 1980, even after 100 round of voting. The

²³¹ Karpat, "Impasse," 41.

²³² Ibid., 40.

political system had really needed a restoration as Ecevit said in 1977, but unlike his intention, the civilian authorities were unable to achieve it. Delegitimization of the opponent, whether in government or in opposition, had become the rule of the political game that would not permit creation of a rapprochement between political parties. In the end, the military intervened on 12 September 1980 in order to reestablish the Turkish democracy that would redefine the rules of the political system in a direction to change the understanding and patterns of political opposition in Turkey.

General Evaluation of the Period

The fragmentation and polarization of the party system on the ideological lines degenerated the program-based oppositional attempts of the out parties in the post-1973 Turkish politics. The ideological demagogies based on 'anti-fascism' or 'anti-communism' became the main themes of the oppositional processes. The alternative was introduced to be a regime preference which led to division of the political spectrum into two rival blocks. In that case, the main goal of the political parties was to hold the political power in their hands and not to give a way to the other side of the ideologically fragmented political system. However, since the electoral processes made the coalition governments inevitable, the smaller parties, particularly those of the extreme ones, obtained a vital place in the strategies of the bigger parties, namely the RPP and the JP. Engaging in a process of mutual delegitimization, the system-loyal parties gave up their centripetal competition of the 1960s. In order to attract the support of the extremist parties and the electorate, they integrated some of their radical demands and strategies that approached the JP and the RPP to semiloyalty in their opposition policies. The leaders of the loyal parties radicalized their discourses launched toward its main rival, the other loyal party. Although, increasing tendency of the socio-economic problems necessitated a peaceful accommodation between the two major parties, it was avoided by this centrifugal competition.

On the other hand, the opposition attempts, in its multipolarity of the party system, were directed not only against the parties of the ideologically rival camp, but also to the parties of the same block. In a bilateral pattern, the political parties, both of opposition and the government, needed to differentiate themselves from their near alternatives, in order to preserve their positions from one election to the other in the higher volatile patterns of the electorate.

The opposition is expected to be weak in a parliament where it is dispersed and this trend is further strengthened unless the parties hold strong internal cohesion or engage in permanent alliances. Still, although the ideological polarization of the period favored the solidarity of the nearer parties in the Assembly that created oppositional fronts, especially against the RPP-headed governments, it was not successful in the TGNA. In that case, the public opinion became the main target of the oppositional attempts. Beside this, some extremist parties tended to provide support for the paramilitary organization in their oppositional strategies. Such parties produced an irresponsible and unfair competition in the political system.

The oppositional attempts of the post-1973 period was a kind of 'politics of out-bidding'. Since the government was perceived as posing threat to the existing regime, in an ideologically fragmented and polarized political system, the opposition as well as the government parties defined their strategies to defeat the other. In this process, the symbolic and polemical confrontations based on the ideological discourses weighted the struggles of the opposition parties. They did not produce pragmatic solutions, taking into consideration the real problems of the country and the demands of people. Contrarily the political competition began to demonstrate a trend toward the 'politics of absurd' that was ended in the military intervention in 1980.

CHAPTER V.

Conclusion

The political opposition in Turkish politics experienced a process of crisis in institutionalization from which opposition of the parliamentary parties was not immunet. The intolerant political culture, monocentrist economic structure and authoritarian legal system were the obstacles before the peaceful evolution of political opposition. Even the trials of competitive politics could not accommodate a tradition of opposition and they culminated in authoritarianism of the ruling parties until the establishment of a liberal political system and a balanced legal structure in 1960.

The 1960 Constitution secured the existence of political opposition in Turkish political system. The targets of regime-oriented policies of the previous opposition parties were realized in the political structure of the post-1960. Limitation of political power, dispersion of its authority among some judicial and administrative institutions and a new electoral law based on proportional representation, empowered the mechanisms of political opposition against the government. Although, it used to seek basically structural amendments for the further democratization of the political system, that had been seen as a barrier against the authoritarian tendencies of the government, from 1960 on, the opposition turned to perform its real functions. It began not only to check and balance the authority of government, but also to produce alternative socio-economic policies to those of the government.

However, during the transition period of the early 1960s, the opposition parties of the parliament could not act in accordance to their real policy preferences and opposition strategies. In order not to irritate the military who was cautious about the healthy institutionalization of the new political structure, the opposition parties had to consider the views of the military personalities in their policy formulations and opposition attempts. So that, the principles envisaged in the 1961 Constitution became

the policies of the opposition parties, while the TGNA was the main site for the opposition attempts. Although, it was made 'very loyal' as being not much critical about the government, the opposition parties, among which the JP was the major one, succeeded in blocking some of the policies of the government in the Parliament and steadily increased its public support. The fragmentation of the party system in the TGNA, which had made the establishment of coalition governments inevitable, increased the power of the opposition against the unstable governments.

Although it never defected toward irresponsibility, during the first half of the 1960s, because of the influence of the military, the opposition parties demonstrated its most cooperative action on external policy of the government. The government was supported by the opposition in its holding the Cyprus crisis.

The opposition of the parliamentary parties was situated in its real position only toward and after the 1965 elections during which military existence in civilian politics had been released and the plural system of the post-1960 political structure had began to be realized. The policy formulations or the oppositional strategies of the parties changed by replacing the traditional ways of competition. The program-based competition began to weight the strategies of the opposition parties. They produced alternative socio-economic policies to those of the government in order to attract the support of the larger population. The socio-economic transformation, which accelerated toward the second half of the 1960s, further initiated the parties for the reformulation of their traditional policies. The RPP reoriented its policies toward the left-of-the centre which was expected to articulate the new demands of the people who were in a process of realignment caused by the socio-economic transformation. Still, the big parties in which the opposition concentrated in the TGNA became unable to integrate the social differentiation. New parties of opposition emerged with more radical and anti-system programs, in order to met the demands of the dissatisfied social sectors. So that, the Turkish party system fell in a process of fragmentation which effected the oppositional policies of the big parties too.

The emergence of the TLP, the NOP and the ultranationalist defection of the NAP provided the Turkish electorate with radical policy alternatives by the second half of the 1960s. Although they could get much public support, they found representation in the TGNA simply due to the electoral law which favored smaller parties. Still, since the parliamentary procedures were in support of the majority, they could not impose much pressure on the policies of the government.

However, emergence of radical alternatives on the left and the right of the political spectrum effected the policy formulations of the big system-loyal parties. The left-of-the centre policies, which had been once chosen as an oppositional strategy, gained a stable root in the RPP. The JP turned to implement policies in order to secure the support of the big bourgeois. The new stands of these big parties triggered a process of internal oppositional within the traditional cadres of the big parties and led to eventual splits that further fragmented the party system. Adding the the pervious fragmentation on the line of ideological preferences, the party competition began to acquire a centrifugal competition toward the ends of 1960s.

On the other hand, the opposition discovered new sites in order to influence the policies of the government. The judicial-bureaucratic mechanisms, introduced by the authorities of the 1960 transition period, were effectively used by the opposing parties of the Parliament throughout the second half of the 1960s, with the aim to blockade the governmental policies, if not to change them.

The fragmentation of the late 1960s reflected itself in the post-1973 Parliament that was to determine the oppositional policies of the parties. Since the political system had lost its predominant party character, the system-loyal big parties steadily depended on the ideologically extreme parties. The smaller radical parties held a blackmailing potential on the system-loyal parties, attracting some segments of their electorate. This increased centrifugal tendencies within the big parties and the program-based opposition degenerated into eventually rising symbolic and polemical

confrontations between the system parties, namely the RPP and the JP. The fragmented party system was divided into two block of the left and the right. In this framework, despite the parties of the same flank of the ideological spectrum pursued a bilateral opposition especially in the eve of elections, since the government of the 'rival' block was perceived to be a regime preference in the polarizing mood of the ideological politics, even the system parties intended to oust the government of the 'other' whatever the strategy to be used. In this process, even the unfair, irresponsible attempts of the extremes parties, particularly those of the NAP, reaching to the degree of supporting paramilitary anti-system organizations, were ignored, if not abused in oppositional attempts. Such actions prepared the basis in order to delegitimize the immediate alternative government on the accusations of anti-system trends. The result became the 'politics of outbidding' which deepened the uncompromising policies between the two major system parties. Although, they had used to cooperate on some basic issues, including foreign policy and presidential elections, the centrifugal opposition strategy of the parties eventually avoided them from maintaining the consensus on such basic issues. So that, the Turkish competitive politics fell in a crisis which ended in another military intervention in 1980.

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