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A Rebellious Generation: Anti-Imperialist Momentum in Turkey, 1959-1971

Abstract

The tumultuous period of the Republic of Turkey between 1959 and 1971 included two coup d'états and two unsuccessful attempted coup d'états. The Turkish 1968 fits into the anti-imperialist trend in Third World countries in the call for full independence during the tense period of the Cold War. Yet, the Turkish 1968 also demonstrates some regional Middle Eastern phenomena, such as the toppling of the political establishment through a military takeover. During the evolution of the Kemalist generation into having all kinds of belated leftist ideas and ideologies the youth in their radical activism surpassed the cautious and calculating elders in the Marxist-Leninist camp in Turkey. This was a time period when there was parliamentarian experiment and trade union solidarity with shantytowns in urban centers of Turkey was occurring, as well as the expectation and cooperation with some military figures for a potential leftist military takeover. Based on Turkish periodicals, as well as memoirs and CIA sources on Turkey, this paper projects the modest yet significant moment of anti-authoritarian attitude of the rebellious generation of Turkish Sixties as well as limited counter-cultural aspect among the youth.

“Denizler” and Turkey as a Cold War Frontier

Dear father,

I will have been departed from among you by the time this letter is delivered to you. I know that you will be saddened even though how much I say, “do not worry” to you all. However, I would like you to meet this situation with strength. Human beings are born, live, grow, and die. What is important for one is not to live long but to achieve as much as possible in a lifetime. That is why I accept to leave early as normal. In the past, my friends were unshakeable against death. Do not doubt that I would fall into hesitation [to accept death] either. Your son has not become destitute and desperate before death. He has consciously joined this path and he has known that the end would be this situation. I know we have different opinions, but I hope you would understand. I believe that not only you but also Turkish and Kurdish peoples who live in Turkey would understand me, too.

...

Long live the independence of the people of Turkey

Long live the lofty ideology of Marxism-Leninism

Long live the struggle of Turkish and Kurdish peoples for independence

Down with imperialism!¹

On the 6th of May 1972 Deniz Gezmiş wrote the above to his father prior to his execution. Deniz was one of the mythical activists of Turkish student movement in the late 1960s. His legend is similar to that of Ernesto “Che” Guevara in Latin America in that both figures have transcended their political context in the past and become a symbol of defiance embellishing t-shirts in an iconic way in the present. Not surprisingly, Deniz was inspired by Guevara among other anti-imperialists. It goes without saying that radical figures of Turkish Sixties, including Deniz Gezmiş, Necla Kuglin, Füsün Özbilgen, Mahir Çayan and alike, merit a contextualized understanding. In this regard, Turkish Sixties has been a relatively understudied subject in the Western academia.² There are numerous memoirs, anecdotes, newspapers, and articles yet to be analyzed for fresh perspectives. The intellectual and political milieu of the likes

¹ Aydın Çubukçu, *Bizim 68*, [trans. Hüseyin Kurt], 13th ed. (İstanbul: Doğan Basın Yayın, 2011), 239. Adobe Edition.

² The journal *Toplumsal Tarih* recently published a special issue on the Turkish 68 in May 2018. For major works on as well as a critique of the literature of the subject, see: Emin Alper, “Student Movement in Turkey from A Global Perspective: 1960-1971.,” *Dissertation* (Boğaziçi University, 2009); Bağış Erten, “Türkiye'de 68,” *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce: Sol*, ed. Murat Gültekingil, 2nd ed. vol. 8 (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2008); Yiğit Akın, “Uluslararası Etkileşim Yapısı İçinde Türkiye Sol Hareketinin Önemli Polemikleri,” *Ibid.*; Zafer Şenocak, “Turkey: The Lost Generation,” *Bulletin Of the German Historical Institute* 1968 Memories and Legacies of a Global Revolt, no. Supplement 6 (2009), 175-180; Ergun Aydinoğlu, “*Sol Hakkında Hersey Mi? Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce-Sol Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme*. Istanbul: Versus Kitap, 2008.

of Deniz Gezmiş belong to the Turkish experimental era of “the Second Republic” after 1960 coup d'état with a new constitution that allowed socialist literature and organizations to flourish. University students were crucial in this period in regards to the emergence of political consciousness in broader society, as well as the catalyzing role of students in class consciousness of the working class, civil servants, and in a lesser degree, peasants.

Anti-authoritarian and counter-cultural aspects of Turkish 1968 were not theoretical matters for activists but a genuine experience they had learnt and attained along the way.³ There is almost a consensus within Turkish historiography that Turkish Sixties did not have anti-authoritarian and counter-cultural dynamics as in the way Western European and North American student movements had. It has been underlined that Turkish students mostly sought the anti-imperialist struggle instead of pursuing a libertarian movement. Unless cultural anthropology is taken into account, comparisons between Western European and Turkish student movement do not yield straightforward answers. In terms of understanding how revolutionary Turkish 1968 was, this paper considers the web of meanings peculiar to a certain human community, in this case Turkish society in the 1960s. Newly released memoirs of female student activists made one thing clear: the responses of female activists to gender-related challenges that stemmed from their fellow male activists shook authority dynamics and sexual relations between women and men. These experiences would vary from one activist to another and they were not monolithic. Nevertheless, female students' reactions amounted to a limited counter-cultural aspect in Turkish Sixties revealing female agency. Mihri Belli, an old guard communist, argued in 1970 that a revolution could not be achieved with students. The kind of revolution in his mind was the old revolution by which political power was seized and the society was designed from top to bottom. The kind of revolution that some female activists achieved in the Turkish 1968 was a cultural one. Female activists transformed themselves and acquired a new way of life concerning sexual equality and liberty, as well as changed the gender relations to a certain extent from the bottom of society.

The mass student politics in the late 1960s in Turkey requires looking into the emergence of student movement at the end of 1950s when the disgruntled Kemalist youth was essentially organized by the Republican People's Party in protest of the increasing Democratic authoritarian regime. It yielded to the military takeover on the 27th of May in 1960 following the student clashes with the police in April 1960. The continuity and rupture between the student movement of the early 1960s and that of the late 1960s is necessary to comprehend the evolution of Turkish Kemalist generation into various kinds of leftist ideologies. One needs to ask various questions: what were the demands and goals of the students? What was their impact on the newly burgeoning working-class consciousness? What kind of liberty did they pursue? In order to answer these questions, it is necessary to consider broader regional and global political context in addition to socio-economic problems in Turkey. Geo-political parameters of Turkey in the Cold War between the Warsaw Pact and NATO alliance turned political space of Turkey, which was

³ Zafer Şenocak explains that Herbert Marcuse, a prominent figure of the New Left movement in Western Europe, was meaningless for the Turkish youth. Nevertheless, an activist such as Atilla Sarp mentions that Marcuse was one of their intellectual sources during the Turkish 1968. See: Şenocak, 176; Atilla Sarp, interview by Bedri Baykam, *68'li Yıllar: Eylemciler*, (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi Yayınları, 1998), 540.

highly linked to the military presence of the US into a *frontier* country. Moreover, regional developments in the Middle East, including the military takeover by Gamal Abd al-Naser in Egypt and the Algerian revolutionary success, had an impact on Turkish leftists.⁴ The Egyptian military takeover and socialist model evoked a similar dream among some Turkish intellectuals and army officers, whereas Algerian struggle for independence caused internal critique on Turkish foreign policy on the same issue. Finally, international socialist literature and diplomatic issues such as the Cyprus crisis between Greece and Turkey and the 1967 Arab-Israeli war also determined the level of anti-American sentiment in Turkey. American counter-revolutionary involvements all across the world caused an anti-colonialist sentiment in the world⁵ and then it was amalgamated into the Turkish 68, especially after the outbreak of violent conflict in Cyprus.

In this regard, Turkish Sixties⁶ were dominantly an anti-imperialist with its emphasis on imagined national full independence in the heyday of the Cold War. For Turkish activists, full independence meant economic independence, self-reliant military, as well as anti-imperialist foreign policy. Most of the objection was against too much reliance on NATO, and specifically the USA, in Turkish national security and foreign policy. Turkish diplomacy of having close relations with Western powers in the wake of Algerian independence struggle caused both international and domestic repercussions. Whereas the right-wing groups in Turkey was afraid of a potential Soviet military intervention to Turkey the left-wing groups thought the USA was excessively influencing the decision-making processes in Turkish institutions; both anxieties were not completely baseless. However, the Cold War environment usually checked any tendency to outweigh the delicate balance of superpowers in the bipolar international bloc system. As a result, the Khrushchev Soviet foreign policy included the idea of peaceful co-existence in Eastern Europe with the capitalist system and was followed by the détente of the late 1960s. In terms of Turkish-Soviet relations, “Khrushchev was the first Soviet leader to solicit Turkish neutrality, but he settled for the normalizations of relations as part of an overall policy of peaceful coexistence.”⁷ The equilibrium of balance of power would reach to the level of a superpower deal in terms of non-intervention to the allies of both superpowers.⁸ This international equilibrium was apparent during the Soviet suppression of Hungarian Uprising in 1956 and Prague Spring in 1968. It was also the case when Turkish military suppressed the

⁴ Hikmet Özdemir, “Siyasal Tarih,” in *Çağdaş Türkiye: 1908-1980*, ed. Sina Akşin, 10th ed. (İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 2008), 261.

⁵ Yiğit Akın, “Uluslararası Etkileşim Yapısı İçinde Türkiye Sol Hareketinin Önemli Polemikleri.” *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce: Sol*. Vol. 8. Edited by Tanıl Bora and Murat Gültekingil. 2nd ed. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayıncılığı, 2007), 87.

⁶ I use the terms Turkish 1968 and Turkish Sixties interchangeably following the example of Timothy Brown.

⁷ Duygu B. Sezer, “Peaceful Coexistence: Turkey and the near East in Soviet Foreign Policy,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 481, Soviet Foreign Policy in an Uncertain World (Sep. 1985), pp. 117-126.

⁸ During the Cuba missile crisis Khrushchev promised John F. Kennedy to “respect the inviolability of the frontiers and sovereignty of Turkey and not to interfere into its internal affairs, not to invade Turkey” in his telegram to the US president on 27 October 1962. See: US National Archives, Collection JFK-4, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/193377>, accessed May 1, 2018; Şenocak, 176.

Turkish left as well as the out-maneuvered the potential leftist military junta by the 12th of March 1971 memorandum.⁹

The CIA report on the 1st of June 1967 concerning Soviet strategy and intentions in the Mediterranean basin reads: “The Soviets have recently begun a small program of economic assistance and made efforts to exploit growing Turkish distaste for the large US military presence. Although the Turkish Communist movement is insignificant a newly emergent left is articulating anti-American feelings with increasing impact.”¹⁰ This newly emergent left included leftist student organizations that would agitate anti-Americanism during the visits of the US 6th Fleet to Turkey on the 24th June, the 24th of July, and the 7th of October 1967. The leftist youth shouted for full independence and called for leaving NATO. Within a year the same youth would start boycotts and occupations at Turkish universities demanding the re-organization of state institutions especially the higher education for a more idealistic workplace and a more democratic university. In the midst of these idealistic demands and efforts, were there libertarian aspects of Turkish 1968 at all concerning the individual? I argue that Turkish youth managed to develop its own kind of anti-authoritarian spirit with limited counter culture in that radical activist students revolted against the leaders of the Old Left, and female activist students rejected the dominant attitudes of the fellow male activists in terms of decision-making processes and sexual liberty.¹¹

The anti-authoritarian spirit had not emerged as a result of certain theories but in consequences of practical experiences against the authoritarian attitudes within the leftist camp. In E. P. Thompson’s term, it was *the jostle of experience* that shaped the consciousness of the youth.¹² Extra-parliamentary politics of the students in the streets caused anxiety among the elders of the Turkish Labor Party. At some point, the elders asked the students to stop their activities due to the fears of prosecution by Turkish courts for illegal activity and of illegitimacy charges by the public opinion. Young ladies on the other side questioned being pushed aside by some of the activist men with different reasons as well as the cultural limits on their sexual freedom even assumed by some of the revolutionary activists. Power relations between female and male activists were a subject of struggle for some women in the face of inconsistencies between the emancipatory ideologies, first and foremost “scientific socialism,” and the practices in the student or revolutionary organizations. They gained feminist understanding in a culturally

⁹ Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 3rd ed. (New York: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 2009), 258; Celil Gürkan, interview by Bedri Baykam, *68’lı Yıllar: Tanıklar*, (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi Yayınları, 1999), 200-1.

¹⁰ Records of the Central Intelligence Agency, 1894 - 2002,
<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/7327184>, accessed May 1, 2018.

¹¹ This paper utilizes the theoretical concepts of “anti-authoritarianism”, “counter-culture”, “extra-parliamentary opposition” and “inventing the radicalism of the past” in the way Timothy Brown develops in his book. See: Timothy Scott Brown, *West Germany and the Global Sixties: The Antiauthoritarian Revolt, 1962-1978*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

¹² For the notion of *the jostle of experience* and Thompson’s critique of “the notion of Marxism as science,” see: E. P. Thompson, *The Poverty of Theory and Other Essays*, (London: Merlin Press, 1978), 168; E. P. Thompson, “Eighteenth-Century English Society: Class Struggle without Class?” *Social History*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (May 1978), 164.

shaped puritan, and sometimes macho mentality of the self-disciplined Turkish leftist men. Obviously, the very notion of class that students underlined in their discussions also shaped their different practices in terms of female-male relations and they also began to notice this reality. However, female “awakening” was not widespread or systematically consequential as some women kept silent against the hegemonic masculinity of the society that was present in the student movement; this is why I consider it as part of the limited counter-cultural process.¹³ In short, anti-authoritarian and counter-cultural aspects of Turkish 1968 were the result of the jostle of experience rather than an intellectual epiphany.

The long revolutionary path since the end of 1950s until the 12th of March military regime in 1972 includes certain breaking points in terms of acquiring political, class, or libertarian consciousness for different groups such as students, working classes, peasants and women. The Turkish 1968 had been developed step-by-step at a national level, as well as international context that went hand-in-hand, and each period contributed to move from one threshold to another until the tragic end when the military intervention consumed the revolutionary generation. This experimental socialist era opening in Turkey has ended with various disappointments for different actors, be it state, students, activists, intellectuals, and the political parties. The revolutionary generation was lost, as described by Zafer Şenocak, due to the suppression of the 1968 movement by the state. However, the genuine experience would always be a reference point for Turkish radicals culminating in the imaginations of protestors during the Gezi Park protests in May 2013 that shook the country with a new wave for anti-authoritarianism.¹⁴ This paper is built upon the works of Zafer Şenocak, Bağış Erten, Yiğit Akın, Ergun Aydinoğlu, and Emin Alper. The paper tracks the major turning points in student movement in a chronological way, then delves into the anti-authoritarian and counter-cultural dimension of the Turkish 1968. For consistency and practicality, and to follow the Turkish literature on the subject, I prefer to use Turkish abbreviations for political parties, organizations or revolutionary political programs.

Mass Student Politics and Contestation for Social Justice

Young Kemalist Generations in the Cocoon:

The year 1959 had been disastrous for democracy in Turkey. For the press, which was considered the conscience and guardian of a democratic regime, it was a year of trial and tribulation during which more newspapers were closed down and journalists imprisoned than any other year. Political activity had become almost totally negative and non-productive, with the result that the average citizen was disillusioned and demoralized. Only the

¹³ For details of contrasting experiences among the ladies, see these interviews: Ayşe Yazıcıoğlu, *68'in Kadınları*, (İstanbul: Doğan Edmont Yayıncılık, 2010), 79, 197.

¹⁴ In fact, Deniz Gezmiş wanted to leave a legacy to the future's revolutionism in Turkey saying, “We have acted so early but this is an investment in revolutionism, humanity, and this is an experience, too.” İlhan Selçuk, interview by Bedri Baykam, *68'li Yıllar: Tanıklar*, 308.

intelligentsia which supported İnönü and the Republican People's Party retained its enthusiasm for politics.¹⁵

The Turkish student movement emerged at the end of 1950s as a result of the encouragement by Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, CHP) in organizing protests against the increasing authoritarian regime of the Democratic Party, as well as in consequence of the newly flourishing idea clubs at universities.¹⁶ The third attempt for the multi-party regime in Turkey after a long tutelary democracy period finally seemed to have worked for almost a decade between 1950 and 1960. In the aftermath of the World War II, one party regimes were considered suspicious in the international community in terms of democracy. In 1946, in addition to external pressure for democratization, İsmet İnönü, one of the founders of Turkish Republic and the current president, allowed the transition into multi-party regime. With the elections of 1950 Democratic Party (DP) came into power and ruled Turkey until the military coup on the 27th of May 1960. When Democratic Party was established in 1946, there was little difference between the DP and the CHP in terms of "subscribing to the basic tenets of Kemalism", i.e., nationalism and secularism. The economic policies of the DP that distinguished itself originally from the CHP also faded when the CHP government adopted political and economic liberalization between 1947 and 1950.¹⁷ The CHP even softened its aggressive secularism policy and allowed more freedom in terms of religious sentiment because of decades long religious civil disobedience by the people especially in the countryside and the failure of the republic to provide a genuine and authentic symbolic meaning to the common people in its efforts to replace the "obscurantism".¹⁸ Already in late the 1940s, both Democratic Party (DP) and the CHP started "tarring each other with the brush of communism."¹⁹ The specter of communism could certainly haul the country in the coming decade so much so that rivals could eliminate their competitors accusing by association to communist identity.²⁰ This is important to keep in mind to understand the milestones of the evolution some Kemalist youth into socialist ideology.

¹⁵ Feroz Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Democracy: 1950-1975*, (London: C. Hurst & Company, 1977), 62-63.

¹⁶ Zürcher, 229-230.

¹⁷ Zürcher, 213.

¹⁸ Zürcher elucidates "The Kemalists like the Unionists before them, were the executors of a modernization strategy based on positivist world vision, in which religion was seen as a hindrance to progress in the modernization of state and society. Their secularism meant not so much the separation of church and state as the subjugation and integration of religion into the state bureaucracy." Zürcher, 233; İştar Gözaydin, *Diyanet: Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Dinin Tanzimi* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayıncılık, 2009), 28; Carter Vaughn Findley, *Turkey, Islam, Nationalism, and Modernity: A History, 1789-2007*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 304; Şerif Mardin, *Religion, Society, and Modernity in Turkey*, (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2006), 226-7.

¹⁹ Zürcher, 213.

²⁰ Kemal Karpat, *Türk Demokrasi Tarihi: Sosyal, Kültürel, Ekonomik Temeller*, (İstanbul: Timas Yayıncılık, 2014), 463. (orig. 1959, titled as *Turkey's Politics: The Transition to a Multi-Party System*.)

Until then, the Kemalist Turkey had applied various economic policies from the beginning of the republic in 1923, oscillating between state intervention to economy and encouraging private ownership and in response to national, as well as an international economic situation, such as the Great Depression in 1929. Turkish governments applied “mixed economy” between 1932 and 1950 applying the principle of *étatisme*.²¹; it was one of the six principles of the CHP and *étatisme* meant state-led industrialization. The major goal for the young republic was to create a national middle class and industrialization along with economic independence. Mete Tunçay asserts that the ideology of the Turkish Liberation War was anti-imperialist without being anti-capitalist.²² Mete Tunçay, Korkut Bortav, and Erik Zürcher all agree that there was a continuity between the Young Turk economic perspective from the 1910s and the Republican Turkish economic policies in that liberalism, as well as state intervention, meant to create a national (mostly Turkish Muslim) bourgeoisie.²³ However, until 1950, “the regime had never been popular with the masses. The small farmers in the countryside, who at the time still made up 80 percent of the total population had not seen any great improvement in their standard of living, in health, education or communications.”²⁴ All of these facts are important comparative points for understanding the imaginations of the leftist students in the 1960s for Kemalist (or Atatürkçü) inspiration for a revolution.

It is necessary to ask: what was the ideology of Kemalism? Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s ideas did not amount to a coherent ideology as he was neither a philosopher nor a thinker “who produced a systematic theory attempting to encompass all aspects of life and society.”²⁵ Mustafa Kemal was a very pragmatic statesman whose legacy has remained open-ended and flexible. Zürcher states “Atatürkism can be best described as a set of attitudes and opinions that were never defined in detail. It evolved gradually.”²⁶ It was “an amalgam of scientism, materialism, social Darwinism, positivism, Turkism, and other popular theories.”²⁷ When the party and the state became increasingly merged with each other in the 1930s, Recep Peker attempted to develop an independent Kemalist ideology and separate the CHP from the state apparatus at the CHP congress in 1936. Peker failed, and the unity of the party and bureaucracy had become official.²⁸ Thus, “Kemalism remained a flexible concept and people with widely differing worldviews have been able to call themselves Kemalist.”²⁹ I argue that it was partly because of

²¹ For an analysis of these economic policies, see: Faruk Birtek, “The Rise and Fall of *Étatisme* in Turkey, 1932-1950: The Uncertain Road in the Restructuring of a Semiperipheral Economy,” Review (Fernand Braudel Center), vol. 8, no. 3 (Winter, 1985), pp. 407-438.

²² Mete Tunçay, *TC’nde Tek Parti Yönetiminin Kurulması, 1923-1931*, (Ankara: Yurt Yayınları, 1981), 185.

²³ Korkut Boratav, “İktisat Tarihi,” in *Çağdaş Türkiye: 1908-1980*, 325; Zürcher, 195; Tunçay, *TC’nde Tek Parti Yönetiminin Kurulması*, 187.

²⁴ Zürcher, 206.

²⁵ Sükrü Hanoğlu, *Atatürk: An Intellectual Biography*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 226.

²⁶ It was then called as Atatürkism in the 1930s. Zürcher, 181.

²⁷ Hanoğlu, 228.

²⁸ Ibid., 177.

²⁹ The Kemalist coalition of the Republican Turkey had consisted of the officers, bureaucrats, Muslim traders in the towns and the landowners in the countryside. Zürcher, 206; Hanoğlu, 181.

this flexibility of Kemalism³⁰ that the anti-imperialist leftist Turkish youth in the 1960s had a useful resource to construct their own revolutionary perspectives and theories.³¹ Whereas the right-wing nationalists were calling themselves, as Atatürkist and opposing the leftist ideas and organizations the left-wing youth called themselves, Kemalist and brought about a rather more radical nationalist outlook with the notion of “the second liberation war.”³² Kemalism had become an intellectual infrastructure for a socialist revolutionary program in Turkish Sixties. Kemalism included after all a secularism that was “a rationalist, scientific-minded, anti-traditionalist and anti-clericalist secularism.”³³ All of these qualities had common grounds with socialism, which was also malleable for rich cross-ideological interactions between Kemalism and socialism in Turkey.³⁴ For just one interesting example, both Kemalism and Marxist socialism aimed at a classless society albeit for different reasons.³⁵

Keeping in mind that socialism is a modern ideology that aims mainly at promoting social justice and workers’ rights in an industrial society I argue that socialist ideas are malleable to be utilized for different political goals such as anti-imperialism and nationalist struggle in different historical and socio-political contexts. Over the course of time Marx himself had revised his position on revolution and how to achieve a socialist revolution in different contexts as he acquired more knowledge and political insight travelling around Europe. For instance, Marx started to consider using the parliamentary way to achieve social reforms as a first step in England when he witnessed a well-functioning democracy there.³⁶ To elaborate the argument, one can ask how was it possible, for example, for the Bolshevik leaders to explain Marxist ideology that aims at dictatorship of the proletariat to a mostly peasant society? Bolsheviks were different from Socialist Revolutionaries in terms of what needed to be done. Therefore, Lenin simply bent the communist ideology he adopted and attempted to fit it into the conditions of Russia. Hence the Marxist-Leninism rationalizing to “accelerate” history for supposedly the next social phase to occur after the emergence of capitalist mode of production. In the case of China, however, the contradiction of the slogan that urges the dictatorship of the proletariat was overcome by an important rhetorical shift. Chinese communists changed the slogan into the

³⁰ The term “Kemalism” was first coined after the 27 May 1960 coup d'état and defined Atatürkism in a new way. For different versions and combinations of Kemalism throughout the republican Turkish history, including right-wing Atatürkism, see: *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce: Kemalizm*. vol. 2. ed. Ahmet İnsel. 6th ed. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayıncıları, 2009).

³¹ Halil M. Karaveli, “An Unfulfilled Promise of Enlightenment: Kemalism and its Liberal Critics,” *Turkish Studies*, 11:1, p. 89, 97.

³² Although there is not a sharp dichotomy between the usages of Atatürkism and Kemalism.

³³ Özgür Mutlu Ulus, *The Army and the Radical Left in Turkey: Military Coups, Socialist Revolution, and Kemalism*, (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 13.

³⁴ For an interesting article on the uneasy symbiotic relations between Kemalism and Marxism in Turkey from 1960s until the 1980 coup d'état that has changed the country forever crushing all the leftist organizations, see: Bülent Somay, “Türk Solunun Kemalizmle İmtihanı,” *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce: Sol*. vol. 8. ed. Tanıl Bora and Murat Gültekingil. 2nd ed. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayıncıları, 2007), 647-660.

³⁵ Ulus, 31; Zürcher, 182.

³⁶ Saul Padover, *The Essential Marx: The Non-Economic Writings-A Selection*, (New York: The New American Library, Inc., 1978), 64.

dictatorship of the peasants, which perfectly fit into the Chinese context. It was the precarious situation of the industry in Turkey in 1960s, even though a significant modernization and industrializations effort had been achieved thus far, and heavily peasant population at the countryside that made the Chinese model or Third World developmentalism an attractive alternative to some left-Kemalists. I believe both socialism and Kemalism provided enough flexibility to Turkish intellectuals to develop their own socialist formulation for Turkish socialisms in the long run.

In summary, the lack of philosophical depth of Kemalism, along with its strong anti-imperialist, nationalist and aggressively secular outlook and content played a role in vivifying the Turkish students' political thinking for idiosyncratic combinations of Kemalism and Marxism to come up with a solid political ideology that befits to Turkey as they deemed. The evolution of Turkish student movement from the beginning of 1960, to the leftist ideologies that occurred against this intellectual and political background and under the impact of Turkish intellectuals. When the Second Republic was established in 1960 Turkey had gained a constitutional court based on the West German model. This was the beginning of a new liberal era for political and social movements, from which workers, students, and socialists would benefit. Moreover, the relative thaw in the Cold War during the de-Stalinization period Khrushchev promoted in 1956 helped to ease the public opinion a little bit concerning the association of being a "communist/socialist" to be a Soviet agent.³⁷

The Emergence of Student Movement and Mass Student Politics

A study of political sociology on the student movement in Turkey between 1960 and 1971 provides a valuable analysis to understand the social and political dynamics of the emergence of student movement and mass politics.³⁸ In his work, Emin Alper aims at deconstructing the myths of Turkish 1968 generation, found in popular narratives, by focusing on "the political structures and opportunities that made a social movement possible."³⁹ Just like elsewhere in the world, Turkish student population increased in the sixties. Moreover, students mostly had prestigious status along with a Jacobin youth culture being considered as future elites of the country.⁴⁰ According to Alper, students were "a rising and self-confident group with their

³⁷ Alper, 35.

³⁸ Emin Alper elaborates on how almost a dozen of sociological models and theories, classical and recent, fail to explain social movements in general and Turkish student movement in particular. Therefore, he does "not focus on only the grievances of students but tries to elaborate on the processes of the empowerment of students, their access to an increasing number of resources in the sixties, the emergence of a distinct youth identity, the cultural and political context in which the students acted, and the political opportunities which they exploited in raising their claims." Alper, 26.

³⁹ Ibid., xi.

⁴⁰ There were around 37,000 students of higher education in 1955 in Turkey. Within a decade it would increase to 65,000. Populist policies as well as American influence in education reform played a role in this increase as well. Basically, the Turkish higher education after 1955 had become more inclusive and less elitist. Ibid., 39-40, 132, 134.

increasing capabilities, resources and visibility in the public life.”⁴¹ Turkish students considered themselves as a group of “above politics” who can give opinions about the situation of the country with a supposed purely patriotic and nationalist point of view to save the country. In fact, the above politics discourse allowed room for them to claim a political role in the society, the level of which was to escalate throughout 1960s. Supporting this position of the Kemalist youth was the special association to the young generations by the Kemalist regime as “the guardians of Kemalist reforms” against the “reactionary and treacherous” actors in the future to destroy the republic.⁴² This nationalist Jacobin youth culture as well as the clashes between the Kemalist elite and the political elite of the Democratic Party allowed opportunities to the students to have a say.⁴³ The general situation of the students in Turkey was that “youth, as a subordinated generational group in a gerontocratic society, had an interest in raising their power claims against their elders.”⁴⁴ This gerontocratic structure of Turkish society would start to change relatively by the 1980s with the mass migration of rural populations to urban areas that had started in the 1960s.⁴⁵ Opportunities for students to become involved in politics arose for the first time just before the toppling of Democratic Party in 1960.

The first time students became involved in political mobilization was during protests that occurred on the 19th of April in 1960 against the repressive measures of the DP government to establish the Investigation Committee (*Tahkikat Komisyonu*) on the activities of the opposition banning all political activity outside of the assembly.⁴⁶ According to the government’s plan, the committee would report its findings in three months; the opposition considered this a direct threat to multi-party regime. Professors at Ankara and Istanbul universities protested the Investigation Committee claiming that it was against the constitution. These professors and the CHP helped the students to march against the DP government’s repressive action.⁴⁷ In the meantime, since 1959, the DP government changed its policy of de-politicizing student organizations and had started to orient pro-government students to the elections of these bodies and indirectly taking over the leadership.⁴⁸

⁴¹ Ibid., xii-xiii.

⁴² Ibid., 41, 44. Atatürk’s Bursa Speech in 1933 encourages Turkish the youth to acclaim a self-appointed role to guard the regime and to rely themselves even before the police, judiciary, and gendarmes of the regime. For the Bursa Speech, see the appendix in Emin Alper’s dissertation.

⁴³ Ibid., 44.

⁴⁴ Alper states “the Jacobin, romantic, nationalist youth in the Third world not only facilitated the politicization of youth but paved the way for a generational conflict.” For the Weberian notion of gerontocracy and traditional authority, see: Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, ed. by Guenther Roth et al. (Berkeley, LA: University of California Press, 1978), 231; Alper, 48,106.

⁴⁵ The rural exodus changed the population significantly, within 25 years 75% peasant population in Turkey reduced to 33 %. Newly migrated rural people started to live mostly in shantytowns in urban centers. Nur Vergin, “Social Change and the Family in Turkey,” *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 26, No. 5 (Dec. 1985), pp. 571, 574.

⁴⁶ Sefa Salih Aydemir, “27 Mayıs Askeri Darbesine Giden Süreçte Üniversite’nin Etkisi,” *International Journal of Eurasian Education and Culture*, Issue 1, 2016, 14.

⁴⁷ Zürcher, 240.

⁴⁸ Alper, 188.

These attempts infuriated Kemalist students from student organizations and who had ties to the CHP's youth branch.⁴⁹ They resisted these manipulative attempts and raised their voices against the government. On 28 April 1960, the police killed a student, namely Turan Emeksiz, at Beyazıt Square across the Istanbul University when students protested the heavy-handed intervention of the police to the students' announcements and professors' support to students; this was a critical moment.⁵⁰ It was followed by anti-government protests and marches in Ankara, the most significant one of them done by the Military Academy cadets on the 21st of May in 1960, only 6 days before the military takeover. In fact, a junta was uncovered in 1957, but the government had preferred to turn a blind eye to the army that covered it up. Instead of suspicious nine officers, the informant was convicted. This time in 1960, however, the government wanted to accelerate the Investigation Committee's activity seeking the findings to be reported in month on the relation between the CHP and the army.⁵¹

Young radical officers, may have been alarmed by this development, acted and toppled the government on the 27th of May in 1960 outside the chain of command in the army. One of the most striking slogans of the post-1960 military takeover had been "Army and youth hand in hand!"⁵² With the new regime a new constitution was brought about written by those professors of law at Ankara and Istanbul universities. This constitution provided large liberties in terms of press, social and political organizations, intellectuals, students, and socialist thought. There was an inclination to socialism even among the members of the CHP at the end of 1950s. The new coalition of the 27th of May regime consisted of the army, bureaucracy, university, CHP, and the industrial bourgeoisie. The first four were exposed to leftist views in different degrees and they needed to create a popular base against the coalition of the toppled DP base, which was composed of the commercial and rural powers.⁵³ The 1960s in Turkey would become an era of the search for alternative developmentalist ideologies stimulated by the new literature and press free to flourish with the newly provided democratic rights and liberal constitution.⁵⁴

⁴⁹ Ibid., 194.

⁵⁰ Until the 27 May coup d'état, rather than students, the initiative belonged to the young professors at the Political Science Faculty of Ankara University in terms of reformist political agenda. The Forum magazine, prepared mostly by these young generation of scholars, emphasized social justice especially with regard to poor peasants of small farmers and influenced post 1960 coup d'état political constellation and students' intellectual formation. The Idea Club, established in 1955 at the Ankara University's Political Science Faculty, was the prominent student initiative for political debates. Alper, 174,196; Aydemir, 15.

⁵¹ Zürcher, 239.

⁵² Aydemir, 16.

⁵³ Ulus, 13-14; Alper, 202.

⁵⁴ For the earlier models and experiences of "defensive developmentalism" in the Middle East in the late 19th and early 20th centuries prior to the socialist ones such as that of Nasser's Egypt, see: James L. Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East: A History*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 71-86.

The Formation of Revolutionary Thought and Struggle: Multiple Models, Theories, and Strategies

The 27th of May coup in 1960 was a project of the junior officers in the army. The independent action of the junior officers had irritated the higher-ranking officers in the Turkish military which subsequently established the Armed Forces Union in order to check any independent action in the future. In order to gain legitimacy and return to democracy the junta resorted to the help of the law professors such as Turhan Feyzioğlu, Süddik Sami Onar, and Tarık Zafer Tunaya. 1961 Constitution provisioned more liberties in terms of freedom of thought, speech, and socialist organizations, trade unions along with the newly added Constitutional Court to check any authoritarian tendency of a government in the future to bypass the Assembly or to suppress the opposition.⁵⁵ The junta, namely the National Unity Committee (*Milli Birlik Komitesi*, MBB) split and moderate officers in the junta ousted the radical ones whose ideological backgrounds included both the ultra-left and ultra-right.⁵⁶ Whereas the former group favored to return to parliamentary regime the latter would consider an extended military tutelage. Moreover, ultra-right figures suggested a totalitarian cultural program. The Chief of Staff General Cemal Gürsel dismissed the extremists from the NUC on 13 October 1960.

The military created some new institutions such as the establishment of a separate intelligence department to spy on junior officers for conspiracies in 1963. Colonel Talat Aydemir's conspiring clique unsuccessfully attempted coups twice out of the chain of command on the 22nd of February in 1962 and the 20th-21st of May in 1963. The unrest in the army was because of the frustration among those officers who thought that the revolution was incomplete and betrayed.⁵⁷ Talat Aydemir and like-minded young officers did not like the normalization efforts in the subsequent CHP coalition governments between 1962 and 1963 and demanded structural reforms. Ismet İnönü, a veteran war hero and one of the founding cadres of the Turkish Republic, deemed it necessary to make some concessions such as the general amnesty to the former DP deputies for the return to multi-party regime.⁵⁸ Students in Turkey had similar

⁵⁵ Zürcher calls this new regime as the Second Turkish Republic and considers the contribution of the professors in writing the new constitution as the transformation of the coup into revolution. Therefore, the idea for a revolution by a coup d'état had been sowed in the political culture of the Turkish leftists. I think, although the content of the top-down change of the regime with the new constitution was revolutionary but its legitimacy was shadowed by the coup. Zürcher adds, "The military takeover was greeted with explosions of public joy in Ankara and Istanbul, notably among the intelligentsia. The rest of the country showed no such reaction. The countryside especially remained ominously silent." Zürcher, 241-3.

⁵⁶ Ulus, 15.

⁵⁷ For the reasons of discontent of Talat Aydemir and radical officers, see: Yeşim Demir, "The Coup Attempts of Colonel Talat Aydemir," *CTTAD-Journal of Modern Turkish History Studies*, vol.12, (2006/Fall), pp. 155–171

⁵⁸ The urgency for stabilizing the country was also alarmed by a series of coups and attempted coups in Syria and Iraq, the last of which happened by this time on 8 February 1963 in Iraq and 8 March 1963 in Syria as Baath operations. Excluding Turkey, between 1949 and 1976 there had been 51 coup d'état attempts, 21 of which were successful. William L. Cleveland and Martin Bunton, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, 6th ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2017),

discontent against the CHP and İnönü, which was the first disappointment with and a breaking point from the CHP in terms of “Kemalism” that was recently coined as such in the early 1960s instead of the term Atatürkism- and being re-defined.⁵⁹ The disillusionment with the CHP continued in the resignations in bureaucracy and the youth branches of the CHP.⁶⁰

The evolution of the Kemalist students in the 1960s towards new developmentalist models, Alper puts forward, did not happen naturally. There had been certain steps, one of which was the departure of the students from the bureaucratic elite, and exposure to the leftist literature most notably in 1963 and following the new elections. Kemalist students supported the 27th of May regime until the 1965 general elections.⁶¹ Then, with the rise of Justice Party (*Adalet Partisi*, AP) into power in 1965, they found themselves in the opposition. Justice Party was the continuation of the former toppled the DP and it had received the majority in the Assembly with 240 seats. In the first half of the 1960s, 27 May spirit dominated the intellectual atmosphere where certain resources were very influential on the youth and the military. Firstly, *Forum* magazine, published by the young scholars of Ankara University mainly promoted Keynesian liberal democracy and the state intervention to solve the ongoing problems. The magazine represented the interest of the city against the interests of the countryside with an emphasis on the neglect of the industry. They suggested that technocrats should be in charge of the planned economy, the judiciary should check the Assembly and the government, and academia should have autonomy. These visions were upheld by the 27 May regime. However, there were other visions promoted by various journals and magazines in the new political and intellectual atmosphere in which almost all non-conservative outlooks had been influenced by the trendy leftist perspectives on social justice with or without the Keynesian discourse; there was a clear shift in Turkish politics when “the pro-coup establishment of the judicial and political structure unquestionably pushed the center of politics to the left.”⁶²

The journal of *Yön* (Direction) represented the radical wing of the 27 May coalition, which in the beginning of the military regime, enjoyed the idea that enough structural social change must be made before returning the power to the civilians.⁶³ It is not clear whether there were direct links between the leader of the abortive coups in 1962-63, Talat Aydemir, and the *Yön* group. However, they projected similar political discourses.⁶⁴ The intellectuals of *Yön*, particularly Doğan Avcıoğlu, suggested a kind of *bureaucratic socialism* and showed sympathy to “Nasserite socialism”. Deeply influencing the intellectual milieu of the 1960s *Yön* “was the

311,424; Ulus, 16; Zürcher, 244; *Sosyalizm ve Toplumsal Mücadeleler Ansiklopedisi* [STMA], vol. 6, 2030-31; George M. Haddad, “Revolutions and Coups d'Etat in the Middle East: A Comparative Study,” *Die Welt des Islams*, New Series, vol. 10, Issue 1/2 (1965), pp. 17-32.

⁵⁹ The amnesty was accepted on 12 October 1962. An ongoing debate was on the “real followers of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk” among the 27 May coalition. Alper, 219-22; 235.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 223.

⁶¹ Major exception was the purge of 147 professors from various universities on 28 October 1960. Student organizations such as TMTF (The National Federation of Students of Turkey) protested the military regime upon these dismissals. Alper, 217-18.

⁶² Ibid., 202

⁶³ Ibid., 203.

⁶⁴ Ulus, 30.

main formulator of left-Kemalist theses, which would be prevalent among students, especially after 1964.”⁶⁵ *Yön*’s authors were heterogeneous with different perspectives on combining the nationalist Kemalism and socialism⁶⁶ but mainly focused on “the rapid and equal development under the technocratic guidance” with “massive state intervention” to the economy. They also underlined the need for land reform, which İnönü had failed to realize between 1945 and 1950.

Among the authors of the *Yön* were Mümtaz Soysal, “İlhan Selçuk, Sadun Aren, Behice Boran, Doğan Avcıoğlu, and Selahhadin Eyüboğlu. According to Avcıoğlu revolutionary forces had to unite for an anti-capitalist and anti-feudalist struggle to achieve social justice and freedom.⁶⁷ According to these perspectives, integrating to the global capitalism without being fully developed at home and protection could only be an imperialist conspiracy.⁶⁸ Between 1961 and its ban in June 1967, the *Yön* represented Turkish Labor Party, the National Democratic Revolution program (*Milli Demokratik Devrim*, MDD) as well as the idea of the socialist takeover by “military-civilian vigorous forces” (*zinde kuvvetler*). The idea was to create a united national-front to cooperate with a junta to realize the revolution. Even though Avcıoğlu did not consider himself to be a Marxist, he left his mark on the Turkish left with his popular book *The Order of Turkey* after 1971, when the conspiracy of 9 March was prevented and taken to the court.⁶⁹ This political line was voiced in the journal *Devrim* (Revolution) since October 1969.⁷⁰ Özgür Mutlu Ulus calls the world view of the *Yön* as Third World developmentalism in which she “the vigorous forces” would play the role of the revolutionary vanguard. The views of the *Yön* were more or less already expressed thirty years ago in the journal of *Kadro* (Cadre). The measurement of growth was the basis of the development and the old economic principle of *étatisme* in Turkey was considered as the potential ingredient of Turkish socialism.⁷¹ “The *Yön*-*Devrim* circle was influenced by the model of the neighboring countries in the Middle East, such as the ‘Free Officers’ in Egypt and the Ba’ath regimes in Syria and Iraq.”⁷²

Arab socialism in Egypt stressed similar points in the need for a rapid economic growth in developing countries where, they believed, only socialist methods could ensure the self-sustained economic take-off. Nasser implemented a command economy and developed a unique form of socialism that was called Arab Socialism.⁷³ Turkish intellectuals were closely following

⁶⁵ Alper, 203-204.

⁶⁶ For a comparative chart on 6 principles of Kemalism and their Socialistic re-interpretations by *Yön-Devrim* intellectual movement, see: *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce: Sol*, 660.

⁶⁷ Ulus, 22; Zürcher, 208, 210, 214; Editorial, “Bildiri,” [Manifesto], *Yön*, December 20, 1961; Alper, 203-204; Doğan Avcıoğlu, “On Turkish Labor Party,” *Yön*, November 28, 1962.

⁶⁸ Alper, 204; Zürcher, 254.

⁶⁹ Ulus, 6.

⁷⁰ Erden Akbulut and Erol Ülker, “Tüstav Arşivlerinde 1960’lı Yıllar ve 12 Mart Dönemi,” *Toplumsal Tarih*, vol. 293, May 2018; Ulus, 43-44.

⁷¹ Ulus, 21-22.

⁷² Ibid., 182-183.

⁷³ Abdel Said likens Nasser’s program to Western Fabianism in its gradualism, avoidance of violent clashes between classes and the idea of capturing the state for social welfare. More strikingly, Nasser recognized religion, which would be really unfavorable for the staunch secularist and anti-clerical Kemalists. Aziz Nesin, a famous Turkish socialist author and satirist

what was happening in Egypt. For instance, Melih Tümer, reported his observations on Egypt on the 20th of December in 1961 at the *Yön*. Land reform, *étatisation*, rectifying the unequal distribution of wealth were important themes in his report.⁷⁴ Whereas the *Yön* was promoting reform program concerning the State Planning Organization in Turkey, the CHP government in the post-1960 coup regime did not follow satisfactorily this reform agenda turning the great expectations of the intellectuals of the *Yön* into disillusionment.⁷⁵ In an anecdote, İnönü is told to have said on November 1968 “I have perhaps realized not even thirty percent of my dreams [in my lifetime.]”⁷⁶ One of the reasons that the CHP had failed to implement and promote a whole hearted leftist political and economic program was that this kind of tendency to balance the political arena in Turkey, not causing extreme complications that would threaten the security and stability of the country.

Whereas the CHP declared itself as “the left of the center” (*ortanın solu*) party in 1965 and aimed at social democracy, the CHP failed to foster social democracy in Turkey primarily for two reasons: the structural economic problems that influenced the Turkish social formation and the identity politics of the CHP instead of full social democratic agenda; that is to say Turkism against the Kurdish question and secularism against Islamism. Social democracy would thrive in Western Europe where capitalists and working classes agreed on a compromise under the supervision of the umpire welfare state in the post-war era.⁷⁷ The central point was the denial of the self-regulating economy. Turkey, on the other hand, had only recently improved its industry a little bit but yet to form a seriously industrial economy and working class by the 1960s. Yunus Emre argues, in the early 1960s “the CHP leadership was concerned about the rise of the working-class movement and the emerging interest in socialism among the popular sector. This might result in losing the radical and progressive voters of the party. Therefore, the CHP redefined its position as standing on the left of center in the mid-1960s. Thus, the centre-left movement in Turkey emerged within the CHP, not from socialist origins. Up to this era, the CHP had been hostile to the left-wing actors in politics, but the party’s search for direction changed its positioning.”⁷⁸ The right to strike and collective bargaining were recognized in 1963.⁷⁹

had written his observations on sixty Turkish students at Al-Azhar Madrasa & University in Egypt on 10 January 1967 at the journal of *Ant* (Oath). Nesin expressed that he had seen many things that he could not associate with socialism. For details of Arab Socialism as well as Nesin’s observations, see: Abdel Moghny Said, *Arab Socialism*, (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1972), 72-77; Aziz Nesin, “Cami-ül Ezher ve Türk Öğrenciler,” *Ant*, January 10, 1967.

⁷⁴ Melih Tümer, “Nasser’s Socialism,” *Yön*, December 20, 1961.

⁷⁵ Ulus, 30.

⁷⁶ Kazım Kolcuoğlu, interview by Bedri Baykam, *68'li Yıllar: Eylemciler*, 348-49.

⁷⁷ Until the multi-part era in 1945 the republican Turkey had denied even the existence of classes and banned all politics based on social classes for the sake of Kemalist principle of Populism. The CHP, however, was even registered to the Socialist International in the 1970s revising its definition as “democratic left.” The 1980 coup d'état would crush the left and limit the rights of the working class. For the statistical details of this analysis, see: Yunus Emre, “Why has Social Democracy not Developed in Turkey? Analysis of an Atypical Case,” *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 2015 vol. 17, No. 4, pp. 395,396.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 398.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 400.

Student movement from the early 1960s until the end of 1960s would be influential in the rise of the social movement in 1969, as Emin Alper explains how the actions of the student movement in Turkey facilitated the working-class as well as peasant protests by the demonstration effect.⁸⁰ In other words, students helped the peasantry, as well as the growing industrial proletariat to acquire their own class consciousness and pursue respective interests as “there were no signs of increasing economic and social restraints on both workers and peasants” in the late 1960s Turkey to explain these changes with.⁸¹ Students were on the other hand under the influence of the intellectuals and professors in their socialist affiliations in the aftermath of the disillusionment with the CHP since the early 1960s. The newly abundant Marxist literature and translations available to students had great impact on them, so much that interrogators would often ask activists during the temporary detention at a police station: “Which literature has made you a revolutionary?”⁸² Of course, ongoing social structural and economic change in Turkey coincided with a new liberal political atmosphere, mass migration to urban areas and the emergence of student movement. All of these transformations went hand-in-hand contributing to the intensive experimental era of the Turkish Sixties in terms of Marxist literature’s making political sense in this geography.⁸³ Otherwise, the diffusion of Marxist thoughts cannot explain this intellectual shift in Turkey.⁸⁴

Other influential journals were: *Ant* (Oath) and *Aydinlik Sosyalist* (Luminous Socialist), *Türk Solu* (Turkish Left), *Sosyal Adalet* (Social Justice), and *Emek* (Labor). Apart from these, there were numerous leftist publications in the form of newspapers, journals, as well as magazines, brochures or leaflets of student organizations or trade unions such as DISK.⁸⁵ Moreover, *TKP'nin Sesi Radyosu* (The Voice of Turkish Communist Party, TKP) would broadcast since May 1967 in addition to the *Bizim Radyo* (Our Radio) broadcasting since 1958 onward, both from abroad. *Bizim Radyo* was based in Leipzig and used Turkish.⁸⁶ TKP supported Turkish Labor Party in Turkey during the Sixties since communism had been banned in Turkey for a long time. TKP targeted Turkish students and workers in Western Europe

⁸⁰ Alper, 421-23.

⁸¹ During this time period Turkey was applying an “import substituting industrialization based on the selective protection of the domestic manufacturing sector. There were 1.3 million people employed in the manufacturing sector within the 35.6 million Turkish population in 1971. Çağlar Keyder, *State and Class in Turkey: A Study in Capitalist Development*, (New York: Verso, 1987), 165, 174; Alper, 421-23.

⁸² Mustafa Zülkadiroğlu, interview by Bedri Baykam, *68'li Yıllar: Eylemciler*, 596.

⁸³ Karpat, 201.

⁸⁴ For understanding the causality dynamics in global intellectual networks, see: Sebastian Conrad, *What is Global History*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 62-70. Kindle Edition.

⁸⁵ DISK (The Confederation of Revolutionary Worker’s Trade Unions) was founded by the unionist in the Turkish Labor Party in 1967 and challenged the state-oriented and apolitical union Türk-İş. For the digital repository of some of these periodicals and publications, see the archive of TUSTAV: <http://www.tustav.org/sureli-yayinlar-arsivi/> , accessed May 1, 2018.

⁸⁶ Ulus, 140.

especially in Federal Republic of Germany.⁸⁷ The contestation for a revolutionary political program and strategy among these leftist groups allowed fluidity and interactions among themselves in the period between 1964 and 1967. However towards the end of 1960s, the crystallization of different point of views led divisions and rival factions but even then, opposing groups were not always theoretically consistent and homogenous. Critical turning points happened after the 1965 elections in which Justice Party (AP), the successor of the toppled DP, came into power with the sweeping victory at the parliament. Competing leftist groups were mostly departed from each other on certain matters such as whether to have a political party, to cooperate with potential radical officers in the army, to avoid illegal street activity, to work thought trade unionism, to follow major National Democratic Revolution program or Socialist Revolution thesis and so on. Before delving into the escalation of political tension in the streets let us look at these major fault lines and some of the leading senior figures, along with the trajectory of student organizations.

When İnönü wanted to send the army back to its barracks and the students to their campuses to pacify them in 1962 and 1963, the latter had gotten disillusioned with the CHP.⁸⁸ Continuing with this perspective, İnönü would miss the whole premise of the movement in 1968 that the youth was in search for a new way of life. He considered worldwide youth movements and protests going on at the same time period in Turkey as “a strange twist of the faith” that statesmen should pay attention.⁸⁹ However, he held the view that there was sickness in the university system to be cured so as prevent boycotts or university occupations appear legitimate and he found university reforms unsatisfactory.⁹⁰ İnönü’s perspective demonstrated concerns for order and regularity. The spirit of rebellion with its emerging new unheard of demands were hard to comprehend for old Kemalist founding figures.⁹¹ Independent socialists, on the other hand, found the opportunity to express themselves more comfortably when 1964 Cyprus crisis boosted the national sentiment.⁹² Intellectuals for the first time criticized the US and imperialism without

⁸⁷ For the transcription of the broadcasts of the Voice of Turkish Communist Party between May 1967 and December 1973, see: Erden Akbulut and Ersin Tosun, ed. *TKP'nin Sesi Radyosu, Mayıs 1967-Aralık 1973*, (İstanbul: Sosyal Tarih Yayınları).

⁸⁸ The same attitude of İnönü would continue and culminate into rage and fury in July 1968 April 1970. Concerning the boycotts and occupations of universities İnönü sarcastically said “Students lost the need to learn. Those who are in school age solve all issues of the world, but they do not need one thing: To learn. ... they do not attend classes, do boycotts and do not allow their fellows attend classes. What kind of thing is this?” For the video of İnönü’s interview, see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-TmBXLTjgls>, accessed 1 May 2018; *Ulus Gazetesi*, July 1, 1968 and April 29, 1970; Alper, 240,

⁸⁹ *Ulus Gazetesi*, November 4, 1968.

⁹⁰ *Ulus Gazetesi*, July 1, 1968 and November 6, 1968.

⁹¹ İnönü asked Artan Betil, a daughter of CHP senator, about her “hippi” hair style in a sarcastic way during the meeting with the representatives of international youth organizations. *Cumhuriyet*, November 25, 1968.

⁹² For a review on historiographies and multi-disciplinary studies on Cyprus issue that moves beyond “narrow legalism and parochial ethnocentrism”, see: Stephanos Pesmazoglou, “The Cyprus Problems,” *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, Volume 18, Number 1, May 2000, pp. 199-208 (Review)

being associated with Soviet Union or communism especially in the aftermath of the notorious Johnson letter to the prime minister Inönü.⁹³ US president Johnson implied in his letter on the 5th of June in 1964 that if Turkey had resorted to intervention to Cyprus, based on the Treaty of Guarantee, the USSR would also have involved in the crisis and in that case the US might have not defend Turkey against the Soviets.⁹⁴ It was a very undiplomatic letter causing a national outcry and anti-American public opinion in Turkey under the light of terrorist attacks on Turkish Cypriot villagers for intimidation by Greek EOKA (National Organization of Greek Struggle).⁹⁵ NATO alliance became suspicious and was “imagined to be a restricting force for a fully independent foreign policy.”⁹⁶ Socialists in the country comfortably attacked NATO using anti-imperialist discourse and found opportunity to urge their leftist political programs. During the years between 1963 and 1967 left Kemalism was dominant in the student organizations⁹⁷ but Turkish Labor Party increasingly attracted students to its socialist approach.

Turkish Labor Party (TIP) was established in 1961 as a reaction to American imposed apolitical trade unionism in Turkey. It took a while to gain a class-based party preceding mass unionist strikes and demonstrations. Mehmet Ali Aybar was offered the leadership and he accepted it on his own terms. When the leadership refused to accept the representatives of the youth branches to general congresses of the party it severed its ties with the youth. TIP’s major success was at the 1965 elections in which the party won 15 deputies in the parliament.⁹⁸ TIP was picky about legalism and independent from Soviet’s direct control like TKP.⁹⁹ Aybar endeavored to bring about a new kind of left against the old left of TKP in that Aybar would advise to read not just Marx and Engels but broader literature such as Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and Karl Kautsky. He urged “not to read Lenin that much” and Mao at all. Aybar stressed *a socialism that was peculiar to Turkey* but could not escape to be labeled as “opportunist” by his rivals.¹⁰⁰

Aybar was aware what was going on in Eurasia concerning the international thaw taking it as an opportunity for Turkish left.¹⁰¹ Aybar would visit Vietnam in August 1967 as a journalist

⁹³ Alper, 244.

⁹⁴ Johnson letter was leaked to the Turkish press on 13 January 1966. For the NATO, Cyprus crisis, and EOKA, see: Thomas W. Gallant, *Modern Greece*, (New York: Arnold Publishers, 2001), 192-196; David French, *Fighting EOKA: The British Counter-Insurgency Campaign on Cyprus, 1955-1959*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015); Baskın Oran, ed. *Türk Dış Politikası: Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar*, vol. 1, 12th.ed. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2006), 686.

⁹⁵ One of the shocking events was Bloody Christmas December 1963 onward. For the trajectory of Cyprus crisis and the Soviet relations with the Greek and Turkish side between 1964 and 1967, see: Oran, 720-734. *Cumhuriyet*, August 3, 1964.

⁹⁶ Alper, 261.

⁹⁷ Alper, 241.

⁹⁸ STMA, vol. 6, pp. 1998-1999.

⁹⁹ 68'li Yıllar: Tanıklar, 12, 18, 19.

¹⁰⁰ 68'li Yıllar: Eylemciler, 569.

¹⁰¹ Alper, 264.

taking part in Russel Court’s Investigation Committee on war crimes during the Vietnam War.¹⁰² Aybar contributed on anti-imperialist consciousness among the Turkish youth. Following closely the Prague Spring, he thought that the rose face of socialism was stained.¹⁰³ Aybar’s TIP also took a milestone in Turkey recognizing minority issues such as the Kurdish and Alevi question.¹⁰⁴ “The party managed to attract important intellectuals, such as the journalist Çetin Altan, novelist Yaşar Kemal, writers Aziz Nesin and Fethi Naci and many others along with future trade unionists. The party adopted a Marxist identity, with the party program formulated at the congress in February 17, 1964, but the party consistently refused Leninism.”¹⁰⁵ Behice Boran and Sadun Aren were other “big guns” of the party. Özgür Mutlu Ulus calls the struggle of TIP as the “long road to socialism” through parliamentarism and considers the party as a vanguard party for that gradual and long path to socialist victory. Aybar’s conviction was “Debonair” socialism or libertarian socialism. His vision was different from “scientific socialism”, which was neither understood nor appreciated well by even Soviet-type party members, such as Behice Boran and Sadun Aren in 1968. Aybar also criticized dogmatism of Turkish leftist movements and opposed Soviet actions saying, “socialism was for human beings and not the other way around.”¹⁰⁶ Yet, ironically, young members or sympathizers of the party found him rather “a controlling leader” that would cause a rupture due his calculating strategy or concern for legality.¹⁰⁷

TIP’s non-capitalist development model was similar to that of the *Yön* and the latter initially supported TIP. However, Aybar underlined the “democratic leadership of workers” in comparison to “technocratic view” of the *Yön*.¹⁰⁸ Mihri Belli and Doğan Avcioğlu departed from TIP and put forward the National Democratic Revolutionaries (MDD). MDD political program, developed by Mihri Belli in 1966 envisioned a military-civilian intelligentsia as the vanguard of the “short-cut revolution.”¹⁰⁹ Mihri Belli was an old-guard leftist who was first introduced to Marxism at Iowa University while studying economics 1936 onwards. Belli joined illegal communist activities in Mississippi countryside. Belli was dismissed from his position at the Economic Department of Istanbul University in 1944 and then exiled in Turkey. Then, Belli joined the Greek civil war as a Turkish comrade and guerilla fighter against the fascists between 1946 and 1949. After the general amnesty in 1950, he returned Turkey and became the administrator of TKP. However, after a year he was charged by the court and incarcerated for

¹⁰² STMA, vol. 7, 2070.

¹⁰³ *68’li Yıllar: Tanıklar*, 44.

¹⁰⁴ STMA, vol. 6, pp. 1998-1999.

¹⁰⁵ Ulus, 65.

¹⁰⁶ Hasan Aksakal, “A ‘Debonair’ Socialist, Principled Politician: The Position and Importance of Mehmet Ali Aybar in Turkish Political Life,” SDÜ *Fen Edebiyat Fakültesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, Aralık 2009, Sayı:20, pp. 86, 95-96; Vehbi Ersan, *1970’lerde Türk Solu*, 3rd ed. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayıncılığı, 2014), 25.

¹⁰⁷ *68’li Yıllar: Eylemciler*, 509-510; Vehbi Ersan, 19.

¹⁰⁸ Alper, 373.

¹⁰⁹ Ulus, 67.

seven years. In 1960s Belli and his fellow Avcioğlu advocated MDD program along with a National Front emphasis.¹¹⁰

According to this theory, inspired by Soviet re-conceptualization of Stalinist two-stage theory of revolution in 1957, in Third world countries, where there was neither a strong bourgeoisie nor a solid working class to become a leading force, “through Soviet aid, existed possibilities for the creation of National Democracy ruled by a United National-Democratic Front under the leadership of *any* democratic class, including revolutionary military officers.”¹¹¹ Nearing the end of the 1960s, especially entering into 1970, propagators of the MDD thesis split into various factions leading further variations and combinations among the leftists. The role of the army was the main reasons for the splintering of these groups.¹¹² Whereas Jacobine Avcioğlu leaned towards the 9th of March junta conspiracy and expected for a “revolution through a narrow door” because he thought that the parliamentary way was blocked, and the revolutionaries did not have enough time. On the other side, the old guard communists such as Mihri Belli, Hikmet Kivilcimli, Reşat Fuat Baraner established the journal *Türk Solu* (Turkish Left) in 1967 but it “became a forum of a wide front uniting the left-Kemalists, socialists, and communists.”¹¹³ Avcioğlu calculated that it was impossible to persuade the large population of peasants and workers that were loyal to the AP.¹¹⁴ The leaders of TIP, on the other hand, had accepted the two-staged model of revolution but since they insisted on the leadership of the workers they revised their political program in 1968-1969. Mehmet Ali Aybar, Behice Boran, and Sadun Aren argued that Turkey had already completed the democratic revolution and a fully capitalist economy had been developed in the country. Therefore, there was no need to follow the leadership of the elites. If the workers could seize the power, they could build socialism immediately.¹¹⁵ Hence was the thesis of “Socialist Revolution” of the Turkish Labor Party.

Opposition to MDD line came also from within. *Aydinlik Sosyalist Dergi* (Socialist Luminous) was published between November 1968 and January 1970. It split into two and the rival journal was established *Proleter Devrimci Aydiknlık* (Proletarian Revolutionary Luminous) by the young student activists in protest to the old guard leftists, such as Belli. The ongoing fractionalization of the MDD supporters would soon yield to alternative paths such as guerilla model, both the urban type and the countryside type. Post-1965 AP governments’ right-wing

¹¹⁰ Mihri Belli, *Gurbetten Notlar: Türkiye Solu, Yaratıcı Marksizm, Kürtler ve Dünya Üstiine*, (İstanbul: Belge Yayınları, 1996); *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce: Sol*, 549.

¹¹¹ In fact, Turkish MDD strategy in 1960s originated from early TKP in the 1920s. The early journal of *Aydinlik* (the first one) and Şefik Hüsnü-wing in Istanbul promoted the idea of a single-front struggle and assumed the nationalist Kemalists during the War of Liberation as a national bourgeoisie. Şefik Hüsnü’s positive regard for Kemalists continued even after the massacre of the 15 TKP members including Mustafa Suphi in 1921 on the way back to Anatolia from the Baku Congress of the People of the East. This Turkish delegate had helped securing Bolshevik support to Turkish Liberation War. Ulus, 25, 92-93; *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce: Sol*, 121.

¹¹² Ulus, 180.

¹¹³ Ersan, 26; Alper 338; Ulus, 59.

¹¹⁴ Alper, 333.

¹¹⁵ Alper, 336.

deputies and ministers put serious pressure on socialist students trying to intimidate them. The chief of staff Cemal Tural, an anti-communist general attempted to make the army as the main fighter against communists and attempted to curb freedom of speech in February 1967. Tural encouraged every citizen to spy on communists.¹¹⁶ The parliamentary experiment faced constant challenges and in one case right-wing opponents of “communism” even dared to lynch TIP deputy Çetin Altan in the parliament in 1968. Extra-parliamentary opposition emerged in this context.

In the meantime, student organizations at various universities grew into federations or becoming centers of mass political force, such as *Dev-Güç* (The United Force of Revolutionaries) and *Dev-Genç* (Federation of the Revolutionary Youth). The fight for taking over student organizations in elections- sometimes in fraudulent ways- between leftists and right-wing/Islamic groups or among rival leftist fractions had caused tensions for a few years at times leading to violence.¹¹⁷ Politicized students increasingly involved in national politics such as the national petrol.¹¹⁸ They also joined strikes with workers, occupations of land with peasants in the countryside. Along with these developments, the trade union DISK mobilized workers for mass demonstrations in urban eras seeking for their rights and hitting the ground with strikes. The supposed lack of workers’ consciousness was suddenly shattered by the staggering courage and initiative of workers at Turkish courts defending themselves without the supervision of the intelligentsia. The proletarian class was out there to struggle for themselves, which was one of the revolutionary moments between 1967 and 1971.¹¹⁹

The escalation of street activities sometimes united the right with the left, especially during the protest against the US 6th fleet in the summer of 1967 in response to Arab-Israel War. The anti-American protest at the Bosphorus continued into 1968 which would help the radical activists to come up with vociferous mobilizations of students in the name of full independence. 1967 Greek coup d'état triggered the view that CIA wanted to strangle leftist movements in the region given to the Dickson report of 1966. According to this report that was based on an American agent, the US foreign office would like the Turkish government to purge some opposing statesmen from the bureaucracy. A Turkish senator announced this report in the assembly.¹²⁰ The culmination of student activities erupted into spontaneous university

¹¹⁶ Alper, 303.

¹¹⁷ The hallmarks of student organizations in the era between 1965 and 1971 were the right-wing nationalist/Islamic *MTTB* (National Turkish Student Union) and *Komünizle Mücadele Derneği* (The Association of the Struggle Against Communism), newly emerging fascist group *Ülkü Ocakları* (Ideal Hearts) along with the Kemalist/left-wing *TMGT* (Turkish Organization of National Youth), *FKF* (Idea Clubs Federation), *DÖB* (The Union of Revolutionary Students) of Istanbul University and *AYOTB* (Student Union of Ankara Higher Schools) etc. For all the details of the ramifications of student organizations and their competing activities as well as violent clashes between 1965 and 1970, see: STMA, vol.8; Emin Alper and Özgür Ulus Mutlu.

¹¹⁸ *Toplumsal Tarih*, vol. 293, May 2018, p.102.

¹¹⁹ STMA, vol. 7, 2152.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 2025.

demonstrations and occupations in 1968 against this already tense background. Although the content of these protests was not the same, the timing was in concordance with the global 1968.

The Apex: 1968-1971

Anti-Imperialism, University Occupations, The Rise of Social Movements, and Violence

1968 in Turkey was momentarily a turning point in which the rise of the *Federation of Idea Clubs* led “a full-fledged social movement after the summer of 1968 and triggered the rise of movements in other segments of the society.”¹²¹ Student demonstrations prior to 1968 had demanded a rather more idealist university system where professors should not seek self-interests outside the university and dedicate themselves to the well-education of the young generations helping for the national leap of the republic. Post 1965 period caused increasing demands for freedom of thought during the AP governments. Socialist students became one of the mass oppositional groups in the country. Student boycotts had started with apolitical reasons and quickly escalated, as well as transformed into large boycotts and university occupations, seeking broader and political goals including more liberal university atmosphere.¹²²



The more clashes happened between opposing student camps, the more socialist students felt under attack and they became militant in their struggle. In the wake of TIP’s legalist strategy to de-escalate socialist activists in order not to give justification to the authorities for a fascist suppression of the left, the militant students became impatient. Student activists turned their minds to a more appealing program; i.e., MDD thesis because of their exponentially growing self-confidence that stemmed from radical activities on campus. The strict legalism and bureaucratic hierarchy at TIP alienated the youth. Revolutionary students had started to consider more radical alternatives as being rapid and realistic to realize social justice and anti-imperialist foreign policy.¹²³ Some students imagined the relationship between activist students and civilian-military elites as a similar situation to pre-27 May 1960 coup d'état, in which students played a significant role for the “revolution”.¹²⁴ Radical students such as Doğu

¹²¹ Alper, 331.

¹²² The journal of *Ant* (Oath) on 17 December 1968 above quotes the slogan of the Istanbul University’s forum of nearly 2500 students that all kinds of worldviews and political outlooks [prevalent in Turkey] shall be discussed, urging for a democratic university. At the background appears the first *modern* university in Turkey, Istanbul University dating back to 1900. (Courtesy of TUSTAV)

¹²³ Alper, 33-340.

¹²⁴ Then a female student activist, Işık Gürsoy Uyar, states that whereas they had considered 1960 military intervention as a revolution in the 1960s they think in the present that it is a coup d'état. Işık Gürsoy Uyar, interview by Ayşe Yazıcıoğlu, *68'in Kadınları*, 132.

Perinçek managed to sever the *Federation of Idea Clubs* from TIP and transformed it into *Federation of the Revolutionary Youth*, i.e., *Dev-Genç*. This was a massive blow to TIP, which lost its momentum formerly acquired by national “awakening meetings” couple of years ago among other things with the slogan “students and workers hand in hand.”¹²⁵ *Dev-Genç* emerged as the dominating actor in student politics for the following years.

The first university boycott in Turkey started on the 10th of June in 1968 at Ankara University’s Faculty of Language, History, and Geography. The spark of the boycott at Ankara University was the dispute between a professor and students concerning the postponing the Latin language exam to another date with no reason. Frustrated, students entered into other classrooms and made a fait accompli and asked professors to cancel all exams in the same day. Receiving no response, they started the first boycott, which would prove to have a domino effect on other universities with three waves of boycotts just like the European students in France, Germany, and Italy influenced Turkish youth with the demonstration effect.¹²⁶ The boycott of the 10th of June first spread to law faculties of Ankara University on 11th of June and Istanbul University on 12th of June. Then it did so to Istanbul Technical University and Maçka Technical School on 17th of June. In a short period of time occupations became widespread. Students at Ankara University demanded apolitical things such as lifting the course of Latin language from philology department and language threshold as well as exams in the first year; freezing fees and changing regulations to include students into the university administration.

Cumhuriyet and *Milliyet* newspapers followed closely the news in Europe.¹²⁷ The journal of Ant also published a series of analysis on the French May and leaders of student movements in the world on 3rd of December in 1968. It featured Daniela Cohn Bendit, Aloïn Krivine, Rudolf Dutschke, Karl Wolff, David Adelstein, Motokasu Tani, Tarik Ali, Tom Hayden.¹²⁸ Some of the aspects of these leaders that the journal introduced were extra-parliamentary politics, being workers for the workers against Stalinism, alienation of people in the capitalist structure and the need for creating new kind of people for the social liberation, de-centralization, democratic society, freedom of thought with the independence of people from the dominance by corporations, the power of spontaneous action defying the control mechanisms. Only the idea that ideology is superior to love by the Japanese Motokasu Tani stood out as a provocative thought for the new left point of view, yet the same idea was still resonating among some puritan Turkish radical students.¹²⁹ According to Oral Çalışlar, an activist of the time, mentions that socialist puritanism began to take over love affairs among Turkish student activists over the course time due to the “small town culture”. Çalışlar also talks about the influence of “red Rudi” and “red Dany” saying the Sorbonne events had unconsciously affected them.¹³⁰ The action of the student movements in the world had an obvious impact on Turkish students encouraging their will.

¹²⁵ *Toplumsal Tarih*, vol. 293, May 2018, p. 103.

¹²⁶ *Cumhuriyet*, June 11, 1968; Alper, 327, 352, 406.

¹²⁷ *Milliyet*, May 1968.

¹²⁸ *Ant*, December 3, 1968.

¹²⁹ Oral Çalışlar, interview by Bedri Baykam, *68’lı Yıllar: Eylemciler*, 96.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 100.

Additionally, intellectuals and professors in Turkey contributed to the independent thinking of the youth. For instance, professor Tarık Zafer Tunaya would advise students “to try not to resemble anybody” at the Turkish Revolutionaries Hearths and journalist İlhan Selçuk recommended them “to seek permission from nobody [to act].”¹³¹ When Deniz Gezmiş and his friends stormed the offices at Istanbul University to launch campus occupation, Tunaya was surprised on what was going on and then did not like the fact that his own students rebelled against him saying “I like rebellious youth but not the ones that rebel against me!”¹³² It was a moment of pushing the limits and was not contradictory to the spirit of 1968, which aimed at the unthinkable; whereas students who were members of the FKF and following TIP’s line hesitated to join the occupations and boycotts Deniz Gezmiş and his fellow activists did not hesitate to send professors and the rector out of the university by forceful protest and fait accompli. Leaders of TIP considered that the timing was wrong for boycotts but then after a while those hesitating students joined the big moment, too.¹³³ TIP’s strict party discipline and hierarchy had become irritating for the radical students.¹³⁴ Deniz Gezmiş’s leadership in creating spontaneous events and organizational skills impressed people around him. Another faculty member, Cemil Meriç, gave conferences on anarchist thought in the Faculty of Literature at Istanbul University.

The university boycotts and occupation at Istanbul University continued until 1970, with intervals of closing down the university temporarily by the university senate and calling the police to the campus and then re-invasion by the students. Generally speaking, the university senate was sympathetic to the demands of the students which education related demands were as well as the broader university reform question. A few times the senate attempted to implement their resolutions in cooperation with the faculty and student representatives. However, continuing de facto occupation of the university by the students as well the ultimatum-like language of the student announcements made it difficult for the university administration to function. Adding more disappointment to this failure was the stalling off university reform by the parliamentary. Both students and teaching or research assistants as well as the faculty at the university actively engaged with the university reform and produced booklets raising their concerns and demands. In response, the university senate had seven regular and one extraordinary meeting at the end to discuss boycotts and student demands. On the 27th December 1968 seven students, namely, Deniz Gezmiş, Celal Doğan, Öcal Okay, Mehdi Beşpinar, Masis Kürkçügil, Kemal Böngöllü, and Bozkurt Nuhoğlu, were taken into custody by the police. The latter two were the former boycott and occupation leaders.¹³⁵ At the Istanbul Technical University, the boycotts started with the slogan of “revolution in education” and ended with the slogan of “social revolution”.¹³⁶ Consultation Council of Student Organizations (*Öğrenci Örgütleri Danışma Kurulu*) set up a campaign of “No to NATO” and tried to synchronize student movements and opened up discussion forums to talk about student movements. Meetings at ITUTB (Union of Students at Istanbul Technical University) discussed the Western European

¹³¹ Mustafa Gürkan, interview by Bedri Baykam, *68'li Yıllar: Eylemciler*, 224.

¹³² Ibid., 229.

¹³³ Alper, 359.

¹³⁴ Mehmet Beşlioğlu, interview by Bedri Baykam, *68'li Yıllar: Eylemciler*, 47.

¹³⁵ Zafer Toprak, “1968-1969 İstanbul Üniversitesi Boykot ve İşgalleri,” *Toplumsal Tarih*, vol. 293, May 2018, 72-80.

¹³⁶ STMA, vol. 7, 2098.

and North American 1968 and the views of Herbert Marcuse, Roger Garaudy, and Jean-Paul Sartre. Soviet invasion of Prague was criticized.¹³⁷ Overall, failing to meet the demands of the student movement in Turkey for university reform would overflow the academia and cause larger political complications outside campuses. The shockwaves of the student movement reached to the students of military academy and they joined the anti-imperialist protests as well.¹³⁸

One of the symbolic events of anti-imperialism was the protest against the incoming American ambassador to Turkey, Robert W. Kommer in late 1968 and early 1969. Protests against him were held both in Istanbul and Ankara. Kommer was a former CIA station chief in Vietnam responsible for the “pacification” in Vietnam, that is to say the man in charge of torture of the members of the communist resistance.¹³⁹ When Kommer visited Middle East Technical University, which was founded after the US university model, radical students burnt his car and the incident became one of the concrete evidences of anti-imperialist consciousness in Turkey. When the METU administration attempted to close the university temporarily the students occupied the university.¹⁴⁰ Anti-American protests were heavily launched against the US 6th fleet in the Mediterranean since the summer 1967, continuing in 1968 and 1969. On the 15th of July in 1968 and onwards, Turkish students spontaneously attacked American soldiers in Taksim Square and chasing them in Beyoğlu where American soldiers would go to nightclubs or brothels. The police intervened and raided the student dorms of ITU killing one student, namely, Vedat Demircioğlu. On the 18th of July in 1968 angry students did not heed the ban and marched towards the Dolmabahçe wharf in Istanbul attacking American soldiers on land. Some grabbed their hats and clothes, some threw ink to the faces of the soldiers, and some stoned the marines or threw them into the Bosphorus. MDD supporters and members of the Union of Revolutionary Students (*DÖB*) were outraged because of the death of Demircioğlu. The SD wing of TIP were concerned with violent clashes which could diminish the popularity of student movement.¹⁴¹ Fifty-four students and four police were wounded, and 34 students were arrested during the protests and dormitory raids. The US gave a memorandum to Turkey raising its concerns about the Istanbul incidents.¹⁴² In February 1969, anti-American protests regarding the visits of the US 6th fleet spread to Izmir, Trabzon, and Ankara in addition to Istanbul. Students were angry because the same fleet had stopped Turkish navy en route to Cyprus in the past.¹⁴³ Yet conservative groups grew concerned about the increasing leftist activity and they associated these activities to a potential leftist coup d'état. Conspiracy theories were propagated.¹⁴⁴ As a result, during the attacks against leftist students by the conservative groups in the midst of anti-American protests 200 protesters were wounded, and the police did almost nothing to stop the

¹³⁷ Ibid., 2099.

¹³⁸ STMA, vol.7, 2101.

¹³⁹ *Tüm*, December 11, 1968; *Cumhuriyet*, January 8, 1969; STMA, vol. 7, 2100, 2103-04.

¹⁴⁰ STMA, vol.7, 2101.

¹⁴¹ Alper, 369; *Cumhuriyet*, July 17-18, 1968.

¹⁴² *Cumhuriyet*, July 19, 1968.

¹⁴³ Harun Karadeniz, *Olaylı Yıllar ve Gençlik*, (İstanbul: May Yayınları, 1969), 130-132.

¹⁴⁴ Alper, 385.

attacks on students. Two students were dead. This violent clash was called “the bloody Sunday” in which the attackers shouted, “death to communists/the godless”.¹⁴⁵

The imaginations of anti-American students convinced themselves in their call to independent Turkey that the US is using Turkey as a political and military satellite for its imperialist goals in the world. Ambassador Kommer had to respond such claims and said that he had admired Atatürk and Turkey was already an independent state.¹⁴⁶ For years, major contention had been the argument that while NATO preferred a “stable Turkey”, nationalists sought development.¹⁴⁷ Just like the Trotskyist Fourth International (FI) put pressure on Charles de Gaulle to withdraw France from NATO as an imagined *capitalist international*, Turkish students and intellectuals demanded to get out of NATO in order to save the sovereignty of Turkey and separating Anatolia from American imperialism giving up arm purchases from the USA.¹⁴⁸ According to the student activists, Atatürk welcomed the Bolshevik aid in the nationalist struggle against the British, French, Italian, and the Greeks during the invasion of Anatolia 1919 onwards. Anti-imperialist alliance of Atatürk and the Bolsheviks were the reference points for Turkish leftist students in 1960s. However, they either forgot or ignored the fact that even though Mustafa Kemal Pasha utilized both pan-Islamic and Bolshevik anti-imperialism during the Turkish War of Liberation in addition to resorting to liberal internationalism of Wilson, Kemal Pasha gave up Islamic legacy after securing the independence of Turkey.¹⁴⁹ The new Republican Turkey was accepted into the Western European international order. Moreover, Kemal Pasha declared capitalism as Turkish economic policy at Izmir economy congress in 1923. Highly likely, it was the Kemalist leadership who massacred the Turkish delegate on the 28th of January in 1921 coming from the Baku Congress of the People of the East.¹⁵⁰ These facts clearly demonstrate that the founding father of Turkey, Atatürk, was anti-imperialist nationalist but hardly a Marxist.¹⁵¹ The Marxist youth in the late 1960s flexibly associated Atatürk in their leftist imaginations to the anti-imperialist protests of the time.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁵ Cumhuriyet, February 16-17, 1969.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Yön, December 20, 1961.

¹⁴⁸ Solar Mohandes, “Bringing Vietnam Home: The Vietnam War, Internationalism, and May ’68,” *French Historical Studies*, vol. 41, no. 2 (April 2018), 229; Ulus, 108, 122, 143, 150.

¹⁴⁹ For anti-Westernist diplomacy in the early 20th century in Asia, see: Cemil Aydin, *The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia: Visions of World Order in Pan-Islamic and Pan-Asian Thought*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007)

¹⁵⁰ Ulus, 134.

¹⁵¹ Even Falih Rıfkı Atay, a staunch Kemalist nationalist and contemporary of Mustafa Kemal, would declare in 1970 that “when Turkish nationalist were fighting against the Greek invaders during İnönü battles [in 1920s] we did not only fight against the imperialist but also extreme leftists.” Atay claimed that Turkish nationalists drowned Mustafa Suphi and Leninists [in the Black Sea] whom would represent in the present the radical leftists. Atay also reminds that Atatürk suppressed the communists in Ankara after this incident. Falih Rıfkı Atay, quoted in ANT, April 14, 1970.

¹⁵² Military governments between 1960 and 1962 changed the DP’s foreign policy that dismissed the non-aligned bloc in world politics. The generals showed sympathy to the Algerian

Whereas the university occupations were initially met with positive regards by the public and the government increasing clashes between the opposing ideological groups as well as the clashes between the radicals and the police would concern all the nerves of Turkish society and the state apparatus. Violent clashes all the more radicalized the leftist student activists between 1969 and 1971. University education was disrupted by ongoing occupations and student politics were criminalized.¹⁵³ Sixty-nine army navy officers made a declaration and protested the murders in the midst of violence. This declaration alarmed the army for a potential coup plot.¹⁵⁴ During these years there were massive workers' strikes in cooperation with student activists, street-theaters tried to address local problems in an ironic way and established theater groups such as "Theater of the Movement for the Revolution" and "Worker's Theater", and so on.¹⁵⁵ These theater groups mainly aimed at mobilizing the masses. Additionally, amateur theater groups emerged blurring the lines between professional and amateur acting groups and making theater accessible to everybody.¹⁵⁶ Workers followed, in order, students, peasants, teachers, white collar workers, and civil servants in the chains of the cycle of social protest in Turkey and on the 15th and 16th of June in 1970, the government was on the brink of collapse.¹⁵⁷ The economy was not bad in this era neither for the peasants nor the workers. Yet, the student movement influenced all the segments of the society in terms of seeking their more rights and structural change.¹⁵⁸ By 1970, the campus was not a place of mass politics any more but a place of physical violence.¹⁵⁹ The government was too late in its attempt to make university reform in 1970 as well as to enact a "personnel law" in order to appease the masses with discontent and to stop turbulence in the country.¹⁶⁰

University campuses in 1970 were full of Molotov cocktails and students began to arm themselves. Since the fall of 1969 some student went to Palestine to receive guerilla training in Al-Fatah camps. Supporters of MDD line split because of the inconsistence between the "practical radicalism and theoretical pacification of MDD thought."¹⁶¹ Militant students did not like being passive in a schema that assigns an active role to the military officers for a leftist coup d'état. They had already become highly militant in street fights and they began to seek the role of

independence struggle and Turkey had become sensitive to the anti-imperialist liberation movements in the world in order not to become isolated in world politics in relation to Cyprus issue. The Algerian socialist revolution in 1962 gained prestige and popularity in global affairs and its story transformed both the Algerian internal politics continuously and the anti-colonial movements and Third World diplomacy for a long time. Jeffrey James Byrne, *Mecca of Revolution: Algeria, De-colonization, and the Third World Order*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016)

¹⁵³ Alper 390.

¹⁵⁴ *Cumhuriyet*, October 17, 1969.

¹⁵⁵ Bilge Seçkin Çetinkaya, "1968'de Sokaklar, İşçiler ve Gençler," *Toplumsal Tarih*, vol. 293, May 2018, pp. 130-134.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Alper, 444.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 421.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 441.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 455.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 429.

a vanguard warriors. The self-confidence and militancy of the students had been exponentially increasing.¹⁶² One of the leaders of the factions in MDD line was Mahir Çayan. According to Çayan, even if a radical Kemalist coup had happened the communists could have been purged by the progressive purges as it happened in Egypt and Algeria.¹⁶³ Many of the militants that went to the Beqaa valley, Lebanon to learn guerilla fight were arrested at the Syria border when they returned Turkey. These students such as Hüseyin İnan, Yusuf Aslan, and Sinan Cemgil were mostly from the METU supporting the Cuban model. This group that was a mixture of eclectic MDD thesis with Kemalism as well as Castroism had to postpone their fight.¹⁶⁴ Deniz joined these militants and was trained by the Palestine Liberation Organization in Jordan in 1969. Cengiz Çandar was another militant in Palestine and would later on say in his memoir, “We proudly clutched our Palestinian identity cards on which we could not decipher a single word or letter. Such was our romanticism at the time!”¹⁶⁵ After the release of these militants in 1970, Deniz Gezmiş established the Turkish Peoples Liberation Army (*THKO*) with them. The idea was to establish a political party out of a vanguard fighting guerilla organization.

At this point, Argentinian Che Guevara, Brazilian Carlos Marighella, and French Régis Debray were popular among the Turkish radicals. A female activist Necla Kuglin had translated Marighella’s ideas into Turkish. Meanwhile Fidel Castro and Che Guevara had been turned into mythical heroes for Turkish radicals so much so that Mahir Çayan began to accuse another MDD faction as pacifist forcing Doğu Perinçek and the journal of *Proletarian Revolutionary Luminous* to adopt a Maoist line to save its radicalism. When Perinçek refused the Latin American guerilla model as “adventurist” Dev-Genç lost its popularity.¹⁶⁶ Apart from a potential left-wing coup d’état, in the revolutionary arena from then on competing guerilla groups dominated the political atmosphere in Turkey and cooperate with the radical Kemalist officers. Urban guerilla model after Marighella and Guevaresque rural guerilla model were competing with each other.¹⁶⁷ Deniz Gezmiş’s *THKO* merged Kemalism with *foco* theory and aimed at keeping autonomy even if a Kemalist coup d’état would happen.¹⁶⁸ Mahir Çayan’s circle, which was represented by the journal of *Kurtuluş* (Liberation) had to turn to urban guerilla model soon because of the necessity to raise propaganda effectively. The countryside was not ready for a guerilla war.¹⁶⁹ Until the 12th of March in 1971, military intervention THKO and THKP-C competed in urban guerilla war. In addition to Carlos Marighella THKP-C militants also took Venezuelan Douglas Bravo as a role model. The actions would vary from bank robbery to raise funds for the vanguard party¹⁷⁰,

¹⁶² Ibid., 430.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 470.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 432-33.

¹⁶⁵ Cengiz Çandar, “A Turk in the Palestinian Resistance,” Journal of Palestine Studies, vol. 30, no. 1 (Autumn, 2000), 72, 78.

¹⁶⁶ Alper, 432-33.

¹⁶⁷ See AP Archive “Turkish Urban Guerillas”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rVxii0bHQxs>, accessed May 1, 2018.

¹⁶⁸ Alper, 467.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 471.

¹⁷⁰ See AP Archive “Five Armed Men Rob A Bank In Istanbul”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=85Cu_P0QXb0, accessed May 1, 2018.

kidnapping important figures such as American airmen¹⁷¹, British and Canadian radar experts, taking hostages such as the daughter of a Turkish officer as well as Israeli consul general in Turkey Ephraim Elrom. Mahir and his comrades would kill the diplomat when their demands not met by the Turkish authorities. When some of these militants put in military prison in Istanbul they even managed to escape from the prison thanks to the help by some radical Kemalist officers.

The dazzling incidents that shook the country was a signal for a radical break and that breaking point would be a military intervention that would crush the leftist militants. At the end, Mahir Çayan and his fellow guerilla fighters would be surrounded by the Turkish gendarmes on and killed in action in a small Anatolian village, Kızıldere (conincidentally it literally means red stream) while they attempted to bargain with the Turkish state to prevent the execution of Deniz Gezmiş, Hüseyin İnan, and Yusuf Aslan.¹⁷² The final was a catastrophe occurred on the 30th of March in 1972 where British and Canadian radar experts were kidnapped from the Black Sea cost NATO base were dead along with all the guerilla team members including Mahir Çayan and except Ertuğrul Kürkçü. The latter would later to tell the story of the incident as a witness from the insider perspective. THKO and THKP-C were terminated by the military regime of 1971 which responded to the guerilla activity by the NATO's counter-guerilla organization.¹⁷³ The chief of staff outmaneuvered the radical leftist Kemalists, shot down the 9th of March conspiracy and replaced it with the 12th of March in 1971 intervention. Mahir Kaynak, a member of Turkish intelligence (MIT) slowly but surely worked among the conspirator officers and intellectuals to decipher the 9th of March plot operating under the disguise of a teaching assistant in economy department at Istanbul University. Kaynak was uncovered after the 12th March intervention and expressed in his memoirs that the National Intelligence Organization (MIT) sought to find Soviet links to the Turkish student movement but he personally could not find any tie. His personal conviction was that Britain was using the Turkish student movement, not the USSR, against the US in order to gain control over Turkey.¹⁷⁴ When THKP-C militants were under trial there were six women militants at the court, namely Ilkay Demir, Hatice Alankuş, Rüçhan Manas, Tülay Tat, Kadriye Denizözen, Jülide Zaim. These radical women represented the female activists in the Turkish student movement and mostly coming from middle and upper-middle class families.

Against the Elders of Old Left and the Men of the New: Anti-Authoritarianism and Counter-Culture

There is almost a consensus within the Turkish historiography that Turkish Sixties did not have anti-authoritarian and counter-cultural dynamics as we know it had in the Western

¹⁷¹ See AP archive “US Airmen Released”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=40sKaFQIq88>, accessed May 1, 2018.

¹⁷² See AP Archive, “Gezmis Arrested”:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MlOkfxOw4iw>, accessed May 1, 2018.

¹⁷³ Bülent Gökay, *Soviet Eastern Policy and Turkey, 1921-1991: Soviet Foreign Policy, Turkey, and Communism*, (New York: Routledge, 2006), 96.

¹⁷⁴ Hulki Cevizoğlu, *Kod Adı 68:68'lilerin Dünü Buguünü*, 2nd ed. (Ankara: Ceviz Kabuğu Yayıncılığı, 2008), 74-77.

European and North American 1968. Turkish students mostly sought anti-imperialist struggle instead of libertarian movement. Musical trends were mainly folk Turkish music and rock was not popular as much as it was in the Western world. Anti-bureaucratic and spontaneous character of Turkish 1968. “Limited influences of the Western liberal movements were overshadowed by the student militancy after 1969” in Turkey.¹⁷⁵ There was a limited effort to search for a new way of life as opposed to the struggle to establish a new political order. Zafer Şenocak argues that Turkish 1968 is driven by Vulgar Marxism and provocatively asks “Was the Turkish revolt of 1968 an emancipation movement at all? Or, to put it differently, was it not controlled by self-appointed “leaders” with macho allure who had long since lost touch with reality?”¹⁷⁶ Şenocak criticizes Turkish 1968 as it did not consider gender relations and revolutionizing the private life, which did not exist after all.¹⁷⁷ Bağış Erten asserts that Turkish 1968 did not provide a major criticism on the society and brought about nothing new. Turkish 1968 was a socialization process of the Turkish university generation. Basic problematic was not questioning the state authority but the issue of who held the power. The society was considered as innocent and deceived by the imperialists and their cooperators.¹⁷⁸ Ergun Aydinoğlu, on the other hand, criticizes Bağış Erten’s mis-comparison of the Turkish 1968 to the Western European 1968 due to his Euro-centric perspective. Aydinoğlu also criticizes Yiğit Akın because of his exaggeration on the degree of the fallout between the old generations and new generations in the leftist groups of Turkey. Ergun Aydinoğlu accepts that the new generation rebelled some old figures such as Mehmet Ali Aybar and Behice Boran. However, Aydinoğlu argues that old guard leftists such as Mihri Belli, Hikmet Kivilcimli, Reşat Baraner had some influence over the militant radicals.¹⁷⁹ I argue that not all leftist students followed those old guard leftists’ direction, and there were significant amount of anti-authoritarianism within the broader leftist student movement against the elders. In a more recent work, Emin Alper put forwards that “a narrow anti-authoritarian and libertarian stream of Turkish student movement reached its zenith in 1968, but faded away, surpassed by a populist political radicalism which refused ‘Western inspired’ culture on behalf of the people’s culture and lifestyles.”¹⁸⁰

The underlying implications of these views is that even if the young generation rebelled the old left and sought a militant way to establish socialism in Turkey they did not defy their elders in the Old Left because of theoretical views on life. The youth’s limited anti-authoritarianism against the legalist and calculating elders emerged as a practical matter. Moreover, since the youth did not look forward to changing the old patterns of life in Turkish society counter-cultural elements remained insignificant such as wearing miniskirts, blue jeans, having long hairs. Even then these counter-cultural students were threatened and accused of being “bourgeois.”¹⁸¹ Emin Alper suggests that further publications of memoirs in depth would shed more light on counter-cultural aspects of Turkish 1968. In addition to old publications of

¹⁷⁵ Alper, 487.

¹⁷⁶ Şenocak, 178.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 179.

¹⁷⁸ Erten, 839, 840.

¹⁷⁹ Ergun Aydinoğlu, “*Sol Hakkında Hersey Mi? Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce-Sol Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme*, (İstanbul: Versus Kitap, 2008), 134-135.

¹⁸⁰ Alper, 497.

¹⁸¹ Alper, 500.

mostly memoirs of the male activists recently memoirs of female student activists have been released. Under the light of these memoirs in the form of interviews I argue that the experiences of activists already shook the taboos in Turkish culture concerning the gerontocratic social hierarchy and gender relations. If the nature of “anarchistic and destructive activism of students against the authority”¹⁸² was not clear in terms of whether it was an *anarchistic individualism*, or a *Jacobin collectivist radicalism* one thing is clear: the responses of female activists to the challenges they faced on the part of their fellow male activists changed the authority dynamics as well as sexual relations between women and men. These experiences would vary from one activist to another and not homogenic, monolithic. However, they amounted to a limited counter-cultural aspect in Turkish Sixties revealing female agency. In this regard, one should also not compare the dynamics of Turkish culture with the dynamics of Western European cultural dynamics in terms of understanding how revolutionary Turkish 1968 was. Clifford Geertz and cultural anthropologists focus on the web of meanings peculiar to a certain human community.¹⁸³

Some of the female activists had to accept the hegemonic masculinity of male activists and found it comfortable to operate in the socialist struggle in this position. İşil Gürsoy Uyar says that it was the men who were elected to the leadership of *idea clubs* and who were expected to speak. Not only men put pressure on women but also women had auto-control over themselves regarding certain patterns of male dominancy and expected “etiquettes” from women.¹⁸⁴ Müfide Pekin tells that romantic relationship was based on marriage and there was no women’s movement in the 1968. Romantic relationship was lived in a courteously and not explicitly in the public. Pekin questioned sexual liberty not as a matter of freedom but as a daily matter that she reflected upon and in the example of Lenin’s multiple darlings such as Ines Armand.¹⁸⁵ Sema Bulutsuz explains that being a revolutionary was a matter of manliness and women thought to be emancipated by the revolution as a result of a common struggle “shoulder to shoulder.” Patriarchal relationship was obvious in collective life so much so that in some prisons men’s ward made decisions and then they notified women about the minutes; the latter obeyed them most of the time. On the other hand, Bulutsuz expresses that it was the women who had realized the sexual liberty in Turkey not men because men were already free in that regard and would not become pregnant. Moreover, whereas women carried out both revolutionary activism at the party and served at home, men were considered to have been worthy of being served at home because of their revolutionism.¹⁸⁶ According to Şermin Çetiner female students lived a kind of communal life at dorms but it was very difficult to overcome sexual taboos.¹⁸⁷

Turkish “communes” at dorms were mostly collective way of life segregated in men’s and women’s dorms. Since dorms were also state institutions and easily seized ideological by activist groups it was easier to create a communal atmosphere at dorms. Confirming the

¹⁸² Alper, 507.

¹⁸³ For instance, see: Robert Lavenda and Emily Schultz, *Anthropology: What Does it Mean to be Human?* 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 213-229; Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

¹⁸⁴ İşil Gürsoy Uyar, interview by Ayşe Yazıcıoğlu, *68’in Kadınları*, 135-139.

¹⁸⁵ Müfide Pekin, interview by Ayşe Yazıcıoğlu, *68’in Kadınları*, 148-152.

¹⁸⁶ Sema Bulutsuz, interview by Ayşe Yazıcıoğlu, *68’in Kadınları*, 166-170.

¹⁸⁷ Şermin Çetiner, interview by Ayşe Yazıcıoğlu, *68’in Kadınları*, 177-79.

patriarchal structure of the society was the fact that the more women acted manly the more they had gotten higher status within the revolutionary movement.¹⁸⁸ Büşra Ersanlı would consciously react to the gender hierarchy in terms of discussions and forums and macho manners that dictated ladies not to laugh loudly in the public or chuckle on the bus. On one occasion Ersanlı was asked to travel to Siverek where guerilla activists were fighting in order to “domesticate” the male activist. She was outraged by this sexist attitude and threw up this disgusting demand to a male leader. The critical position of the men in radical activists were so given that the police would interrogate men much more severely and longer than the women.¹⁸⁹ Even the elder women in the socialist struggle would “turn to a man” when it came to be serious about political matters. Behice Boran, an old guard leftist and senior radical, would become an authoritarian woman in the prison when she had to share the same ward with the younger female activists in the Yıldırım prison; Boran was much more authoritarian than Mehmet Ali Aybar.

There was a necessity for ladies in the society to have either an engagement or a marriage contract with a man in order to gain value and respect in 1960s.¹⁹⁰ Traditional values were still strong.¹⁹¹ The police would insolently and condescendingly ask female activists in interrogations “Are you a woman or a girl”, meaning whether one was a virgin or not.¹⁹² To sum up, old cultural values challenged the Turkish female activists and led some of them into a counter-cultural defiance in terms of masculine authority and sexual liberty. Mihri Belli, an old guard communist argued in 1970 that the revolution could not be achieved with the students.¹⁹³ The kind of revolution in his mind was the old revolution by which political power was seized and the society is designed from top to the bottom. The kind of revolution that some female activist endeavored to achieve was a cultural one in which they transformed themselves into a new way of life from the ground of the society.

¹⁸⁸ Şule Zaloğlu, interview by Ayşe Yazıcıoğlu, *68'in Kadınları*, 186-87.

¹⁸⁹ Büşra Ersanlı, interview by Ayşe Yazıcıoğlu, *68'in Kadınları*, 41-44.

¹⁹⁰ For a memoir type of novel on Yıldırım Women's Ward, see: Sevgi Soysal, *Yıldırım Bölge Kadınlar Koğuşu*, 8th ed. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayıncılık, 2018); Fatma Arda Sayman, interview by Ayşe Yazıcıoğlu, *68'in Kadınları*, 64-65.

¹⁹¹ Ottoman practice of monitoring migrant male workers to urban areas, as well as “lonely” women in neighborhoods by the residents, was a common principle for both Muslim, Christian, and Jewish communities for centuries. If residents or community leaders were suspicious of anything against perceived virtue, then they could call the janissaries to intervene for saving the public order. It seems that such traditional values were still entrenched in Turkish society in the 1960s. Turkish female activists had to respond to sexual norms and challenges even within the revolutionary student movement. Students, both male and female, were still expected to stay at men-only or women-only dorms. Any mix-gender student house would be under suspicion of the general society. See: Fariba Zarinebaf, *Crime and Punishment in Istanbul, 1700-1800*, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2010), 87-92.

¹⁹² Necla Kuglin, interview by Bedri Baykam, *68'li Yıllar: Eylemciler*, 382.

¹⁹³ Ertuğrul Kürkçü, interview by Bedri Baykam, *68'li Yıllar: Eylemciler*, 426.

Conclusion:

This paper contextualizes the Turkish 1968 with its unique socio-political dynamics and historical development under the light of international environment and influence. The evolution of Kemalist generations into radical revolutionaries within the Turkish student movement from 1959 to 1971 is a long and complicated trajectory to have a clear picture of what had happened. The anti-imperialist tone of Turkish Sixties was a rich and intensive period for the youth in finding its direction on how to modernize the country for the national development and saving the sovereignty of Turkey in their imaginations within the capitalist bloc in Cold War era. At a critical geo-political juncture Turkey responded to certain global affairs such as the Cyprus crisis, Arab-Israeli war, and Vietnam war in a way that facilitated the rise of student movement into full-fledged mass political life under the influence of European and North American student movements. In this roughly turbulent decade, the phenomenon of toppling the regime by a coup d'état and hence opening the door for a socialist revolution was always a possibility within certain radical circles among Turkish revolutionaries pondering mostly on the Middle Eastern military interventions. Ideological formations of the student activists had been expedited in late 1960s and culminated by the university occupations and boycotts.

Major disappointments stemmed from the CHP, TIP, and the government's late university reform proposal influenced the direction and ramification of student organizations. Radical students lost their patience in the face of the deadlock in front of parliamentary way for a structural change as well as the assignment of a passive role to the students in the cooperation with the radical officers in the army. As a result, students had become militants and chose to fight a guerilla war. Turkish student movement after 1969 involved in clashes and violence that halted its potential for an anti-authoritarian and counter cultural opening. Nonetheless, some activists had enough opportunities to experiment such opening in a limited way; the latter were mostly female activists gaining a feminist perspective as a practical matter. Their mental and daily transformation would be a milestone in future's student movements as a reference point. In short, Turkish 1968 paved the way for revolutionizing the gender relations and changing the gerontocratic social hierarchy in Turkey as a complementary element to the anti-imperialist aspect of the Turkish student movement. Further research can shed light on the evolution of gender relations as well as ways of liberty in Turkey since 1970s in regards to the transformation of the youth under the influence of the legacy of Turkish 1968. An anthropological history of anti-authoritarianism in Turkish culture can explain changes at critical junctures such as the 1980 coup d'état, the collapse of the Communist Bloc in the late 1980s as well as the Gezi Protests in 2013.

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