Chapter - V

CONCLUSION

Turkey witnessed the socialism phenomenon after the 1960 coup d'état, both as an ideology and a technique of action designated to achieve rapid modernization through the rational organisation of economic life. The spokesmen of socialism included Turkish urban intelligentsia, namely university professors, teachers, writers, journalists and old time Marxists who by their efforts revolutionized the political, social and economic life in defining socialism.

Therefore Labour Party of Turkey could be interpreted as socialist movement to organize and used for the ideological purposes. The party was originally established by a small group of trade unionists on February 13, 1961, with the idea of sending workers' representatives to Parliament. The party met with some negative reaction from the main body of trade unions but was soon ignored, since it seemed as innocuous as many other similar organizations, despite the fact that it had opened branches in several provinces by May of 1961.

However, the change came in 1962, when the party leadership was assumed by Mehmet Ali Aybar and a few of his associates known as Marxists. There were some indications
showing that the first founders, some without knowing it, were a front for the Marxist socialists. It is reliably reported that Aybar is basically speaking on behalf of a policy-making group which would rule the central bodies. The party was established on the same day the Ministry of Interior lifted the ban on political activities. The offer of party leadership to Aybar came only after its issuance of 'socialist' declaration and seemed to have taken the lead in developing socialism.

However, the proposal to launch workingmen's party was defeated in a trade union convention largely through the efforts of Labour Party members from the provinces. The attempt made to establish Social Security Party by 293 trade unions with approximately 300,000 members, was not carried out, lest it destroy the economic orientation of Labour. Behice Boran, a former sociology professor, described the formation of Labour Party as a 'capitalist plot' engineered to oppose and defeat the real workers' parties. The suspicions were shed by Labour Party leaders and minimized as a pseudosocialist organ, though their differences were not publicly aired.

Aybar as a ideologue of party engaged himself in strenuous activity to establish branches in the countryside and publicize the Party's views. He had little success at
the beginning. Meanwhile, a bitter struggle developing between right and left wing intellectuals ended with the apparent victory of the latter. The labour strike in the summer of 1962, demanded full employment in different sectors but failed to get the approval of Parliament. This, however, prepared the ground for the Labour Party's future activities. In August 1962 Aybar was formally approved as Chairman, along with Rustu Guneri as Secretary General and Orhan Arsal, Ibrahim Denizcier, Ismail Topkar, and Kemal Turker as Member of the Central Executive Committee.

In November 1962 the Party engaged in a campaign to delete articles 141 and 142 from the criminal code, prohibiting to propagate the concept of class struggle by these articles. The campaign was well organized and supported by all Leftist publications, including the Our Radio, the clandestine broadcasting station located in one of the Eastern European countries. However, it began to backfire when nationalists broke up the protest meeting. Several members of the Labour Party resigned, protesting the forceful manner in which the Leaders had been chosen. The Labour confederation itself organized counter demonstrations condemning communism, in an oblique warning to the Labour Party to limit its propaganda. Harassed by these attacks, a Labourite delegation visited Prime Minister Inonu and secured from him a promise that the constitutional rights granting freedom of thought would be extended to their
party. Subsequently the Labourites, supported by the socialist society and several new members, including Niyazi Agirnasli, a senator from Ankara, resumed their activities, chiefly in the form of press conference and panel discussions. They criticized the five year economic plan as being inadequate, and opposed Turkey's entry into the common Market as infringing upon national independence and consolidating the country's economic and social structure responsible for the society's backwardness. The Party concentrated its efforts on gaining a favourable public image. It rejected implicitly any association with communism in order to attract the workers and the uncommitted, social minded intellectuals.

Despite these efforts the membership remained confined largely to urban intellectuals, while workers seemed weary of its growing dogmatism. The Party had established organizations only in seven provinces and twelve towns, whereas the next smallest party had about 150 branches. It also adopted a rather friendly attitude towards Kurdish communists and socialists, many of whom were striving to acquire national rights for their own group. Sadun Aren, a professor at the school of Political Science in Ankara who eventually became the head of the Ankara branch and deputy in 1965, had warned against excessive theorizing.
Aren claimed that the ideological struggle between capitalism and socialism had lost its violent character because of a change in economic conditions, and that polemical discussions were useless. True, social conditions in Turkey were not yet stabilized and they provided ground for bitter ideological struggle. He proposed to use statism as an ideology for mobilizing the masses, and through it, make 'factories and establishment centres of civilization and culture, in fact, true schools". The emphasis on statism was legally concordant with the constitution, which had accepted the principle of a mixed economy granting equal place to private and state enterprises.

The convention amended the by-laws to strengthen the power of central bodies and define members' duties. The member under Article 7 was to follow faithfully the program and by-Laws, obey the decisions and directives of competent party organization, and fulfill thoroughly the responsibilities assigned to him. He was to vote for party candidates and use every opportunity to enlist new members and disseminate information about the Party's program and goals. He was to obey all decisions even if he personally disagreed with them.

A new, voluminous party program was presented to the convention by Yahya Kanbolat, Sadun Aren, Fethi Naci and Behice Boran -- none of whom was a worker and at least three
were known as dedicated Marxists. The program begins by reproducing a declaration by the first Turkish National Assembly of October 21, 1920, condemning capitalism and imperialism. It define the Party as being the political organization, marching to power through Legal Means and based on history and science, of the Turkish working class and of the groups which arrived consciously at the happy conclusion of seeing unity of fate with it, and followed its democratic leadership, such as socialist intellectuals, agricultural workers, Landlords and insufficiently landed peasants, craftsmen, small businessmen and salary and wage earners, low income professionals, in a word all citizens leading a life based on their own effort.

The program stressed the Party's desire to follow democratic ways and to respect the constitution. It gave an extensive analysis of Turkey's social structure in order to dramatize the country's backwardness, and the existence of an overwhelming number of workingmen, thus justifying the need for radical social reforms. The program also presented a doctrinaire interpretation of Turkish history and arrived at the conclusion that once workers became organized and 'acquired class consciousness nobody could oppose them for very long in carrying out their historical mission in achieving social progress and democracy.
The Labour Party was the living symbol of the fact that workers were becoming politically conscious and were bound to mobilize all toilers despite a regressive trade unionist leadership serving the ruling classes. The Party was the political means for achieving a workers' democracy, while statism represented its social and economic dimensions. The main solution to Turkey's problems, according to the program, lay in the political field, namely in bringing working men to power through political education by the party, under the protection of rights and freedoms guaranteed by the constitution. The key production and exchange means were to be nationalized. The program rejected Western method of development as being inapplicable to Turkey and advocated "a planned economy siding with Labour and being implemented and controlled through workers' participation". Private enterprise was to be an auxiliary of the state economy in this planned framework and gradually limited, as its functions were taken over by government enterprises.

The state was to establish basic industry and operate it as state property, distribute land to peasants, and adopt a program of land cultivation through a system combining state, cooperative and private farms. Economic education was to be implemented according to the principle "income according to effort culminating eventually in the abolition of a system based on the exploitation of man by man. The
program claimed that the party believed in the existence of social laws similar to physical laws above man's will power, but that this would not prevent outside intervention in order to achieve rapid harmony between historical conditions and social evolution. Science was the only road to follow; the party policy was to be defined according to scientific realities. The program defined in detail the question of education and culture and interpreted the principles of the Turkish Republic -- nationalism being defined as opposition to foreign domination. It expressed the deepest respect for religious and philosophical beliefs and especially stressed the fact that the party's struggle against backwardness should never be understood as struggle against religion", although its commitment to keep religion out of politics was firm.

The program in general was consistent with the Party's outward idea of establishing a system based on the leadership of the working class. The doctrinaire, deterministic view of society and history was accompanied by various side interpretations and formal concessions to prevailing ideas in society, and formal respect for the constitution in order to enjoy its protection.

The Labour Party's chief target -- the Justice Party and its Leader Suleyman Demirel, accused of being a stooge
of the West -- had won 240 seats out of a total of 450 in the 1965 election. The Republican Peoples' Party, pushed a bit Left -- "Left of center", as Inonu said -- did much less than expected with 29 per cent and 134 seats. Coalition government then disappeared as the new Prime Minister, Demirel, formed a Justice Party government. He was the son of a peasant, trained engineer, and knew the West by personal experience. He was one of the "new men".

However, it may be said further that much of the Labour Party's dynamism was provided by the able, young, social minded members of the Republican Party. These encouraged by their own Party's lukewarm attitude towards the Left and its ambiguous idea of statism went fully to the support of the Labour Party. But these intellectuals, who were effective as long as they spoke moderately for their own party, lost their popular following in siding with an abstract extreme Left. Yet, the establishment of the Labour Party and its activities must be viewed as an important milestone in Turkish politics. For the first time in history socialist ideas found formal representation in the Parliament. One, however, question the Labourites' social origin and occupation, but the fact remains that they spoke on behalf of groups hitherto deprived of formal representation in the Legislature. This in turn forced the other political parties to reshape their views on economic development and social Justice according to the specific needs of various social groups as is now evident in their programs.
Socialism, however, appeared as a program of social and economic reform. It began as a general current of thought among intellectuals and was shaped gradually into a social ideology. A few group among the intelligentsia especially those in universities and the press used socialist ideology both as program for radical structural changes and as a technique to acquire power. The bulk of the intellectuals of the bureaucracy, the trade unions and professionals, however, remained sympathetic more to a democratic flexible program of social and economic action, rather than political dogma. An organization likely to answer the social yearning of these groups has not been established. A newly formed social Democratic Party under senator Sitki Ulay, a former general, does not seem to have the organizational and ideological capacity necessary to embody the intelligentsia's wish. The chances are that the Peoples' Republican Party of Ismet Inonu moving ideologically to the Left under prodding from its own socialist wing, may subdue its arch conservatives and becomes a truly socialist Party. If this occurs, then several groups, such as those around on and the universities, and even the rank and file. Members of the Labour Party, would join it and make the Republican Party a truly social minded democratic party. If this does not materialize, the Republican Socialist group may resign and form their own independent body. They would probably
secure considerable backing from Labour. The Labour Party in this case probably will move further to the Left and leaving aside its revisionist views -- become a truly orthodox Marxist Party, especially of the formal ban on Communist Parties is lifted.

However, most Turkish political parties have been internally created. With the exception of the Turkish Labour Party, which was founded by several trade union leaders, indirect parties have failed to play any significant role in electoral competition. Hence, Party leadership rest with members of the National Assembly and new parties usually evolve out of factional splits from Parliamentary party groups.

The formal structural characteristics of Turkish Parties are quite similar. In terms of a functional classification, party organizations include central executive bodies, disciplinary organs and Parliamentary groups. With respect to territorial and hierarchical structure, they extend from national head quarters in Ankara down to provinces and subprovinces. The 'Getin Altan affairs' is symptomatic of the LPT's aggressiveness and of its rivals response. The year 1968 seems to have been a high point in inter-party strife, at least Judging from the quantity of publications and their virulence. They were further exacerbated by the struggle over the amendment to
the electoral law for the National Assembly and by the senate election campaign.

Uludogan promised to show what kind of Party the LPT was -- that it was not a worker's party. He analyzed the LPT booklet New Order and its claim that Turkey was for the Workers. He also took issue with the LPT's slogan of 'Land for the Peasant' and asked who would then pay the peasants for their work, should the LPT's promises he realized. Uludogau ended by asserting that nobody should exchange reality for empty slogans. This appeal to continue the status quo and ignore the LPT's radical propaganda was buttressed with further accusations. Turkey's Minister of the Interior, spoke in the Parliamentary budget commission about 'extreme trends' and his speech was then published by his Party, the Justice Party, as a 28-page booklet. Sukan stated that there was a movement afoot to destroy the state. Lately, the LPT had arranged numerous meetings in Ankara and the eastern parts of Turkey suggesting that the inhabitants of this area were not Turks, but Kurds or Alevis a sensitive matter. Sukan denied that the LPT Marxist, for its method were identical to those of the TCP, and its contacts were with communist parties abroad. He concluded by asserting that the LPT's ideas conflicted with Turkey's constitution that their Allah was Stalin and their Ka'ba was Moscow.
The structure of the Labour force, that is its distribution by occupational sectors, age, sex, etc. is closely related to the growth of trade unions in Turkey. Despite all efforts aimed at industrialization, little growth has been recorded in the size of the industrial Labour force. Consequently unions, deprived of an industrial working class to back them, have not enjoyed favourable conditions for rapid growth. In fact, the distribution of the active population by economic sector shows that 77 per cent of the active population is engaged in agriculture, a ratio much higher than that of the industrially advanced countries.

Moreover, the indifference of female workers towards unionization, resulting probably from the pressure of tradition and the lack of sophistication required to recognize trade unions as self-help organizations, has been an important obstacle to further union expansion. Legal restrictions which used to prevent young workers from joining trade unions until the enactment of the new legislation have also barred trade unions from increasing their membership, for it must be considered that child labour is employed in Turkey on a large scale in spite of the existing legal restriction. This has posed various problems and difficulties for unions.

The mobility of Turkish workers between the villages and urban centres leads to high labour turnover in industry.
This in turn, has negative effects on the development of trade union organizations, since it inhibits the development of class consciousness among workers. Almost all over the world, the first trade union organizers have been the skilled workers. The labour turnover among skilled workers provides them with stability and more favourable chances to organize unions. On the other hand, unskilled workers have almost everywhere, organized much later and with greater difficulty. Since the unskilled and peasant-type portion of the Turkish labour force constitutes the majority, the development of a sense of collective identity among workers has been a difficult process, and this has hindered the development of an effective trade union movement.

Certain qualitative characteristics of the work force also account for the ineffective state of trade unions. As with the success of political democracy in a country, so with the realization of industrial democracy: they both require certain prerequisite, a certain level of sophistication and education. Trade unions, as organizations institutionalizing industrial democracy, demand certain minimum requirements, a certain level of educational attainment, literacy and class consciousness among workers. As regards education, however, Turkey possesses the characteristics proper to other underdeveloped countries; a significant number of workers are illiterate,
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not having enjoyed even an elementary education. These workers face tremendous difficulties in adapting themselves to the requirements of an industrial urban life.

Owing to the primitive living conditions in villages, peasant type workers find it extremely difficult to acquire the qualities of industrial workers in technological advanced societies. The attitudes the ambitions and enthusiasm for self advancement, the dexterity and preservance the occupational solidarity and class consciousness exhibited by the workers of industrially advanced societies are lacking in these people. Given these characteristics, they are not enthusiastic about joining and bolstering the trade unions. Since they are constantly afraid of being laid off by their employers. This indifference and lack of courage are all the more understandable in view of the vast number of unskilled workers on the Turkish Labour Market.

Workers in Turkey attach more importance to issue such as job security and old-age protection then to the mere development of the trade union movement. Since, at their present stage, unions are far from possessing the power to provide security of employment for their members, most workers don't think of joining them, nor do they care about the social status of the unions.
However, the expansion of the labour force also involved important changes in its composition. Labour union membership, which before 1960 was heavily concentrated in the public sector's large manufacturing and mining establishment, has become highly diversified and much more representative of the working class as a whole. In the last two decades the overall thrust of the new union organization has shifted from the public sector to the private sector, from manufacturing and transportation to construction and services, from larger, concentrated work sites to smaller, more dispersed work sites, and from sectors employing permanent skilled or semiskilled workers to sectors with large surpluses of seasonal common labour and white-collar workers.

Despite the generalized acceptance of labour force and collective bargaining in the state industrial sector, their diffusion into other areas of the economy has been very limited, uneven, and often highly conflictive. The experiences and problems of unionists who have taken the lead in organizing more hostile sectors and work branches bear little resemblance to those of unionists whose organizations were already well established by the early 1960s. Older organizations in state industry have benefited enormously from paternalistic public policies encouraging unionists to form large and providing workers with wages and benefits that generally exceed private sector standards.
In order to approach what these unionists have gained years of collaboration and negotiation with the state bureaucracy, their weaker counterparts in other sectors have had to pressure or confront employers by mobilizing support in the courts in parliament and in the general public.

The tendency for the three rival labour union factions to represent different core constituencies for which different economic and political strategies would be effective can be seen by comparing the distributions of their memberships across economic sectors. The conservative unions originated in the state industrial establishments and then extended their influence by including many private workers in their own organizations and by aiding newer and smaller in private manufacturing.

Because of their continued concentration in manufacturing and mining, especially in the public sector, the distribution of membership for these unions resembles the profile of the other factions or of the current Labour force as a whole. The socialist unions originated primarily in the private and foreign owned manufacturing sector, where the militancy of their early organizational tactics drew support from the worker's party. The social democratic unions originally differed from the other two factions by representing a more diverse constituency that was not
predominantly industrial and not heavily concentrated in either the public or private sector.

The overall pattern of labour organization indicates that the three factions have pursued strategies of partition and segmentation more commonly than strategies of direct competition and confrontation. The conservative unions have focused on enlarging and asserting greater control over their core constituencies in state industry while leaving most of the newer organization in more difficult areas to others. Aided by the public sector's rapid adoption of automatic dues checkoffs and centralized collective bargaining conservative unionists have come close to acquiring perfect representational monopolies over the state industrial work force.

Moreover, ninety per cent of the workers in state industry are now dues-paying union members, and about eighty percent of these belong to conservative unions. In the nonindustrial sectors more militants labour force achieved narrower majorities within smaller and much less densely organized constitution. Social democrats represent the majority of organized workers in transportation and construction.

Socialist unionists have been generally content with informal three way partitioning of the Labour force because
it has allowed them to secure a firm position among an important segment of the working class and to preserve their autonomy vis-a-vis the larger union factions and the state. But conservative and social democratic leaders have been far more eager to replace segmental organization with a unitary structure in order to increase labour's bargaining power with employers and the major parties. In the factional struggle to restructure the Labour Movement, the key initiative have come, first, from the conservative faction's attempt to assert monopolistic control through corporatism and, then from the social democratic faction's attempt to become the preeminent partner in the people's party coalition by capturing control of both. The nucleus of conservative unionism in Turkey is formed by three organizations: the state monopolies worker's union, the miners' federation, and the textile workers' union. There are largest and wealthiest unions in the nation. Under the Democratic Party regime unionism in these work branches became dominated by Leaders who were the most willing to moderate demands and to cooperate in policy implementation in exchange for grants of representational exclusiveness and formal consultation. The strength and endurance of the coalition's alliance with the Justice Party is based on the mutual ambition of these union and party leaders force.

The original prototype of conservative unionism is the state monopolies worker's union, which represents workers in
the alcoholic beverage, tobacco, and food processing industries. The union's leadership has had a thirty year history of relying on Democratic and Justice Party patronage in dealing with employers in some of the public sector's most profitable enterprises. Moreover, the establishment of the Labour Party and its activities must be viewed as an important milestone in Turkish policies. For the first time in history socialist ideas found formal representation in the Parliament. One may question the Labourites' social origin and occupation, but the fact remains that they spoke on behalf of groups hitherto deprived of formal representation in the Legislature. This in turn forced the other political parties to reshape their views on economic development and social Justice according to the specific needs of various social groups, as is now evident in their program.

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Thus, the next decade in Turkey may witness further the rise and political reorganization of the intelligentsia on behalf of socialist ideologies ranging from Fabianism to extreme Marxism. The intelligentsia, which was both the product and then the agent of modernization, uses socialism not only for opening new horizons for social and economic
modernization but also for justifying its own bid for power. The social group attacked as being opposed to this modernization are the entrepreneurial, nationalist, state capitalist groups which established power and status in the past is the supporters and representatives of the emerging Republican order. The socialist position is strengthened by the fact that the increase of importance attached to economic occupations, coupled with intensive social mobility, integration into and participation in political and economic life, has rendered narrow and restrictive the sphere of modernization outlined in the first decades of the Republic. This situation provides ample conditions for ideological debate, especially since social stratification facilities the application of Marxist concepts concerning the social classes. Yet, viewed in its entirety and with due regard to the objective situation of all social groups, the over-all process of change in Turkey cannot be understood and appraised in ideological terms, but rather in the broad perspective opened by modern social sciences.

In the second phase of modernization in Turkey the intelligentsia's role and function in society are markedly different from the first phase. It is not a leader at the head of all other social groups but a rationalizing agent on discovering the objective roots of thought and of the very process of transformation.
The Labour Party adopted ideology as its tool for enlarging the scope of modernization. It consequently was forced to negate the objective conditions which facilitated its rise by stressing the subjective effects of change. This contradicts both the prevailing conditions in Turkey and the intelligentsia's vital new role of achieving integration and participation through science and consensus.