

Short Abstract

Ali Erken, St. Antony's. The Construction of Nationalist Politics in Turkey: The MHP: 1965-1980.

This thesis presents an analysis of the political discourse and strategies of the MHP (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*-Nationalist Movement Party) between 1965 and 1980. It particularly focuses on the role of young militants in the development of the nationalist movement in Turkey during this period. The 1960s and 1970s in Turkey saw military coups, street clashes, violence perpetrated by university students, and the rapid proliferation of civil organizations. Yet this turbulent period in modern Turkish history has received no systematic historical investigation. The MHP was one of the principal actors of this period. The study argues that the change in the profile of the CKMP-MHP leadership and the recruitment of young nationalist students, who became increasingly involved in physical confrontations with the socialists, had multiple effects on nationalist discourse and strategies. Retired soldiers involved in the 27 May 1960 military coup sought to develop a nationalist party based on secular-Kemalist principles, but those people who held conservative views of nationalism started to join the CKMP-MHP. The anti-Republican discourse of this current of thought involved the re-appropriation of Ottoman history and culture and certain religious themes into nationalist discourse. This ideological orientation appealed to most of young nationalists organized around the *ülkü ocakları*. However, the thesis demonstrates that there were various channels of ideological indoctrination in the nationalist movement, a diversity of positions that sometimes stirred conflicts among the nationalists themselves. The question of political strategy involved paradoxical aspects as well. Young nationalists were willing to take on the mission of becoming the future elites of the country yet were simultaneously involved in violent confrontations with socialists. Most of the party leadership, on the other hand, was preoccupied with parliamentary goals and the long-term administrative success of nationalist activists in the state apparatus. The thesis shows that viewing the party activities and paramilitary operations in the same framework gave rise to serious tensions within the nationalist movement. The findings of this study also shed light on the institutional and ideological evolution of the nationalist movement after 1980.

Long Abstract

This thesis presents an analysis of the political discourse and strategies of the MHP (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*-Nationalist Movement Party) between 1965 and 1980. It particularly focuses on the role of young militants in the development of the nationalist movement in Turkey during this period. The study argues that the agents of nationalist politics changed during these fifteen years, and that the growing presence in the movement of young militant nationalists had a considerable impact on its political strategies and ideology.

The nationalist movement in Turkey in the 1960s and 1970s included the MHP, the *ülkü ocakları* (the hearth of idealists), in which young nationalist militants, mostly high-school and university students, had gathered under the loose supervision of the party leaders, and other nationalist organizations loosely associated with the party. The thesis shows that during this period the party and nationalist organizations founded in connection with the party were comprised of structurally and ideologically diverse groups, which resulted in various conflicts both within the party and between it and the various nationalist organizations that were largely run by young nationalist militants. The study also discusses the challenge to the nationalists from the left in the context of the Cold War and their need to mould the party ideology to conservative public opinion in order to help the nationalists unify around a single leader and party.

The question of how to contextualize the history of modern Turkey within the histories of both modern Europe and the modern Middle East has yet to be addressed in current scholarship. Of course, the MHP did not emerge overnight and there was a wider set of underlying factors behind the birth and growth of the nationalist movement in Turkey. Its evolution, for instance, bears striking resemblances to the fascist movements that grew in Germany and Italy from the 1920s onwards. Moreover, the involvement of military forces in politics and the rise of nationalism as a political force in the Middle East in the decades following 1952 had an impact upon the Turkish context. Within the confines of this thesis it would be unfeasible to take on a comparative study; instead, I aim to highlight in certain sections how political life in Turkey fits into the wider picture of Middle Eastern politics.

We could classify the current literature on the MHP, the *ülkü ocakları* and nationalist organizations around the party, into two main threads: scholarly works and non-academic, amateur studies. The available scholarly literature on Turkish intellectual and political history focuses either on the period before 1960 (mostly the late Ottoman and early Republican

periods) or the period since the 1980s, whereas what happened between these two periods has been relatively neglected. Most of the non-academic research on the MHP and the nationalist movement has been undertaken by partisan researchers, either from a right-wing or socialist background. Yet we can find in these studies a depth of factual information and some sophisticated analysis on the nationalist movement. This thesis is the first comprehensive study of the MHP in English. Academic coverage to date does not investigate in any detail the connection between the various actors comprising nationalist politics, namely, the party leadership, ideologues and young militants. Furthermore, most of the available studies were completed in the 1990s and early 2000s, and were not able to benefit from the recent autobiographical literature that became available in the 2000s.

Chapter 1 provides a historical background for the discussion of particular themes covered in subsequent chapters. It explains how the early Republican elite framed Republican secular nationalism and imposed it on the masses through intermediary institutions, which proved to be significant vehicles in political mobilization. The chapter demonstrates that the idea of Turkish nationalism was not confined to Republican secular nationalism but included also differing threads, such as Turkist and conservative nationalism, both of which started to become more popular in the 1940s and 1950s. The chapter also discusses how the gradual decline of secular Republican nationalism as a political force went hand in hand with the process of democratization in the country.

Chapter 2 analyses the ideological pathway of nationalism in party politics between 1965 and 1980. It argues that the generators of the ideologies of nationalist politics in Turkey changed during this period. The first nationalist political endeavor during this period was undertaken by a handful of retired soldiers involved in the 1960 coup, under the leadership of Alparslan Türkeş. They advocated secular nationalism and republican Kemalism when they joined the CKMP-*Cumhuriyetçi Köylü Millet Partisi* (Republican Peasants' Nation Party) in 1965, but at the end of the 1969 congress, where the party changed its name to the MHP-*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi* (Nationalist Movement Party), only three of them (out of ten) remained in the party. In the early years of the MHP Türkeş and another retired soldier, Dündar Taşer, managed to steer the party discourse towards conservative nationalism, which was advantageous and instrumental in recruiting young nationalists from the universities and high schools.

Furthermore, some conservative nationalist ideologues drew closer to the party, forging contacts with the party leadership and young militants. As a result, after 1971 the number of people in the party leadership from civilian backgrounds increased. More

importantly, the *ülkü ocakları* started to have a say in the ideological and political orientation of the party, especially after 1975. Yet the language employed in the *ülkü ocakları* started to become more Islamic than the party leadership had envisaged and tended to call for more radical reforms in society and politics.

Chapter 3 presents an in-depth investigation into the organization of the nationalist movement from 1965 to 1980. It demonstrates the tension among the party cadres, where two underlying, but overlapping, divergences were exposed: one was the ideological divide linked to the generational difference between the older, more secular, military-trained leaders and the younger and more religious university students trained in the *ülkü ocakları*; the other was the strategic difference between those who prioritized electoral success, such as the party board and its local representatives, and those from the *ülkü ocakları*, who thought that the only way to win the “war” against the socialists was to wipe them out by force. In the face of these tensions, the unifying forces that kept the nationalist activists together were the cult of the leader, the commitment to conservative-nationalist doctrine and the state of war with the socialists.

Chapters 2 and 3 thus set out the ideological and structural framework of the movement. Based on this analysis, chapter 4 looks at how the nationalist movement was influenced by, and evolved in response to, the socialist movement in Turkey between 1965 and 1980. This chapter shows that certain patterns of socialist civil and political activism were emulated by the nationalists, who saw their struggle against the left as a fight against “infidels”. The *ülkü ocakları*, other nationalist organizations and the MHP tussled with socialist civil organizations, radical groups and the CHP to capture the state apparatus and gain the upper hand in civil society, but the expectations and strategies of these groups in the nationalist movement were different from each other. This chapter argues that the magnitude of the confrontation of young nationalist militants with left-wing activism ascribed them a distinctive identity and elevated them to a superior position in the movement.

Chapter 5 focuses on the nationalist movement’s relations with other right-wing groups, aiming to demonstrate that the nationalist movement experienced a very paradoxical relationship with the right-wing parties, because of its dual mission involving short-term political goals and the training of nationalist cadres for the future. It argues that the nationalists struggled with the incompatibility of being both an ideologically-driven cadre movement whilst at the same time trying to appeal to the mass electorate. From 1968 to 1971 the MHP and nationalist organizations strongly opposed the AP-*Adalet Partisi* (Justice Party) government and its liberal policies; after 1971 they battled for the religious vote with the

MSP-*Milli Selamet Partisi* (National Salvation Party), which carried the flag of religious politics in Turkey. In 1975 the MHP joined forces with these parties in coalition to fight against the socialists, although the tension between them often came to the surface.

Finally, the conclusion offers a summary of the main findings of the thesis and identifies how it has contributed to our understanding of the nationalist movement in Turkey and raises questions about potential areas of further research, with regard to post-1980 developments.

This study is based on two main methods: textual analysis and in-depth interviews. The former provides us with an examination of available texts reflecting the ideology and strategy of the movement, and the latter present the views of former activist militants and party board members involved in the movement in the period under study. Autobiographies and biographies also provided extremely valuable information for this study; the large number of recently published autobiographical and biographical accounts makes it possible to cross-check information gathered from a range of different sources.

To conclude, the thesis makes a contribution to the understanding of the MHP and nationalist movement, demonstrating how the party leader, party board and youth organizations worked in connection with each other. It shows that the change in the party's political discourse and political strategies from 1965 to 1980 is linked to the increasing preponderance of young militants in the nationalist movement. The flexibility that allowed young nationalist militants to act independently on the ground and their growing discontent with party politics brought about a deepening rift with the party board and local branches. This discrepancy between the ideological orientation of the party members and that of the *ülküçüler* escalated especially in the late 1970s. However, the loose structure of the nationalist movement and the gravity of the political conjuncture kept these actors together under the same framework until 1980.

PREFACE

The thesis explores the construction of nationalist discourse and strategies of the MHP between 1965 and 1980. It demonstrates that the MHP was not a political party only, but stood at the center of a widespread network of organizations clustered around it. It shows that the differing understandings of nationalist ideology and strategies of nationalist politics resulted in various conflicts in the party and nationalist organizations that were largely run by young nationalists during this period. The study aims to make a contribution to the study of this turbulent period of modern Turkish history.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND GLOSSARY

Ülkücü: In Turkish *ülku* means “ideal”; but in political contexts *ülküücü* is generally used to describe a militant or activist in the nationalist movement. Specifically *ülküücü* means to attribute a higher value to those nationalists who are strict in following certain sets of individual and political behaviour.

Ülkü Ocağı (or *Ocak*)- (The Heart of Ideal): The organization in which young nationalists gather and are given training to be brought up as a real *ülküücü*.

“-ler” and “-lar” stands for plural “s” in English; e.g: *Ülkücüler* and *ocaklar*

Akıncı: Irregular armies fighting in the Ottoman borderlands and carrying military expeditions.

Alperen: The image of Sufi warrior from the early Turkish-Islamic states

Başbuğ: The leader of a tribe in former Turkic states

DEV-SOL: *Devrimci Sol* (Revolutionary-Left)

DEV-YOL: *Devrimci Yol* (Revolutionary-Way):

DİSK: *Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu* (The Confederation of the Unions of Revolutionary Workers):

DİYANET (The Presidency of Religious Affairs)

FKF: *Fikir Klüpleri Federsyonu* (The Federation of Thinking and Idea Clubs)

GÜT: *Genç Ülkücüler Teşkilatı* (The Society of Young Nationalists)

MDD: *Milli Demokratik Devrim* (National Democratic Revolution)

MİSK: *Milliyetçi İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu* (The Confederation of the Unions of Nationalist Workers).

MTTB: *Milli Türk Talebe Birliği* (National Turkish Student Union)

POL-BİR: *Polis Birliği* (The Union of Police)

POL-DER: *Polis Derneği*: (The Society of Police)

TRT: *Türkiye Radyo ve Televizyon Kurumu* (Turkish Radio and Television Corporation)

TÖB-DER: *Türkiye Öğretmenler Birliği Derneği* (The Society of Teachers of Turkey)

TÖS: *Türkiye Öğretmenler Sendikası* (The Union of Teachers of Turkey)

ÜKD: *Üniversiteliler Kültür Derneği*: (The Society of Culture for University Students)

ÜLKÜ-BİR: *Ülkücü Öğretmenler Birliği Derneği* (The Society of Ülkücü Teachers)

ÜOB: *Ülkü Ocakları Birliği* (The Union of Ülkü Ocakları)

ÜOD: *Ülkü Ocakları Derneği* (The Society of Ülkü Ocakları)

ÜGD: *Ülkücü Gençlik Derneği* (The Society of Ülkücü Youth)

CKMP: *Cumhuriyetçi Köylü Millet Partisi*-Republican Peasants' Nation Party

MHP: *Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*-Nationalist Movement Party

MSP: *Milli Selamet Partisi*-National Salvation Party

MNP: *Milli Nizam Partisi*-National Order Party

AP: *Adalet Partisi*-Justice Party

DP: *Demokrat Parti*-Democrat Party

DP: *Demokratik Parti*-Democratic Party

CHP: *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*-Republican People's Party

MP: *Millet Partisi*-Nation Party

TİP: *Türkiye İşçi Partisi*-Labour Party of Turkey

GP: *Güven Partisi*-Trust Party

NUC: *Milli Birlik Komitesi*-National Union Committee

BBP: *Büyük Birlik Partisi*-Great Unity Party

MTSD: Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce

STMA: Sosyalizm ve Toplumsal Mücadeleler Ansiklopedisi

I- INTRODUCTION

The Problem and Research Question

The Nationalist Movement Party¹ (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*-MHP) is currently the third biggest party at the ballot box and the second oldest party in Turkish political history. Alparslan Türkeş² took over the CKMP³ leadership in 1965 and led nationalist politics in Turkey until his death in 1997. The party's unique position in Turkish politics, however, has more to do with its activities before the 1980 military coup. In an interview in the 1990s, Türkeş claimed that the MHP organization had recruited and trained more than 250,000 young militants in the late 1960s and 1970s.⁴ In fact, the number of *ülkü ocakları*⁵, organizations in which young nationalist militants, mostly high-school and university students, had gathered under the loose supervision of the party leaders, reached more than 1200 across the country in this period.⁶

This thesis presents an analysis of the political discourse and strategies of the MHP between 1965 and 1980. It particularly focuses on the role of young militants in the development of the nationalist movement in Turkey during this period. The study argues that the agents of nationalist politics changed during these fifteen years, and that the growing presence in the movement of young militant nationalists had a considerable impact on its political strategies and ideology.

¹ In most of the current literature in English "*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*" is translated into English as "Nationalist Action Party"

² See Biographical Details of the Leading Personalities (Appendix 2)

³ The party name was changed to the MHP in 1969.

⁴ Hulusi Turgut, *Şahinlerin Dansı: Türkeş'le Röportajlar (Interviews with Alparslan Türkeş: The Dance of Hawks)* (İstanbul: ABC, 1995), p. 404.

⁵ See the Glossary and Abbreviations.

⁶ *Hergün*, 1 March 1978.

The nationalist movement in Turkey in the 1960s and 1970s included the MHP, the *ülkü ocakları* and other nationalist organizations loosely associated with the party. The thesis analyses the well-known '*lider-doktrin-teşkilat*' (leader-doctrine-organization) motto of the MHP, showing that during this period the nationalist movement was comprised of structurally and ideologically diverse groups, which resulted in various conflicts within the party and nationalist organizations that were largely run by young nationalist militants. The study also discusses the challenge to the nationalists from the left in the context of the Cold War and their need to mould the party ideology to conservative public opinion in order to help the nationalists unify around a single leader and party.

On the one side of this complicated structure, the democratic mechanisms of the nationalist movement as a parliamentary party appeared to be working properly, while on the other side paramilitary groups were operating, which were continually forcing the party leadership to accommodate to their own terms and language. The nationalist ideologues and the party leadership were not only concerned with the training of the young and educated elites of the country to rule the state but also condoned their involvement in physical fights and use of violence against the socialists. In the realm of ideology, the emphasis on secularist-Kemalist values in the early days of the party was gradually replaced by pro-religious and anti-Western doctrine, framed within conservative nationalism but placing a varied emphasis on ethnic and religious values, depending on the socio-political context. This transformation of a political party into a broader and very complex socio-political movement was made possible with the changing profile of its political leadership and activists.

The study thus aims to explore the following questions: How did the relationship between the party and the other components of the nationalist movement work? What were the roles of the young nationalist militants in shaping the MHP's strategy and discourse? How were young militants trained within the nationalist movement? How did the tension between

youngsters and the party leadership emerge and how was it managed? What were the differing views of the members of the party leadership and nationalist ideologues in building the party discourse and strategy?

Contextualizing the MHP

The question of how to contextualize the history of modern Turkey within the histories of both modern Europe and the modern Middle East has yet to be addressed in the current scholarship. Of course, the MHP did not emerge overnight and there was a wider set of underlying factors behind the birth and growth of the nationalist movement in Turkey. Its evolution, for instance, bears striking resemblances to the fascist movements that grew in Germany and Italy from the 1920s onwards. Moreover, the involvement of military forces in politics and the rise of nationalism as a political force in the Middle East in the decades following 1952 had an impact upon the Turkish context. In the confines of this thesis it would be unfeasible to take on a comparative study; instead, I aim to highlight in certain sections how political life in Turkey fits into the wider picture of Middle Eastern politics. To this end, a brief discussion of the general history of the Middle East between 1960 and 1980 is given later in this section. Likewise, a brief discussion of the patterns of fascist experience in Europe helps trace the connections between these movements and give insight for further studies. The terminology employed in the studies of modern nationalism and in this study in particular needs clarification as well. This is undertaken below.

There are certain limitations to the comparison of nationalist movements in Europe and Turkey, one such being that the MHP in Turkey never rose to power like the Nazis and Fascists. It would therefore perhaps be more revealing to shift our focus towards the political strategies that nationalist movements in Europe had employed in order to seize power. In their

ascension to power, German and Italian nationalists had adopted certain strategies such as the training of young militants, the use of violence, and the sanctification of the leader, which had worked well to mobilize the politically disenfranchised masses and young people in particular.⁷ In Germany, for instance, Adolf Hitler initiated the training of paramilitaries to suppress the socialist groups in order to gain more widespread support from conservative circles.⁸ This was accompanied by spectacular expressions of power and discipline through public meetings and gatherings. Similarly, Italian nationalists under the control of Mussolini developed the reputation for large and ostentatious displays of physical power and discipline.⁹ Similar displays of ostentation were undertaken by Alparslan Türkeş, the leader of the MHP, who organized commando marches in the late 1960s.

The experience of fascism was actually not novel to Turkish political life; the CHP *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi* (Republican People's Party) had pursued pro-fascist policies from the late 1920s to the 1940s. The party had become embedded into the state and İsmet İnönü, who had ruled the country with authoritarian measures, awarded himself the title of “National Leader” (*Milli Şef*).¹⁰ Minorities too had suffered from these pro-fascist policies; the Wealth Tax (*Varlık Vergisi*) of 1942 was imposed disproportionately on minorities, which crippled their businesses and significantly depleted their accumulated wealth.¹¹ The Kemalist regime ascribed to Turkish citizens fundamental duties towards their state and nation, to which they

⁷ Richard J. Evans, *The Coming of The Third Reich* (London: Penguin, 2003); pp. 260-263; Robert O. Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism* (London: Penguin Books, 2005); pp. 49-51, 58-64.

⁸ Richard J. Evans, *The Third Reich*, pp. 217-230; Peter Fritzsche, “The NSDAP 1919-1934: From Fringe Politics to the Seizure of Power” in Jane Caplan ed., *Nazi Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); pp. 61-69.

⁹ Robert O. Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism*, pp. 87-89; Roger Griffin, *Fascism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 43-45, 58-60.

¹⁰ Mahmut Goloğlu, *Milli Şef Dönemi: 1939-1945 (The Era of National Chef)* (İstanbul: Kalite, 1974); pp. 5-7.

¹¹ Ayhan Aktar, *Varlık Vergisi ve Türkleştirme Politikaları (Wealth Tax and The Politics of Turkification)* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2010).

owed absolute loyalty.¹² The army was the inseparable component of this axis, as each Turkish citizen was declared to be born to be a soldier and the Turks were a “military nation”.¹³ The young generation was supposed to be trained to have certain physical qualities to fulfill this duty.¹⁴ To spread this vision of state and society, People’s Houses (*Halk Evleri*) and Village Institutes were employed as intermediary institutions.¹⁵ In education, even after the transition from single party rule to democracy, the sanctification of the state and army continued to be a major component of the curriculum in primary and high schools.¹⁶

The rise of the MHP in the 1960s took place in a different context. In the 1960s civil society activities flourished dramatically, owing to the set of freedoms granted in the 1961 Constitution. Thus the nationalist movement in Turkey, led by two retired leaders of the 27 May 1960 coup, had to accommodate itself to the dynamic political life and civil activism of the 1960s, and seemingly went through similar experiences to the National Socialists in Germany in the early 1930s. As Paxton notes, participating in electoral politics required nationalist forces to apply pragmatic solutions in their competition for political power.¹⁷ It is therefore no surprise that we can observe similar characteristics within all these movements, such as the tension that emerged between the young militants and the party leadership, the lack of sufficiently qualified party members in terms of ideological indoctrination, conflicting attitudes towards democracy and the use of violence.¹⁸ Related to these, the positioning of the nationalist forces *vis-à-vis* state institutions was telling; the nationalists in Turkey, for

¹²Füsun Üstel, “Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’inde Resmi Yurttaş Profilinin Evrimi” (The Evolution of the Profile of the Official Citizen in Turkey) in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce (Political Thought in Modern Turkey)* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2001-2009), Vol IV, pp. 276-278.

¹³ Ayşe Gül Altınay, *The Myth of the Military Nation* (New York: Palgrave: 2004), pp. 12-16.

¹⁴ Hande Özkan, “Selim Sırrı Tarcan”, in *MTSD*, Vol.II, pp. 278-279.

¹⁵ Asım Karaömerlioğlu, *Orada Bir Köy Var Uzakta (There is a Village Far Away)*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2011), pp. 101-107; also see Anıl Çeçen, *Halk Evleri: Atatürk’ün Kültür Kurumu (People’s Houses: Atatürk’s Cultural Institution)* (İstanbul: Cumhuriyet, 2000), p. 108

¹⁶ See Etienne Copeaux, *Türk Tarih Tezinden Türk İslam Sentezine (From Turkish History Thesis to Turkish Islamic Synthesis)* (İletişim: İstanbul, 2010).

¹⁷ Robert O.Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism*, pp. 52-53.

¹⁸ Robert O.Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism*, pp. 96, 131-133; Stanley Payne, *Fascism: Comparison and Definition* (London: University of Madison Press), pp. 58-68.

instance, presented themselves to the military-bureaucratic establishment as a force to protect the state from the socialists and were willing to be co-opted into the state institutions. This was reminiscent of Hitler's political strategies towards the state forces in the late 1920s and early 1930s.¹⁹ A more detailed discussion of these political strategies and their implications takes place in the third and fourth chapters of the thesis.

Political terminology in the history of modern Turkey bears certain ambiguities. During the single-party rule from 1923 to 1946, the CHP leadership displayed itself as the carrier of progressive reforms. Nationalism, one of the founding principles of the CHP program released in 1927, occupied a defining place in the political discourse during the single-party period. As will be explained in Chapters I and II, however, from the late 1930s onwards we see the emergence of differing variants of Turkish nationalism with conflicting perspectives.²⁰ It can be said that the protection of the unity and sovereignty of the state was the foremost concern for all of the currents of Turkish nationalism.²¹ Nationalism continued to be a principle enunciated in the programs of almost all the parties in the 1960s and 1970s, but the MHP in 1969 became the first party to use the term "nationalist" in its name and to put nationalist ideology at the core of its political program.

The content of the view of nationalism articulated by the CKMP-MHP is subject to further discussion in the following chapters. In most of the available literature we see that the view of nationalism the MHP espoused is labeled "conservative nationalism."²² In brief, this

¹⁹ Robert O.Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism*, pp. 96-98, 102-107; Richard J.Evans, *The Coming of the Third Reich*, pp. 271-273.

²⁰ See *Symbiotic Antagonism: Competing Nationalisms in Turkey*, ed.Ayşe Kadioğlu, Fuat Keyman, (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah, 2010), pp. 15, 62-63,130; Tanıl Bora, "Sunuş" (Introduction) in *MTSD*, pp. 18-20; İlker Aytürk, "The Racist Critics of Atatürk and Kemalism from the 1930s to the 1960s", *Journal of Contemporary History*, 46:308 (2011).

²¹ Ayşe Kadioğlu, "The Twin Motives of Turkish Nationalism" in *Symbiotic Antagonism*, pp. 35, 41, 46; Tanıl Bora, "Nationalist Discourses in Turkey", in *Symbiotic Antagonism*, p. 57.

²²See Umut Özer, "The Genealogy of Turkish Nationalism: From Ethnic and Civic to Conservative Nationalism in Turkey" in *Symbiotic Antagonism*, pp. 104,124; Berrin Koyuncu Lorsadağı, "On the Question of Islam and Nationalism in Turkey: Sources and Discourse" in *Symbiotic Antagonism*, p. 145; Kemal Can, "Ülkücü Hareketin İdeolojisi" in *MTSD*, Vol 4, p. 663; Yüksel Taşkın, *Milliyetçi Muhafazakar Entelijansiya: Anti-*

vision of nationalism is critical of the Republican perception of westernization and insists on the centrality of Turkish-Islamic history and religion in nationalist discourse.²³ Whether it would be apt to call this ‘‘religious nationalism’’ rather than ‘‘conservative nationalism’’ is a valid question; in the current literature ‘‘religious nationalism’’ is a denominator used to describe certain trends of nationalism in such countries as Ireland, India and Iran.²⁴ On the other hand, other denominators such as ‘‘cultural’’ and ‘‘conservative’’ are also employed in describing types of nationalism that put emphasis on the issues of religion and westernization.²⁵ Furthermore, as noted, we see that in the existing literature on Turkish nationalism, the term ‘conservative nationalism’ is more commonly used.²⁶ I prefer using the same term in this study.

The instrumentalization of historical analogies and geo-political imaginations, which involved the re-invention of certain terms, was common in the far-right movements in Europe. For example, the Fascists employed *Duce* and the Nazis *Führer*, titles drawn from the old military language of these cultures, in a bid to establish the authority of their leader.²⁷ The

Komünizmden Küreselleşme Karşıtlığına (Nationalist Conservative Intelligentsia: From Anti-Communism to Anti-Globalisation) (İstanbul: İletişim, 2007); Kemal Karpat, *Social Change and Politics in Turkey: A Structural-Historical Analysis* (Leiden: Brill, 1973); pp.22-24; Burak Arıkan, ‘‘The Programme of the Nationalist Action Party of Turkey: An iron hand in a velvet glove’’, *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 4, October 1998. p. 122; for a discussion on the evolution of conservatism and nationalism see Nuray Mert, *Merkez Sağın Kısa Tarihi* (Selis: İstanbul, 2007), pp. 66-70, 76-78, 168-169.

²³ See Chapters 1 and 2; Mert discusses the centrality of religion, anti-communism and the aversion towards Republicanism in Turkish conservatism and nationalism, Nuray Mert, *Merkez Sağın Kısa Tarihi* (Selis: İstanbul, 2007), pp. 65-79, 168-169.

²⁴ Mark Jurgensmeyer, *The New Cold War? Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State* (California: University of California Press, 1993); Peter Van Der Veer, *Religious Nationalism: Hindus and Muslims in India*, (California: University of California Press, 1993); Philip Barker, *Religious Nationalism in Modern Europe*, (Routledge, 2009).

²⁵ See John Hutchinson, *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism* (London: Unwin, 1987) and *Modern Nationalism* (London: Fontana, 1994); John MacCaffrey, *Irish Federalism in the 1870s: A Study in Conservative Nationalism* (American Philosophical Society, 1962); Noam Chomsky, *Middle East Illusions* (Oxford: Rowman, 2003), p. 211; Gerard Delanty, Patrick O'Mahony, *Nationalism and Social Theory: Modernity and the Recalcitrance of the Nation* (London: Sage, 2002); *Theorizing Nationalism*, ed. Ronald Beiner (New York: Albany, 1999), pp. 296-304.

²⁶ See footnote 22.

²⁷ Philipp Von Hilgers, trans. Ross Benjamin, *War Games: A History of War on Paper* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2012), pp. 78-85; Stanislao G. Pugliese, *Fascism, Anti-Fascism, and the Resistance in Italy: 1919 to the Present* (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2004), pp. 140-144, 317.

appropriation of the title *Başbuğ*²⁸, which was used to describe the leader of a tribe in former Turkic states, attributed to Alparslan Türkeş a transcendent authority, going beyond spatial and temporal boundaries, and creating an image of him as the all-powerful leader of a greater Turkic nation. Thus Türkeş's leadership did not draw its legitimacy only from democratic conventions, but also relied on a historical-cultural heritage employed in order to create a cult of leader. Another element of this practice in the European far-right movements was the use of teleological expressions such as German *Lebensraum* (living space), which became a very popular term in the German political discourse, implying the Germans' "natural" right to live in a wider territory than they already occupied.²⁹ The Turkish nationalists brought to the fore the concept of *nizam-ı alem* (world order); nationalist historian Osman Turan skillfully articulated the concept of *nizam-ı alem*, ascribing to it the meaning that the Turks had a special mission to bring order to the world as a whole.³⁰

Furthermore, the European far-right in the 1920s and 1930s was keen to embrace an anti-communist mission; the nationalists displayed themselves as guarding their nations from the socialist "internationalists."³¹ Likewise in Turkey, as will be discussed in the thesis, the CKMP-MHP spearheaded the anti-communist struggle. A further dimension of anti-communism in Turkey was its connection with religion and the historical enmity with the Russians; the nationalists insistently equated communism with anti-religiosity and being a tool of Russian geo-political goals, which helped them embrace the mission of defending the state and religion. Related to this, lastly, in contrast to the nationalist movements in Europe,

²⁸ *TDK Güncel Türkçe Sözlük (TDK Contemporary Dictionary of Turkish)*, s.v "Başbuğ"; the title *Başbuğ* was quite instrumental for the MHP in shaping its geopolitical discourse as the party held pan-Turkist views.

²⁹ Woodruff D. Smith, *The Ideological Origins of Nazi Imperialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 83-94.

³⁰ See Osman Turan, *Türk-Cihan Hakimiyeti Mefkuresi Tarihi (The History of the Ideal of Turkish Domination of the World)* (İstanbul: Ötüken, 2009), pp. 199-202., Beşir Ayvazoğlu notes that the usage of this term in Ottoman sources bears a different meaning, however; for example, in Sultan Mehmed II's *kanunnâme nizam-ı alem* implies socio-political order in the Ottoman Empire. Beşir Ayvazoğlu, *Tanrı Dağından Hira Dağına (From Mount Tian Shan to Mount Hira)* (İstanbul: Kapı, 2010), pp. 156-57.

³¹ Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (New York: St.Martin, 1991), pp. 65, 109; Walter Laquer, *Fascism: A Reader's Guide* (California: University of Berkeley Press), pp. 16-17.

anti-Westernism was a focal element in the construction of MHP nationalism in the 1960s and 1970s. As will be seen, this antagonism was displayed at a crude level in nationalist militants' aggression towards the institutions and social practices of Western culture and in the political rhetoric of some members of the MHP leadership in the speeches they made to mobilize the nationalist activists. However, even in the writings of nationalist thinkers, no sophisticated analysis of anti-Westernization is made; rather there is a simplistic focus on the political representations of what they call the struggle between the East and the West, or between "Eastern" and "Western" civilizations.³²

It is also important to situate the rise of the MHP in regional context. We see the frequent involvement of the military officers in politics in the Middle East in the 1960s and 1970s. The Egyptian Free Officers' coup in 1952 and Nasser's successful takeover of the government brought the politics of nationalism to the centre of Egyptian and Middle Eastern politics. Nasser's Suez policy was the first serious step towards the actualization of Pan-Arabism, which had so far been confined to elite circles and was yet to become a driving political force in the region.³³ The coup tilted the balance of power in Cold War politics too; although Nasser's nationalization did not result in the total elimination of the Western presence in Egypt, it offered a model for Middle Eastern rulers to chart their own course, benefiting from the Cold War rivalry between the superpowers. Similarly in the Maghreb the Algerian independence movement was gaining mass support for its goal of national independence. The officers who toppled the king in Iraq in 1958 resembled their colleagues in Egypt and their movement gave a boost to the mounting anti-imperialist tide under the control of authoritarian military regimes.³⁴ The rise of the Ba'ath movement in Syrian politics,

³² See the relevant discussion in Chapters 1 and 2.

³³ James Jankowski, "Arab Nationalism in Nasserism and Egyptian State Policy" in Israel Gershoni, James Jankowski, *Rethinking Nationalism in the Arab Middle-East* (New York: Columbia University Press 1997), pp. 150-169.

³⁴ See Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett, *Iraq Since 1958: From Revolution to Dictatorship* (London: Tauris, 2001).

combining socialism with Arab nationalism, aimed to ensure that the British and Americans could no longer exercise the dominance they had previously enjoyed in the region.³⁵ This wave of nationalism, however, was gradually replaced by the rise of “political Islam” and Islamic movements from the mid-1970s onwards.³⁶

The Cold-War balance of power is a significant element in understanding the ideological struggle in Turkey in the 1960s and 1970s. Turkey, as a member of NATO, was on the side of Western powers, yet had extraordinarily strategic position as a direct neighbour of the USSR, leading to the stationing of American troops and missiles on Turkish territory. The failure or success of socialist revolutionary movements in the world were closely observed among the nationalists and socialists; besides, the governments in Turkey calculated their domestic and foreign policy orientations with a view to this balance of power. Anti-American or anti-Soviet sentiments were strong enough to instigate socio-political reactions, especially among the intelligentsia; scholars of both ideological persuasions worked hard to spread their messages through scholarly publications and the mass media. The methods of anti-American and anti-communist confrontation elsewhere in the world were usually replicated by the agents of this confrontation in Turkey.

Literature Review

We could classify the current literature on the MHP, the *ülkü ocakları* and nationalist organizations around the party, into two main threads: scholarly works and non-academic, amateur studies. The available scholarly literature on Turkish intellectual and political history focuses either on the pre-1960s (mostly the late Ottoman and early Republican periods) or the period since the 1980s, whereas what happened between these two periods has been relatively

³⁵ See Nikolaos van Dam, *The Struggle for Power in Syria: Politics and Society under Asad and the Ba'th Party* (London: Tauris, 2006).

³⁶ Eugene Rogan, *The Arabs: A History* (New York: Basic Books, 2009), pp. 397-439.

neglected.³⁷ Moreover, much of the relevant literature on the Middle East does not cover the Turkish case. Furthermore, what is available on the MHP between 1960 and 1980 is written mostly by political scientists; Jacob Landau's chapter on the MHP in *Radical Politics in Modern Turkey* and his article on the MHP provide a rich amount of information about the party, but the relatively limited nature of the sources available to him, mainly composed of newspapers and the party documents available in the 1970s, posed a serious challenge for his work.³⁸ M. Ali Ağaoğulları's article on the ultranationalist right in Turkey dwells heavily on the MHP's anti-communist mission and the use of violence as a political tool, but it falls short of showing ideological and strategic nuances in the movement.³⁹ For instance, he argues that the MHP attempted to accede to power by using the armed forces, but fails to demonstrate the divergent attitudes in the party leadership and young militants towards the army and use of violence.⁴⁰ Ümit Cizre's article on the MHP clearly presents similarities and divergences between Kemalist ideology and the MHP's discourse; yet her assumption that the MHP could not have survived without the support of the AP ignores the MHP's strength amongst university students and civil servants.⁴¹ It hints at the ideological variations in the party leadership, but does not discuss the contribution of young militants to the nationalist discourse.⁴² One of the two articles by Burak Arıkan focuses on the rise of extreme nationalism in Europe in the 1990s; the other article evaluates the MHP program and its relation with the Intellectuals' Hearth.⁴³ Whereas this study rightly addresses the impact on the MHP of certain right-wing intellectuals clustered around the Intellectuals' Hearth, it fails

³⁷A recent study by Gavin D. Brockett, for example, explores the formation of Turkish national identity through local newspapers in the 1940s and 1950s. See Gavin D. Brockett, *How Happy to Call Oneself a Turk: Provincial Newspapers and the Negotiation of a Muslim National Identity* (Texas: University of Texas Press, 2011).

³⁸Jacob Landau, *Radical Politics in Modern Turkey* (Leiden: Brill 1974) and "The Nationalist Action Party in Turkey", *Journal of Contemporary History* 17 (1982), pp. 587-606.

³⁹Mehmet Ali Ağaoğulları, "The Ultranationalist Right" in Irvin Schick and Ahmet Tonak eds. *Turkey in Transition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 177-217.

⁴⁰Mehmet Ali Ağaoğulları, "The Ultranationalist Right", p. 206.

⁴¹Ümit Cizre, "The Ideology and Politics of the NAP in Turkey", *Cahiers d'Etudes sur la Méditerranée Orientale et le monde Turco-Iranien*, 13, 1992, pp. 142-144, 157-158.

⁴²Ümit Cizre, "The Ideology and Politics of the NAP in Turkey", pp. 150-152.

⁴³Burak Arıkan, "Turkish Ultra-Nationalists under Review: A Study of the Nationalist Action Party", *Nations and Nationalism*, Vol. 8, Part 3, July 2002, pp. 357-76; "The Programme of the Nationalist Action Party of Turkey: An iron hand in a velvet glove", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 4, October 1998.

to identify some other important ideologues who made a greater contribution to the evolution of the party's discourse. Likewise, Hugh Poulton briefly touches upon the MHP of the 1970s in his book surveying nationalist thinking and politics in Turkey in the 20th century.⁴⁴ His balanced conclusion on the MHP presents a comparison of the nationalist movement in Turkey with the extreme right-wing movements in Europe, but it suffers from the scant use of available primary sources. Mustafa Çalık's PhD study, based on ethnographic methods, looking at the underlying cultural reasons behind people's joining the MHP in certain Central Anatolian villages, stands as the only available scholarly work in Turkish.⁴⁵ The study presents a balanced analysis of why people opted to join the MHP in the 1970s, but it presents only a brief discussion on the role of the party leadership and ideologues in drawing militants to the movement.⁴⁶

Most of the non-academic research on the MHP and nationalist movement has been undertaken by partisan researchers, either from a right-wing or socialist background. Yet we can find in these studies a depth of factual information and some sophisticated analysis on the nationalist movement. For instance, despite some easy generalizations and lack of references, *Devlet-Ocak-Dergah* by Tanıl Bora and Kemal Can which focuses on the post-1980 history of the MHP, provides a thorough analysis of the structure and ideology of the nationalist movement before 1980.⁴⁷ Bora and Can rightly point out the latent impact of youth forces on party discourse and strategy along with the diverse nature of the movement.⁴⁸ However, they do not substantiate the analysis with concrete evidence and fail to demonstrate the role of nationalist ideologues in the movement; we are missing a sophisticated analysis of the profiles of party board members and detailed investigation of the indoctrination and socialization

⁴⁴ Hugh Poulton, *Top hat, Grey Wolf, and Crescent: Turkish Nationalism and the Turkish Republic* (London: Hurst, 1997), pp. 146-148, 156-165.

⁴⁵ Mustafa Çalık, *MHP Hareketinin Kaynakları ve Gelişimi (The Sources and Development of the MHP Movement)* (Ankara: Cedit Yayınları, 1996).

⁴⁶ Mustafa Çalık, *MHP Hareketinin Kaynakları*, pp. 131-161

⁴⁷ Tanıl Bora ve Kemal Can, *Devlet Ocak Dergah (State, Ocak, Lodge)* (İstanbul: İletişim, 1991).

⁴⁸ Tanıl Bora and Kemal Can, *Devlet Ocak Dergah*, 9th Ed. (İstanbul: İletişim, 2009), pp. 71, 77, 84.

processes affecting young militants.⁴⁹ Merdan Yanardağ's study on the MHP provides a comprehensive survey, aiming to demonstrate the illegal, militaristic and violent face of the nationalist movement.⁵⁰ On the other side, Hakan Akpınar's *Kurtların Kardeşliği*⁵¹ is a brief history of the MHP with a lot of anecdotes praising the party leadership and young militants. Despite their biased approach, however, Akpınar and Yanardağ's books provide important factual background for the study of the MHP. Lastly, three documentary works looking at the nationalist cause present a vast amount of information on the history of the MHP and the *ülkü ocakları*. Hakkı Öznur's *Ülkücü Hareket*⁵², composed of six volumes, is an epic survey of the nationalist movement via a compilation of news, articles and speeches. In a similar fashion, Metin Turhan's *Ülkü Ocakları*⁵³ and Turhan Feyzioğlu's *Fırtınalı Yıllarda Ülkücü Hareket*⁵⁴ are mostly composed of the declarations released by the nationalist organizations and the *ülkü ocakları* of the time.

This thesis is the first comprehensive study of the MHP in English. The available literature does not investigate in any detail the connection between the various actors comprising nationalist politics, namely, the party leadership, ideologues and young militants. The thesis, therefore, is an attempt to investigate the impact of these relationships on the construction of nationalist political discourse and strategy. Furthermore, most of the available studies were completed in the 1990s and early 2000s, and could not benefit from the recent autobiographical literature and documentary studies that became available in the 2000s.

The current historical scholarship attempts to situate Turkish history either in the history of Europe or the history of the Middle East, and thus downplays certain elements in order to make the connection with one and deny the connection with another. Yet

⁴⁹ Tanıl Bora and Kemal Can, *Devlet Ocak Dergah*, pp. 69-84.

⁵⁰ Merdan Yanardağ covers the period 1965-1980 in his account of the nationalist movement in *Ülkücü Hareket'in Analitik Tarihi (The Analytical History of the Ülkücü hareket)* (İstanbul: Gendaş, 2002).

⁵¹ Hakan Akpınar, *Kurtların Kardeşliği (The Brotherhood of Wolves)* (İstanbul: Birharf, 2005).

⁵² Hakkı Öznur, *Ülkücü Hareket (Ülkücü Movement)*(Ankara: Alternatif, 1999).

⁵³ Metin Turhan, *Ülkü Ocakları* (İstanbul: Bilgeoğuz, 2010).

⁵⁴ Turan Feyzioğlu, *Fırtınalı Yıllarda Ülkücü Hareket (The Ülkücü Movement in Turbulent Years)*(İstanbul: Ozan, 2000).

incorporating the history of political nationalism in Turkey into a wider theoretical or historical framework will be possible only after a detailed study of this specific period is undertaken. As discussed above, there are striking similarities between the MHP and the extreme-right or fascist movements in Europe, yet the current literature relies on a very limited scope of resources to draw comparisons and link these movements or ideological streams to each other. Equally important, there is much to be gained from slotting the MHP and nationalist movements into the regional context of the political movements in the Middle East in the 1960 and 1970s. This study, therefore, aims to provide a solid historical and analytical background for future studies to be undertaken on these topics.

Organization of Chapters

Chapter 1 provides a historical background for the discussion of particular themes covered in subsequent chapters. It explains how the early Republican elite framed Republican secular nationalism and imposed it on the masses through intermediary institutions, which proved to be significant vehicles in political mobilization. The chapter demonstrates that the idea of Turkish nationalism was comprised of many differing threads, such as Turkist and conservative nationalism, both of which started to become more popular in the 1940s and 1950s. The chapter also discusses how the gradual decline of secular Republican nationalism as a political force went hand in hand with the process of democratization in the country. Lastly, it underlines the idea that religion and westernization occupied a central place in the shaping of people's political orientations in Turkey.

Chapter 2 analyses the ideological pathway of nationalism in party politics between 1965 and 1980. It argues that the generators of the ideologies of nationalist politics in Turkey changed during this period. The first nationalist political endeavor during this period was undertaken by a handful of retired soldiers involved in the 1960 coup, under the leadership of

Alparslan Türkeş. They advocated secular nationalism and republican Kemalism when they joined the CKMP-*Cumhuriyetçi Köylü Millet Partisi* (Republican Peasants' Nation Party) in 1965, but at the end of the 1969 congress, where the party changed its name to the MHP-*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi* (Nationalist Movement Party), only three of them (out of ten) remained in the party. In the early years of the MHP Türkeş and another retired soldier, Dündar Taşer, managed to steer the party discourse towards conservative nationalism, which was advantageous and instrumental in recruiting young nationalists from the universities and high schools.

Furthermore, some conservative nationalist ideologues drew closer to the party, forging contacts with the party leadership and young militants. As a result, after 1971 the number of people in the party leadership from civilian backgrounds increased. More importantly, young nationalists trained in associations known as *ülkü ocakları* started to have a say in the ideological and political orientation of the party, especially after 1975. The MHP and *ülkü ocakları*, whose number exceeded 1000, started to employ conservative nationalism to a greater extent, which meshed Turkist values with religion, drawing on certain themes from Ottoman history such as the idea of *nizam-ı alem* (World Order).⁵⁵ Yet the language employed in the *ülkü ocakları* started to become more Islamic than the party leadership had envisaged and tended to call for more radical reforms in society and politics. The chapter aims to demonstrate this multiplicity of sources in framing the ideological discourse of the nationalist movement.

Chapter 3 presents an in-depth investigation into the organization of the nationalist movement from 1965 to 1980. It demonstrates the tension among the party cadres, where two underlying, but overlapping, divergences were exposed: one was the ideological divide linked to the generational difference between the older, more secular leaders and the younger and

⁵⁵ See Osman Turan, *Türk-Cihan Hakimiyeti Mefkuresi*, pp. 199-202.

more religious university students trained in the *ülkü ocakları*; the other was the strategic difference between those who prioritized electoral success, such as the party board and its local representatives, and those from the *ülkü ocakları*, who thought that the only way to win the “war” against the socialists was to wipe them out by force.

In this model Alparslan Türkeş was the unquestionable leader, but he needed the backing of trained nationalist youths to consolidate his position. He delegated the development of training programs to different people at different times, either to nationalist conservative thinkers or even to older *ocak* members who promoted conservative nationalism. In these education and indoctrination sessions, young nationalists were taught that the *ülküçüler*⁵⁶, who would be trained in an *ülkü ocağı*, embraced a special mission and were superior to ordinary party members. As this *ülküçü* identity, distinct from the party identity, was in the making, the electoral success of the MHP in the 1977 election raised the expectations of party board, local party representatives and the party deputies. Nevertheless, the intensity of violent clashes and assassinations in the late 1970s preoccupied nationalist militants and the party leadership much more than long-term institutional-political investment for the future or pursuing achievable political prospects.

Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 thus set out the ideological and structural framework of the movement. Based on this analysis, Chapter 4 looks at how the nationalist movement was influenced by, and evolved in response to, the socialist movement in the universities, media and trade unions between 1965 and 1980. This chapter shows that certain patterns of socialist civil and political activism were emulated by the nationalists, who saw their struggle against the left as a fight against “infidels”. It argues that the magnitude of the confrontation of

⁵⁶*Ülkü* literally means “ideal” (mefkure) in Turkish. See Ziya Gökalp, *Türkleşmek, İslamlaşmak, Muasırlaşmak, (Turkification, Islamicisation, Modernisation)* (İstanbul: Toker Yayınları, 1992), pp. 51-55. For a wider discussion of this subject see Nevzat Kösoğlu, *Türk Milliyetçiliği ve Osmanlı (Turkish Nationalism and the Ottoman Empire)* (İstanbul: Ötüken, 2009), pp. 85-105. However, we do not have clear evidence about the first use of this term in party politics. Also see the Abbreviations and Glossary.

young nationalist militants with left-wing activism ascribed them a distinctive identity and elevated them to a superior position in the movement.

The tension between these groups escalated after the CHP became the strongest party in parliament from 1973 to 1980 with a new discourse appealing to socialist organizations. Yet young militants could often be dragged into this struggle as a result of local tensions or individual behavioral patterns rather than pursuing clear ideological goals. The *ülkü ocakları*, other nationalist organizations and the MHP tussled with socialist civil organizations, radical groups and the CHP to capture the state apparatus and gain the upper hand in civil society, but the expectations and strategies of these groups in the nationalist movement were different from each other. This tension pulled the ordinary masses into ideological antagonisms, leading to bloody mass confrontations in many towns and cities, exposing the lack of coordination and the dilemmas amongst the members of the nationalist movement.

Chapter 5 focuses on the nationalist movement's relations with other right-wing groups, aiming to demonstrate that the nationalist movement experienced a very paradoxical relationship with the right-wing parties, because of its dual mission involving short-term political goals and the training of nationalist cadres for the future. In other words, it elucidates the lines of demarcation in right-wing politics in Turkey. It argues that the nationalists struggled with the incompatibility of being both an ideologically-driven cadre movement whilst at the same time trying to appeal to the mass electorate. From 1968 to 1971 the MHP and nationalist organizations strongly opposed the AP -*Adalet Partisi* (Justice Party) government and its liberal policies; after 1971 they battled over the religious electorate with the MSP-*Milli Selamet Partisi* (National Salvation Party), which carried the flag of religious politics in Turkey. In 1975 the MHP joined forces with these parties to fight against the socialists, although the tension between them often came to the surface. Besides, young militants were strongly critical of the AP, which they thought to be a party of pragmatists and

self-serving politicians. They expressed their resentment to the MHP leadership, which had formed an alliance with this party. It can be seen that the nationalist militants and the party leadership were in a dilemma about how to treat the AP electorate and answer their expectations. The MHP and MSP were close friends regarding the promotion of an anti-Western stance in culture, the economy, and foreign affairs, but became bitter foes with their competing claims to uphold the right form of religion and how to best represent the religious-conservative electorate in politics. This was especially the case in the late 1970s, when the MSP's youth force, the *akıncılar*,⁵⁷ started to play a role in the university conflicts. On the other hand, the leaning of young militants towards a more anti-secular stance worried Türkeş and the party board.

Finally, the conclusion offers a summary of the main findings of the thesis and identifies how it has contributed to our understanding of the nationalist movement in Turkey and raises questions about potential areas of further research, with regard to post-1980 developments.

Methods and Sources

This study is based on two main methods: textual analysis and in-depth interviews. The former provides us with an examination of available texts reflecting the ideology and strategy of the movement, and the latter present the views of former activist militants involved in the movement and party board members in the period under study. The textual primary sources consist of party programs, political declarations released by parties or other political organizations, election speeches, newspapers and journals.

The party programs, election commitments and election speeches of the CKMP-MHP, AP, CHP and MNP-MSP reflect these parties' views on fundamental political issues. There

⁵⁷ The *akıncı* were irregular cavalry during the first centuries of the Ottoman Empire, based on and primarily for service in Europe. Their name derives from the verbal noun *akın* (from *ak-mak*, "to flow, be poured out"), which means a "raid, incursion into enemy territory". Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd ed., s.v. "Akıncı".

was no official newspaper of the MHP before 1980, but particular newspapers represented the party's political views at different periods. *Hergün* (Everyday) served as a semi-official party paper from 1975 to 1980. *Millet* (Nation), likewise, was a newspaper that reflected the MHP's views from 1975 onwards. *Ortadoğu* (The Middle East) advocated the nationalist mindset and backed the MHP in the mid 1970s, though its popularity amongst the nationalist militants gradually declined. *Milli Hareket* (National Movement), a monthly journal published between 1967 and 1971, was the first publication associated with the CKMP-MHP. *Devlet* (State), which started to be circulated in 1969, was the first weekly newspaper in alignment with the nationalist movement and continued to be published until the late 1970s. *Ocak* (Hearth) and *Töre* (Custom) were the two nationalist journals featuring theoretical essays; *Bozkurt* (Grey Wolf) (1972-1977) was prepared by a nationalist thinkers and party board members for a young audience. Aside from these papers, the *ülkü ocakları* leadership had their own publications: *Genç Arkadaş* (Young Friend) (1975-1979), *Hasret* (Longing) (1975-1979), *Nizam-ı Alem* (World Order) (1979) and *Birliğe Çağrı* (The Call to Unity) (1979-1980) were prepared by the *ülkü ocakları* leadership and distributed to the *ülkü ocakları* branches or sold at kiosks.⁵⁸

Most of the party meetings, congress speeches, declarations, interviews, articles and other relevant news about the nationalist movement are available in these publications. Added to these, mainstream newspapers such as *Milliyet* (Nationhood) were helpful for following other political developments of the time. Newspaper and journal archives are available in the Beyazıt Kütüphanesi (Beyazıt Library), which is the largest public library in Istanbul. Some of the nationalist journals missing in Beyazıt Kütüphanesi can be found in the Milli Kütüphane (National Library) in Ankara. The online archive of *Milliyet* newspaper is also of great help. Lastly, some of these documents are included in the documentary compilations mentioned above.

⁵⁸ Hasan Çağlayan and İbrahim Metin, Interviews, also see Hakkı Öznur, *Ülkücü Hareket*, Vol. IV, 3, 45, 76.

Autobiographies and biographies also provided extremely valuable information for this study; the large number of recently published autobiographical and biographical accounts make it possible to cross-check the information gathered from different sources. Numan Esin's *Bir 27 Mayısçı'nın Anıları*⁵⁹, Ahmet Er's *Hatıralarım*⁶⁰, Nevzat Kösoğlu's *Bir Vatan Kurtarma Hikayesi*⁶¹, Yaşar Okuyan's *O Yıllar*⁶², Taha Akyol's *Hayat Yolunda Gençlere Hatıralar*⁶³, Mehmet Doğan's *Gölgedeki Adam*⁶⁴, Ahmet Karabacak's *Üç Hilal'in Hikayesi*⁶⁵, Turan Güven's *İnsan Gelecekte Yaşar*⁶⁶, Ali Yurtaslan's *İtirafı*⁶⁷ and Hulusi Turgut's *Şahinlerin Dansı*⁶⁸, in which he presents a series of interviews with Alparslan Türkeş on his life story, reflect insiders' views on the MHP and the nationalist movement. Furthermore, the thesis benefits from the biographical accounts of retired military officers, left-wing activists and politicians of the time such as Dünder Seyhan's *Gölgedeki Adam*⁶⁹, Orhan Erkanlı's *Sorular-Sorunlar-Sorumlular*⁷⁰, Oğuzhan Müftüoğlu's *Bitmeyen Yolculuk*⁷¹ and Sarp Kuray's *İsyan ve Tevekkül*.⁷²

There are a limited number of official sources available on the MHP. The Prosecutor's statement in the "*MHP ve Ülkücü Kuruluşlar Davası*" (*The Trial of the MHP and Ülkücü Organizations*), is a vast document prepared during the martial law administration on the

⁵⁹ Numan Esin, *Devrim ve Demokrasi: Bir 27 Mayısçının Anıları (Revolution and Democracy: The Memories of a Soldier Involved in 27 May)* (İstanbul: Doğan, 2005).

⁶⁰ Ahmet Er, *Hatıralarım ve Hayatım* (İstanbul: Pamuk Yayınları, 2007).

⁶¹ Osman Çakır, *Nevzat Kösoğlu ile Hatıralar Yahut Bir Vatan Kurtarma Hikayesi (Memoirs or A Story of Saving the Fatherland)* (İstanbul: Ötüken, 2008).

⁶² Yaşar Okuyan, *O Yıllar (Those Years)* (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2010).

⁶³ Taha Akyol, *Hayat Yolunda Gençler İçin Anılar ve Öneriler (Memoirs and Advice for Youngsters)* (İstanbul: Doğan, 2007).

⁶⁴ Mehmet Doğan, *Alparslan Türkeş, MHP ve Gölgedeki Adam (Alparslan Türkeş, MHP and The Man in the Shadow)* (İstanbul: Ocak Yayınları, 2000).

⁶⁵ Ahmet Karabacak, *Üç Hilalin Hikayesi (The Story of the Three Crescents)* (İstanbul: Bilgeoğuz, 2011).

⁶⁶ Turan Güven, *İnsan Gelecekte Yaşar (Human Beings Live in the Future)* (İstanbul, Bilgeoğuz: 2006).

⁶⁷ Ali Yurtaslan, *İtirafı (Concessions)* (İstanbul: Aydınlık, 1980).

⁶⁸ Hulusi Turgut, *Şahinlerin Dansı: Türkeş'le Röportajlar (Interviews with Alparslan Türkeş: The Dance of Hawks)* (İstanbul: ABC, 1995).

⁶⁹ Dünder Seyhan, *Gölgedeki Adam (The Man in the Shadow)* (İstanbul: Uycan, 1966).

⁷⁰ Orhan Erkanlı, *Anılar Sorunlar, Sorumlular (Memoirs, Problems, Those Responsible)* (Baha: İstanbul: 1973)

⁷¹ Adnan Bostancıoğlu, *Oğuzhan Müftüoğlu ile Bitmeyen Yolculuk (Unfinished Journey with Oğuzhan Müftüoğlu [The Leader of Dev-Yol before 1980])* (İstanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları, 2011).

⁷² Sarp Kuray, *İsyan ve Tevekkül (Rebellion and Submission)* (İstanbul: Birharf, 2008).

nationalist movement after the 1980 coup.⁷³ In this document, which represents a political bias, there is plenty of information on the nationalist movement, which was checked against the information gathered in the oral interviews and other written sources. Another official document is a report written in 1970 by the Ministry of the Interior during the AP government and later published; this report discusses the foundation of the commando camps and the spread of nationalist organizations.⁷⁴

Books written by the party leaders of the time are another important source for this study; Alparslan Türkeş's *Dokuz Işık*⁷⁵ and *Türkiye'nin Meseleleri*⁷⁶, Bülent Ecevit's *Ortanın Solu*⁷⁷ and Necmettin Erbakan's *Milli Görüş*⁷⁸ reflect the party leaders' basic views on the political issues of the day. In addition to these political handbooks, scholarly works by nationalist academicians, mostly historians, such as Osman Turan's *Türk Cihan Hakimiyeti Mefkuresi Tarihi*⁷⁹ and İbrahim Kafesoğlu's *Milliyetçilik Meseleleri*⁸⁰, and books and articles penned by leading nationalist ideologues such as Ahmet Arvasi, Galip Erdem, Erol Güngör and Nihal Atsız are helpful sources in tracing the formation of nationalist thinking since the 1940s.

The second method I have applied is in-depth interviews with former nationalist militants and party board members of the time. These interviews were semi-structured with open-ended questions. Each of them took approximately 1.5 hours, depending on the interviewees' responses.⁸¹ Most of the interviewees had been in a position of influence regarding the setting of the ideological and strategic orientation of the movement. I had access to them via personal contacts during my fieldwork in Turkey during 2010-2012. These

⁷³ *MHP ve Ülkücü Kuruluşlar Davası (The Trial of the MHP and Ülkücü Organizations)* (Ankara: 1981); this statement was submitted to the court on 29 April 1981 by the Military Prosecutor's Office.

⁷⁴ *AP Hükümetinin 1970'de Hazırlattığı MHP Raporu: Ülkücü Komando Kampları (Report on the MHP by the AP Government: Ülkücü Commando Camps)* (İstanbul: Aydınlık, 1980).

⁷⁵ Alparslan Türkeş, *Dokuz Işık (Nine Lights)* (Ankara: Emel, 1979).

⁷⁶ Alparslan Türkeş, *Türkiye'nin Meseleleri (The Issues of Turkey)* (İstanbul: Milli Hareket, 1969).

⁷⁷ Bülent Ecevit, *Ortanın Solu (Left of Center)* (İstanbul: Kim Yayınları, 1966).

⁷⁸ Necmettin Erbakan, *Milli Görüş (National View)* (İstanbul: Dergah, 1975).

⁷⁹ Osman Turan, *Türk Cihan Hakimiyeti Mefkuresi Tarihi (The History of the Ideal of Turkish World Hegemony)* (İstanbul: Ötüken, 2009).

⁸⁰ İbrahim Kafesoğlu, *Milliyetçilik Meseleleri (The Issues of Nationalism)* (Ankara: TKAE, 1966).

⁸¹ All interviewees consented to my use of quotations in the thesis.

interviews contain valuable information regarding the dynamics between the party leadership and young militants.⁸² For instance, the information gathered in these conversations provided me with more concrete examples to identify the tension between the party leadership and young militants, or the leader and the party board, at which some of the written sources hinted. Likewise, in these interviews it was possible to collect much more detailed information about the training sessions given to young nationalist militants and the leadership style of Alparslan Türkeş.

One methodological drawback of oral interviews is the question of reliability. In this study there are several factors which could undermine the reliability of the information, such as the length of time elapsed since the 1970s, personal and legal concerns of the interviewees and the political division amongst the nationalists after 1980.⁸³ On the other hand, the interviewees reflected consensual views on major issues and in most cases it was possible to cross-check information they provided with other interviews, biographical accounts or the written narratives of the time.⁸⁴

The question of reliability also involves a potential problem regarding the interviewees' influence on my description of the wider political struggles in Turkey during the 1960s and 1970s. However, I have tried to avoid this problem by not treating their own partial accounts of these struggles, of which they were a part, as truths. Instead I have relied upon factual information I have gathered from the academic literature and primary sources such as newspapers. Most of the information I have used from these interviews is related to party affairs, the organization of the *ülkü ocakları* and inner dynamics between the party members and young militants.

⁸² For a discussion on the advantages of oral interviews in gathering information see Paul Thompson, *Voice of the Past: Oral History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988) pp. 88-92.

⁸³ Ritchie suggests that we should treat oral evidence as cautiously as any other form of evidence. Donald Ritchie, *Doing Oral History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 117-118; Paul Thompson, likewise, points out that interviewees may reflect their experiences in different forms for various reasons. *Voice of the Past*, pp. 128-132.

⁸⁴ Ritchie notes that oral history should not stand alone as a single source and that researchers should seek out available material to substantiate both written and oral evidence. Donald Ritchie, *Doing Oral History*, p. 119.

Lastly, I benefited from the works of the leading scholars on the history of Turkish nationalism and politics, which provide a rich historical and conceptual background for this study. Of particular value are the relevant articles in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce* and *Symbiotic Antagonism: Competing Nationalisms in Turkey*, in which several articles exploring the evolution of conservative nationalism in Turkey are compiled.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce (Political Thought in Modern Turkey)* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2001-2009); *Symbiotic Antagonism: Competing Nationalisms in Turkey*. ed. Ayşe Kadioğlu, Fuat Keyman (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah, 2010).

CHAPTER 1

THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONALIST DISCOURSE IN THE TURKISH REPUBLIC DOWN TO 1960

This chapter aims to explore the formation of nationalist ideology during the early Republican period and the transition from single-party rule to democracy in Turkey. It demonstrates that the nationalist discourse did not follow a single line but was broken down into the different notions of secular, Turkist and conservative nationalism, which held differing visions on the question of westernization, history and religion. As opposed to the secular nationalists, the Turkists and conservative nationalists promoted an anti-Westernist view of nationalism praising the Ottoman heritage; yet conservative nationalists and Turkists diverged on the centrality of religion and ethnicity in the idea of nationalism. The chapter suggests that the agents of political nationalism were the Republican elite, who favored a top-down model of social change and imposed their secular vision of nationalism through various means. The chapter also aims to show that intermediary institutions became significant political tools to indoctrinate and mobilize the masses from the early days of the Republic.

The chapter starts with a discussion of Kemalist nationalism, followed by an analysis of its political application, and the rise of challenging views of nationalism during the İnönü period. The final section briefly looks at how the post-1946 democratization impacted upon the evolution of nationalist ideology and civil organizations. The survey rests mainly on secondary sources with an intention to look at this period through the lens of post-1960 politics. The analysis therefore revolves around particular themes that are seen to be relevant throughout the following decades.

I - THE MAKING OF KEMALIST NATIONALISM: 1923-1938

During the course of the foundation of the new Turkish Republic, the Ottoman *millet* system was torn apart to be replaced by secular nationalism, and specific contours of Turkism were integrated into this ideology. In the meantime, Mustafa Kemal and the early Republican elite introduced a set of drastic reforms aimed at westernization that were instrumental in building a nation-state. The single party's radical reforms were demanding, but the absence of democratic mechanisms and civil society were serious obstacles in enforcing these reforms.⁸⁶ In a bid to close this gap the Republican leadership made use of the *Türk Ocakları* and People's Houses, making them instrumental tools in the ideological indoctrination of the masses.

From *Millet* to Nation: The Question of the Turkish *Millet*

In the Ottoman Empire the subjects of the Sultan had been codified according to their religious affiliation since the mid-15th century; the Muslim *millet*, the Armenian *millet*, the Rum *millet* and the Jewish *millet* were the constituent *millets* of society until the 19th century.⁸⁷ The 19th and early 20th centuries witnessed the shattering of the long-standing social framework; Muslims living in the Balkans and Anatolia grew increasingly anxious especially towards the Armenian and Rum *millets* as a result of successive independence

⁸⁶ Şerif Mardin, *Türkiye'de Toplum ve Siyaset (Society and Politics in Turkey)* (İstanbul: İletişim, 1992), pp. 60-62, 234.

⁸⁷ Macit Kenanoğlu, *Osmanlı'da Millet Sistemi (The Millet System in the Ottoman Empire)* (İstanbul: Klasik 2004), pp. 30-33; Kemal Karpat, "Millet and Nationality", reprinted in Kemal H. Karpat, *Studies in Ottoman Social and Political History* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), pp. 610-646. Richard Clogg notes that the Rum *millet* included the Serbs, the Bulgarians, the Romanians, the Vlachs and Christian Albanians. Richard Clogg, "The Greek Millet in the Ottoman Empire" in *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: the Functioning of a Plural Society*, ed. Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1982), pp. 185-200. These *millets*, however, were not necessarily the most important dividing line amongst the Ottoman subjects in the Empire. Bruce Masters, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World: The Roots of Sectarianism*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 12-14, 99. The Ottoman government recognized the Bulgarians as a separate *millet* in 1870; Serbian community administration was officially recognized in 1890; see *Conflicting Loyalties in the Balkans: The Great Powers, the Ottoman Empire and Nation Building*, ed. Nathalie Clayer, Hannes Grandits, Robert Pichle (London: Tauris, 2011), p. 266.

movements in the Empire.⁸⁸ The Muslim *millet* started to fragment, too; from 1908 onwards some of the leaders of the Albanian and Arab communities, codified as part of the Muslim *millet*, wanted to establish independent states and abandon their attachment to the Ottoman Empire.⁸⁹ Assessing these developments, many of the bureaucrats and thinkers in İstanbul lost their belief in preserving the old identities which formed the imperial structure.

The Ottoman Empire lost a great portion of its territories in the Balkans and in the Middle East between 1876 and 1920; the composition of its population dramatically changed as well and the percentage of Muslim population in Anatolia significantly increased.⁹⁰ The controversy over the Sèvres Treaty of 1920, signed in the aftermath of WW1, led some military men and bureaucrats to defy the harsh conditions imposed on the Ottoman Empire and give impetus to a resistance movement that had been already in the making since 1919.⁹¹ The resistance in Anatolia was quickly organized and its leaders, in defiance of the authority of the sultan, skillfully articulated the notion of a “Turkish *millet*” as an independent source of legitimacy.⁹² The opening of the Turkish Grand National Assembly (*Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi*) was a crucial step in reinforcing the conviction that the will of the Turkish *millet* would be above everything else.⁹³

⁸⁸ Fikret Adanır and Suraiya Faroqhi, ed., *The Ottomans and the Balkans: A Discussion of Historiography* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), pp. 32-41; Soner Çağaptay, *Islam, Secularism and Nationalism in Modern Turkey: Who is a Turk?* (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 4-11.

⁸⁹ Hasan Kayalı, *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire: 1908-1918* (California: University of California Press, 1997), pp. 81-114, 161-171.

⁹⁰ Kemal Karpaz, *Osmanlı'dan Günümüze Etnik Yapılanma ve Göçler (Ethnic Structure and Migrations From the Ottoman Empire to Our Day)* Trans. Bahar Tırnakçı (İstanbul: Timaş, 2010), pp. 13-20; also see Kemal Karpaz, “Historical Continuity and Identity Change”, in *Ottoman Past and Today's Turkey*, ed. Kemal Karpaz (Leiden: Brill, 2000), p. 22. Furthermore, the Committee of Union and Progress leadership was determined to purge the non-Muslim population from Anatolia; for a detailed discussion see Soner Çağaptay, *Islam, Secularism and Nationalism*, pp.8-10

⁹¹ Kazım Karabekir, *İstiklal Harbimizin Esasları (The Foundations of our War of Independence)* (İstanbul: Emre, 1995), pp. 33-47; Stanford Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Vol II, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 343-347. Also see Selahattin Tansel, *Mondrostan Mudanyaya Kadar (From Mudros to Mudanya)*, Vol: II, (İstanbul: MEB, 1991), pp. 53-142

⁹² Selahattin Tansel, *Mondrostan Mudanyaya*, pp. 53-110; see Ahmet Yıldız, “Kemalist Milliyetçilik (Kemalist Nationalism)”, in *MTSD*, Vol. II, pp. 217-222.

⁹³ *Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri (Speeches and Discourses of Atatürk)* (Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi), Vol. II, p. 184.

It could be said that the transformation of the meaning of *millet* and the change in the political ruling structure went hand in hand. The victory won against the Greeks in the War of Independence earned Mustafa Kemal, the leader of the resistance movement great prestige and power.⁹⁴ He was in favor of a swift shift to a republican system; the first step was the abolition of the sultanate in 1922 and in the following year Mustafa Kemal founded the *Halk Fırkası* (People's Party-HF⁹⁵). Soon after this, the Kemalist leadership proposed a motion to the parliament to declare a republic, a significant maneuver to tighten their grip on the administration, and the foundation of a new Turkish Republic was declared by the parliament on 29 October 1923.⁹⁶ The first attempt to found an opposition party ended in failure in 1925; some of the leaders of the War of Independence, such as Kazım Karabekir, Refet Bele and Rauf Orbay, had joined forces in 1924 to form a political party, the *Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Fırkası* (Progressive Republican Party-TCF), which advocated a wider application of democratic norms in the political administration and challenged Mustafa Kemal, who was tempted to eliminate his old friends whilst he built a new political order.⁹⁷ This party was closed down in 1925 and Mustafa Kemal consolidated his power in the administration, appointing close friends to key positions in the bureaucracy.⁹⁸ Meanwhile those messages praising the will of the nation were slowly disregarded and single-party rule was established in the country.

In European nation-states of the time nationhood was either ascribed through cultural practices and a sense of belonging to a land, *jus soli*, or through the ethnicity of ancestors, *jus sanguinis*.⁹⁹ The citizenship policies of the Turkish Republic did not conform to either of

⁹⁴ Kazım Karabekir, *Paşaların Hesaplaşması (The Showdown of Pashas)* (İstanbul: Emre, 1995), pp. 170-176, 183-185; Eric Jan Zürcher, *Milli Mücadelede İttihatçılık (The Unionist Factor: The Role of the CUP in the Turkish National Movement)*, trans. Nüzhet Salihoğlu (Ankara: Bağlam, 1987), p. 234.

⁹⁵ It was renamed *Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası* (Republican People's Party) in 1924.

⁹⁶ Eric Jan Zürcher, *Milli Mücadelede İttihatçılık*, pp. 243-247.

⁹⁷ Mete Tunçay, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Tek Parti Yönetimi'nin Kurulması*, pp. 108-109; also see Eric Jan Zürcher, *Terrakkiperver Cumhuriyet Fırkası (Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic: the Progressive Republican Party, 1924-1925)* trans. Gül Çağalı Güven (İstanbul: Bağlam, 1992), pp. 125-129, 130-139.

⁹⁸ The party was closed in 1925 following the Şeyh Said revolt, which will be touched upon later. Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (London: Tauris, 2004), pp. 166-176.

⁹⁹ Patrick Weil, Trans. Catherine Porter, *How To Be French: Nationality in the Making Since 1789* (Durham, Duke University Press, 2008), pp. 173-194.

these definitions; the persistence of the *millet* system in defining Turkish nationhood left religion the highest denominator, above ethnicity and civic duties.¹⁰⁰ The ethnic make-up of Turkey was still diverse at the end of the Independence War and the Turkish delegation that went to Lausanne to negotiate a peace settlement was not prepared to accept minorities based on ethnicity, language or sect, but only those based on religion.¹⁰¹ The exclusion of the criteria of ethnicity and language in granting Turkish citizenship was not an ad hoc decision; in the Lausanne Convention of 30 January 1923¹⁰², the Turkish side was strongly insistent that religion should be the criteria of minority in their country.¹⁰³ Likewise, the Gagauz Turks of Moldova, who were Orthodox Christians, were not granted Turkish citizenship, whereas Albanians, Bosnians and Pomaks, who were not ethnically Turkish but practiced the Muslim faith, were encouraged to migrate to Turkey and given Turkish nationality.¹⁰⁴

It could therefore be argued that there was a confusion in shifting from ‘Muslim *millet*’ to ‘Turkish *millet*’ (Turkish nation), which obscured what it meant for people to be part of the Turkish *millet* and to uphold Türk *milliyetçiliği* (Turkish nationalism).¹⁰⁵ Actually, debates on Turkishness, Turkish nationality and Islam had dominated intellectual circles in the late Ottoman period.¹⁰⁶ The sociologist Ziya Gökalp had been among the most prolific

¹⁰⁰ Şener Aktürk, ‘Persistence of the Islamic Millet as an Ottoman Legacy: Mono-Religious and Anti-Ethnic Definition of Turkish Nationhood’, *Middle Eastern Studies* 45:6(2009): 893-895.

¹⁰¹ Şener Aktürk, ‘Persistence of the Islamic Millet’, p. 902.

¹⁰² See *Türk Dış Politikasında Lozan (Lausanne in the Turkish Foreign Policy)* (Ankara: Dışişleri Bakanlığı, 1973), p. 97

¹⁰³ Baskın Oran, *Türkiye’de Azınlıklar: Kavramlar, Lozan, İç Mevzuat, İçtihat, Uygulamaları (Minorities in Turkey: Concepts, Lausanne, Regulations, Interpretations, Applications)* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2010), pp. 47-49, 64. Rıza Nur, *Hayat ve Hatırlarım (My Life and Memories)* (İstanbul: Altındağ, 1968), pp. 1007-1020.

¹⁰⁴ Şener Aktürk, ‘Persistence of the Islamic Millet’, pp. 896.

¹⁰⁵ Kushner points out the confusion arising from the transformation of the meaning of ‘*millet*’ during the 19th and early 20th centuries; he notes that the term *millet* had had a religious attribution in the Ottoman Empire, whereas it started to be used in the modern sense gradually after 1839. David Kushner, *Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Doğuşu (The Birth of Turkish Nationalism)* Trans.Şevket Türet (İstanbul: Kesit, 2009), pp. 46-59. For a similar discussion see Kemal Karpat, *İslamın Siyasallaşması (The Politicization of Islam)* Trans.Şiar Yalçın (İstanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2004), pp. 618-632; Gökhan Çetinsaya, ‘Rethinking nationalism and Islam: Some preliminary notes on the roots of ‘Turkish-Islamic synthesis’ in modern Turkish political thought’, *Muslim World*, LXXXIX, 3-4 (1999), pp. 353-364.

¹⁰⁶ See Ertuğrul Düzdağ, *Yakın Tarihimizde İslam ve Irkçılık Meselesi (The Question of Islam and Racism in our Recent History)* (İstanbul: Kaynak, 2006); Gökhan Çetinsaya, ‘Rethinking nationalism and Islam’, pp. 353-360.

contributors to the discussion and penned several books on Turkish national identity; Mustafa Kemal was a keen reader of Gökbalp and drew inspiration from his ideas.¹⁰⁷ Gökbalp was one of the active proponents of the idea of Turkism, which had first been introduced by Yusuf Akçura in his *Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset* (Three Ways of Politics) in 1904, where Akçura had mapped three different trajectories for the future of the Ottoman Empire (Ottomanism, Islamism, Turkism), of which he saw only the last as viable.¹⁰⁸ In his *Türkçülüğün Esasları* (The Principles of Turkism, 1923), Ziya Gökbalp laid out a theory of nationalism based on cultural integrity and social and cultural cohesion, which required sharing the same feeling and spirit, speaking the same language and acting in accordance with identical moral values.¹⁰⁹ Heyd and Parla note that Gökbalp was not concerned with the theological aspect of religion, but elaborated its social function, emphasizing the practical dimension of religion in the social fabric.¹¹⁰ In fact, in his early writings Gökbalp had considered religion and state as closely interlinked with each other whereas towards the end of his career he challenged the centrality of religion in the realm of politics and law.¹¹¹

Advancing the idea of Turkism he presented a perspective of nationalism in a framework compatible with the vision of the new ruling elite.¹¹² In the following years, Mustafa Kemal and the Republican elite incorporated these ideas into their westernization and nation-building project, combining Turkism with Westernism into a single political vision.

¹⁰⁷ Uriel Heyd, *Foundations of Turkish Nationalism: The life and teachings of Ziya Gökbalp*, p. 170; Şükrü Hanioglu, *Atatürk: An Intellectual Biography* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2011), pp. 64-66.

¹⁰⁸ The Turkist perspective had maintained that the Ottoman rulers needed to restructure imperial institutions, relying exclusively on Turkish components inside the Empire and Turkish communities living outside. Yusuf Akçura, *Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset (Three Ways of Politics)* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1976), pp. 19-24, 33-36; Jacob Landau, *Pan-Turkism in Turkey*, pp. 28-37.

¹⁰⁹ Ziya Gökbalp, *Türkçülüğün Esasları*, pp. 16-18; also see Ziya Gökbalp, *Türkleşmek İslamlaşmak Muasırlaşmak (Turkification, Islamicisation, Modernisation)* (İstanbul: Toker Yayınları, 1992).

¹¹⁰ Taha Parla, *Ziya Gökbalp, Kemalizm ve Türkiye’de Korporatizm (Ziya Gökbalp, Kemalism and Corporatism in Turkey)* (İstanbul: İletişim, 1993), pp. 79-85; Uriel Heyd, *Foundations of Turkish Nationalism*, pp. 85-87.

¹¹¹ Ziya Gökbalp, *Makaleler I (Articles)* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1993); pp.79-85 and *Türkçülüğün Esasları*, pp. 176-177.

¹¹² Taha Parla, *Ziya Gökbalp*, pp. 9-13, 79-83.

They imagined secular nationalism as a fundamental pillar of the westernization reforms that they were poised to undertake and took radical steps in its construction.¹¹³

Nationalism within Westernism

It could be said that the pace of westernization surpassed the pace of nationalism from 1923 to 1930. Recourse to the westernization project, which had its early roots in the *Tanzimat* reforms of the mid-19th century, ignited the *Kulturkampf* of the previous century. This time, however, westernization reforms came with a much greater force and on a larger scale; reform laws were swiftly passed and forcefully implemented in various segments of society during the first decade of the new republic.

In contradiction with the citizenship policies, the early Republican elite were determined to build a Turkish national identity independent of any religious connotation and Islam was gradually eliminated from the Kemalist nation-building program.¹¹⁴ Poulton notes that Kemalist nationalism displays Gellner's high-culture-forming paradigm; indeed the Kemalist elite took certain steps to weave a novel cultural fabric.¹¹⁵ The abolition of the sultanate was the first step, followed by the abolition of Caliphate in 1924.¹¹⁶ They were quick to introduce drastic changes in the legal domain as well; the *şer'iyye* courts were brought to an end in 1924 and the *Mecelle*¹¹⁷ and Law of Family Rights of 1917, which had been

¹¹³ İlker Aytürk, "The Racist Critics of Atatürk and Kemalism from the 1930 to the 1960s", *Journal of Contemporary History*, 46:308 (2011), p. 331.

¹¹⁴ İlker Aytürk, "The Racist Critics of Atatürk", p. 329; Gökhan Çetinsaya, "Rethinking Nationalism and Islam", pp. 362-365

¹¹⁵ Hugh Poulton, *Top Hat, Grey Wolf and Crescent* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), p. 128

¹¹⁶ Metet Tunçay, *Tek Parti*, p. 76; a wave of public reaction started to spread in various regions; the revolt led by Sheikh Said, a Nakşibendi sheikh, demanding the restoration of the caliphate, broke out across eastern and southeastern Anatolia in 1925 and special courts named *İstiklal Mahkemeleri* (Independence Tribunals), which had been introduced in 1920, were set up again to apply swift and harsh punishment; many religious scholars were executed for their strong criticisms of republican policies. See Mete Tunçay, *Tek Parti*, pp. 78, 127, 140

¹¹⁷ The *Mecelle* was the civil code compiled on the basis of Islamic law by a commission under the chairmanship of Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, that had been implemented in the Ottoman Empire between 1878-1926; see Uriel Heyd,

markedly reformist in its time, was replaced with the Swiss civil code in 1926.¹¹⁸ The reform in the education institutions closed the *medreses* in 1924 and speeded up the development of modern mass schooling with a westernized curriculum.¹¹⁹ In 1925 the Hat Law prohibited the wearing of traditional male headgear such as the fez and the turban; the following year Sufi lodges were shut down and the Arabic script was replaced by the Latin script in 1928.¹²⁰

The Republican regime was trying to achieve rapid and radical change in the mentality of the whole population. However, the rate of illiteracy remained around 80% as investments to improve schooling fell short of providing a substantial means of education to the masses.¹²¹ To foster mass education and indoctrination, in 1931 the government launched a new initiative, the *Halk Evleri* (*People's Houses*), which aimed to promote republican reforms in urban centers.¹²² The number of People's Houses rapidly increased in three years, reaching eighty branches in 1934 with approximately five hundred thousand people attending their activities.¹²³ In various branches of the People's Houses social and cultural activities were run; for instance, language sections collected local sayings and proverbs still in use in villages to send to the Turkish Language Society, which made a substantial contribution to the

Türk Hukuk ve Kültür Tarihi Üzerine Makaleler (Articles on the History of Turkish Law and Culture)(Adana: Ankara Okulu, 2002), pp. 151-153.

¹¹⁸ Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, pp. 416-418, 467-473.

¹¹⁹ Mete Tunçay, *Tek Parti*, pp. 225-226, 232-240.

¹²⁰ Furthermore, in 1925 the Rumi calendar, which was a solar calendar, based on the Julian calendar as far as its months were concerned but counting its years from the Hijra, like the Muslim calendar, and used by the Ottomans since the *Tanzimat* reforms, was replaced with the Gregorian calendar, used by the Europeans. The length and weight measures were changed to the western standards as well in 1926 and 1931. Mete Tunçay, *Tek Parti*, pp. 149-150, 226-232.

¹²¹ Stanford Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Vol II, p. 386-387; The rate of literacy in 1935 was 18.7%; see *TUİK: İstatistik Göstergeler: 1923-2010 (Statistical Indicators)* (Ankara, Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu, 2010).

¹²² Mustafa Özsarı, “Halk Evlerinin Kuruluşu ve Çalışmaları”,

<http://w3.balikesir.edu.tr/~mozsari/Halkevleri.htm>; (accessed 18-5-2012). Çeçen notes that the early Republican elite drew inspiration from the *Skolo* organization in Czechoslovakia; Anıl Çeçen, *Halk Evleri*, p. 108.

¹²³ *Halkevleri Geçen Yıllarda Nasıl Çalıştı (How Did People's Houses Work In Previous Years)*(Ankara: CHP Yayinlari, 1935), pp. 6-7; Neşe Yeşilkaya, “Halk Evleri” in *MTSD*, Vol. II, pp. 114-116; also see Kemal Karpat, “The Impact of the People's Houses on the Development of Communication in Turkey: 1931-1951”, *Die Welt des Islams*, Vol. 15, Issue 1/4 (1974), pp. 69-84.

transformation of the Turkish vocabulary in the context of language reform program.¹²⁴ Each House had its independent journal, like *Ülkü* (Ideal) in Ankara and *Yeni Türk* (New Turk) in İstanbul, to publicize their studies in Turkish language and history; these journals were supposed to “help the cultural revolution spread among the people and the villagers”.¹²⁵ To Reşit Galip, minister of education in the 1930s, the Turkish nation had been lagging behind in its march to catch up with the level of the advanced civilization of the West and was determined to close this gap with the help of these institutions.¹²⁶

It is a fact that the educated elites and political leadership in Turkey closely watched the intellectual-political currents in Europe at the time and often expressed this inspiration in their political behavior.¹²⁷ It seems that in the 1920s the Republicans were close to a view of nationalism that stressed the unity of culture and sense of collective belonging of the Turkish nation. However, this was a time in which far-right movements such as the National Socialists in Germany, the Fascists in Italy and the Action Française in France were in the ascendancy in Europe, where politicians were playing on ideas of race to spark nationalist sentiments and nationalist views promoting racial inequality were gaining popularity.¹²⁸ As a result, there seems to be a gradual change in the Turkish ruling elite’s nationalist discourse from an

¹²⁴ Mustafa Özşarı, “Halk Evlerinin Kuruluşu ve Çalışmaları”; likewise, upon the introduction of the ‘surname law’, language sections of the People’s Houses again led campaigns to find new surnames for citizens and to teach Turkish in areas where local inhabitants had a low level of knowledge of the Turkish language. Anıl Çeçen, *Halk Evleri*, pp. 124-131.

¹²⁵ Zeki Arıkan, “Halkevlerinin Kuruluşu ve Tarihsel İşlevi” (The Establishment of People’s Houses and Their Historical Function), *Atatürk Yolu Dergisi*, VI/23 (1999), p. 273; likewise Recep Peker in a speech stated: “To be a nation in this century, and to be a body as a nation, we need mass education along with schooling”, Recep Peker, “Halk Evleri Açılma Nutku”, *Ülkü Dergisi*, VI (February 1933), pp. 6-8.

¹²⁶ Zeki Arıkan, “Halkevlerinin Kuruluşu ve Tarihsel İşlevi”, p. 269.

¹²⁷ Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, pp. 463-503; Ahmet Çigdem, “Batılılaşma, Modernite ve Modernizasyon (Westernization, Modernity and Modernization)” in *MTSD*, Vol. III, pp. 72-79, 82-84.

¹²⁸ Neil MacMaster, *Racism in Europe 1870-2000* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 34-46, 98-135; in the works of prominent anthropologists of the time such as Georges Vacher de Lapouge, Alfred Ploetz and Henry Huxley racial difference was of primary importance in defining human identity. Stefan Kuhl, *The Nazi Connection: Eugenics, American Racism, and German National Socialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp.70-71; Bruce, David Baum, *The Rise and Fall of the Caucasian Race: A Political History of Racial Identity* (New York: New York University Press, 2008), pp. 118-121, 133-135.

essentially cultural understanding towards a view of nationalism defined by racial-ethnic categories. For instance, in the CHP party program in 1931 it had been stated that:

“Every citizen living in the Republic of Turkey who speaks Turkish, who is brought up within Turkish culture and adopts Turkish ideals, regardless of his/her religion and sect, is a Turk.”¹²⁹

Notwithstanding this, the ethnic superiority of Turks was frequently referred to in official publications such as school textbooks and often voiced by party members from the early 1930s onwards. Minister of Justice Esat Bozkurt, for example, said that he favored a model of society based on race: “We [those who are Turks] will be the masters; the others will serve us”.¹³⁰ Similarly, in the Sun-Language Theory, it was argued that the Turkish language was the highest of all languages.¹³¹ In 1934, following the revocation of the titles and denominators employed in Ottoman society, citizens were compelled to adopt Turkish surnames.¹³²

This re-orientation of nationalist policies by the Republican leadership produced its side-effects upon society. In southeastern Anatolia the proportion of Kurdish people was overwhelmingly high, and Turkish was not even the spoken language. They were displeased by the enforcement of Turkish as the official language and the transition from Muslim *millet*, in which they had enjoyed the same status with Turks, to secular and ethnically demarcated “Turkishness”.¹³³ Likewise, despite the population exchange, a sizeable Greek minority

¹²⁹ For Mustafa Kemal’s definition of the Turkish nation based on culture and sense of belongingness see Baskın Oran, *Atatürk Milliyetçiliği (Atatürkist Nationalism)* (Ankara: Dost, 1988), pp. 130-134; Turhan Feyzioğlu, *Atatürk ve Milliyetçilik (Atatürk and Nationalism)* (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu, 1987), pp. 55-58. Similarly, Mustafa Kemal once stated: “*Millet* is a title given to a community that has a rich shared memory, shows willingness to live together, and has a commitment to preserve its common legacy”. Baskın Oran, *Atatürk Milliyetçiliği*, p. 130.

¹³⁰ *Cumhuriyet*, 19 Eylül 1930.

¹³¹ Berk Balçık, “Milliyetçilik ve Dil Politikaları” in *MTSD*, Vol. IV, pp. 784-785; Hugh Poulton, *Top Hat*, pp. 111-112. The Turkish Anthropological Research Society, founded in 1931, conducted research on human bones and skulls collected from graveyards. Likewise, Afet Inan’s PhD study, supervised by Eugene Pittard, was on racial analysis of the Anatolian people; see *L’Anatolie, Le Pays de la Race Turque: Recherches sur les Caractères Anthropologiques des Populations de la Turquie (Enquete sur 64,000 Individus)*. Préf. de Eugène Pittard (Genève: Georg 1941).

¹³² *Official Gazette of the Republic of Turkey*, 02 July 1934

¹³³ Soner Çağaptay, *Islam, Secularism and Nationalism in Modern Turkey*, pp. 102-105; on the other hand, despite all this emphasis on Turkish ethnicity, the citizenship policies, as explained above, indicated the persistence of the idea of the Muslim “*millet*”, as the government registered citizens not on the basis of their

continued to live in İstanbul, which had been exempted from the provisions of the Lausanne Convention, whereas Armenian and Jewish citizens were spread across the country; in total, there were around 250,000 non-Muslims living in Turkey in 1927.¹³⁴ Greeks and Armenians were disappointed with the discriminatory attitude of the government, which prevented them from holding positions in the civil service and the army, but, as Çağaptay notes, the attitude of the Turkish government and press seemed to change after Greek-Turkish relations ameliorated from the early 1930s onwards.¹³⁵ Jews accommodated themselves more easily to the Republic in the early years, but the attitude towards them changed in the late 1920s and early 1930s as well.¹³⁶

Following the European example, the ruling elite sought to benefit from academic studies to build a new Turkish national culture; the Faculty of Language History and Geography (Dil Tarih Coğrafya Fakültesi-DTCF) in Ankara University, for example, was established in 1935 to encourage research in language, history and material culture.¹³⁷ The Turkish Language Society (*Türk Dil Kurumu*), founded in 1932, aimed to rediscover authentic Turkish vocabulary and invent novel words to facilitate the elimination of Arabo-Persian

ethnicity but according to religious affiliation. What appeared on identity cards was not ethnic identities such as Turk, Kurd, Albanian or Arab but religious affiliations like Muslim, Armenian, Jew or Greek Orthodox (Rum). Şener Aktürk, ‘‘Persistence of the Islamic Millet’’, p. 896.

¹³⁴ Fuat Dündar, *Türkiye Nüfus Sayımlarında Azınlıklar* (Minorities in Turkish Censuses) (İstanbul: Chivi Yazıları, Yayınevi, 2000) p. 157, 207; Şener Aktürk, ‘‘Continuity and Change in the Regimes of Ethnicity in Austria, Germany, the USSR/Russia and Turkey: Varieties of Ethnic Regimes and Hypothesis for Change’’, *Nationalities Papers*, 35:1, pp. 39-41.

¹³⁵ Şener Aktürk, ‘‘Persistence of the Islamic Millet’’, pp. 897-898; moreover, the election of a new Patriarch in İstanbul stirred a controversy among the Greek community in Turkey; in the end Basil III, who was an acceptable name for the Turkish government, was elected to the Patriarchate in 1925; Soner Çağaptay, *Islam, Secularism and Nationalism*, pp. 27-28, 30-41.

¹³⁶ For instance, Jewish thinker Moiz Kohen (then Munis Tekinalp), who contributed to republican thinking, argued that the Jews in Turkey should comply with westernization reforms and be assimilated into Turkish identity; Jacob M.Landau; *Tekinalp, Turkish Patriot* (Leiden: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut 1984), p.6. Avner Levi, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’nde Yahudiler* (*Jews in the Republic of Turkey*) (İstanbul: 2010), pp.20-22; Rıfat Bali, ‘‘Yahudi Ermeni ve Rum Toplumlarında Milliyetçilik’’ (Nationalism in the Jewish and Greek Communities), in *MTSD*, Vol 4, pp. 919-920. On the other hand, this peaceful relation with the Jews gradually deteriorated; in 1934, a government decree which divided the country into specific zones, identifying ‘‘those areas where the population of people of Turkish culture should increase’’, caused Jews living in Edirne, a border city in the northwest, to be expelled from the city. For a wider discussion see Rıfat Bali, *1934 Edirne Olayları* (İstanbul: Libra, 2012); Avner Levi, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’nde Yahudiler*, pp. 70-75.

¹³⁷ Büşra Ersanlı, *İktidar ve Tarih: Türkiye’de Resmi Tarih Tezinin Oluşumu: 1929-1937* (*Power and History: The Making of the Official Turkish History Thesis in Turkey: 1929-1937*) (İstanbul: İletişim, 2009), pp. 156-157.

vocabulary.¹³⁸ Mustafa Kemal, very eager to see this new vocabulary applied, chose to use new words when he spoke publicly and compelled his friends, the media and the schools to do so.¹³⁹ The Sun-Language Theory, which maintained that Turkish was the mother of all existing languages, was promoted by the Republican leadership in the early 1930s.¹⁴⁰ Archaeological research aimed at revealing links between the Turks and ancient Anatolian civilizations such as those of the Hittites and Sumerians was undertaken. The “Turkish History Thesis”, which was developed in the early 1930s, argued that early ancestors of the Turkish nation had flourished in Central Asia thousands of years ago.¹⁴¹ It can be seen that Mustafa Kemal attached special importance to history and was willing to ascribe certain qualities to the Turkish nation with the help of novel evidence to be found in this research on Turkish history.¹⁴² Accordingly, the first Turkish History Congress was convened in Ankara in 1932 in the presence of Mustafa Kemal; over two hundred participants took their seats as fifteen researchers presented their papers on various aspects of Turkish history.¹⁴³ Charting the history of the Turkish people, most of the presentations dwelt on pre-Islamic Turkish history, and the Ottoman era was reduced to a minor stage of the Turks’ long venture in history for tens of thousands of years.¹⁴⁴

This historiography fostered the ruling elite’s view that the Ottoman experience was not something to be proud of; there was a consensus among the historians and Republican elite that the Ottomans had misinterpreted the role of religion in society, stood against

¹³⁸ Geoffrey Lewis, *Türk Dil Reformu (The Turkish Language Reform)* Trans. Fatih Uslu (İstanbul: Paradigma, 2007) pp. 73-77.

¹³⁹ Geoffrey Lewis, *Türk Dil Reformu*, pp. 77, 95-96.

¹⁴⁰ This theory had received positive feedback when it had been first introduced, but was gradually discarded towards the late 1930s. Geoffrey Lewis, *Türk Dil Reformu*, pp. 95-96.

¹⁴¹ Soner Çağaptay, *Islam, Secularism and Nationalism*, pp. 52-54; Büşra Ersanlı, *İktidar ve Tarih*, pp. 103, 122-127.

¹⁴² Arı İnan, *Prof. Afet İnan* (İstanbul: Remzi, 2005), pp. 97-99.

¹⁴³ Büşra Ersanlı, *İktidar ve Tarih*, pp. 119-124.

¹⁴⁴ Büşra Ersanlı, *İktidar ve Tarih*, pp. 119-124; Hugh Poulton, *Top Hat*, pp. 107-108.

scientific discoveries and let non-Turkish people hold positions in the state administration.¹⁴⁵

The Turkish History Thesis also argued that the migration of the Turks from Central Asia to Europe and Anatolia contributed to the progress of world civilization.¹⁴⁶ In school textbooks, this praise of the pre-Islamic heritage was emphasized, whereas Ottoman history was dismissed and the Ottoman rulers received paltry coverage.¹⁴⁷

On the other hand, independent of the state apparatus, the ideology of nationalism found a voice among civil circles again in the early 1930s with the writings of Nihal Atsız, a young scholar at İstanbul University from Turkist circles, who held extreme racist views.¹⁴⁸ By the time Atsız published the *Atsız Mecmua* in 1931 and *Orhun* in 1933 it was highly problematic to propagate any other view of Turkish nationalism than the one imposed by the Republican elite; in these publications and in his later works Atsız criticized the CHP, especially over its view of history and rejection of Pan-Turkism.¹⁴⁹ For instance, he saw no point in doing historical research to find a connection between old Anatolian civilizations and the Turks; more importantly, he denigrated the school textbook prepared by the Turkish Historical Society under the title *Türk Tarihi* (Turkish History), and condemned its mocking interpretation of Ottoman history, claiming that the Ottoman family was “the greatest family in the whole of Turkish history”.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁵ Esat Bozkurt, *Atatürk İhtilali* (Atatürk Revolution) (İstanbul: Altın Kitaplar, 1967); Afet İnan, *Tarih Üzerine İnceleme ve Makaleler* (Researches and Essays on History) (Ankara: Akin Matbaası, 1960), pp. 118-128.

¹⁴⁶ Etienne Copeaux, *Tarih Ders Kitaplarında Türk Tarih Tezinden Türk İslam Sentezine* (From Turkish History Thesis to Turkish Islamic Synthesis in History Textbooks) (İstanbul: İletişim, 2006), pp. 37-45.

¹⁴⁷ Büşra Ersanlı, *İktidar ve Tarih: Türkiye’de Resmi Tarih Tezinin Oluşumu*, pp. 106-113, 128; “*Medeni Bilgiler ve Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’ün El Yazıları*” (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1969), pp. 32-36. To reinforce this perspective with further evidence, Afet İnan, the “court historian” patronized by the ruling elite, was encouraged by Mustafa Kemal to advance her research on the history of the Turks before Islam. Arı İnan, *Prof. Afet İnan*, pp. 97-99.

¹⁴⁸ İlker Aytürk, “The Racist Critics of Atatürk”, pp. 314-316; also see Altan Deliorman, *Tanıdığım Atsız* (İstanbul: Orkun, 2000).

¹⁴⁹ İlker Aytürk, “The Racist Critics of Atatürk”, pp. 316, 327-328, 331-33; *Orhun* was closed down in 1934; Jacob Landau, *Pan-Turkizm*, p. 86

¹⁵⁰ Nihal Atsız, *Tanrıdağı* 10-11 (July 1942); he lambasted a poem which described Abdulhamit II, who was according to Atsız a genius, as a vampire. Nihal Atsız, *Türk Tarihinde Meseleler* (Issues in Turkish History) İstanbul 1997, pp. 81, 77. Also for his praise of Abdulhamid see “Abdulhamid Han - Gök Sultan”, *Ocak Dergisi*, 11, Mayıs 1956.

To disseminate their specific vision of nationalism, the Republican leadership initially saw the *Türk Ocakları* (Turkish Hearths) as a significant tool. The *Türk Ocakları* had been founded in 1912 by a group of nationalist intellectuals including Yusuf Akçura, Mehmed Emin [Yurdakul], Ahmed Ağaoğlu and Ahmed Emin [Tek], and had served to promote Turkism especially among educated people, having enjoyed a privileged relationship with the CUP.¹⁵¹ The *Türk Ocakları* continued to operate in semi-independent fashion in the early years of the Republic, reaching nearly thirty thousand members owing to the CHP's strong backing. The party considered the *Türk Ocakları* a channel to spread new cultural codes to the masses; towards the late 1920s and in the early 1930s, however, the *Türk Ocakları* lost this semi-independent status and became totally embedded in the state apparatus.¹⁵² The content of its activities also changed, in part due to the government's dislike for extreme interpretations of Turkism.¹⁵³ More importantly, the ideological forefathers of Turkism, who were the founders of the *Türk Ocakları* as well, were either invited to work in state service or cast out from political life.¹⁵⁴ Eventually, in March 1931 the *Türk Ocakları* were closed down by Mustafa Kemal.¹⁵⁵

The only active student society of the time, the *Milli Türk Talebe Birliği* (Milli Türk Talebe Birliği-National Turkish Student Union) was in tune with the CHP policies. In 1928 it was involved in the campaign “*Vatandaş Türkçe Konuş*” (Hey citizen, speak Turkish), which urged people, especially non-Muslim citizens, to speak Turkish in public places.¹⁵⁶ Similarly, they participated in other state-led campaigns such as buying “made in Turkey” products or

¹⁵¹ Between 1913 and 1918 the *Türk Ocağı* was one of the three societies which were allowed to operate (all other societies were forced to shut down). The number of its branches was more than thirty (with approximately 2000 members); see Füsün Üstel, *Türk Ocakları (1912-1931)* (İstanbul: İletişim, 1997), p. 92.

¹⁵² Füsün Üstel, *Türk Ocakları*, pp. 225-230.

¹⁵³ Füsün Üstel, *Türk Ocakları*, pp. 360-361.

¹⁵⁴ Yusuf Akçura, for instance, was appointed to the head of the Turkish Historical Society, and Ahmed Emin Tek started to serve in the foreign ministry. By contrast, Zeki Velidi and Ahmed Ağaoğlu tussled with republican power holders because of their clashing views and eventually retreated to their own corners.

¹⁵⁵ When they were shut down, there were 264 active *ocak* branches across the country. See Füsün Üstel, *Türk Ocakları*, p. 390.

¹⁵⁶ Soner Çağaptay, *Islam, Secularism and Nationalism*, pp. 25-27

attending demonstrations to protest alleged mistreatment of Turks living in foreign lands. In 1936, however, like the *Türk Ocakları*, the activities of the *MTTB* were suspended on account of its public demonstrations to support Turks living in Bulgaria and Aleppo.¹⁵⁷ By the time the *MTTB* was closed, the People's Houses, co-opted into the enlarging party-state structure, remained the only active institution for spreading nationalist propaganda in the country.

Geopolitics and Political Economy of Secular Nationalism

The geopolitics and political economy of the republican leadership represented a variety of directions in terms of what nationalism was taken to mean. In the realm of foreign policy, international affairs in the early 20th century were being driven by ‘Pan’ ideologies. The Ottoman Empire, too, had had to cope with the Pan-Slavist policies of the Russian Empire. It was no coincidence that the intellectual forefathers of Turkism, such as Zeki Velidi, Yusuf Akçura and Ahmet Ağaoğlu, had immigrated to Turkey from Russia, and these people had fashioned a Turkish version of this ideology, ardently defending the applicability of Pan-Turkism in Turkey.¹⁵⁸ The death of Enver Paşa, Minister of War and one of the most powerful figures in government from 1913 to 1918, in Dushanbe (Tajikistan) in 1922 testified that Pan-Turkist views had found resonance among the ruling elite. Likewise, Ziya Gökalp expounded the idea of “*Turan*”¹⁵⁹, imagining that all Turkic peoples would share a common culture.¹⁶⁰ Nevertheless, Mustafa Kemal stipulated his own rules in foreign policy and neither

¹⁵⁷ Tevfik Çavdar, “Cumhuriyet Döneminde Gençlik” in *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, p. 809.

¹⁵⁸ Jacob Landau, *Pan-Turkism in Turkey*, pp. 13-20, 93.

¹⁵⁹ Landau notes that *Turan* was an undefined Shangri-La-like area in the steppes of Central Asia and in a Turkish document of 1832 identified with Turkestan, Tatarstan, Uzbekistan and Moghulistan, according to its ruling inhabitants at different times. The idea of *Turan* signifies rapprochement and union among all people who originate from these areas. See Jacob Landau, *Pan-Turkism in Turkey: A Study in Irredentism* (London: Hurst 1981), p. 1.

¹⁶⁰ Ziya Gökalp, *Türkçülüğün Esasları (The Principles of Turkism)* (Ankara: Milli İctimaiyat Kütüphanesi, 1923), pp. 23-25. In *Türkçülüğün Esasları* Gökalp discusses the ideal of Turan (*Turan Mefkûresi*) as a cultural phenomenon rather than a political concept. See *Türkçülüğün Esasları*, pp. 23-27. In his previous works, however, he implies that the Turan is the fatherland of all Turks, see Ziya Gökalp, “Turan” in *Genç Kalemler* (March 1911)

he nor his ruling elite embraced this ideology.¹⁶¹ Even during the early 1930s, when German and Italian irredentism seriously challenged the balance of power, the Turkish government remained silent about Turks living in neighboring countries. Indeed, the boundaries of the Turkish state recognized in the Lausanne Treaty nearly matched the area designated in the National Pact (*Misak-ı Milli*),¹⁶² and the government prioritized taking care of the land they had managed to retain. Abandoning the idea of *Turan* also helped them forge friendly relations with the Bolsheviks in Russia.¹⁶³ Furthermore, the Republican leadership strove to build healthy relations with the new states established in the former lands of the Ottoman Empire; in the Middle East, British and French mandates and spheres of influence had been established where the Ottomans once ruled, but the Turkish government renounced any ambition to regain control over these lands.¹⁶⁴ On the Western side, Turkey formed friendly relations with the states that had grown out of the old Ottoman territories, namely Bulgaria and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. Even with the Greeks they signed a Treaty of Friendship in 1930.¹⁶⁵

On the other hand, the Republican rulers demonstrated their displeasure with Western powers' grip on the Turkish economy. To Mustafa Kemal, economic independence was the basis of political independence, without which a nation's sovereignty could not be guaranteed.¹⁶⁶ At Lausanne the Turkish delegate, therefore, had been determined to get rid of

¹⁶¹ Mustafa Yılmaz, "Determinants of Turkish Foreign Policy: Historical Framework and Traditional Inputs", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol 35, No:4, 1999, pp. 171-172, 179.

¹⁶² The *Misak-ı Milli* was a manifesto, published on 12 February 1920, which outlined the goals of the Turkish War of Independence in six articles.

¹⁶³ Mehmet Gönlübol, *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası: 1919-1965*, pp. 27-30; also see Stefanos Yerasimos, *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri: Ekim Devriminden Milli Mücadeleye (Turkish-Soviet Relations: From the October Revolution to the National Struggle)*(İstanbul: Gözlem, 1979).

¹⁶⁴ Mehmet Gönlübol, *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası: 1919-1965 (Turkish Foreign Policy)*(Ankara: Ankara Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi, 1969), pp. 61-63, 79. On the contrary, it seems that Mustafa Kemal gave his support to the Middle Eastern nations to gain their independence: "Look at the sun rising from the East. There are many more brother nations that would gain their independence and freedom...imperialism and colonialism will disappear from the earth." Enver Ziya Karal, *Atatürk'ten Düşünceler (Thoughts from Atatürk)* (Ankara: Doğuş, 1962), p. 15.

¹⁶⁵ Mehmet Gönlübol, *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası*, pp. 66-67.

¹⁶⁶ Afet İnan, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti ve Türk Devrimi (The Republic of Turkey and the Turkish Revolution)* (Ankara: Ankara Basımevi, 1973), pp. 105-119.

the economic concessions given to Europeans in the last decades of Ottoman rule.¹⁶⁷ The new government had inherited a wrecked economy, with poor technical-industrial infrastructure and a shortage of capital to make new investment, which posed major setbacks to implementing any serious project. Considering the lack of capital in Turkish investors' hands, the state launched a massive investment campaign in the industrial sector in 1933, which was also driven by the fear that if private investment was permitted, foreign capital would seize the lion's share.¹⁶⁸ Beyond that, such state agencies as the The Turkish Grain Board (*Toprak Mahsulleri Ofisi-TMO*), founded in 1938, supervised agricultural production and citizens were urged to buy products made in Turkey in order to foster agricultural production in the country. The government also organized a "Domestic Products Week" to increase the circulation of made-in-Turkey products such as shoes and clothes in the economy.¹⁶⁹ In sum, the republican elite undertook a big effort to ensure that the control of trade, finance and industry would stay in Turkish hands.

II- The Persistence of Secular-Kemalist Nationalism and the Emergence of Alternative Nationalist Discourses: 1938-1945

İsmet İnönü, who had commanded part of the Ottoman army in the War of Independence and then served as prime minister from 1923 to 1937, was elected on Atatürk's death in November 1938 as the second President of the Turkish Republic. In December 1938 an extraordinary congress of the CHP conferred on İnönü the title of "National Leader",

¹⁶⁷ Murat Baskıcı, "Lozan Barış Antlaşmasının Ekonomik ve Malî Hükümleri" in *Yaşayan Lozan (Living Lausanne)* (Ankara: Kültür Turizm Bakanlığı, 2003), pp. 309, 315, 385

¹⁶⁸ See Mustafa Kemal's speech to the İzmir Economic Congress in Afet İnan, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti ve Türk Devrimi* (Ankara: Ankara Basımevi, 1973), pp. 105-119; William Hale notes that the Republican leadership avoided indebted the state to foreigners, but they were prepared to allow foreign investment to undertake projects in Turkey; see William Hale, *Political and Economic Development of Modern Turkey* (London: Croom Helm, 1981), p. 40.

¹⁶⁹ Ahmet İnel, "Milliyetçilik ve Kalkınmacılık (Nationalism and Developmentalism)" in *MTSD Vol IV*, pp. 770-771.

succeeding the ‘‘Eternal Leader’’ Atatürk.¹⁷⁰ The contours of Kemalist nationalism persisted after 1938 in the cultural, economic and foreign policies pursued by the subsequent government and İsmet İnönü continued the state-ruling practices of pre-1938. He was determined to push republican reforms forward, however modified in content. However, the tension this top-down westernization aroused among conservative people grew higher. Lastly, the backlash from Turkist circles in the face of Republican cultural policies and the increase in the number of publications promoting conservative nationalism indicated that alternative visions of nationalism had been able to gain some sympathy among educated people.

Complexities of Kemalist Nationalism and Cultural Westernization

İnönü had to contend with a very delicate balance of power in international politics; in September 1939, just ten months after he had assumed the presidency, Germany invaded Poland and war was declared in Britain and France. The Turkish government was determined not to get involved in the war and closely monitored the course of events. The Germans emerged triumphant in Western Europe and marched their armies to the Balkans, easily invading Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Greece in 1941, and forcing Turkish statesmen to reconsider their neutrality. The German armies halted their advance at the Turkish border, but it was obvious that they were powerful enough to launch an offensive against Turkey whenever they might think it necessary. As a result, Turkey signed a mutual non-aggression treaty with the Nazis on 18 June 1941, which guaranteed that the Germans would not act in hostility towards Turkey.¹⁷¹

German dominance in Europe had a marked impact on both ideology and politics in Turkey. There were generals in the Turkish army who were sympathetic to the Nazis; they visited the German army to observe its military structure and forged friendly relations with

¹⁷⁰ Mahmut Golođlu, *Milli Şef*, pp. 5-7.

¹⁷¹ Mehmet Gönlübol, *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası: 1919-1965*, p. 156.

the German military elite.¹⁷² Hüsnü Erkilet, one of these generals, asked the Germans to collaborate in raising an anti-Bolshevik movement among the Turkic communities in the Soviet Union; furthermore, the Germans were willing to work with the Turkic and Muslim communities against the Bolsheviks.¹⁷³ Likewise, İsmet İnönü was keen not to provoke the Germans and appointed Şükrü Saraçoğlu, who was known to be a pro-German politician, as his prime minister in 1942.¹⁷⁴ Furthermore, the coming to power in Europe of such extreme ideologies gave people of identical persuasion in Turkey confidence to express their racist-fascist views more vocally. Nihal Atsız published several articles in his journal *Orhun* and Reha Oğuz Türkkan, another prominent racist, released the magazines *Bozkurt* (Grey Wolf) (1939) and *Gökbörü* (Sky Wolf) (1942), in which a wide range of issues was covered.¹⁷⁵ In these magazines, it was claimed that the superiority of the Turkish race was proven by its physical qualities and by its historical achievements, which were made possible by a strong state tradition and a powerful army.¹⁷⁶ Stark xenophobic undertones prevailed in these papers, too; it was claimed that the minorities had always been a serious problem because they had betrayed the Turks throughout history.¹⁷⁷ Finally, it was often underscored that communist ideology and the Soviet regime posed the most serious threat to the sovereignty of the Turkish state and the fundamental elements of its culture.¹⁷⁸

To some extent, the ruling elite followed their European fascist counterparts in terms of domestic policy orientation. The government introduced the ‘‘Wealth Tax’’ (*Varlık*

¹⁷² These generals were Hüsnü Erkilet and Nuri Dilligil; Jacob Landau, *Pan-Turkism in Turkey*, pp. 110-112.

¹⁷³ Christian Leitz, *Nazi Germany and Neutral Europe during the Second World War*, pp. 96-98; Nathalie Clayer, Eric Germain, *Islam in Inter-War Europe* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), pp.298-299.

¹⁷⁴ Mustafa Aydın, ‘‘Savaş Kaosunda Türkiye: Görelî Özerklik 2, 1939–1945’’ in Baskın Oran ed. *Türk Dış Politikası, 1919–1980 (Turkish Foreign Policy, 1919-1980)* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2002), pp. 449-450

¹⁷⁵ Jacob Landau, *Pan-Turkism in Turkey*, pp. 87-91.

¹⁷⁶ Orhangazi Ertekin, ‘‘Cumhuriyet Döneminde Türkçülüğün Çatallanan Yolları’’ (Diverging Paths of Turkism during the Republican Era) in *MTSD*, Vol. IV, pp. 370-379.

¹⁷⁷ Atsız warned Saraçoğlu about non-Muslims, giving the Ottoman Sultan Mehmet II as an example. To Atsız, Sultan Mehmet’s tolerance towards non-Muslims at a time when the Turks were all-powerful cost the Turkish nation dear. Likewise, their dominance of business life that could not be broken in the early years of the Republic would be detrimental for the unity of the nation. Nihal Atsız, ‘‘Başvekil Mektup II’’, *Orhun* 16 (April 1944).

¹⁷⁸ Jacob Landau, *Pan-Turkism in Turkey*, p. 135.

Vergisi) in 1942, which was imposed in a discriminatory fashion on rich people in proportion to their declared wealth, in order to subsidize the country's worsening economy during the War.¹⁷⁹ Underlying the Wealth Tax was the common conviction among the ruling elite that the non-Muslim minorities had unfairly exploited helpless Muslim citizens for their own benefit.¹⁸⁰ Another incentive for the government to punish non-Muslims was the failure to bring into being a strong national bourgeoisie, despite economic incentives of the Atatürk era.¹⁸¹ Naturally, the Wealth Tax came as a shock to non-Muslim citizens, who felt they had shown their loyalty to the new state by opting to stay in Turkey after the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. People who could not pay this tax were arrested and sent to Aşkale, an eastern Anatolian town in the province of Erzurum, to do compulsory service for the state by working in the mines.¹⁸²

Whilst nationalist politics showed its dark face against minorities in the country, it was paradoxically striking that the republican elite worked hard to spread humanist culture, based on the Greco-Roman heritage, through the media and school textbooks.¹⁸³ Hasan Ali Yücel, the Minister of Education between 1938 and 1946, initiated the foundation of a Translation Bureau, which translated more than two hundred Greek and Western classics into Turkish, and Latin and Greek language classes were introduced into the high-school curriculum.¹⁸⁴

¹⁷⁹ Muslims and foreigners were to pay 1/8 of their wealth, *dönmes* (converts from Judaism) were to pay 1/4 and non-Muslims were to give half of their wealth; Rıdvan Akar, *Varlık Vergisi Kanunu: Tek Parti Rejiminde Azınlık Karşılığı Politika Örneği (The Wealth Tax Law: An Example of Anti-Minority Policy under the Single-Party Regime)* (İstanbul: Belge, 1992), p. 56; Faik Ökte, *Varlık Vergisi Faciası (The Wealth Tax Catastrophe)* (İstanbul: Nebioğlu, 1951), pp. 86-92.

¹⁸⁰ Kemal Karpat, *Türk Demokrasi Tarihi: Sosyal, Ekonomik, Kültürel Temeller (History of Turkish Democracy: Social, Economic, Cultural Foundations)* (İstanbul: İstanbul Matbaası, 1967), pp. 105-106.

¹⁸¹ Rıdvan Akar, *Varlık Vergisi*, pp. 87-92.

¹⁸² Rıdvan Akar, *Varlık Vergisi*, pp. 67-73; also see Hugh Poulton, *Top Hat*, pp. 117-118.

¹⁸³ Orhan Koçak, "1920'lerden 1970'lere Kültür Politikaları (Cultural Politics from the 1920s to the 1970s)" in *MTSD*, Vol. IV, p. 393). In a speech in 1939 Hasan Ali Yücel commented on humanism: "Turkish humanism is a way of understanding which appreciates any kind of human work, regardless of spatial and temporal boundaries. From whatever nation, any kind of human work which brings a novel thinking or understanding to humanity would earn our respect and admiration". Burcu Korucu, "Türk Hümanizmi'nin Çeviri Boyutu: Tercüme Dergisi ve Tercüme Bürosu" (The Translation Aspect of the Turkish Humanism: *Tercüme* Journal and the Translation Bureau) (MA diss., Yıldız Üniversitesi, 2007), pp. 91-93.

¹⁸⁴ Kadir Şeker, "İnönü Dönemi Kültür Hayatı (1938-1950)", pp. 80-82; Burcu Korucu, "Türk Hümanizmi'nin Çeviri Boyutu: Tercüme Dergisi ve Tercüme Bürosu", p. 119-125.

People's Houses, highly appreciated by İsmet İnönü, continued to spread, but operated only in urban centres, whereas eighty percent of the population still lived in rural areas. The CHP decided to open *Köy Enstitüleri* (Village Institutes)¹⁸⁵, post-primary co-educational boarding schools that would train and indoctrinate the rural populace through an organized network of teacher training institutes.¹⁸⁶ At the head of this project were Hasan Ali Yücel, the Minister of Education, and İsmail Hakkı Tonguç, the General Director of Primary Education, who had secured the backing of İsmet İnönü for the establishment of these institutions.¹⁸⁷ They clung to the mainstream republican view that Turkey lagged behind European civilization, and hoped to advance republican cultural reforms in order to combat this deficiency.¹⁸⁸ A significant part of the curriculum consisted of culture classes, which involved learning to play Western musical instruments, practicing drama, theatre, drawing and reading the Western classics.¹⁸⁹ Upon the opening of the Village Institutes İsmail Hakkı Tonguç declared:

“We hope that, in the world of the future, belief will not be based on invisible powers coming from the sky or metaphysical ideas; we should endow this new world with a rational religion in which no deception or lie can survive. Thus, children to be trained in these institutes will not be slaves to scholasticism”.¹⁹⁰

Sabahattin Eyüboğlu, who was the deputy head of the Translation Office in the Ministry of Education and one of the active defenders of the Village Institutes, similarly argued:

¹⁸⁵ The first two institutes were opened in 1937. With new openings in 1941, more than 20 Village Institutes started to operate. By 1945 approximately 20,000 students had graduated from these institutions; Asım Karaömerlioğlu, *Orada Bir Köy*, pp. 105-107

¹⁸⁶ For a discussion on the role of village institutes in the spread of Kemalist nationalism see Asım Karaömerlioğlu, *Orada Bir Köy*, pp. 101-103.

¹⁸⁷ Cemil Koçak, *Türkiye'de Milli Şef Dönemi (1938-1945): Dönemin İç ve Dış Politikası Üzerine Bir Araştırma, (The National Leader Era in Turkey (1938-1945): A Study on the Domestic and Foreign Policy of the Era)* (İstanbul: İletişim, 1996), Vol II, p. 121-122.

¹⁸⁸ Sabahattin Eyüboğlu, *Köy Enstitüleri Üzerine* (İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1979), pp. 60-70.

¹⁸⁹ The curriculum was designed on a five-year plan: Culture, Science and Teacher Training Classes: 115 Weeks, Agriculture Classes: 58 Weeks, Technical Skills Classes: 58 Weeks; Kadir Şeker, “İnönü Dönemi Kültür Hayatı (1938-1950)” (Cultural Life in the İnönü Era 1938-1950) (PhD diss., Suleyman Demirel Üniversitesi, 2006), p. 29.

¹⁹⁰ Mehmet Başaran, *Tonguç Yolu-Köy Enstitüleri: Devrimci Eğitim (The Way of Tonguç - The Village Institutes: Revolutionary Education)* (İstanbul: Varlık Yayınevi), p. 99. Also see İsmail Hakkı Tonguç, *Canlandırılacak Köy (The Village to be Revived)* (İstanbul: Remzi Yayınevi, 1947), p. 419.

“Secularism (laicism) should not be considered as a way of thinking only, but as a life style that should be lived across Anatolia. The work ethic in the Village Institutes is a shared notion like religion amongst the people.”¹⁹¹

It can be argued that these cultural policies led to a deepening rift between the Kemalist-secularist nationalists and the Turkist circles. Furthermore, the legacy of these policies persisted through the 1960s and 1970s, so that the MHP and young nationalist militants denigrated İnönü’s cultural reforms as the cause of the spread of socialism in the country.

Executing a top-down policy-making process whilst leaving no space open for ordinary citizens to express their opinions regarding ideological matters led to a backlash in various regions. A lack of available data means the reaction of villagers is difficult to fully apprehend, but at least at some cases resentment about the Village Institutes, mostly located in remote places, seems to have been simmering amongst the conservative and religious masses.¹⁹² Moreover, the single-party regime applied restrictions to the teaching of religion in primary and high schools, reducing the weekly hours of religious classes to only half an hour in 1930.¹⁹³ The İnönü government arrested religious scholars such as Said-i Nursi, who had long been critical of republican reforms and trained his disciples via letters that were circulated in manuscript copies, and Süleyman H.Tunahan, who had exhorted his followers to continue their religious education in secret.¹⁹⁴ The reason why the persecution of these two men of religion is of relevance here is that in the 1960s and 1970s their followers were to lead the most organized movements giving religious education outside state control.¹⁹⁵ In fact, the policies of the CHP in these years was an important factor in fuelling the political aversion of the conservative electorate towards the party at the ballot box in the decades to come.

¹⁹¹ Sabahattin Eyüboğlu, *Köy Enstitüleri Üzerine*, p. 100.

¹⁹² For one example of a complaint letter written to the Presidency of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı*) about the Village Institutes see Kadir Şeker, “İnönü Donemi Kültür Hayatı (1938-1950)”, pp. 20-22.

¹⁹³ Mustafa Öcal, “İlahiyat Fakültelerinin Tarihçesi”, *Uludağ Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, Vol.1, Issue 1 (1986), pp. 113-114.

¹⁹⁴ See Ruşen Çakır, *Ayet ve Slogan* (İstanbul: Metis, 1990), pp. 80-85, 127-129.

¹⁹⁵ Şerif Mardin, *Modern Türkiye’de Din ve Sosyal Değişim: Bediüzzaman Said Nursi Olayı (Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediüzzaman Said Nursi)*, Trans. Metin Çulhaoğlu (İstanbul: İletişim, 1992) pp. 154-164; Mustafa Aydın, “Süleymancılık” in *MTSD*, Vol.VI, pp. 309-320.

Bifurcation of Nationalist Ideology: Turkists and Conservative Nationalists

Turkist circles were deeply frustrated with the profile of instructors in the Village Institutes; to them İsmail Hakkı Tonguç and Hasan Ali Yücel patronized leftist-socialist militants in the administration and turned the other way when these militants used the institutes to disseminate socialist views.¹⁹⁶ For Atsız, taking preventive measures to halt socialist expansion was far more urgent than translating Western classics or teaching Greek and Latin in schools, which would be no good for Turkish culture and alienate Turkish people from their cultural heritage and identity; he also held that Turkish culture had its authentic roots in Central Asia, where the first Turkish states were born.¹⁹⁷ Actually, Turkist circles had felt confident with the Republican leadership when Şükrü Saraçoğlu had been appointed to the prime ministership. Indeed, in August 1942 Saraçoğlu made an emotional speech in parliament and stated: “We are Turks, Turkist, and will remain Turkist forever. Turkism is for us an issue of conscience and culture as much as of blood”.¹⁹⁸ The Turkists thus felt no doubt that the government would respond to their worries about the socialists, to whom, they claimed, the support of some state bureaucrats and the party MPs had been gradually shifting.

In 1944 Nihal Atsız published a letter in *Orhun* urging Saraçoğlu to save the country from “insidious” socialists; after a week of silence, Atsız posted another letter where he gave a list of names he alleged to be linked with socialism, and asked Saraçoğlu to “crush and

¹⁹⁶ İlhan Darendelioğlu, *Türkiye’de Milliyetçilik Hareketleri (Nationalist Movements in Turkey)* (İstanbul: Toker, 1977) pp. 303-311; Reha Oguz Türkkan, *Tabutluktan Gurbete (From Coffin Land to Diaspora)* (İstanbul: 1975) p. 35-36. Asım Karaömerlioglu points out that the Village Institutes provided a favourable ground for the intermeshing of Kemalist and leftist values, and the graduates of the Village Institutes acquired leading roles in the socialist movement during the 1960s and 70s; yet he contends that the right-wing claims regarding the penetration of communist-socialist groups into these institutions do not rely on any substantial evidence. Asım Karaömerlioglu, “Köy Enstitüleri Üzerine Düşünceler” (Thoughts on the Village Institutes), *Toplum ve Bilim* (Spring 1998), pp. 73-75; 76-70 and “68.Yılında Köy Enstitülerini Rahat Bırakalım Artık”, <http://www.bianet.org/bianet/toplum/106398-68-yilinda-koy-enstitulerini-rahat-birakalim-artik>, (last accessed on 26 December 2012)

¹⁹⁷ Nihal Atsız, *Başvekiye Mektup II*; Nihal Atsız, *Makaleler III*, p. 107

¹⁹⁸ Orhangazi Ertekin, “Cumhuriyet Döneminde Türkçülüğün Çatallanan Yolları” in *MTSD*, Vol. IV, p. 366.

wipe out socialism’’.¹⁹⁹ In response, however, Sabahattin Ali, a literary writer who had been castigated by Atsız in the letters, took him to court. The Atsız-Sabahattin Ali trial started on 3 May August 1944, and on that day Turkists gathered in Ankara to lend their support to Atsız. However, they were to face a daunting backlash from the government, as dozens of people were arrested in the following week on the grounds that they were conducting Pan-Turkist propaganda.²⁰⁰ Leading ideologues, professors, bureaucrats and civilians were kept in custody for more than three months and brought to a very high-profile trial; the only soldier in the group was Alparslan Türkeş, a young lieutenant at that time.²⁰¹

The Turkists had been sure that they had the prime minister’s backing, but this event shook their self-confidence and generated hostility towards the CHP leadership. This resentment deepened with İnönü’s speech on 19 May 1944; following the arrest of the Turkists, the president gave a speech condemning Turkist-Turanists for abusing Turkish nationalism, and warned people of their malicious intention to provoke hatred inside and outside the country.²⁰² Moreover, Hasan Ali Yücel, who had been a target of the Turkists, warned teachers of the “dangerous” penetration of racist-Turkist ideas into schools; he held that the Turkists abused one of the six principles of the republican reforms, namely nationalism, at the expense of the others, and also subverted national unity.²⁰³ Apart from its

¹⁹⁹; Nihal Atsız, “Başvekile Mektup II”.

²⁰⁰ Orhangazi Ertekin, “Cumhuriyet Döneminde Türkçülüğün Çatallanan Yolları”, pp. 366-368; Günay Göksoy Özdoğan, *Turan’dan Bozkurt’a: Tek Parti Döneminde Türkçülük (From Turan to Grey Wolf: Turkism During the Single Party Era)* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2001), pp. 101-105 for detailed information see Orhangazi Ertekin, “1944 Trial: A Turning Point of Turkist Movement” (Master Thesis, ODTU, 1999).

²⁰¹ Jacob Landau, *Pan-Turkism*, pp. 117-118. Among those held in custody were Hasan Ferit Cansever, Fethi Tevetoğlu, Alparslan Türkeş, Hüseyin Nihal Atsız, Hüseyin Namık Orkun, Nejdet Sançar, Zeki Velidi Togan, Orhan Şaik Gökyay, Hikmet Tanyu, Reha Oğuz Türkkkan, and Sait Bilgiç; in later years “coffins” became a symbol in nationalist jargon, as these people were subject to systematic torture by state agents and police, who put the suspects into coffins. At the end of this trial in 1945 these people were not found guilty. Günay Gölssu Özdoğan, *Turan’dan Bozkurt’a*, pp. 112-113; also see Alparslan Türkeş, *1944 Milliyetçilik Olayı (The Nationalist Case of 1944)* (İstanbul: Kutluğ, 1975), p. 44, 56, 80-83.

²⁰² It was a speech given on the anniversary of Mustafa Kemal’s landing at Samsun in 1919. İnönü noted “...we are Turkish nationalists, but we stand up against racism. Therefore we reject any movement that would threaten the existence of the Turkish Grand National Assembly.” *Cumhuriyet*, 20 May 1944

²⁰³ Maarif Vekaleti, *Irçılık-Turanlılık* (Ankara: Maarif Vekaleti, 1944), pp. 3-9; Kadir Şeker, “İnönü Dönemi Kültür Hayatı”, pp. 35-37.

domestic effects, the trial sent an obvious message to the allied powers, especially the Soviets, who were gaining the upper hand against the Germans.²⁰⁴

It was mentioned above that the Turkists and the republican elite had differing views on the interpretation of Ottoman history; they diverged again over the principles the new education program and cultural policies should be built upon, which was a challenge to the Republican vision of mutually inclusive Turkish nationalism and Westernism.²⁰⁵ In the end, the events of 1944, signaling that Turkish nationalism was fragmented into different layers, marked a breakaway of Turkist circles from the Republican elite.

Converging with the Turkists in their criticism of Republican nationalism was a group of intellectuals who supported a different strand of nationalism, namely conservative nationalism, in the 1940s. Nurettin Topçu, who had published the *Hareket* (Movement) journal since 1939, defended the idea that nationalism should draw on shared cultural values that were immersed in tradition and largely shaped by metaphysical, rather than material, sources. He held that cultural practices maintained by the Anatolian people should form the basis for a new understanding of Turkish nation and nationalism.²⁰⁶ In the realm of ideology it can be argued that Topçu's views and the MHP discourse after 1969 shared a common ground, yet Topçu did not have a relationship with the CKMP-MHP leadership or the young nationalist militants in the 1960s and 1970s.²⁰⁷ Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, a leading poet and thinker in religious and nationalist circles, launched his *Büyük Doğu* (Great East) in 1943, which contained articles and commentaries expressing grievances with CHP policies and

²⁰⁴ Orhangazi Ertekin, "Cumhuriyet Döneminde Türkçülüğün Çatallanan Yolları", p. 370. For a discussion on the impact of this trial on the relationship between Turkey and Germany see Cemil Koçak, *Türkiye'de Milli Şef*, pp. 229-230.

²⁰⁵ İlker Aytürk, "The Racist Critics of Atatürk", pp. 329-333.

²⁰⁶ Nurettin Topçu, *Milliyetçiliğimizin Esasları (The Principles of Our Nationalism)* (İstanbul: Dergah, 1978), pp. 6-9.

²⁰⁷ Topçu coined the term "Islamic socialism" and launched intellectual debates around this concept in the 1960s.

pillorying an understanding of nationalism based on secular Western values.²⁰⁸ He promoted a view of nationalism grounded in the centrality of the Ottoman past and Islamic religion, combining these with a starkly anti-Westernist and anti-communist undertone; as can be understood from its title, *Büyük Doğu* was anti-Western and strongly antagonistic to Westernizing reforms, suggesting instead that Turkey should draw inspiration from the East.²⁰⁹ It seems, however, “East” was only attributed to the Muslim World and did not comprise the rest of Asia; in this framework Turkish nation was attributed the leading role among the other Muslim communities in the East.²¹⁰ Lastly, Osman Yüksel Serdengeçti, who was a journalist, launched the *Serdengeçti* journal, in which he promoted a conservative view of nationalism throughout the late 1940s and 1950s.²¹¹

In spite of their prolific intellectual contribution to the debate, neither conservative nationalists nor Turkists were able to extend their reach to the majority of ordinary people. Their appeal was mainly confined to educated groups who had access to their publications or speeches, a relatively small number in a country with only 35% literacy.²¹² Eventually, the post-1946 democratization marked an important step in the popularization of conservative nationalist views across the country. Gavin Brockett’s study demonstrates that the liberalization of the press and the spread of provincial newspapers contributed to the

²⁰⁸ Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, *Çerçeve II (Framework II)* (İstanbul: Büyük Doğu, 1998), pp. 5-6, 22-23; also see his *Hücum ve Polemik (Attack and Polemics)* (İstanbul: Büyük Doğu, 1997).

²⁰⁹ See Murat Güzel, “Necip Fazıl”, *MTSD*, Vol. V, pp. 335-339; Gavin D. Brockett, *How Happy to Call Oneself a Turk*, pp. 210-216. As Kadioğlu notes, Republican nationalism had a claim to combine the values of Western civilization with Eastern culture and this mission prevailed in the nationalist discourse since the early days of Republic., Ayşe Kadioğlu, “The Paradox of Turkish Nationalism and the Construction of Official Identity,” *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 32, no. 2 (April 1996), pp. 177-178. Similarly, Bora argues that East-West tension is one of the central themes in Turkish nationalism. Tanıl Bora, *Türk Sağının Üç Hali: Milliyetçilik, İslamcılık, Muhafazakarlık, (Three States of the Turkish Right: Nationalism, Conservatism, Islamism)* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2007) pp. 44-5. It seems that this complicated question received frequent coverage among the conservative nationalist thinkers as well, yet it remains an arduous issue to be dealt with. The use of this terminology, however, was rare among the nationalist militants and the MHP leadership in the 1970s.

²¹⁰ Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, *İdeolocya Örgüsü* (İstanbul: Büyük Doğu, 2002); pp. 1-15. It is worth adding that there had been high number of studies on the question of civilization in the late 19th century and early 20th century in the Western historiographical literature. See Arnold Toynbee, *Civilization on Trial* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1946); Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West* (New York: Knopf, 1948).

²¹¹ On the first page of his journal he sometimes used the slogan: “Allah-Millet-Vatan Yolunda” (On the Way of Allah-Nation-Fatherland); see *Serdengeçti* 11 (March 1958).

²¹² See *TÜİK: İstatistik Göstergeler: 1923-2010 (Statistical Indicators)* (Ankara, Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu, 2010).

diversification of views of nationalism at the grassroots level and Islam occupied a very central place in this formation of popular national identity.²¹³ From these local publications it can be concluded that religious associations with Turkishness were much stronger than secular loyalties to the Turkish national identity, in contrast to what was imagined by secular Kemalist elites.²¹⁴

III- From 1946 to 1960: Transition to Democracy and Nationalist Organizations

In 1945 four leading CHP deputies released a declaration urging reforms in the party administration.²¹⁵ In the post-war period, İsmet İnönü realized that the integration of Turkey with the Western bloc was the only possible option to rescue the country from continuous, and increasingly dangerous, Soviet pressure to annex the eastern provinces of Turkey.²¹⁶ His generation was deeply alarmed by the Russian threat, and he did not lose time in abandoning the single-party regime, tacitly encouraging these four deputies to establish a new political party.²¹⁷

The DP (Democrat Party) was founded in 1946, under the leadership of Celal Bayar²¹⁸, and participated in the elections held in the same year. Although the party members were ill-prepared and the CHP elite employed underhand tactics during the election, it still

²¹³ Gavin D.Brockett, *How Happy to Call Oneself a Turk*, pp. 224-226.

²¹⁴ Brockett also contends that the Turkish-Islamic synthesis was a reflection of a reality that became apparent between 1945 and 1954; Gavin D.Brockett, *How Happy to Call Oneself a Turk*., pp. 204, 222-223.

²¹⁵ Samet Ağaoğlu, *Demokrat Partinin Doğuş ve Yükseliş Sebepleri (The Causes of the Birth and Rise of the Democrat Party)* (İstanbul: Baha, 1972), pp. 83-87; Tevfik Çavdar, “Demokrat Parti” in *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye Ansiklopedisi (The Encyclopedia of Turkey in the Republican Era)* (İstanbul: İletişim, 1983), pp. 2060-2066.

²¹⁶ Mehmet Gönlübol, *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası: 1919-1965*, pp. 194, 200-201; Cemil Koçak, *Türkiye’de Milli Şef*, p. 560.

²¹⁷ Friendly relations between the Bolsheviks and the Kemalist regime in the 1920s deteriorated in the late 1930s and 1940s, See Rıfki Salim Burçak, *Türk-Rus-İngiliz Münasebetleri: 1791-1941 (The Relations between the Turks, the Russians and the British)* (İstanbul: Aydınlık, 1946), pp. 50-54, 94-104.

²¹⁸ Celal Bayar had been one of the leading CHP members and the last Prime Minister during the Presidency of Mustafa Kemal.

managed to poll 13% of the votes.²¹⁹ The next four years witnessed a fierce rivalry between the two parties, but it was less an ideological clash than a power struggle; the DP primarily aimed to capture the conservative masses who had been infuriated with CHP elitism and its reforms, even though the party leadership was composed of former leading CHP members.²²⁰ In 1948 another group of politicians in the DP, dissatisfied with the performance of the Democrats in opposition, broke away from the party and started a new political endeavor with the Nation Party (*Millet Partisi*).²²¹ The *Millet Partisi* advocated individual freedoms and pledged to improve social-citizenship rights, which would ease the running of Islamic activities.²²²

The DP had managed to force the CHP to introduce a new electoral system, which increased its expectations of a good showing in the 1950 elections.²²³ Moreover, the party employed an inspiring slogan to attract people disaffected by single-party rule: ‘‘Enough! The nation will speak’’. In fact, the 1950 elections marked a watershed in Turkish politics. The 27 years of CHP rule ended with a resounding Democrat victory, which expelled four out of five CHP deputies from the parliament.²²⁴ Celal Bayar was elected as the third president of the Republic in 1950, and İsmet İnönü went back to parliament. This all came as a shock to the CHP elite, who had not expected such a huge electoral breakthrough from the DP; the impact of this shift was to convulse the bureaucratic establishment too, which was used to working with a single-party government.

²¹⁹ Tefik Çavdar, *Türkiye'nin Demokrasi Tarihi: 1839-1950 (The History of Democracy in Turkey: 1839-1950)*, (İstanbul: İmge, 2008), pp. 453-456.

²²⁰ İlkay Sunar, ‘‘Populism and Patronage: The Democrat Party and its Legacy in Turkey,’’ *II Politico* 55(October-December 1990); Tefik Çavdar, ‘‘Demokrat Parti’’, pp. 2066-2068.

²²¹ Fevzi Cakmak, an extremely senior retired general, who had seen long service as Chief of the General Staff, was among the founders of the party. Another was Osman Bölükbaşı. John M. Varder Lippe, *The Politics of Turkish Democracy* (New York: Suny Press, 2005), pp. 174-176.

²²² *Millet Partisi Program ve Tüzük (Nation Party Program and Rules)*(İzmir: Nefaset Matbaası, 1948).

²²³ Feroz Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment*, pp. 27-30.

²²⁴ The new arithmetic in the TBMM was 416 (DP) to 69 (CHP); the MP did not perform very well, only acquiring 3.3% of the total votes. See Appendix 2.

The DP government was formed by Prime Minister Adnan Menderes²²⁵ on 22 May 1950. The government acted quickly to fulfill the promises it had given before the elections; the decision to allow the *ezan* (call to prayer) to be performed in its Arabic version on 16 June 1950, for instance, was of great symbolic importance to those people who had turned to the Democrats out of religious concerns.²²⁶ In the realm of economics, the DP government benefited from the Marshall Aid released by the American government to restore economic vitality in Europe, which enabled the government to subsidize private enterprise and foster the emergence of a new bourgeoisie. Along with this, the government subsidized peasants, who happily acquired credits to purchase tractors to plough their land.²²⁷ In other words, the Democrats reversed CHP policies, which had favored civil servants, directing benefits instead towards peasants and businessmen. In foreign policy, they easily came to terms with the Western bloc and sent Turkish troops to Korea in 1950; in reward Turkey was accepted into NATO in 1952.²²⁸ The election results in 1954 demonstrated that these policies were approved by a greater majority than had supported the Democrats in 1950; the party acquired 57% of total votes whereas the CHP performed slightly worse than in 1950 and got 35%.²²⁹

In the meantime Turkist circles, bowed down during the events of 1944, had had some time to heal their wounds. The multiparty regime and relative democratization of the 1950s helped them cultivate some confidence. Small-scale nationalist societies promoting Turkist or conservative nationalist views, founded during the late 1940s, such as Association for Turkish Culture (*Türk Kültür Derneği*), Hearth of Turkish Culture (*Türk Kültür Ocağı*) and the Organization of Turkish Youth (*Türk Gençlik Teşkilatı*) joined forces under the Federation of

²²⁵ Adnan Menderes had been a CHP deputy, but resigned from the party in 1945 and acted with Celal Bayar in the foundation of the DP.

²²⁶ *Cumhuriyet*, 17 June 1950; Feroz Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Democracy*, pp. 365-366

²²⁷ Mustafa Albayrak, *Türk Siyasi Hayatında Demokrat Parti (The Democrat Party in Turkish Political Life)* (Ankara: Phoenix, 2004), pp. 303-308.

²²⁸ Mehmet Gönlübol, *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası: 1919-1965*, pp. 227-236.

²²⁹ The MP, which increased its number of MP's from one to five in 1954, was not able to become a serious alternative to these parties. See Appendix 2.

Union of Nationalists (*Milliyetçiler Birliği Federasyonu*) in 1951.²³⁰ Its first congress was held in the same year and the confederation changed its name to the Society of Turkish Nationalists (*TMD-Türk Milliyetçileri Derneği*). The DP deputy Sait Bilgiç became the president of the society and another DP deputy, Tahsin Tola, was elected to the board.²³¹ The society upheld conservative nationalist views, their program stating that they were to promote and defend the idea of nationalism rooted in the “belief in God, fatherland, history, language, tradition, morality”.²³² In a year, nearly sixty branches of the TMD were opened across the country and its members started to express their views more openly in the DP.²³³ In addition to all these, Remzi Arık, who had trained Nurettin Topçu when they had studied in Paris and advocated that the essence of Turkish nationalism lay in religion, art and tradition, which found their spirits in Anatolia, had founded the Turkish Peasant Party in 1951.²³⁴

The possible electoral implications of a nationalist political movement worried the DP elites, and there were certain cliques in the CHP also that were displeased with the increasing activities of the TMD. The event that was to change the course of events occurred in 1952 in Malatya; Ahmet Emin Yalman, a liberal journalist who was an outspoken critic of the TMD, was shot by a high-school student.²³⁵ The DP leadership, especially President Celal Bayar, acted quickly to condemn this violence and Prime Minister Adnan Menderes gave a speech on 17 January 1953 condemning those who were behaving as if they were the “owners” of Turkish nationalism; he reiterated that the DP government would not tolerate these

²³⁰ Jacob Landau, *Pan-Turkism in Turkey*, p. 130.

²³¹ İlhan Darendelioğlu, *Türkiye’de Milliyetçilik Hareketleri*, p. 284.

²³² *Türk Milliyetçiler Derneği Tüzüğü (The Statutes of the Society of Turkish Nationalists)* (Ankara: Sebat, 1951).

²³³ *Serdengeçti* 19-20 (October-November 1952); in a DP city congress it was proposed that all Masonic lodges, which were “traps of Communist and Jewish imperialism”, should be closed down. Ahmet Emin Yalman, *Yakın Tarihte Gördüklerim ve Geçirdiklerim 1945-1971 (My Experiences and Memories of the Recent Past)* (İstanbul: Rey Yayınları, 1971), pp. 225, 249-50.

²³⁴ Remzi Arık, *İdeal ve İdeoloji (Ideal and Ideology)* (İstanbul: Hareket Yayınları, 1967), p. 100-115; also see Remzi Arık, *Türk Milliyetçiliği (Turkish Nationalism)* (İstanbul: Dergah, 1974). It seems that Arık was not impressed with the material superiority of the West, but a zealous defender of Eastern civilization. According to him, the spiritual unity of Anatolia had been in the making since the early days of Seljuk rule in Anatolia. See Hilmi Ziya Ülken, *Türkiye’de Çağdaş Düşünce Tarihi* (İstanbul: Ülken Yayınları, 1979), pp. 485-87.

²³⁵ *Milliyet*, 23 November 1952; upon this assassination attempt Necip Fazıl Kısakürek and Osman Yüksel Serdengeçti were arrested. *Milliyet*, 24 December 1952, 20 June 1953.

currents.²³⁶ TMD members were arrested and the society was charged with promoting racism and a political order based on religion; the TMD was closed down by court decision in 1953.²³⁷

In contrast to the single-party period, nationalist ideology in the form of secular nationalism was no longer propagated by the state apparatus; the People's Houses, for example, were closed in 1951. Prime Minister Adnan Menderes was a liberal-minded person and the DP leadership did not promote a nationalist political agenda; the xenophobic policies of the single-party era, for example, were not replicated in the early years of the DP government and the DP government stayed neutral towards those Jews, Armenians and Greeks who remained in Turkey. On the other hand, it can be argued that the DP leadership and Celal Bayar walked in the footsteps of Kemalist nationalism in many aspects; as seen above, they neither let Turkist circles flourish again, nor acceded to the intermingling of nationalism with religion in politics. Furthermore, in 1955, political tension between Turkey and Greece escalated again, after thirty years of friendly relations, due to disagreement on the Cyprus issue, and this resentment towards Greece manifested itself as a reaction against the non-Muslim citizens living in the country.²³⁸ On the night of 6-7 September, thugs in İstanbul, with the connivance of agencies of the state, attacked the houses of non-Muslim citizens and destroyed their shops.²³⁹

In the last five years of the DP government, the tension between the DP and the CHP increased dramatically; neither of the parties was able to tolerate what the other said. As mentioned in the introduction, with the increasing involvement of the military in politics in the Middle East, the government and opposition started to consider more seriously the

²³⁶ *Milliyet*, January 18, 1953; in the same speech he underlined that communism was a grave threat for Turkey and that 'irtica' (religious reaction) was not an important issue in Turkey.

²³⁷ *Milliyet*, 23 January 1953

²³⁸ Mehmet Gönlübol, *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası: 1919-1965*, pp. 338-348.

²³⁹ *Milliyet*, 07 September 1955-09 September 1955; it was later discovered that these thugs had been transported from other cities to İstanbul with the help of military and police forces. Dilek Güven, *6-7 Eylül Olayları (6-7 September Clashes)* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2005), pp. 32-36, 84-92.

likelihood of a military intervention in politics.²⁴⁰ The protests of university students in İstanbul against the government in 1960 marked a new stage in the political struggle; these students were largely pro-CHP and there was no organized group of nationalist students in these demonstrations.²⁴¹ Indeed, in this atmosphere nationalist groups did not have an important role on the political scene; their activities were confined to seminars and events run in the *Türk Ocakları*, re-opened in 1949.²⁴² The fierce political rivalry between the DP and CHP overshadowed other political currents in the country and eventually dragged the country back into authoritarianism.

In conclusion, the political and ideological strength of the republican secular nationalism of the 1920s and 1930s, which was propagated with the help of the *Türk Ocakları* and People's Houses, started to decline after the mid 1940s; other currents of Turkish nationalism managed to find an audience from this period onwards. The impact of the westernization reforms became quickly visible in every corner of social life, but a secular lifestyle and the adoption of secular-nationalist values hardly took deeper root in society.²⁴³ The Turkists and conservative nationalists were critical of the pro-Western tenets of Kemalist nationalism, especially its denigration of the Ottoman past, but how to situate religion in Turkish nationalism stood as the basic demarcating line between these two threads.²⁴⁴ The CHP elite and military-bureaucratic establishment, on the other hand, were keen to preserve their privilege as the sole agents of ideological politics, showing no tolerance towards any other grouping advocating nationalist ideology.

None of these currents of nationalist ideology was a driving political force in the 1950s. In other words, in this period nationalist slogans were not much favored by the party

²⁴⁰ William Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 100-111.

²⁴¹ Nevzat Kösoğlu, *Hatıralar Yahut Bir Vatan Kurtarma Hikayesi (Memories or A Story of Saving the Fatherland)* (İstanbul: Ötüken, 2008), pp. 71-73.

²⁴² İlhan Darendelioğlu, *Türkiye'de Milliyetçilik Hareketleri*, p. 200; İbrahim Metin, Interview by Ali Erken; the *Türk Ocakları* did not regain its prestigious and influential position of the 1910s and 1920s.

²⁴³ Şerif Mardin, *Türkiye'de Toplum ve Siyaset*, pp. 60-66; Nuray Mert, *Merkez Sağın Kısa Tarihi (A Short History of the Center Right)* (İstanbul, Selis 2007), pp. 65-69.

²⁴⁴ See İlker Aytürk, "The Racist Critics of Atatürk", pp. 319-320.

leaderships. The next chapter looks at the further decline of secular nationalism as a political force and the further rise of conservative nationalism. The foundation of the MHP played a major role in this as did civil organizations involving young nationalist activists.

CHAPTER 2

IDEOLOGICAL EVOLUTION OF TURKISH NATIONALISM IN POLITICS: 1960-1980

This chapter analyses the ideological evolution of Turkish nationalism in politics from 1960 to 1980 providing an in-depth analysis of the ideological contours of the CKMP (*Cumhuriyetçi Köylü Millet Partisi*-Republican Peasants' Nation Party), and its successor the MHP. It aims to demonstrate that nationalist ideology in the form of conservative nationalism became a political force from the mid 1960s onwards and that a tangible shift in the nationalist discourse of the party took place during this period, concomitant to the change of the agents of political nationalism. It also aims to explain the incorporation into the party ideology of the views of conservative nationalist thinkers and ideologues and shows the blurred boundaries in the formation of party ideology as a result of Alparslan Türkeş's pragmatic political choices in building up a political party and nationalist movement at the same time.

The chapter starts with a discussion of the 1960 coup and Alparslan Türkeş's takeover of the CKMP. It analyses the ideological premises of the CKMP after 1965, which aimed to develop a nationalist political discourse in party politics in Turkey. The following section concerns the rise of conservative nationalism after the 1969 party congress, its ideologues and their relationship to the party leadership, which resulted in the widespread attraction of young nationalist militants to this notion of nationalism. The last section deals with the Turkist stream in the MHP, and it investigates how young militants pushed the limits of conservative nationalism towards the late 1970s.

This chapter largely relies on primary sources such as the party programs, newspapers, journals, autobiographical accounts and interviews with the party members of the time. It

considers the relevant literature on Turkish history and culture written from a nationalist perspective as well as the secondary literature pertinent to the topic.

I- Nationalism in Party Politics, 1960-1968

From the Coup to the Takeover of the CKMP

On the night of 27 May 1960 Turkish military forces toppled the DP government and arrested the DP leadership, Celal Bayar and the party deputies, sending them to the island of Yassıada in the Marmara Sea.²⁴⁵ The number of military officers involved in the 27 May coup is hard to determine and the hierarchy among them remains blurry. Exhilarated with their colleagues' success, many officers were eager to attain a position in the newly formed regime.²⁴⁶ Those officers who had been in control of executing the coup, such as Orhan Kabıbay, Alparslan Türkeş, Sami Küçük, Sezai Okan, Orhan Erkanlı and Osman Köksal were able to impose their control in the following weeks, but the formation of the National Unity Committee, composed of thirty eight members, came after a painful process of negotiation among them.²⁴⁷ At the end of this, some core members convinced their friends to let a handful of young capitans into the Committee; Numan Esin, Muzaffer Özdağ and Ahmet Er, who all held nationalist-Turkist views, were included in the list thanks to colonel Alparslan Türkeş's patronage.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁵ *Milliyet*, 28 May 1960-19 June 1960.

²⁴⁶ Abdi İpekçi and Ömer Sami Coşar, *İhtilal'in İç Yüzü (The Inside Story of the Coup)* (İstanbul: Uygun, 1965), p. 240.

²⁴⁷ Abdi İpekçi and Ömer Sami Coşar, *İhtilal'in İç Yüzü*, pp. 298-300.

²⁴⁸ Ümit Özdağ, son of Muzaffer Özdağ, notes that these young soldiers held nationalist views. Ümit Özdağ, *Menderes Dönemi Ordu Siyaset İlişkileri ve 27 Mayıs İhtilali (The Army-Politics Relations during Menderes Era and 27 May Revolution)*, pp. 112-113, 216.

The soldiers involved in the 27 May coup came from a wide range of ideological persuasions that could broadly be subsumed under the rubric of Kemalism; yet it can be seen that there was great deal of pragmatism and power obsession in the Committee.²⁴⁹ Their reformist discourse that recurrently promised to transform Turkey into an advanced society, drawing on reinstated Kemalist reforms, did not draw on a sound ideological background.²⁵⁰ It can be said that Türkeş and some Committee members around him pursued an ideological agenda, but they did not conjure up a clear vision, nor did they display strident commitment in pursuing it.

During their six months in power the original NUC was occupied with drafting a new constitution.²⁵¹ In economic matters, the State Planning Agency was founded to frame development planning. In foreign policy, it was insisted that Turkey would adhere to the commitments to NATO and CENTO as maintaining good relations with the West was of importance for many in the NUC.²⁵² The structure of the army was changed as well; two hundred and thirty five generals were forced into retirement.²⁵³ Nevertheless, as noted, the NUC members were not committed to any clear policy orientation; according to Dündar

²⁴⁹ In most of the memoir books by the NUC members the incongruity among the members was exposed; see Orhan Erkanlı, *Anılar, Sorunlar, Sorumlular (Memoirs, Problems, Those Responsible)* (Baha: İstanbul: 1973); Dündar Seyhan, *Gölgedeki Adam (The Man in the Shadow)* (İstanbul: Uycan, 1966); Alparslan Türkeş, Muzaffer Özdağ and Rıfat Baykal, *Bazı Gerçekler: Savunmalar (Some Truths: Defences)* (İstanbul: Ayyıldız: 1965); Numan Esin, *Devrim ve Demokrasi: Bir 27 Mayısçının Anıları (Revolution and Democracy: The Memoirs of a Soldier Involved in 27 May)* (İstanbul: Doğan, 2005).

²⁵⁰ For a series of interviews with some of the NUC members see *Cumhuriyet* 17-31 July 1960.

²⁵¹ Ziya Nur Aksun, *Dündar Taşer'in Büyük Türkiye'si*, pp. 51-54; Abdi İpekçi and Ömer Sami Coşar, *İhtilal'in İç Yüzü*, pp. 376-77, 441-444; Orhan Erkanlı, *Memoirs*, p. 141.

²⁵² Later in his memoirs Türkeş notes that the Committee needed the help of America to fuel the Turkish economy; otherwise they would have been unable even to pay the salaries of the foreign mission officers. Hulusi Turgut, *Şahinlerin Dansı: Türkeş'le Röportajlar (The Dance of Hawks: Interviews with Alparslan Türkeş)* (İstanbul: ABC, 1995), pp. 211-215; Ümit Özdağ, *Menderes Dönemi*, pp. 344-345.

²⁵³ Seyhan underlines that as the composition of the committee was not reflective of the army hierarchy, to forestall any potential feud. Dündar Seyhan, *Gölgedeki Adam*, p. 101. Hale and Erkanlı point out that the basic goal of this decision was to restore the balance between the number of high-rank and low-rank army members. William Hale, *Turkish Politics* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 125, Orhan Erkanlı, *Anılar*, p. 40.

Taşer, a member of the Committee and close friend of Türkeş, there were thirty eight different versions of the 27 May movement.²⁵⁴

The NUC could roughly be divided into three groups, the first of which, led by some colonels including Türkeş, favored a more radical and reformist agenda. Instead of handing governing power back to the CHP, they were determined to stay in power to execute reforms, however ill-defined these were, and hold elections some time later.²⁵⁵ The second group was characterized by arguing for a smooth but swift return to parliamentary rule, but they insisted that this process should be taken care of by İnönü, a precondition which elevated the CHP's old leader to the position of a shadow force behind the Committee.²⁵⁶ The last group stood between these factions; the balance of power would shift according to which side the third group favored at any particular time.²⁵⁷ Outside this power struggle, it can be argued that Turkish nationalism was not the motivating force behind the May 27 coup, which lacked a straightforward ideological orientation such as the Baath regimes demonstrated.

This fragmented structure presumably prevented any of the groups from expelling the others, or a ruthless colonel, like Nasser in Egypt, from being able to impose his personal rule. Moreover, it soon became manifest that General Cemal Gürsel, the head of the NUC, lacked sufficient commanding authority over the army to keep the young officers under control.²⁵⁸ Colonel Alparslan Türkeş, who announced the Coup on the radio on the night of 27 May and then assumed the office of advisor to Cemal Gürsel,²⁵⁹ filled this emerging power gap, rising to prominence in the NUC. He had already secured the backing of young nationalist officers in the army, and the days in office helped him to be familiar with local power holders visiting

²⁵⁴ For a comprehensive account of this discongruity in the NUC see İbrahim Metin, *İhtilalciler Hesaplaşıyor, (The Showdown of the Army Officers Involved in 27 May Coup)* (İstanbul: Töre, 2012).

²⁵⁵ Abdi İpekçi and Ömer Sami Coşar, *İhtilal'in İç Yüzü*, pp. 330-335, 427.

²⁵⁶ Abdi İpekçi and Ömer Sami Coşar, *İhtilal'in İç Yüzü*, pp. 330-335, 427.

²⁵⁷ Abdi İpekçi and Ömer Sami Coşar, *İhtilal'in İç Yüzü*, pp. 382-84; Dündar Seyhan, *Gölgedeki Adam*, pp. 112-114.

²⁵⁸ William Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military*, pp. 133-134.

²⁵⁹ *Milliyet*, 14 July 1965, 01 March 1965, 016 April 1965.

Ankara to pay their respects to the new government.²⁶⁰ It became popularized that Türkeş would be a second Nasser in the region.²⁶¹ Indeed, whilst Türkeş was Gürsel's advisor he undertook some initiatives on his own such as sponsoring a nationalist foundation named the "Turkish Culture Society", led by Şahap Hormiş, the father in-law of Türkeş's daughter, with an intention to promote Turkish nationalism amongst the youth.²⁶² Likewise, he proposed to the Committee the establishment of a Turkish Union of Ideal and Culture, aiming to foster the teaching of nationalist doctrine and Kemalist values to the youth.²⁶³ Considering power relations at the time, if any member of the Committee was to impose one-man rule, Türkeş seemed to be the most likely man to do so.

Other powerful colonels mostly remained in the background, ideologically not as visible as Türkeş. However, some among them such as Osman Köksal, Sami Küçük, Sezai Okan and Ekrem Acuner stood up against Türkeş's clique on the grounds that they pursued hidden Pan-Turkist goals and held secret meetings intending a government takeover.²⁶⁴ Obsessed by identical fears, Türkeş and his friends became increasingly nervous.²⁶⁵ In these tricky conditions, Cemal Gürsel, who knew little about what was underlying this dispute, was not happy with intensifying rumours that Türkeş, like Nasser, would topple him.²⁶⁶ Türkeş was deposed from his position and the balance of power tilted to the other group.²⁶⁷ Following this, Gürsel and Cemal Madanoğlu, who had the highest military rank in the Committee, decided to dissolve the NUC in order to build it into a new shape; on 13

²⁶⁰ Abdi İpekçi and Ömer Sami Coşar, *İhtilal'in İç Yüzü*, p. 384.

²⁶¹ *Milliyet*, 06 August 1962, 06 April 1965; William Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military*, pp. 130-134

²⁶² It was a short-lived project that was abandoned after the exile of the Fourteen Ümit Özdağ, *Menderes Dönemi*, pp. 317-320

²⁶³ Ümit Özdağ, *Menderes Dönemi*, pp. 363-367. The purpose of this project included the foundation of an independent commission that would coordinate national education; *Milliyet*, 9 December 1960, Abdi İpekçi and Ömer Sami Coşar, *İhtilal'in İç Yüzü*, pp. 461-463.

²⁶⁴ Numan Esin, *Devrim ve Demokrasi*, pp. 167-171.

²⁶⁵ Numan Esin, *Devrim ve Demokrasi*, pp. 163-172; Dündar Seyhan, *Gölgedeki Adam*, pp. 112-114.

²⁶⁶ William Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military*, pp. 133-134.

²⁶⁷ Numan Esin, *Devrim ve Demokrasi*, pp.163-172.

November, the NUC was abolished and fourteen²⁶⁸ of its members, mainly composed of Türkeş's clique, were sent to foreign missions.²⁶⁹

After the exile of the Fourteen, the power scramble in Turkey turned vicious. A new power hub, composed mostly of the army officers outside the Committee who thought that the military officers should stay in government for a longer term, was in the making.²⁷⁰ Furthermore, it seems that the execution of Adnan Menderes, Hüsnü Polatkan, the Treasury Minister, and Fatin Rüştü Zorlu, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, on 17 September 1961 crippled public support behind the NUC. In the elections on 15 October 1961 the CHP could only get 38% of total votes, slightly more than the AP, the party established as the successor to the DP.²⁷¹ Given this political turbulence it was a viable goal for the Fourteen to reassert their control in Ankara once the prohibition on their entry to Turkey ended.²⁷² However, the tale of the Fourteen abroad entailed as much complexity as those that caused problems in the NUC; they were packaged together, but this did not necessarily mean that they were organized behind the same political goal.²⁷³ Türkeş could not convince his colleagues to unite behind his name because of his obsession with leadership and private connections in civil as well as military circles.²⁷⁴

Türkeş had secured considerable backing among students with nationalist orientations in the military academies, who were tempted by Pan-Turkist ideals.²⁷⁵ An early sign of his rising popularity as a political leader was seen when young people from nationalist organizations such as *Türk Ocakları* and ÜKD (*Üniversiteliler Kültür Derneği-The Society of*

²⁶⁸ These fourteen officers expelled from the National Union Committee were subsequently referred to as “the Fourteen” in Turkish politics.

²⁶⁹ *Milliyet*, 14 November 1960; these officers were Orhan Kabibay, Alparslan Türkeş, Orhan Erkanlı, Rıfat Baykal, Mustafa Kaplan, Şefik Soyuyüce, Numan Esin, Muzaffer Özdağ, Ahmet Er, Dündar Taşer, Münir Köseoğlu, Muzaffer Karan, İrfan Solmazer, Fazıl Akkoyunlu.

²⁷⁰ Dündar Seyhan, *Gölgedeki Adam*, pp. 144-147.

²⁷¹ See Appendix 2

²⁷² Numan Esin, *Devrim ve Demokrasi*, pp. 214-222.

²⁷³ Numan Esin, *Devrim ve Demokrasi*, pp. 211-218, William Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military*, p. 131

²⁷⁴ Numan Esin, *Devrim ve Demokrasi*, pp. 211-218.

²⁷⁵ Ömer Gürcan, “Ben İhtilalcim” (*I am a Revolutionist*) (İstanbul: Suvari, 2005), pp. 74-78, 163-179.

Culture for University Students)²⁷⁶ gathered at the airport with enthusiasm to greet his return to Turkey on 23 February 1963.²⁷⁷ Türkeş did not have mass popular appeal, but growing interest from a circle composed of student and civil organizations that coalesced around the nationalist cause. On the other hand, Türkeş and some of the Fourteen supporting him were keen to grasp the executive political power that they had acquired after the Coup, either through democratic means or not. To this end, they were poised to take advantage of the gap that emerged after the fall of the DP, which could have been filled by the AP.²⁷⁸ While Türkeş was trying to secure backing within the AP, he was arrested because of his involvement in Colonel Talat Aydemir's abortive Coup on 21 May 1963.²⁷⁹ Eventually, after spending four months in prison, he was released and on 31 March 1965 he and four of his friends from the Fourteen joined the CKMP; this represented a decisive new political initiative on their part.²⁸⁰

The Ideological Premises of the CKMP

The CKMP had been founded upon the merging of the *Cumhuriyet Millet Partisi* (Republican Nation Party-CMP)²⁸¹ and *Türkiye Köylü Partisi* (Turkish Peasant Party-TKP) in 1958. The party, led by Osman Bölükbaşı, longstanding leader of the MP and CMP, had acquired 13% of the total votes in the 1961 election.²⁸² Bölükbaşı had long been critical of the DP governments and the CHP, but the CKMP joined the coalition government with the CHP and AP in 1963. In the following two years, however, Osman Bolükbaşı left the CKMP due to

²⁷⁶ See the Footnote 321.

²⁷⁷ Nevzat Kösoğlu, *Hatıralar*, pp. 113-116.

²⁷⁸ See Chapter 5.

²⁷⁹ *Milliyet*, 22 May 1963; many of the young officers known to be within Türkeş's sphere of influence had already participated in Talat Aydemir's first abortive coup in 1962, Ömer Gürçan, '*Ben İhtilalciyim*', pp. 74-78, 163-179. However, before the court in 1963 Türkeş claimed that he stayed away from this putsch mainly because he and Aydemir clashed over the leadership; Hulusi Turgut, *Şahinlerin Dansı*, pp. 352-364.

²⁸⁰ Hugh Poulton, *Top Hat*, p. 139; these four people were Dündar Taşer, Ahmet Er, Muzaffer Özdağ and Rıfat Baykal.

²⁸¹ The CMP was the continuation of the MP, founded in 1948. See Chapter 1.

²⁸² See Appendix 2

internal frictions within the party and the CKMP votes fell to 2.2% in the 1963 local elections.²⁸³ Whilst the sharp fall in votes urged the party leadership to seek some measure to halt the meltdown, Türkeş and his friends thought that the CKMP could be the right place for them to step into party politics, as it represented the third alternative in politics as opposed to the two mainstream parties.²⁸⁴ Besides, the party had an already established organization and a certain amount of money that they would otherwise be very unlikely to obtain in time for the general election scheduled for 10 October 1965.²⁸⁵ It was against this backdrop that in 31 March 1965 Türkeş joined the CKMP.

Türkeş was appointed as the party inspector, making it possible for him to visit the party branches across the country.²⁸⁶ During this short period spent in inspectorship, which seem to have been oriented towards organizational recovery, he might have laid the ground for the party's ideological transformation.²⁸⁷ Any sign of such a shift was not yet visible in the discourse of the party leadership, which became increasingly anxious about Türkeş's forging a network between the party and nationalist circles.²⁸⁸ In the following months, the party chairman Ahmet Oğuz announced his resignation upon Türkeş's calling the party to an early congress in 1965. In the week following this resignation, on 19 June 1965, four other members of the Fourteen, Numan Esin, Mustafa Kaplan, Fazıl Akkoyunlu and Şefik Soyuyüce, joined the CKMP, reinforcing Türkeş's increasing control of the party.²⁸⁹

The leadership struggle in the party did not cease, however. The old party members viewed Türkeş's group as fascists who were importing authoritarianism into politics.²⁹⁰ Türkeş won the leadership at the congress in August 1965, allowing him to take full control of the party. The first test for the new leadership came five months after the congress. The 1965

²⁸³ See Appendix 2

²⁸⁴ See Chapter 5

²⁸⁵ At the time they joined the party the CKMP was still in the coalition government, holding four ministries.

²⁸⁶ *Milliyet*, 22 April 1965.

²⁸⁷ Hakkı Öznur, *Ülkücü Hareket (Ülkücü Movement)* (Ankara: Alternatif, 1999), Vol.I, pp. 85-87.

²⁸⁸ *Milliyet*, 26 May 1965-27 May 1965.

²⁸⁹ *Milliyet*, 20 June 1965

²⁹⁰ *Milliyet*, 2 August 1965-5 August 1965; see Introduction Chapter

election would be a fair indicator of the reaction of the electorate to the takeover. In the election Süleyman Demirel's Justice Party, which had established itself as the legitimate successor of the DP, overwhelmed the CKMP, along with the other parties including the CHP, acquiring 52% of the votes.²⁹¹ The CKMP could only collect 208,696 votes, accounting for 2.2% of the total. The Senate election in 1966 was a duplication of that of 1965 as the CKMP received only 2.2% of the votes whereas the AP had every right to declare itself the indisputable victor with 56%.²⁹²

The new CKMP leadership struggled to find an open space to express its political stance in the early years of their rule partly because of the AP's far-reaching control over the rightist electorate. On the left, unlike the CKMP, the newly-founded TİP (*Türkiye İşçi Partisi*-Labour Party of Turkey) had succeeded in presenting itself as a promising alternative to the CHP with its dogged commitment to land reform and a socialist development model.²⁹³ The escalating tension between the Greeks and Turks on Cyprus seemed to be a promising cause for Türkeş, as a former soldier born in Cyprus. It would give him the opportunity to display his political skills and promote his party's political stance to the masses.²⁹⁴ Yet the Cyprus question was an issue on which almost all political parties had consensual views; therefore the CKMP had little new to say. The rising socialist activism provided a serious political agenda for the CKMP leadership; Türkeş gave lengthy speeches in the 1967 party congress about socialist movements and the Soviet threat to Turkey, which were, to him, the serious issue for Turkish international security.²⁹⁵ Nevertheless, anti-communism was already being propounded by the AP and the CHP leader İsmet İnönü had spoken on this issue. Even the

²⁹¹ See Appendix 2

²⁹² The CKMP won 11 seats in the Assembly. See Appendix 2

²⁹³ See Chapter 4

²⁹⁴ *Milliyet* 24 December 1966; also see *Milliyet*, 28 December 1965

²⁹⁵ *Milli Hareket* 17 (December 1967).

President of the Republic, Cemal Gürsel, had been at the head of the Society for Struggle against Communism (*Komunizmle Mücadele Derneği*).²⁹⁶

Having been squeezed between the AP and the CHP, the CKMP leadership found it hard to reach those politicians in the AP with nationalist tendencies; despite Süleyman Demirel's victory against the conservative wing of the AP in the 1964 party congress, most of these people preferred not to desert the party.²⁹⁷ Thus the CKMP's reach could only cover some nationalist thinkers and those politically less competent.²⁹⁸ In these political confines, the party turned to the training and indoctrination of young people and university students, a cause which Türkeş and his friends had worked extensively on since their days in the army. As will be discussed in the following sections, this was a step of high importance, which would give the politicization of nationalism in Turkey a new form

The CKMP program of 1965 was the first written document where the Fourteen laid down the main contours of their ideological orientation. Mostly drawn up by Türkeş's friends Numan Esin and Muzaffer Özdağ, the party program outlined a comprehensive agenda for the economy, education and culture; it was, perhaps, a program echoing what they had intended to do during their tenure in the NUC.²⁹⁹ The program consisted of separate chapters addressing a wide range of topics, with the first part devoted to defining specifically what the party leadership meant by nation and nationalism. On the subject of the nation, it read: "Everyone who says 'I am a Turk' and feels himself/herself a Turk is regarded as a Turk. Our party rejects racism".³⁰⁰ In addition, being a Turk was conditioned on "the consciousness of

²⁹⁶ *Milliyet*, 17 July 1965.

²⁹⁷ Feroz Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Democracy 1950-1970* (London: Hurst, 1977), pp. 234-241; Süleyman Demirel, who had been the head of General Directorate of State Hydraulic Work in the 1950s, represented the liberal wing in the party, see Chapter 5.

²⁹⁸ Ramiz Ongun, Interview.

²⁹⁹ Numan Esin, Interview.

³⁰⁰ *CKMP Parti Programı (The CKMP Party Program)* (Ankara: CKMP, 1965), p. 4.

belonging to the Turkish nation, loving Turkish Culture, willingness to live as a Turk and loyalty to the Turkish State”.³⁰¹ The description of the nation in the program continued:

“...the nation is a continuing spiritual unit. The Turkish nation is a historical and social entity made up by unity of life, fate, culture and ideal. We believe in the glorious past of Turkishness (*Türklük*)³⁰² and its bright future”.³⁰³

Relying on these definitions, it is clear that the CKMP leadership’s understanding of the nation drew on a conception of nationhood based on culture and citizenship rather than race or blood.

Echoing the views of Ziya Gökalp, three aspects were underlined as fundamental pillars of Turkish nationalism. These were: “unity in culture”, “national independence and sovereignty”, and a “reformist spirit that would foster the development of Turkey”.³⁰⁴ These three goals were bound together in order to advance the country to the high standards of modern societies. It was put forward that the natural resources of Turkey were being squeezed by foreign companies whose investments in the country should be subject to strict state control.³⁰⁵ The party program stressed the importance of economic development, for it was held as being essential in protecting Turkey’s independence.³⁰⁶ In line with Kemalist nationalism, anti-imperialism was adopted as a rightful stance to be incorporated into the idea of a “Greater and Prosperous Turkey”, the subtitle of the party program. Accordingly, independence movements of other nations were to be observed with a close eye:

“...the Turkish worldview is against all sorts of imperialism. Turkey does not belong to imperialist alliances, and it favors independence movements of nations and their development.”³⁰⁷

It could, however, be argued that there was diversity among the party leadership and the party members at some level on which aspects of Turkish nationalism they would

³⁰¹ *CKMP Parti Programı*, p. 5.

³⁰² “*Türklük*” has no adequate equivalent in English. It expresses both the abstract quality of Turkishness and the collectivity of Turks.

³⁰³ *CKMP Parti Programı*, p. 4.

³⁰⁴ *CKMP Parti Programı*, p. 9; for Ziya Gökalp’s views on culture and nation see Uriel Heyd, *Turkish Nationalism*, pp. 62-63.

³⁰⁵ Rıfat Baykal, *CKMP Seçim Konuşmaları (The CKMP Election Speeches)* (Ankara: 1966).

³⁰⁶ *CKMP Parti Programı*, p. 16.

³⁰⁷ *CKMP Parti Programı*, p. 34.

prioritize. To Numan Esin, for instance, nationalism was an ideology that would help Turkey to upgrade itself to the position of a modern and powerful state with a strong economy; nationalism, in other words, was not an end in itself, but a device that would allow for this progress.³⁰⁸ That is why, perhaps, in the foreign policy section of the party program there was no reference invoking the idea of Pan-Turkism or a call to protect those Turks living abroad.³⁰⁹ Likewise, a long chapter in the program explaining educational and cultural policy did not set out any specific policy regarding Turkish language and history, nor did it touch upon the minorities in the country.³¹⁰ Muzaffer Özdağ and Rıfat Baykal held similar views to Esin, grounded in the central importance of an organic society for national development. They were keen to address the poor industrial and urban development in Turkey, viewing the masses as left without any substantial resources to sustain their livelihood, a situation which they thought would possibly lead to social disintegration.³¹¹ Özdağ called this outlook “*milliyetçi-toplumcu*”³¹² (nationalist-social-minded), and the term started to be used by the nationalists to denote that they were as concerned as socialists with social issues relating to poverty and inequality.³¹³

However, some of Nihal Atsız’s followers, Türkeş’s personal friends outside the Fourteen and a group of educated young nationalists who joined the party after his takeover were more tempted by cultural issues such as history, language and the question of westernization.³¹⁴ It was hard to say that they had a clear ideological vision, but they shared a

³⁰⁸ Numan Esin, Interview.

³⁰⁹ *CKMP Parti Programı*, p. 34; Hugh Poulton, *Top hat, Grey Wolf and Crescent: Turkish Nationalism and the Turkish Republic* (London: Hurst, 1997), p. 148. For a discussion on the place of Pan-Turkist views in the MHP discourse see Jacob Landau, *Pan-Turkism*, pp. 151-153, 164-166.

³¹⁰ *CKMP Parti Programı*, pp. 22-26.

³¹¹ Rıfat Baykal, *CKMP Seçim Konuşmaları*; also see Muzaffer Özdağ’s speech in Turhan Feyizoğlu, *Fırtınalı Yıllarda*, p. 495.

³¹² Though *toplumcu* literally means “socialist” in Turkish, it is used by the nationalists to differentiate themselves from the socialists as they were keen to avoid the term *sosyalist* “socialist”. Türkeş eventually banned the use of *milliyetçi-toplumcu* after 1975. Jacob Landau translates *toplumcu* as “social-minded”; however, it means “collectivist”, “corporatist” or “communitarianist” as well; Jacob Landau, *Radical Politics in Modern Turkey*, p. 215. I will stick to Landau’s translation.

³¹³ See Turhan Feyizoğlu, *Fırtınalı Yıllarda*, pp. 488-510.

³¹⁴ Nevzat Kösoğlu, *Hatıralar*, pp. 170-172; Sadi Somuncuoğlu, Interview.

strong animosity towards socialism and anxiety about Republican nationalism. It can be said that Dündar Taşer and Ahmet Er, two other retired members of the NUC, started to stand closer to this school in the party.

At the 1967 party congress Türkeş proclaimed the “Nine Lights” as the official ideology.³¹⁵ Imposing a fixed text and set of principles, he could establish a doctrinal framework into which all derivations of nationalism within the party should fit. A brief explanation of the “Nine Lights”, a set of nine principles portrayed as essential in uplifting the Turkish nation, was given in the congress.³¹⁶ What was striking, in terms of the ranking of these principles, however unclearly defined, was that nationalism, the first and foremost principle, was followed by *ülküçülük*, *ahlakçılık*, *ilimcilik*, (idealism, moralism, and belief in science).

Despite these somewhat diverging paths, Türkeş and his friends were united in the desire to promote a common secular nationalism, a unity which helped them stick together until 1968. In his election speech in 1966 Rıfat Baykal claimed that the CKMP will defend Turkish nationalism in its perfect sense as following in the footsteps of Mustafa Kemal and his reforms. Atatürk’s nationalism, he claimed, had been misapplied and abused during the single-party era, when the CHP even persecuted genuine Turkish nationalists.³¹⁷ He argued that Turkish nationalism would find its true shape, in spirit and in practice, through the CKMP.³¹⁸ Likewise Mustafa Kaplan, in his speech upon joining the CKMP, referred to Atatürk’s reforms as having been left at a standstill and in need of being completed, whilst Numan Esin maintained that the party would follow in the footsteps of Atatürk to achieve

³¹⁵ See Alparslan Türkeş’s congress speech in *Milli Hareket* 17 (December 1967).

³¹⁶ These principles were: *Milliyetçilik*, *Ülküçülük*, *Ahlaklıkk*, *İlimcilik*, *Toplumculuk*, *Köycülük*, *Hürriyetçilik* ve *Şahsiyetçilik*, *Gelişimcilik* ve *Halkçılıkk*, *Endüstricilik* ve *Teknikçilik* (*Nationalism, Idealism, Moralism, Belief in Science, Solidarism, Peasantism, Freedom and Individualism, Developmentalism and Folkism, Industrialism and Technicalism*).

³¹⁷ Rıfat Baykal, *CKMP Seçim Konuşmaları*.

³¹⁸ Rıfat Baykal, *CKMP Seçim Konuşmaları*.

economic independence.³¹⁹ Türkeş concurred with these views, asserting that the CKMP leadership wanted to “carry the flag of Kemalism” as it was the only solution for the existing problems in the country.³²⁰ In fact, when Türkeş had been asked about his view of nationalism after the 27 May coup he had traced it back to Atatürk’s nationalism.³²¹ It is clear that Türkeş approved of the cultural ingredients of Kemalist nationalism, prioritizing a process of purification in language; he even supported the *ezan* being called in Turkish, criticizing the DP for revoking this practice.³²²

From their comments during the six months they had spent in the NUC it can be surmised that Türkeş and his friends had had a plan to undertake a reformist project in Islam aiming to make it more compatible with Turkish national culture. This project had meant to bring changes in the language of religion, women’s dressing codes in public³²³ and the interpretation of national and religious history.³²⁴ Similarly, the CKMP party program of 1965 underlined that religious education should be reformed in accordance with the requirements of modern society, accommodating the elements of national culture.³²⁵ It could therefore be argued that the place of religion in this perspective was confined to the realm of culture, and was not attributed a defining role in the evolution of Turkish nationalism. In parallel with this view, the party program underscored that religion should be a matter of individual choice and practice, and stated that there was a need for a reform in theology faculties, religious high schools (*İmam-Hatip Okulları*) and Islamic academies (*İslam Yüksek Enstitüleri*).³²⁶

The CKMP leadership was determined not to show any affinity with political Islam and shunned employing Islamic symbols in the period between 1965 and 1967. Nevertheless, it appears that even if some members of the party leadership still clung to their views, Türkeş

³¹⁹ *Yeni Gazete* 20 June 1965, *Milliyet*, 02 August 1965.

³²⁰ *Milliyet*, 05 June 1965.

³²¹ *Cumhuriyet*, 17 July 1960.

³²² *Cumhuriyet*, 17 July 1960.

³²³ Türkeş was critical of *Çarsaf*, a black outer garment covering a woman thoroughly. *Cumhuriyet*, 17 July 1960

³²⁴ *Milliyet*, 16 July 1960.

³²⁵ *CKMP Parti Programı*, p. 30.

³²⁶ *CKMP Parti Programı*, p. 30.

and some others modified their outlook on religion after they began to be involved in politics; signs of change came in the 1967 congress, where Türkeş called on his audience to follow the lines of the Book, implying the Quran, which Turkish people had followed to that date.³²⁷ Two other members of the Fourteen, Ahmet Er and Dündar Taşer, adopted identical discourses around the same time, whereas the rest of their friends were less willing to align with this new line.

The frustration of the former NUC members, with the exception of Türkeş, Taşer and Er, mounted once they were faced with the politicization of Islam in their own party, a position which they had strongly denounced. In addition to this, the party leadership started to recruit young university students, who then tended to question the secular nationalism promoted by these former army officers; the *ülkü ocakları* started to be founded as student social clubs in universities from 1967 onwards.³²⁸ As will be discussed in Chapter 3, the *ülkü ocakları* were legally independent bodies and had no affiliation with the party, but the party leadership encouraged young students to participate in them and aimed to exercise a close supervision over them.³²⁹ After a period of training, these young nationalists were expected to go to villages and propagate the party ideology.³³⁰ However, as interaction between young nationalists, the party leadership and the masses intensified, the ambiguity about how to deal with religion turned highly controversial.

It is clear that young nationalists were often frustrated by the ideology taught to them and the methods used. For example, at a conference Rıfat Baykal was criticized by Taha Akyol, a young activist who was to become a party board member of the MHP in the 1970s, for his harsh words on Islam, and Baykal harshly retorted “Get rid of these regressive (*gerici*)

³²⁷ *Milli Hareket* 17 (December 1967).

³²⁸ Nearly a year before that, the commando camps where young people were trained to fight against the socialists were founded; furthermore, *Genç Ülkücüler Teşkilatı* (*The Society of Young Nationalists*), another youth organization, started its activities in Anatolia. For a wider discussion of these organizations see Chapter 3.

³²⁹ Sadi Somunçuoğlu, Interview

³³⁰ Alparslan Türkeş, Interview, *Milliyet*, 4 December 1969- 6 Decemeber.1969.

people”.³³¹ The term “*gerici*” had been imbued with a symbolic meaning in secularist discourse since the early days of the Republic and was likely to invoke resentful sentiments amongst conservative people. As another example, Ramiz Ongun, who was the leader of the *ülkü ocakları* in 1970-1971, relates:

“I visited the party centre to attend Özdağ’s class, which had been arranged to train young nationalists, but I was surprised at the very first moment to see a classroom filled with ladies dressed in Western clothes. Later on, towards the end of the speech Özdağ asked us to disperse into villages and explain the cause of nationalism. When I stated that we had to ask for help from the *imam* of that village, he raged, and after a couple of exchanges excluded me from the class.”³³²

It seems that aside from the question of religion, the CKMP leadership were as yet unready to confront the masses.³³³ Trained in the military academy, they had ascended to the leadership of a military regime; it was likely that being cross-examined and challenged by opposing views in public would cause them much irritation. On occasions when the audience expressed any sign of dissatisfaction with their argument, they could quickly run out of patience.³³⁴ On the other hand, compared to his friends, Türkeş was less inclined to display his real feelings before the audience and was willing to hear questions from them.³³⁵

Furthermore, running a political campaign required coming to terms with what people wanted to hear and, as discussed in the previous chapter, the conservative masses did not respond favorably to the Kemalist nationalist set of goals. Turkist arguments, likewise, fell short of attracting a widespread political mobilization. For instance, during a speech he gave in a village near Ankara, Ramiz Ongun analysed in depth the importance of language, believing that his audience should be more conscious about the Turkish language. At the end of his speech, which covered theoretical issues rather than answering the immediate practical needs of the audience, one of the audience simply commented:

³³¹ Taha Akyol, *Hayat Yolunda Gençler İçin Anılar ve Öneriler (Memoirs and Advice for Youngsters)* (İstanbul: Doğan, 2007), pp. 27-28.

³³² Ramiz Ongun, Interview.

³³³ Turhan Güven, *İnsan Gelecekte Yaşar (Human Beings Live in the Future)*, (İstanbul: Bilgeoğuz, 2006), p. 307

³³⁴ Ramiz Ongun, Interview.

³³⁵ Ramiz Ongun, Interview.

‘‘I agree with everything that he said, but I think he overemphasizes this tongue (showing his tongue)³³⁶; this tongue sometimes speaks the truth, sometimes lies. He should not waste his time with this too much’’.³³⁷

Carrying out politics in line with Kemalist nationalism in a party which was becoming more attractive to young people spawned a serious tension amongst the party leadership; eventually, five of the retired NUC members, Numan Esin, Şefik Soyuyüce, Mustafa Kaplan, Fazıl Akkoyunlu and Münir Köseoğlu, announced their resignation from the CKMP in 1968, stating that they could no longer participate in a political movement leaning towards the ‘‘regressive right’’.³³⁸ It can also be said that their departure was not only precipitated by a deepening ideological rift; it had become clear that the probability of taking over political power through the ballot box was far lower than if it was seized through other means.³³⁹ In the meantime, army officers in other countries of the region such as Iraq and Syria had carried out forceful transitions of power in 1963 and shortly after resigning from the CKMP some of these former NUC members supported the leftist revolutionary cliques in the army.³⁴⁰ Thus, it can be argued that the attempted transition from militarism to democracy failed to achieve the underlying reformist aims of the party.

As the first experiment in bringing nationalist ideology to the attention of the masses, the consequences of the CKMP experience were to be the yardstick for the future of nationalist politics in Turkey. Political expectations and the increasing number of young newcomers to the party had stirred a change in both the nationalist discourse, and the method of politics, in the CKMP. Internal and external factors in this change will be discussed more comprehensively in the following chapters.

³³⁶ In Turkish, the word *dil* means both ‘‘tongue’’ and ‘‘language’’.

³³⁷ Ramiz Ongun, Interview.

³³⁸ *Milliyet*, 17 October 1968, 27 October 1968.

³³⁹ Numan Esin, *Devrim ve Demokrasi*, pp. 245-250.

³⁴⁰ See Chapter 4.

II- The Birth of the MHP and Conservative Nationalism

The CKMP changed its name to the MHP and chose a novel party emblem at its 1969 congress; with this change the party leadership aimed to give a new formation to the party ideology and structure. The novel party discourse did not advocate a complete break with the tenets of secular-Kemalist nationalism and stuck with anti-imperialism and the sanctification of the state and army, but it could be argued that with specific emphasis on religion and Turkish-Islamic history it filled the ideological gap for many young students not satisfied with Kemalist cultural and ideological codes.³⁴¹ The changing socio-political makeup of the country coupled with the fast popularization of the party among the youth eased this evolution of ideology. An analysis of the new face of political nationalism in the 1970s follows.

The 1969 Congress

Even before the congress in January 1969 where a new party name and emblem would be adopted, the resignation of the former NUC members had changed the balance of power in the CKMP. In 1968 and 1969 a group of educated nationalists from the ÜKD, who upheld conservative nationalism, including Nevzat Kösoğlu, Nuri Görgür, Ahmet İyioldu, Şerafettin Yılmaz, Sadi Somuncuoğlu, Cezmi Bayram, Acar Okan and Ayvaz Gökdemir, had been able to forge tighter ties with Türkeş and Taşer, and assume important roles in the party structure.³⁴² Galip Erdem, a leading conservative nationalist ideologue, who had personal contacts with Türkeş and Taşer, facilitated this connection.³⁴³ This group secured the backing of the majority of young nationalists and was happy to welcome to the party new members

³⁴¹ For a relevant discussion on the reception of republican cultural values among the conservative masses see Şerif Mardin, *Religion, Society and Modernity in Turkey* (New York: Syracuse, 2003), pp. 223, 226 and Nuray Mert, *Merkez Sağın Kısa Tarihi (A Short History of the Center Right)* (İstanbul, Selis 2007), pp. 65-67.

³⁴² Nevzat Kösoğlu, *Hatıralar*, pp. 156-158, 218-224.

³⁴³ Sadi Somuncuoğlu, Interview.

such as Osman Turan³⁴⁴, one of the most renowned nationalist historians of the Seljuks, and O.Yüksel Serdengeçti, foremost nationalist ideologue.³⁴⁵ They favored a shift towards a more conservative understanding of nationalism in the party discourse. In the opposite camp, Muzaffer Özdağ and Rıfat Baykal remained somewhat isolated as a result of the resignation of the five former NUC members, but were still determined to ensure that the contours of Kemalist nationalism prevailed in the party. They decided to join forces with the young Turkist³⁴⁶ activists, few in numbers but quite vibrant in the party activities, clustering around Nihal Atsız.³⁴⁷ Atsız himself was disinclined to be drawn into actual politics, but Türkeş's rise to power in the CKMP was appreciated by Atsız's followers.³⁴⁸

Even before the proceedings, the tension in the congress hall in 1969 was considerably higher than in 1967. The first clash exploded upon a party deputies' request to revoke the article of the party program suggesting that the party's view of nationalism draws inspiration from that of Mustafa Kemal; this motion was solidly refused by Muzaffer Özdağ, who reasserted that Kemalism should and would remain as the pillar of the CKMP.³⁴⁹ The second dispute arose over the new party name and emblem, which, for many in the party, signified the political goal of the movement.³⁵⁰ The group led by Baykal and Özdağ proposed the name KİP (Peasants Labour Party-*Köylü İşçi Partisi*), inspired by the TİP, evoking a *milliyetçi-toplumcu* orientation. Nevertheless, the majority opted for MHP (Nationalist Movement Party-*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*), hoping to bring action and nationalism together under the same heading.³⁵¹

³⁴⁴ As will be discussed in Chapter 5 Osman Turan had been an AP Deputy.

³⁴⁵ See Chapter 1.

³⁴⁶ In the late 1960s and 1970s the term "Turkists" (*Türkçü*) was used to denote those people in the party standing close to Nihal Atsız's views and his Society of Turkists.

³⁴⁷ İbrahim Metin, Interview; Hakkı Öznur, *Ülkücü Hareket*, Vol 1, pp. 174-177.

³⁴⁸ İbrahim Metin, Interview.

³⁴⁹ Hakkı Öznur, *Ülkücü Hareket*, Vol 1. p. 174. See *CKMP Parti Programı*, p. 4

³⁵⁰ Hakk Öznur, *Ülkücü Hareket*, Vol 1. p. 174.

³⁵¹ *Milliyet*, 10 February 1969.

The fiercest debate revolved around the party emblem. One group advocated the *bozkurt*,³⁵² which had been regarded as the distinctive symbol of Turkists, whereas the other possibility was the adoption of the “three crescents”, which had been used in the Ottoman flag. Embroiled in long debates lasting through the day, the two sides accused each other of being *şamanist* (shamanist) or *şeriatçı* (favouring Sharia) respectively, and the irreconcilability of the factions became even clearer.³⁵³ The debate ended up with congress devolving to the party board the responsibility for choosing the new emblem.³⁵⁴

In Türkeş’s speech to the delegates the inseparability of religion and nation was the main argument. Türkeş stated: “We refuse a nationalism that denies Islam and we refuse an Islam that ignores the nation.” He went on to say:

“Whoever says that religion and nationalism are two separate entities is none other than a fool, and whoever asks ‘are you a Muslim or a nationalist?’ is not one of us”.³⁵⁵

He concluded his speech with a reference to Abdullah Ibn Saba’³⁵⁶ who is known for causing the first political division among Muslims, implying that this conflict between Turkists and conservative nationalists could lead to a split in the party.³⁵⁷ Yet he was one of the few people who did not disclose his opinion on what the new name of the party should be. At the board meeting it was agreed that the party emblem would be three crescents while the *bozkurt* would become the symbol of party youth.³⁵⁸

³⁵² For a discussion of the *bozkurt* legend in Turkish history see Zeki Velidi Togan, “Bozkurt Efsanesi” in *Türkler (The Turks)*, Vol III, (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye 2002), p. 545.

³⁵³ Hugh Poulton, *Top Hat, Grey Wolf and Crescent*, p. 156; see also the interviews in Hakkı Öznur, *Ülkücü Hareket*, Vol 1, pp. 185-189.

³⁵⁴ Hakkı Öznur, *Ülkücü Hareket*, Vol 1, pp. 175, 185-189.

³⁵⁵ *Milli Hareket* 32 (March 1969); in this congress he also used another slogan, “*Türklük Gurur ve Şuuru İslam Ahlak ve Faziletleri*” (The pride and consciousness of Turkishness, Islamic morals and virtues), which became highly popular in the party. In the following years such symbolic phrases as “*Türklük Bedenimiz, İslamiyet Ruhumuz*” (Turkishness is our body, Islam is our spirit) and “*Tanrı Dağı Kadar Türk, Hıra Dağı Kadar Müslüman*” (As Turkish as Mount Tian Shan, as Muslim as Mount Hira) were introduced into the party discourse.

³⁵⁶ In the Sunni accounts Abdullah Ibn Saba is said to have roused the Egyptians against the Caliph ‘Uthman on the grounds of ‘Ali’s special rights; and the bloodshed between ‘Ali and Talha and Zubayr is then ascribed to these same murderers of ‘Uthman. *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., s.v, “‘Abd Allah b Saba’ ”

³⁵⁷ *Milli Hareket* 32 (March 1969).

³⁵⁸ Hulusi Turgut, *Şahinlerin Dansı*, pp. 399-400.

Türkeş presented this as simply a matter of practicality, explaining that drawing the *bozkurt* required a high level of artistic skills, and would be too complex for a party to use in its propaganda campaign, whereas the three crescents were better suited for this purpose.³⁵⁹ However, this decision undoubtedly held further meanings beyond its practical usefulness; firstly, the party aligned itself with a new form of cultural nationalism and secondly, it shifted its stance that had discredited the use of religion as a political tool. Besides, it is clear that Türkeş's endorsement of conservative nationalists against his old friends eased the way for the incorporation of the former into the party. A number of people drawn from ÜKD circles were elected to the party's executive board to replace Özdağ and Baykal, and two other former NUC members, Dündar Taşer and Ahmet Er, started to make a bigger contribution to the ideological framework that the MHP would be committed to through the 1970s. It became clear that Ottoman history and Islam could generate a higher level of emotional impetus amongst young nationalist militants and it is possible to say that this ideological framework was instrumental in realizing Türkeş's vision of an action-oriented political movement.

The side-effect of the congress was the alienation of the Özdağ-Baykal clique from the party; they did not hold a position to shape the party ideology anymore, and in fact were left with no choice but to break away from the MHP.³⁶⁰ In numerous letters sent to Türkeş they argued that the cause of their discontent was being the object of slander by some people who intended to take over the party administration, just as had been done to other members of the Fourteen.³⁶¹ They also complained that during the 1969 general election campaign the party had approached religious groups to make electoral gains at the expense of the principles set

³⁵⁹ Hulusi Turgut, *Şahinlerin Dansı*, pp. 399-400.

³⁶⁰ Hakkı Öznur, *Ülkücü Hareket*, Vol 1, p.184-188; Sadi Somuncuoğlu and İbrahim Metin, Interviews.

³⁶¹ Rıfat Baykal argued in one of the letters he sent to Türkeş that in the party there were people who did not like Mustafa Kemal, but could only express their hatred against him in informal conversation.. Hakkı Öznur, *Ülkücü Hareket*, p.183.

out previously by the leadership.³⁶² It became clear, however, that despite these complaints Türkeş was determined to part ways with his old friends and set to embrace a novel ideology and strategy in politics.

With its transformed political discourse and fresh members, corralled into a dynamic organization under a new name and emblem, the MHP had higher expectations for the 1969 elections. When Ahmet Er in his election speech on radio called people to the “*Muhammedi Nizam* (Muhammedan Order)”, the religiosity of the MHP discourse was at its starkest. His sentences were hardly obscure and the wording was fairly calculated:

“...everyone has to fear God, keep his name in mind, be fearful of him, not be slave to another slave but only to God. The new order I would propose that you endorse *Muhammedi Nizam*”.³⁶³

The speech was recorded a few months after the congress, and possibly reflected the mood the party had been leaning towards since then. Yet the people on the MHP board were apparently worried about the timing and content of the speech and when Türkeş was asked about it, he underlined that it did not represent the party view, but merely Ahmed Er’s personal reflections.³⁶⁴ This answer reveals that the inclusion of religion in the nationalist discourse proved to be a painful challenge for the MHP leadership, in which a consensual view on this issue was yet to emerge.

This ideological shift of the MHP had made some impact on the wider range of rightist-conservative circles. To that date, the AP had benefited from its dominant position on the right of the political spectrum, enabling it to reach religious people; when the MHP set itself on new ground that could appeal to the same group the AP resorted to mobilizing its widespread and well-organized party network in an attempt to offset the challenge.³⁶⁵ Another challenge to the MHP came from a very influential religious grouping, the *Nurcular*, the followers of Said-i Nursi. They had secured the AP’s patronage during the latter’s first four

³⁶² Ümit Özdağ, Interview. Özdağ did not leave the party right and assumed the vice presidency in the party, but never involved in the party affairs until his resignation in 1971. Hakkı Öznur, *Ülkücü Hareket*, Vol 1, p.186.

³⁶³ Ahmet Er, *Hatıralarım*, pp. 293-300.

³⁶⁴ Alparslan Türkeş, Interview, *Milliyet*, 04 December 1969- 06 December 1969.

³⁶⁵ *Milliyet*, 06 December 1969

years in power and it seems that some sub-groups in the *Nurcu* movement were alarmed by any development in politics that was likely to weaken the AP's grip on government; a pamphlet entitled *İslami Hareket Bakımından Alparslan Türkeş, Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi ve Din Gerçeği* (The Facts about Alparslan Türkeş, the MHP and Religion from the Perspective of the Islamic Movement) was published by Bekir Berk, one of the leading representatives of the *Nur* movement.³⁶⁶ In this pamphlet, which brought together old speeches and articles of Alparslan Türkeş, Muzaffer Özdağ and Rıfat Baykal, displaying their allegiance to Kemalist reforms, it was suggested that religion and nationalism could never be combined.³⁶⁷

The 1969 election results did not meet the high expectations that had arisen in MHP circles. The party was only able to get 3% of the total votes, which was a slight increase compared to the 1965 elections, but failed to display itself as a major political power.³⁶⁸ Only Alparslan Türkeş would be in the Assembly to represent his party,³⁶⁹ which deprived the party of sufficient means to keep its public visibility high and to have a say on daily events. It became manifest that the transformation of its discourse and image had failed to pull the conservative electorate to its side.

On the other hand, the level of trauma was relatively low for the newcomers to the party and young nationalists; there was no coverage of the election results in the declarations released by young nationalist militants and, as will be discussed in the following chapters, the intensity of their struggle with the socialists outweighed for them the concerns of party politics. In fact, the ideological confrontation in the universities between nationalist and socialist students had started to be more violent after 1968. The conservative nationalist cause

³⁶⁶ Bekir Berk and Mustafa Polat, *İslami Hareket Bakımından Alparslan Türkeş, Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi ve Din Gerçeği* (İstanbul: Güneş, 1969).

³⁶⁷ Bekir Berk, *İslami Hareket*, pp. 91-120. This reaction was not stimulated by political interest only. The grave of Said-i Nursi was believed to have been transferred to a secret place from his first burial place in Şanlıurfa by Türkeş's order when he was Gürsel's advisor in 1960. This was taken by his disciples as an insult directed at their spiritual leader. Bekir Berk, *İslami Hareket*, pp. 69-71.

³⁶⁸ See Appendix 2.

³⁶⁹ It can be said that this sharp drop in the number of CKMP-MHP deputies, despite the slight increase in the party votes, was a result of the change in the electoral system in 1968.

acquired an even stronger appeal to the country's youth as the number of casualties and killings increased.

Conservative Nationalist Ideologues and the MHP

As discussed in the previous chapter, there had been a number of publications promoting conservative nationalism in the late 1940s and 1950s, which had found audiences amongst small numbers of educated people. This intellectual thread became more vibrant in the 1960s and as the MHP moved into a new phase, some of the conservative nationalist ideologues forged stronger ties with the party youth and the leadership. The cordiality from conservative circles was pleasing for the MHP as well, since the party leadership was in need of new ideological firepower that would steer young militants.

The *Aydınlar Klübü* (Intellectuals' Club), founded in 1962 in İstanbul, was one of the first organizations where leading ideologues of conservative nationalist thinking in Turkey held weekly seminars on a wide range of topics.³⁷⁰ It relied on a very straightforward and simply defined program that would promote religious conservative values that these people thought had fallen into jeopardy in the face of the reviving Kemalist discourse promoted by the 27 May regime, and proliferating socialist organizations.³⁷¹ Less formal than the *Aydınlar Klübü*, the *Marmara Kırathanesi* (Marmara Coffeehouse) was located in Beyazıt near the University of İstanbul. It became an attractive location for those who moved in rightist circles, including those in the *Aydınlar Klübü*, providing a comfortable setting for young university students and conservative nationalist intellectuals to meet around the same table.³⁷²

³⁷⁰ Yüksel Taşkın, *Milliyetçi Muhafazakar Entelijansiya: Anti Komünizmden Küreselleşme Karşılığında (Nationalist Conservative Intelligentsia: From Anti-Communism to Anti-Globalisation)* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2007), p. 245.

³⁷¹ Yüksel Taşkın, "Muhafazakar Bir Proje Olarak Türk-İslam Sentezi (Turkish-Islamic Synthesis as a Conservative Project)" in *MTSD*, Vol. V, pp. 387-401.

³⁷² Mehmed Niyazi, *Dahiler ve Deliler (Genius and Follies)* (İstanbul: Ötüken, 2001), pp. 12-32; Nevzat Kösoğlu, *Hatıralar*, pp. 97-101.

These thinkers had an interest in the arts and humanities in general; most of them were imbued with a religious sensitivity to varying degrees, but did not have expertise in Islamic sciences. Among them there were scholars such as Osman Turan Erol Güngör and Ziya Nur Aksun, poets such as Necip Fazıl Kısakürek and Hilmi Oflaz, and columnists such as Ahmet Kabaklı and Osman Yüksel Serdengeçti. These people had a very deep interest in Turkish-Islamic history and offered a nationalistic interpretation of it.³⁷³ Another central theme in their agenda was the westernization debate and the question of cultural transformation.³⁷⁴ As they were critical of the Republican westernization reforms and the derisive attitude of the Republican bureaucratic elite towards the Ottoman heritage they had no love for the CHP; the 27 May coup did not receive the backing of these people mainly due to the perception that it was a movement designed to restore the CHP's rule.³⁷⁵ Most of these thinkers were also critical of socialist ideology and anxious about the rising socialist wave in the country; from the mid 1960s onwards they put a lot of effort into refuting socialist literature and revolutionary ideologies.³⁷⁶

In 1969 a ‘‘Seminar of Nationalist Scholars’’ was convened by Prof. İbrahim Kafesoğlu, another prominent nationalist historian. It attracted more than seventy scholars, whose presentations aimed to discuss various aspects of Turkish culture and how to tackle the rising socialist ideology.³⁷⁷ Following this meeting the *Aydınlar Klübü* was renamed *Aydınlar*

³⁷³ Nevzat Kösoğlu *Hatıralar*, pp. 97-101; Ahmet İyioğlu, Interview.

³⁷⁴ The question of westernization was dealt with in a scholarly fashion in the works of Prof. Mümtaz Turhan and Prof. Ziyaeddin Fındıkoğlu. See Mümtaz Turhan, *Garplılaşmanın Neresindeyiz* (Where are we in Westernization) and Ziyaeddin Fındıkoğlu, *İctimaiyat* (Sociology). Erol Güngör, who had been a student of Mümtaz Turhan, continued this thread. As will be discussed in Chapter 5, the politicization of this debate was explicitly tangible after 1969.

³⁷⁵ Yüksel Taşkın, *Milliyetçi Muhafazakar Entelijansiya*, pp. 128-134.

³⁷⁶ Yüksel Taşkın, *Milliyetçi Muhafazakar Entelijansiya*, pp. 133-143.

³⁷⁷ *Milliyetçi Türkiye'ye doğru: 10-11 Mayıs 1969'da Yapılan Milliyetçiler İlmi Seminerinde Varılan Neticeler* (Towards Nationalist Turkey: Conclusions from the Scientific Seminar of Nationalists held on 10-11 May 1969) (İstanbul: Kültür Ocağı Gen. Mer., 1969).

Ocağı (Intellectuals' Hearth), and sought to promote a "Turkish-Islamic synthesis" against the socialist trends in the country.³⁷⁸

The connection between these intellectuals, young militants and the MHP leadership was somewhat complicated. Among some of the intellectuals in the *Aydınlar Klübü-Ocağı* the AP was deemed the most appropriate channel for achieving political and cultural ends and in its early years the CKMP-MHP was gently dismissed.³⁷⁹ On the other hand, young nationalists went in search of educational resources that would provide arguments and material to counteract those of the socialists. Aside from Türkeş's "Nine Lights" doctrine, they relied on a few nationalist journals such as *Devlet* and *Ocak*.³⁸⁰ A number of nationalist thinkers wrote in these publications and gave seminars in Kübitem, a research center founded in 1968 by a group of educated young nationalists.³⁸¹ It could be said that the theoretical sophistication that would apply nationalist ideology to practical issues was still missing, but young nationalists were given a broad overview of Turkish history, found themselves introduced to the ideas of the early nationalist thinkers and were taught about the socio-economic problems of the country at a basic level.³⁸² Only a few of the young militants could forge personal contacts with these scholars, but the writings of such leading conservative-nationalist ideologues as Erol Güngör, Osman Turan, Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, Yüksel Serdengeçti and Mümtaz Turhan started to be more popular among them.³⁸³ It seems that the reservation of intellectuals about the CKMP-MHP in its early years did not last too long and some of them started to move closer to the MHP, which increased the familiarity of their

³⁷⁸ Emin Alper-Özgür Sevgi Göral, "Aydınlar Ocağı" in *MTSD*, Vol. V, pp. 583-584.

³⁷⁹ Tanıl Bora-Kemal Can, *Devlet Ocak Dergah*, pp. 129-133.

³⁸⁰ Sadi Somuncuoğlu, Interview.

³⁸¹ Dündar Taşer encouraged a group of young nationalist scholars and intellectuals to found a research center for nationalist thinking where young nationalists would be taught. Sadi Somuncuoğlu, Interview; see Chapter 3.

³⁸² Sadi Somuncuoğlu, Interview.

³⁸³ Turhan Feyizoğlu, *Fırtınalı Yıllarda*, pp. 760-785; Mustafa Çalık, *MHP Hareketinin Kaynakları*, pp. 117-127; These writings included Ziya Gökalp's books on Turkish nationalism, Nihal Atsız's novels, history books written by nationalist historians such as İsmail Hakkı Danişmend, Osman Turan and Faruk Sümer, the books of Muhammed Hamidullah on Islam and Islamic history and hagiographies of Sufis who lived in Anatolia. For the detailed list see *Milli Hareket* 31-32 (February-March 1969).

views amongst young nationalist militants. Many of them were invited to write in nationalist publications and to give speeches in conferences held by young nationalist militants.³⁸⁴

On the level of the party leadership, Alparslan Türkeş had maintained contact with a group of Turkists around Atsız, but was less in touch with these conservative circles. Besides, it seems that his involvement in the 27 May coup counted against his credibility; for example, on Türkeş's return to the country Necip Fazıl Kısakürek slated young nationalists who were quite optimistic that Türkeş would be the new political leader for them.³⁸⁵ Türkeş was from the army, but what was worse, and more conspicuous, were his views on nationalism and religion as displayed during his NUC membership after the 27 May coup. At this juncture, the members of the ÜKD played an important role in mediating between the conservative nationalist thinkers and the party leadership.³⁸⁶ It seems that Dündar Taşer worked harder than Türkeş to forge a connection between his party and conservative nationalist thinkers. According to scholars and students of the time, he had high skills in personal relations that enabled him to be familiar with many people from conservative circles.³⁸⁷ It is hard to trace Taşer's ideological evolution before 1960 based on available documents, but from his writings and speeches it can be surmised that he was far more articulate than Türkeş in historical analysis and sociological reasoning. In most of his speeches Taşer addressed a wide range of historical issues, in particular the history of the Ottoman Empire, and was critical of republican historiography. His audience was mostly composed of students, who heard stories about the "glories" of their ancestors.³⁸⁸ In one of his speeches he said:

³⁸⁴ Osman Turan and Yüksel Serdengeçti joined the MHP in the late 1960s. Erol Güngör started to work in close collaboration with the party leadership from the early 1970s.) Necip Fazıl, who had been invited to give speeches in the *ülkü ocakları*, joined the party in 1977.

³⁸⁵ Nevzat Kösoğlu, *Hatıralar*, pp. 115-116.

³⁸⁶ Sadi Somuncuoğlu, Interview; Nevzat Kösoğlu, *Hatıralar*, pp. 160-181, 221.

³⁸⁷ This point was raised by most of the interviewees.

³⁸⁸ Nevzat Kösoğlu, *Dündar Taşer* (Ankara: Alternatif, 2003); Ziya Nur Aksun, *Dündar Taşer'in Büyük Türkiyesi (The Great Turkey of Dündar Taşer)* (İstanbul: Kutluğ, 1974).

“ We are a nation that founded the greatest empires of the world and ruled every part of the world... he last link in this chain of these empires was the Ottoman Empire of which we are the heirs...”³⁸⁹

In an article he penned on the death of Dündar Taşer in 1972, Erol Güngör wrote:

“...You can ask what point is there in investigating the past?...there may even be some among you who say ‘Let’s leave the past and look at the condition we are in today; we are amongst the least successful states in the world’. Taşer would reply to you by saying: ‘We have got into the condition we are in today because of our abandonment of our past. If you search seriously for answers to the questions I have asked, you will find a state [meaning the Ottomans] unequalled in world history. Without knowing and understanding this state, there is no way you can understand the Turkish nation or explain the hardships we face today’³⁹⁰

History in the Service of Politics

Whether Alparslan Türkeş and Dündar Taşer were curious readers of Ottoman historical literature was less important than how they manipulated the ideas articulated in it for political mobilization. Türkeş, for instance, strongly urged nationalist militants to be present at “Ertuğrul Gazi Festivals”, where the birth of the Ottoman Empire was celebrated.³⁹¹ It can also be argued that seeing the strength of the socialists in civil society and universities resulted in a passion for political activism among the conservative nationalist elite as well.

The centrality of the state in nationalist historiography and political discourse was instrumental for illustrating the endurance of the Turkish nation and its will to remain independent.³⁹² Nevertheless, conservative nationalists maintained that the representation of the state in the works of republican historians was insufficient as it underrepresented the Ottoman phase in the succession of Turkish states.³⁹³ Leading ideologues such as Dündar Taşer, Erol Güngör and O.Yüksel Serdengeçti often complained that dismissing the Ottoman Empire was an injustice to Turkish nationalism and suggested that the Ottoman Empire were

³⁸⁹ Dündar Taşer, “ Biz Kimiz? (Who are we?)”, *Devlet*, 7 April 1969.

³⁹⁰ Erol Güngör, “Dündar Taşer’in Büyük Türkiyesi” (The Great Turkey of Dündar Taşer), *Töre*, 18 December 1972.

³⁹¹ *Devlet*, 6 September 1971.

³⁹² Büşra Ersanlı, *İktidar ve Tarih*, pp. 106-113; Nihal Atsız, “Türk Tarihine Bakışımız Nasıl Olmalıdır?” (How Should We View Turkish History), *Çınaraltı* 1(1941), Dündar Taşer, “Biz Kimiz?”.

³⁹³ Nevzat Kösoğlu, *Kitap Şuurı* (İstanbul: Ötüken, 1994), pp. 87-89; for a discussion of the early Kemalist historiography on the Ottoman period see Büşra Ersanlı, *İktidar ve Tarih*, pp. 106-113, 128.

the greatest Turkish state in history.³⁹⁴ Furthermore, conservative nationalist historiography represented the rulers of the Ottoman Empire as believing that the interests of the state supersede the interests of the individual.³⁹⁵ Dündar Taşer in many of his speeches spelled out the necessity of sacrificing oneself for the sake of the state; he introduced the term “*fena fi-d’devle*” (annihilation in the state)³⁹⁶, and asked young nationalist militants to apply this vision in their lives.³⁹⁷ To ensure that the state survived, conservative nationalists prescribed that its citizens and bureaucrats should be unquestionably loyal to their state; certain examples from the lives of non-Muslim military commanders and high ranking state servants had a decent place in this historiography.³⁹⁸ Likewise, although the social make up of the Empire received scant coverage in the literature, Armenians, Jews and Arabs were depicted as living comfortably under the rule of the sultans as long as they respected the state.³⁹⁹

As will be discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, this articulation of history resonated strongly with the nationalists. For instance, as will be discussed, especially during the Milliyetçi Cephe (MC-Nationalist Front) governments⁴⁰⁰ they were motivated to fill positions in the bureaucracy and civil service. Likewise, the MHP leadership and young militants strove to display themselves as utterly loyal to the state and nation, stressing that the ideology they espoused was not imported from the Soviets or China; Ramiz Ongun, the *ülkü ocakları* president in 1970-1971, made the following comments:

“... the struggle of the nationalist youth, despite various setbacks, against the Maoist and Leninist groups, whose roots are in foreign lands and thus have access to greater material resources, has found, and will continue to receive, backing from our people”⁴⁰¹

³⁹⁴ Erol Güngör, ‘‘Dündar Taşer’in Büyük Türkiyesi’’; Dündar Taşer, ‘‘ Biz Kimiz?’’.

³⁹⁵ Osman Turan, *Türk Cihan Hakimiyeti* p. 300.

³⁹⁶ This term is obviously derived from ‘‘fena-fi’llah’’, a concept in sufism and means to express annihilation in God, which sufi mystic should strive to achieve. Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd ed., s.v., ‘‘Annihilation and Abiding in God’’

³⁹⁷ Ziya Nur Aksun, *Dündar Taşer’in Büyük Türkiyesi*, p. 23.

³⁹⁸ Dündar Taşer gives the examples of Müsürüs Pasha, Ottoman Ambassador to London, and Alfred Rüstem Beg, the representative of the Ottoman foreign office in the USA. Ziya Nur Aksun, *Dündar Taşer’in Büyük Türkiyesi*, pp. 119-121, 147.

³⁹⁹ Ziya Nur Aksun, *Dündar Taşer’in Büyük Türkiyesi*, pp. 149-150.

⁴⁰⁰ See Footnote 420.

⁴⁰¹ Metin Turhan, *Ülkü Ocakları*, pp. 86-87.

It appears that both the party leadership and the young nationalists considered loyalty more important than ethnic background or religious persuasion. For them it was not minorities that posed the most serious threat to the state but socialists, who were believed to receive financial and technological assistance from abroad.⁴⁰² Likewise, the nationalists sought to display a moderate profile towards the Kurdish population in the country, suggesting that the MHP had no problem with the Kurds as long as they did not dispute the integrity of the state.⁴⁰³ On the other hand, nationalist militants and the party leadership often lambasted “Kurdish-socialist separatist groups” who ran active campaigns in the universities and eastern provinces of the country.⁴⁰⁴

Another central theme in conservative nationalist historiography was the Russian-Ottoman struggle. Drawing on this historical antagonism, the nationalists considered the activities of the socialists in Turkey as spearheaded by the Soviets and thus an imminent threat to the existence of the Turkish state. Türkeş’s speech to the İstanbul *ülkü ocakları* in 1969 was illustrative of this anger:

“This communism is a means of Moscov⁴⁰⁵ imperialism, which aims to tear apart the integrity of the Turkish nation and the unity of the Turkish state...what is going on in Czechoslovakia today gives an idea about this ... a similar plan operates in our country as well ...their goal is to capture Turkey. Behind this goal there is betrayal and a plot to destroy the Turkish nation. If a person claims to be a communist, s/he is a puppet, a spy or a traitor.”⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰² İstanbul *ülkü ocakları* leader Nihat Çetinkaya, for instance, said in 1971: “We are backed neither by America nor Russia nor the government, but we do our best to help students in need to buy books and daily necessities.” Metin Turhan, *Ülkü Ocakları*, p. 65.

⁴⁰³ Türkeş’s words in 1979 reflected this view: “...slaves of foreign ideologies claim that ‘if Türkeş comes to power, he will slaughter the Kurds’. These traitors would drive our state to disaster. I reiterate that regardless of the region they live in, those who live in this land are our brothers and will be under our protection.” Hakkı Öznur, *Ülkücü Hareket*, Vol I., pp. 548-49.

⁴⁰⁴ Metin Turhan, *Ülkü Ocakları*, pp. 72-75.

⁴⁰⁵ “Moskof” is a Turkish word representing the Russian in a derogatory sense.

⁴⁰⁶ Metin Turhan, *Ülkü Ocakları*, pp. 19-22; Dündar Taşer argued that there has been a negative correlation between the power of Turkey and the power of Russia, Ziya Nur, *Dündar Taşer’in Büyük Türkiyesi*, p. 152

Many of the historical studies by conservative nationalist academics were on Seljuk history.⁴⁰⁷ This interest probably stemmed from scholarly concerns, yet it is possible to surmise that these scholars were tempted by the rich material that could be found in Seljuk history supporting the idea of highlighting a Turkish-Islamic synthesis. As a result, recourse to the Seljuks helped nationalist academics to sanctify Anatolia as the heartland of the new Turkey; this importance derived not from the excellence of the ancient Anatolian civilizations, as Republican nationalist historiography suggested, but from the “Turkish-Islamic” character of Anatolia and its being the major battlefield in the Turks’ struggle against the Christian West.⁴⁰⁸ This historiography installed a stark East-West dichotomy, tracing the antagonism back to the Seljuks’ defense against the Crusades in Anatolia, which was equated with the nationalist resistance to Western and Russian “imperialism”.⁴⁰⁹ As will be discussed in Chapter 5, most of the MHP leadership and of the young nationalists readily embraced this discourse and maintained that the westerners had manufactured countless sinister plots to cripple the Turks since they were victorious in Anatolia. Accordingly, the 900th anniversary of the battle of Malazgirt in 1971 was enthusiastically celebrated in party circles and Alparslan Türkeş was the only party leader who was present at the celebrations in Erzurum.⁴¹⁰ An *ülkü ocakları* statement read:

⁴⁰⁷ See İbrahim Kafesoğlu, *Selçuklu Tarihi ve Büyük Selçuklu İmparatoru Melikşah (Seljuk History and Melikşah, Great Seljuk Empire)* (İstanbul: Meb, 1973), Osman Turan, *Selçuklular Zamanında Türkiye (Turkey in the Time of the Seljuks)* (İstanbul: Turan, 1971) and *Selçuklular ve İslamiyet (The Seljuks and Islam)* (İstanbul: Turan, 1971).

⁴⁰⁸ İbrahim Kafesoğlu, *A Short History of the Turkish-Islamic States* (Ankara: Kültür Dil Tarih Yüksek Kurumu, 1994), pp. 43-45 and *Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Meseleleri (The Issues of Turkish Nationalism)* (Ankara: Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü, 1966), pp. 127-137.

⁴⁰⁹ In one of his election speeches O.Yüksel Serdengeçti said: “Since 1071 we have sacrificed countless generations for the sake of these lands; now on these lands under which millions of unidentified martyrs are buried there are some people who sell their nation to foreigners.” Osman Yüksel Serdengeçti, “Radyodaki Seçim Konuşmalarım: 1969 Seçimleri” (My Election Speeches on the Radio: The 1969 Elections) in Osman Yüksel Serdengeçti, *Bir Nesli Nasıl Mahvettiler (How They Wrecked a Generation)* (İstanbul: TEV, 2010).

⁴¹⁰ *Devlet*, 6 September 1971; for detailed information on the electoral performance of the MHP in some of the central and eastern Anatolian cities see Footnote 1123.

“The force of Alparslan that destroyed the Crusaders in 1071 will today, under the leadership of another Alparslan, destroy the traitors”.⁴¹¹

The MHP leadership and the young nationalists were critical of the Republican nationalist topography as well, which showed no geopolitical interest in Turkish and Muslim populations living outside the boundaries of modern Turkey, and re-imagined it from the perspective of the Ottoman “golden age”.⁴¹² In one of his speeches Dündar Taşer complained to young nationalists that, as a result of westernization, there was a lack of awareness among Turkish people of the fact that their forefathers had ruled three continents.⁴¹³

Conservative nationalism dealt seriously with the question of cultural and political westernization. Unlike the CKMP, which had seen the cause of current social problems as the failed policies of the CHP under the rule of İsmet İnönü and the DP governments, the MHP discourse brought to the fore the “degeneration in every aspect of life that had plagued Turkish society in the last two hundred years”.⁴¹⁴ Türkeş did not speak against the Kemalist westernizing reforms, but neither did he praise them, and most of the party leadership and young nationalists often criticized the way in which westernization measures had been taken.⁴¹⁵ It could, therefore, be said that in contrast to the CKMP, the MHP had no commitment to advance republican reforms; this stance of the party was an important factor in shaping its relations with the AP and MSP.⁴¹⁶

⁴¹¹ Metin Turhan, *Ülkü Ocakları*, p. 98.

⁴¹² Ziya Nur Aksun, *Dündar Taşer'in Büyük Türkiye*, pp. 46-51

⁴¹³ Ziya Nur Aksun, *Dündar Taşer'in Büyük Türkiye*, pp. 46-51.

⁴¹⁴ See Alparslan Türkeş's 1969 congress speech in *Milli Hareket* 32 (March 1969); in a conference held at ODTÜ in 1970 Türkeş argued that the rulers of Turkey and Turkish intellectuals had been following the wrong mentality for a hundred and fifty years. See Metin Turhan, *Ülkü Ocakları*, pp. 19-22; Dündar Taşer, “Batılılaşmak” (*Westernization*), *Devlet*, 19 October 1970.

⁴¹⁵ See Chapter 5.

⁴¹⁶ See Chapter 5.

II- The Diversity in the MHP Discourse in the 1970s

As this nexus among the party, ideologues and youth was in the making, Türkeş's *Nine Lights* continued to be the handbook for the party's militants. From the mid 1970s onwards, however, young nationalists started to employ a strikingly religious language, especially in the last two years preceding the 1980 coup. It could be argued that the conservative nationalist interpretation of history and religion was able to ascribe a mission to young people coming from conservative backgrounds, in a process of enculturation that republican nationalism had not been able to achieve.⁴¹⁷

As will be discussed in Chapter 4, the magnitude of political violence in the universities and streets increased dramatically in 1970 and the army released a memorandum on 12 March 1971, effectively forcing the AP government to step down.⁴¹⁸ The three years following the 1971 coup witnessed the bifurcation of the political right in Turkey, whereas the CHP seemed to be rejuvenated from 1973 by its new leader, Bülent Ecevit, who brought a fresh energy to the party.⁴¹⁹ The AP had suffered intra-party rivalries before the 1971 coup, which shattered the political conjuncture that had benefited it, and the Democratic Party had been founded by former AP members, who enjoyed Celal Bayar's patronage, in 1970.⁴²⁰ In addition to these developments, the foundation of the MNP (National Order Party-*Milli Nizam Partisi*) in 1970, to be replaced by the MSP (National Salvation Party-*Milli Selamet Partisi*) in 1972, marked the entry of political Islam into Turkish politics.⁴²¹

⁴¹⁷ Nuray Mert, *Merkez Sağın Kısa Tarihi*, pp. 65-69.

⁴¹⁸ For a wider discussion see Chapter 4.

⁴¹⁹ Feroz Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment*, pp. 327-331.

⁴²⁰ Feroz Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment*, pp. 246-248; see also Chapter 5.

⁴²¹ Sadık Albayrak, *Türk Siyasi Hayatında MSP Olayı (The Case of MSP in Turkish Political Life)* (İstanbul: Araştırma, 1989), pp. 1-21.

The party suffered a severe political blow in the 1973 elections, acquiring only 2.0% of the votes.⁴²² Implanting religion into the party discourse had turned out to have brought no benefit in electoral terms. Even more disappointing for the MHP was the breakthrough made by the MSP, a party advocating political Islam, which gained 11.8% of the total votes, and the fact that the CHP managed to form a coalition government with the MSP.⁴²³ To make matters worse, in 1972 nationalists had received the shocking news of the death of Dündar Taşer, who was killed in a traffic accident on 13 June in Ankara.⁴²⁴ His death was deeply mourned by nationalist youth and the party board, in which he had played the role of interlocutor between the younger generation and the leadership.

The Clash with the Turkists

In the aftermath of the coup, an important question arose within the party: how to balance Turkism and conservative nationalism? In 1969 the MHP had moved to conservative nationalism, but the leadership and the young militants somehow continued to rely on pre-Islamic Turkish symbols, which were widely circulated in the party publications and speeches. Moreover, youngsters as well as thinkers of a strong Turkist persuasion did not leave the MHP, despite their declining influence on the discourse, and managed to preserve their presence in party events and activities.⁴²⁵ It appears that this persistence of a Turkist stream was largely made possible by the willingness of the party leadership to appeal to nationalist and religious sentiments through a single political discourse. Türkeş continued to exhort his followers to call him *Başbuğ*, which means “leader” in pre-Islamic Turkish

⁴²² See Appendix 2

⁴²³ *Devlet*, 29 October 1973, 12 November 1973, 19 November 1973.

⁴²⁴ He was hit by a lorry in the street just after he left home. *Milliyet*, 15 June 1972.

⁴²⁵ İbrahim Metin, Interview; see Metin Turhan, *Ülkü Ocakları*, pp. 151-152.

communities.⁴²⁶ Employing this title implied that Türkeş was not only a retired colonel or a party leader, but that he presided over a movement that claimed to carry out a historic mission, the geographical scope of which was not confined to Turkey. Similarly, the prevailing image of *bozkurt* among the youth was encouraged and instead of using the word “Allah”, as some conservative nationalists urged, at the end of political speeches or articles the maxim “*Tanrı Türkü Korusun*” (God Save the Turk) was regularly employed.⁴²⁷ It was clear that, even after its adoption of a discourse inclusive of Islam, the party was still keen to retain its use of cultural symbols pertaining to pre-Islamic Turkic conventions.

The ideological permeation of Turkist values amongst young militants was no less tangible. Nihal Atsız’s books were highly popular among nationalist militants.⁴²⁸ Necdet Sancar, brother of Nihal Atsız and a staunch adherent of Turkism, maintained his contacts with Türkeş and the party; he was often invited as guest speaker to the party meetings held by youth groups as well and confirmed his brother’s confidence in Türkeş in a lecture he gave to the nationalist youth in 1970.⁴²⁹ Again, representing the Turkist stream, until his articles were suspended by Türkeş in the late 70s, Nejdet Sevinç was highly popular among nationalist youth thanks to his straightforward style and satirical language.⁴³⁰ It also appears that young nationalists closely watched the developments concerning the Turkic communities living outside Turkey, especially under the socialist regimes. In fact there were certain points at which the Turkist school and conservative nationalism converged with each other. For instance, conservative nationalists held that Turkish nationalism should subscribe to the idea of *nizam-ı alem* (world order), which implies bringing order to the world⁴³¹ and in many aspects overlapped with the idea of *kızıl elma* (red apple), which implies “world

⁴²⁶ As will be discussed in the next chapter, “*Başbuğ*” was first used at the 1967 congress.

⁴²⁷ See Metin Turhan, *Ülkü Ocakları* and Turhan Feyizoğlu, *Fırtınalı Yıllarda*.

⁴²⁸ Mustafa Çalık, *MHP Hareketinin Kaynakları*, pp. 117-127.

⁴²⁹ Hakkı Öznur, *Ülkücü Hareket*, Vol II, pp. 218-219.

⁴³⁰ See Mustafa Çalık, *MHP Hareketinin Kaynakları*, p. 127.

⁴³¹ For a discussion on the manipulation of this idea see footnote 29.

hegemony”’.⁴³² We do not see an in-depth analysis of these terms in the nationalist publications; neither Turkists nor conservative nationalists dealt with the historical evolution of each term in political and social context. Rather, this teleological understanding of history was instrumental for the nationalists in ascribing themselves a specific role in the course of Turkish history and justifying their action on the field.⁴³³

A bitter controversy in the nationalist movement was sparked by a physical quarrel between the two groups of young militants in Ankara in May 1973, in which a young nationalist close to the Society of Turkists, controlled by Atsız, was stabbed to death by another nationalist militant.⁴³⁴ Following this event, the estrangement of Turkist groups from the MHP deepened and ended up with a final break between Türkeş and Atsız in 1974. The feud turned irreconcilable after Atsız published a fierce critique of Türkeş in the journal *Ötüken* and denigrated the way nationalism was articulated in the MHP and its being embedded within Islam.⁴³⁵ Türkeş in his later speeches argued that Atsız disapproved of his views about the Kurds⁴³⁶ and when Türkeş was asked about Atsız’s article on the MHP and his ideological impact on the party, he replied that MHP nationalism followed a different line from that of Atsız, whose ideas no longer represented the party.⁴³⁷ In response, all the MHP members who belonged to the Society of Turkists were expelled from the party.⁴³⁸ One year after they parted ways, Atsız passed away, but Türkeş did not attend his funeral. On the other

⁴³² Osman Turan argues that the idea of *kızıl elma* implied Turkish world hegemony in the Ottoman chronicles; he claims that conquering Istanbul was central to this ideal; *Türk Cihan Hakimiyeti*, pp. 264-279. As mentioned in the introduction, in the far-right movements in Europe similar terms such as *Neuordnung* (new order) were invented to express nationalist intentions to extend their political hegemony over larger territories.

⁴³³ It is telling that the nationalists employed *Nizam-ı Alem* very frequently in the late 1970s, at a time when the competition with the MSP was in rise and the Iranian revolution took place.

⁴³⁴ Nihal Atsız, “Ne Yaptığımı Bilmeyenler” (Those who do not know what they do), *Ötüken* 7 (July 1973).

⁴³⁵ Nihal Atsız, “Ne Yaptığımı Bilmeyenler”; Türkeş notes that Atsız had demanded him to make drastic changes in the party ideology that would promote extreme views of Turkism, which were, to him, unacceptable. Hulusi Turgut, *Şahinlerin Dansı*, pp. 409-411.

⁴³⁶ Hulusi Turgut, *Şahinlerin Dansı*, pp. 411-412. In his article Atsız also criticizes Türkeş because of his views on the Jews, saying. “...Turkists do not give concessions and make such laughable remarks as “We are not in enmity with the Jews, since we did not fight against them”. Nihal Atsız, “Ne Yaptığımı Bilmeyenler”.

⁴³⁷ Hulusi Turgut, *Şahinlerin Dansı*, pp. 409-412.

⁴³⁸ Such leading MHP board members as Galip Erdem, Sadi Somuncuoğlu, İbrahim Metin and Acar Okan were expelled. Hakkı Öznur, *Ülkücü Hareket*, Vol VI, pp. 31-33.

hand, the nationalist journals and newspapers published the next day paid their respects to him and stressed his importance to nationalist thought.⁴³⁹

The effect this break-up had on the MHP was the disappearance of Atsız's circle in the party organization for a while. It perhaps fitted the party leadership's political goals in the short term, as the Turkists' political outreach was narrow and could have split the party youth. On the other hand, the ideological forefathers of Turkism such as Ziya Gökalp, Yusuf Akçura, Zeki Velidi Togan, and eventually Nihal Atsız continued to be reference points even for conservative nationalists in the MHP.⁴⁴⁰ It can be argued that their ideological perspective was still instrumental in mobilizing some young militants and provided the MHP with a ground on which the party could set itself against political Islam and the mainstream right.

Young Nationalists, Islam and the Party Discourse

Upon the dissolution of the CHP-MSP coalition in September 1974, the MHP took a leading role in breaking the political stalemate in the country by calling upon all rightist parties to form a nationalist front government.⁴⁴¹ Their success in coalition talks resulted in the formation of a new government formed by the AP, MSP, MHP and GP (*Güven Partisi-Reliance Party*) in which the MHP would hold two ministries.⁴⁴² The first "National Front" (*Milliyetçi Cephe-MC*) government ruled the country from 1975 to 1977. The structural effects on the MHP of spending two years in the government will be a topic of the following chapters; here it will suffice to say that in the 1977 elections the MHP managed to double its

⁴³⁹ Hakkı Öznur, *Ülkücü Hareket*, Vol VI, pp. 37-38; *Hergün*, 12 December 1975.

⁴⁴⁰ Sadi Somuncuoğlu, Interview. Selahattin Sarı (the *ülkü ocakları* leader of the time), Interview in *Genç Arkadaş*, 1 July 1977. The *ülkü ocakları* leadership held a Ziya Gökalp week between 25 and 31 October 1974 to revere his legacy; see Metin Turhan, *Ülkü Ocakları*, p. 361.

⁴⁴¹ *Milliyet*, 20 March 1971; Merdan Yanardağ, *Ülkücü Hareket*, pp. 71-72.

⁴⁴² Alparslan Türkeş became deputy prime minister (with the state intelligence service under his control), and M. Raşit Erkovan became a minister without portfolio. *Milliyet*, 1 April 1975.

votes, winning 6.4% of the poll⁴⁴³. The MHP joined the second MC government also (1977), but this coalition government lasted only for six months and then a CHP government came to power in 1978-1979, followed by a minority AP government until September 1980.⁴⁴⁴ As will be discussed in Chapter 4, bloody clashes between nationalists and socialists escalated across the country with dramatic consequences.

In the period from 1977 to 1980 the number of *ülkü ocakları* grew extensively and concomitant to this, young nationalists became more independent in ideological orientation. During these years the crystallization of the idea of *ülküçü*⁴⁴⁵, which ascribed a distinctive identity to the nationalist activist, was telling; most of the writings on this concept were penned by conservative-nationalist ideologues and some leaders in the *ülkü ocakları*.⁴⁴⁶ Political slogans imploring young nationalists to undertake a holy mission started to appear in nationalist publications and to mark nationalist gatherings. This novel understanding of nationalism was especially prevalent in the journals and papers published by the *ülkü ocakları* leadership; some of the subheadings on these papers were: ‘‘The Victory Belongs to the Carriers of Islam’s Flag’’, ‘‘The MHP: The party which Infidels (*Küffar*) attack’’ and ‘‘Are people ready to die in the way of God?’’.⁴⁴⁷ Some of these slogans were invented during gatherings of young militants or published in their weekly publications such as *Hasret* and *Genç Arkadaş*, without consultation with the party leadership.⁴⁴⁸ In the *ülkü ocakları* congress in 1977 the following slogans were shouted:

‘‘The victory will belong to Islam even if our blood spills (*kanımız aksa da zafer İslamın*), Muslims are one fist against the infidels (*Müslümanlar küfre karşı tek yumruk*), Ours is the age for Islamic revival (*çağımız İslam’da dirilişedir*), We are Turks, Muslims and soldiers of Islam, (*Türkün*

⁴⁴³ See Appendix 1.

⁴⁴⁴ In the second MC government the MHP controlled the Ministry of Customs, Ministry of Trade, and Ministry of Health and Social Service; Alparslan Türkeş became deputy prime minister. See *Milliyet*, 22 July 1977.

⁴⁴⁵ See the Abbreviations and Glossary.

⁴⁴⁶ There were a number of articles articulating this concept in the early 1970s, a more extensive coverage can be found in the *ülkü ocakları* publications after the mid 1970s. For a wider discussion on the concept of *ülküçü* see Chapter 3.

⁴⁴⁷ *Hasret*, 25 August 1977, April 1978.

⁴⁴⁸ Burhan Kavucu, Sadi Somuncuoğlu and Hasan Çağlayan, Interview; see Chapter 3.

Müslümanız İslam'ın Eriyiz), Our fight is against the corrupt order (*Kavgamız Vurguncu Düzenedir*)".⁴⁴⁹

It also appears that the increasing number of deaths made a profound psychological impact on young militants and some nationalist ideologues. Nationalists called their losses “şehit” (martyr), which implies that they were killed for the sake of a sacred cause; this terminology enhanced their conviction that they were in a “holy” struggle against socialist infidels

Actually, this wave of religiosity coming from below was condoned by the party leadership in political speeches and informal meetings with the young activists.⁴⁵⁰ Furthermore, Alparslan Türkeş successfully gave the impression that he was strict in his religious observances and went to Mecca in 1977 to perform the hajj.⁴⁵¹ Young nationalist militants who wanted to visit religious leaders were allowed to do so, and even Türkeş increased his contacts with people of religion, including Sufi sheikhs of the time.⁴⁵² That Islam now acquired pride of place in the MHP discourse in the late 1970s was underlined by the fact that at the 1979 party congress Türkeş named the way of MHP nationalism the “way of God”.⁴⁵³

One of the most influential ideologues who made a significant contribution to the Islamization in the MHP discourse in the late 1970s was Ahmet Arvasi, a retired instructor in the teacher training institutes in Balıkesir, Bursa and İstanbul, who became a MHP board member in 1979.⁴⁵⁴ With his articles published in *Hergün* and speeches he gave in formal and informal meetings, Arvasi had a charismatic influence on young militants.⁴⁵⁵ He made his fame especially after he started writing in *Hergün*, the unofficial newspaper of the party, where he was able to promote the Turkish-Islamic ideal (*Türk-İslam Ülküsü*), a term he

⁴⁴⁹ Hakkı Öznur, *Ülkücü Hareket*, Vol II, p. 437; Burhan Kavuncu, Interview.

⁴⁵⁰ Musa Serdar Çelebi and Hasan Çağlayan, Interviews, see Chapter 3.

⁴⁵¹ *Milliyet*, 10 December 1976.

⁴⁵² Tanil Bora, Kemal Can, *Devlet Ocak Dergah*, pp. 285-288; see Chapter 5.

⁴⁵³ Alparslan Türkeş, *Konuşmalar*, pp. 38-53.

⁴⁵⁴ Serdar Polat, “Seyit Ahmet Arvasi’nin Devlet ve Eğitim Anlayışı (Ahmet Arvasi’s Understanding of State and Education)” (Ma Diss. Van Yüzüncü Yıl Üniversitesi, 2009), p. 8.

⁴⁵⁵ Hakkı Öznur, *Ahmet Arvasi* (Alternatif Yayınları, 2002), pp. 11-24, 171-208.

coined to replace the Turkish-Islamic synthesis, claiming that there is no need for a synthesis between Turkness and Islam as they both complement each other.⁴⁵⁶ In one of his articles he stated:

“...in the current dismay situation the only light of hope and belief comes out of Turkey. A new generation, which draws strength from the belief and morality of Islam, springs from our history and gains more strength everyday. This generation is the gift of God to the Islamic World.”⁴⁵⁷

Likewise, the transfer from the MSP to the MHP of Necip Fazıl Kısakürek before the 1977 elections generated a morale boost among young nationalists.⁴⁵⁸ On the eve of 1977 elections Necip Fazıl released a statement, “The Declaration to the Turkish Nation”, and declared his support to the MHP; in this declaration he stated:

“...Alparslan Türkeş has showed that his only spiritual pillar is, with single word, is Islam... I am with this community, inside of which the fire of Islam burns. The outside of this community is sparkingly Turk, and inside of it rules the outside...”⁴⁵⁹

Lastly the increasing popularity of certain Sufi sheikhs among young nationalists paved the way for the diffusion of themes from Sufism into their nationalist discourse.⁴⁶⁰

The book *Ülkü Yolu* (The *Ülkü* Path), written in 1979 by a youth leader named Namık Kemal Zeybek⁴⁶¹, was representative of the result of this ideological re-configuration in the nationalist movement. In this book the young nationalist was equated with the *alp-eren*⁴⁶² (Sufi warrior), implying qualities of being both a Sufi disciple and a warrior on the battlefield. Sufis from Turkic lands such as Ahmed Yesevi, Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi and Yunus Emre, who lived in the 12th and 13th centuries, were portrayed as the ideal men for a young nationalist to emulate.⁴⁶³ Young nationalists were thus urged to behave in accordance with

⁴⁵⁶ *Hergün*, 2 March 1978.

⁴⁵⁷ Ahmet Arvasi, “Ülkücü’nün Ahlakı (The Morality of Ülkücü)”, *Hergün*, 17 September 1978. For a compilation of his writings in *Hergün* see Ahmet Arvasi, *Türk İslam Ülküsü*, Vol I-II-III (Ankara: Ocak, 1982).

⁴⁵⁸ See Chapter 5.

⁴⁵⁹ *Hergün*, 13-15 May 1977.

⁴⁶⁰ Tanıl Bora and Kemal Can, pp. 285-288; Yılmaz Yalçiner, Interview.

⁴⁶¹ Namık Kemal Zeybek was a frequent visitor of the Naqshbandi Sheikh A.Raşid Erol in Adıyaman and drew *ocak* members to this Sufi order. Abdullah Muradoğlu, Yılmaz Yalçiner, Interview.

⁴⁶² Osman Turan notes that the Turkish warrior *Alp* ascribed a religious connotation and was started to be used as “Alp-eren”. Osman Turan, *Selçuklular Tarihi ve Türk-İslam Medeniyeti (The History of Seljuks and Turkish-Islamic Civilization)* (Ankara: Türk Kültürü Araştırma Vakfı, 1965), p. 318.

⁴⁶³ Namık Kemal Zeybek, *Ülkü Yolu (The Ülkü Path)* (Ankara: Uzman, 1980), pp. 14-24.

higher moral values, represented by elevated personal characteristics drawn from old Turkish-Islamic culture, including *fütüvvet*,⁴⁶⁴ the combination of chivalry, honesty and bravery.⁴⁶⁵

From 1977 onwards young nationalist militants started to assert that they would fight for the restoration of *nizam-ı alem*, the idea which had been rediscovered by conservative nationalist scholars and the MHP ideologues from the depths of Ottoman history and dusted off and was now gaining increasing prominence.⁴⁶⁶ However, to the *ülkü ocakları* leaders, this “order” should be based on the Islamic faith; in the first issue of *Nizam-ı Alem*, the official paper of the *ülkü ocakları* leadership after 1979, it was underlined:

“According to us, the fundamental issue is the issue of belief. Those who are the architects of their belief and who strengthen their belief will taste eternal happiness and reach the goal of life. The order to be established by these people will be the order of Haqq (Right). All ideas and relations established by those who don’t make their decisions according to God’s commands are invalid...the *nizam-ı alem* has been shaken, and this journal starts its journey as a weapon of those who want to restore this *nizam-ı alem* and do not give consent to *küfr* (unbelief)...”⁴⁶⁷

This mission of “global order” was linked with a specific Islamic doctrine; young militants were confident that following their conversion the Turks had rapidly adopted one of Islam’s fundamental teachings, the duty of *ilay-i Kelimetullah* (Exalting the Word of God).⁴⁶⁸ The *ülkü ocakları* leadership claimed to be reviving this idea and did not hesitate to display this vision as the ultimate goal of Turkish nationalism; it was insisted that their struggle against the socialists was no more than a single stage on the way to its realization; in *Birliğe Çağrı* (The Call for Unity), a journal published by the *ülkü ocakları* leadership, it was asserted:

“... our struggle is to help our nation become the carrier of the da‘wa of Islam. The solution of the problems lies in a fundamental change of the system and the submission of all the institutions of

⁴⁶⁴ Futuwwa is “a term invented in about the 8th century, which signifies the qualities of the mature man and characteristics of the fata, literally “young man”; by this term it has become customary to denote various movements and organizations which until the beginning of the modern era were widespread throughout all the urban communities of the Muslim East”. Hammer-Purgstall also points out the connection of this term with Sufim. Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd ed., s.v., “Futuwwa”.

⁴⁶⁵ Namık Kemal Zeybek, *Ülkü Yolu*, pp. 14-24; Ahmed Arvasi, “Nizam-ı Alem” in *Nizam-ı Alem*, 12 October 1979.

⁴⁶⁶ See Footnote 42.

⁴⁶⁷ *Nizam-ı Alem*, 5 October 1979.

⁴⁶⁸ Namık Kemal Zeybek, *Ülkü Yolu*, pp. 12-14, Hasan Çağlayan, Interview.

society to God, but our people are deceived by short-term solutions and Westernist imperialist political alternatives’’.⁴⁶⁹

Despite all the rhetoric, as will be discussed in the following chapters, most of the party leadership displayed a paradoxical attitude to the question of religion in the party discourse. For example, neither *ilay-i Kelimetullah* nor *nizam-ı alem* came to surface in the party program, and neither Türkeş nor the party deputies in the parliament employed these terms much in public. Likewise, the idea that statecraft should draw more on religious beliefs was never mentioned in the party discourse. Notwithstanding their tolerance towards the increasing religiosity of young militants, it can be said that Alparslan Türkeş and some party board members were not very comfortable with the excessive use of religion among young militants in the late 1970s. The journal published by the *ülkü ocakları* leadership entitled *Nizam-ı Alem* was suspended by Türkeş’s order in late 1979 on the grounds that it propagated some ideas concerning religion and nation incompatible with the MHP’s nationalism.⁴⁷⁰ This was one of the rare examples where Türkeş took a serious step to halt the gradual Islamization of MHP discourse in the late 1970s and, more importantly, it revealed that the merger of religion and nationalism was still painful even at a time when the party made the greatest use of it.

IV- Conclusion

To conclude, it can be seen that the makers of the nationalist discourse changed between 1965 and 1980. There was not just one single centre of indoctrination in the nationalist movement. There was a plurality of individuals involved in the formation of nationalist doctrine: members of the party leadership, young nationalists and nationalist ideologues all found ways to promote their own view of nationalism within the movement. In

⁴⁶⁹ *Birliĝe Çağrı*, 5 December 1979.

⁴⁷⁰ Hasan Çağlayan, Burhan Kavuncu and Sadi Somuncuoğlu, Interviews.

other words, the discourse and movement was not molded by a single hand or a few, but fed by a variety of intellectual sources and strains of nationalism that were cultivated into a single political party. Certain themes from Turkish-Islamic history and religion became more visible in the nationalist discourse from 1969 onwards. Whereas the majority of former NUC members left the party as a result of this process, Türkeş was more flexible and at ease with this new political discourse, partly owing to the nature of the democratic competition in the country. In the following chapters the study will seek to make an in-depth analysis of the factors that accompanied this ideological evolution: the organizational transformation of the party and the developments that the MHP had to deal with on the political left and the right.

CHAPTER 3

THE STRUCTURE OF THE NATIONALIST MOVEMENT

This chapter investigates the organizational evolution of the CKMP-MHP from 1965 to 1980. Based on evidence from interviews with the former party representatives and *ülkü ocakları* leaders, and primary sources yet to be explored in scholarship, it aims to analyse the formation of nationalist organizations and demonstrate the tension among the nationalists, which could be attributed to the ideological and strategic divergences. These dynamics within the movement were complicated; on one side there was an apparent commitment to democratic mechanisms, whereas on the other paramilitary forces were in action. The fierce struggle with the socialists and Alparlan Türkeş's leadership tactics were instrumental in keeping these groups together. The slogan of “*lider-doktrin-teşkilat* (leader-doctrine-organization)”, which implied that there was cohesion and unity between the leader, doctrine and organizations, became highly popular in the nationalist organizations; the chapter questions the validity of this hypothesis.

The chapter starts with a discussion of the early years of Türkeş and his friends in the CKMP, followed by an analysis of the foundation of the *ülkü ocakları* and their relations with the party. The next section deals with the expansion of the nationalist organizations and the training and indoctrination of young nationalists. The final part of the chapter looks at the intriguing relationship between the party leadership, namely the leader and the party board, and young militants in the turbulent political atmosphere of the late 1970s. The chapter mainly relies on oral interviews with young militants and the party board members of the time as well as autobiographical accounts. Along with these, nationalist journals and newspapers are focal sources for this chapter.

I- The Nationalist Movement from the Takeover by Türkeş of the CKMP to the Foundation of the MC Government: 1965-1974

This section examines the structure of the nationalist movement from the takeover of the CKMP in 1965 to the MHP's accession to power as part of a coalition government in 1975. Türkeş and his friends took over the CKMP leadership in 1965, but until 1967 the party struggled to find its direction in politics. From 1967 onwards Türkeş and some other members of the party leadership started to underline that the CKMP's priority was to recruit young and educated people. The foundation of the *ülkü ocakları* and *Genç Ülkücüler Teşkilatı* fitted this intention, but the emergence of paramilitary forces in connection with the CKMP was obviously incompatible with the party leadership's emphasis on the commitment to democratic conventions. Between 1968 and 1971 there was a constant effort to sustain uniformity among the nationalist organizations, but there was no systematic coordination among the young nationalists, nationalist ideologues and party leadership. Between 1971 and 1974 the MHP and nationalist organizations scaled down the scope of their activities, mainly as a result of the military intervention in 1971.

The CKMP in the Early Years and the Nationalist Organizations 1965-1969

At the time Türkeş and his friends joined the CKMP, the party had already formed its local branches in most regions of the country; in the October 1965 elections, party candidates ran for seats in forty-eight of the sixty-seven provinces.⁴⁷¹ This network, however, was comparatively restricted and unable to compete effectively with the mainstream parties.

⁴⁷¹ Hakkı Öznur, *Ülkücü Hareket*, Vol I, p. 126-127.

Türkeş and his friends embarked on forging a new and more intensive network among the party branches, and aimed to invite their friends and followers into the party structure.⁴⁷² As they came from backgrounds in the army, they were able to attract young officers and colleagues with whom they had previously worked. In civilian life, their NUC experience had made it possible for them to reach out to the provinces and local power holders who were in a position to help them attain electoral success.⁴⁷³ In the media they had both friends and enemies who were closely following their political activities and pronouncements. As a result, their popularity soared in the media after they joined the CKMP. The very early years in the party, however, proved that these resources had not been converted into real political momentum. The meetings in small venues such as wedding halls or apartments attracted no more than a few dozen people.⁴⁷⁴ İbrahim Metin, for instance, explains that in one of the party meetings, where Taşer was to give a speech, there were only ten people; yet Taşer did not cancel the meeting and gave a speech on nationalism.⁴⁷⁵

The years the Fourteen had spent in the military meant they had spent much of their time on the indoctrination of young officers or colleagues. Furthermore, Türkeş preferred to work with a group of committed followers as he had previously done before the coup.⁴⁷⁶ It seems that it was tolerable for the leadership that the party could not achieve any particular level of electoral success, because they prioritized having a small but indoctrinated group of followers.⁴⁷⁷ That is why, perhaps, Türkeş and his friends were at ease with building a political movement on young people who would believe in them. On the other hand, they

⁴⁷² Numan Esin, Interview.

⁴⁷³ Numan Esin, *Devrim ve Demokrasi*, pp. 240-250.

⁴⁷⁴ Mehmet Doğan, *Alparslan Türkeş, MHP ve Gölgedeki Adam (Alparslan Türkeş, MHP and The Man in the Shadow)* (İstanbul: Ocak Yayınları, 2000), pp. 5-10; Yaşar Okuyan, *O Yıllar (Those Years)* (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2010), p. 31.

⁴⁷⁵ İbrahim Metin, ‘‘Ey Kamil Turan’’

http://eskimeyendostlar.net/?s=yazilar_detay&bolum=1175599634&id=360 (accessed on 31 October 2012).

⁴⁷⁶ See Numan Esin, *Devrim ve Demokrasi*, pp. 211-224.

⁴⁷⁷ In the early years of the new CKMP leadership there was still a considerable suspicion about whether Türkeş and his friends would stick with democratic conventions, mainly because of the ongoing debates on 27 May and their prevailing contacts within the army.

were not clearly agreed on how to steer a group of nationalist youth into politics and what techniques they should apply to train these people.⁴⁷⁸

Certain habits and practices that permeated the party after the Fourteen joined it called to mind various other elements of military culture. In the early years Türkeş continued to capitalize on his image as “the all-powerful colonel of the coup” (İhtilalin Kudretli Albayı).⁴⁷⁹ He was still able to hold authority over his close circle, thanks to being older and having assumed a higher rank in the army. He was referred to as “my colonel” not only by other retired soldiers but also by the party members, which hinted that he preferred to maintain the hierarchy established in the army.⁴⁸⁰ Retired and active military officers of various ranks from the army were frequent visitors of the CKMP.⁴⁸¹ In the 1967 Senate elections, the majority of the party candidates were retired soldiers, most of whom were presumably offered a place in the list either by Türkeş or other members of the Fourteen.⁴⁸² It is clear that Türkeş meant to rely on his former friends in his political endeavors and get them involved in the party. Satirizing this convention, Osman Bölükbaşı, the former CKMP leader, described the party as “filled with sword rattling”.⁴⁸³

It was not only the extensive use of symbols, but also the strict application of discipline that gave the party an image of semi-military organization. The party members were strongly urged to act in a disciplined manner when they gathered in public; in the party congresses and marches, young nationalists dressed in uniform and, lined up in order, paraded

⁴⁷⁸ Numan Esin, one of the Fourteen, clearly stresses the division among the Fourteen over how to start a new political movement. He argues that Türkeş was over-ambitious in recruiting his own followers as soon as possible. This disposition, in the view of Esin, was related to Türkeş’s age, as he was 60 and had no time to wait any longer. See Numan Esin, *Devrim ve Demokrasi*, pp. 250-253.

⁴⁷⁹ It appears that he was still being called “Albayım” (my colonel), though less frequently, until the late 1970s.

⁴⁸⁰ Hakan Akpınar, *Kurtların Kardeşliği* (The Brotherhood of Wolves) (İstanbul: Biharf Yayınları, 2000), p. 25.

⁴⁸¹ Ahmet B.Karabacak, *Üç Hilal’in Hikayesi* (The Story of the Three Crescents) (İstanbul: Bilge Oğuz: 2011), pp. 17-23.

⁴⁸² See Hakkı Öznur, *Ülkücü Hareket*, Vol I, pp. 133-135.

⁴⁸³ Fatih Artvinli, *Siyasete Harcanmış Bir Ömür* (A Life Spent on Politics) (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2007).

along the streets.⁴⁸⁴ Named the ‘‘Nine Lights marches’’ or ‘‘commando marches’’, these demonstrations were organized by the leadership to show that they were training youngsters in a disciplined fashion; in some of these routinized marches, Alparslan Türkeş participated and made speeches to bolster the motivation and morale of the groups, appreciating the discipline and vigor the party youth displayed.⁴⁸⁵ The discipline and austerity illustrated in this structure resonated with traditional codes of practice entrenched among the countryside as well. Paying respect to one's elders, being obedient to one's superiors without question and discipline in communal life were prevalent values in social practice; in a field study conducted in Gümüşhane, a small city in northeast Anatolia where the MHP achieved a major electoral success in the 1977 elections, a high number of interviewees declared that they joined the party or voted for Türkeş because they found him a serious man.⁴⁸⁶ Interviewees added that he had been a ‘‘soldier’’, which implied that he was a man of sobriety, discipline and hierarchy.⁴⁸⁷ It can be argued that this perception drew a lot on the early Republican period during which two former generals, Mustafa Kemal and İsmet İnönü, had ruled the country for more than twenty years. The military men in politics, therefore, continued to be seen as eligible candidates for ruling positions.

Although Türkeş and his friends had already secured the backing of some youngsters with nationalist tendencies, as explained in the previous chapter, neither he nor the other members of the Fourteen had the ideological sophistication to lead educated young people in nationalist thinking. With that in mind, the commando camps first started in 1967-8 were programmed to attract the less educated and to foster physical fitness, which would then provide human resources for the MHP's political strategy of using violence against the

⁴⁸⁴ *Milliyet*, 19 January 1969, 02 September 1969.

⁴⁸⁵ *Milliyet*, 02 September 1969.

⁴⁸⁶ Mustafa Çalık, *MHP Hareketinin Kaynakları*, pp. 130-136.

⁴⁸⁷ Mustafa Çalık, *MHP Hareketinin Kaynakları*, pp. 130-140.

socialists.⁴⁸⁸ The content of education in these camps included physical training and some reading classes.⁴⁸⁹ The party leadership was not happy with the name “commando” attributed to the camps and preferred to use *bozkurt*, for they knew that commando would be seen as an importation from foreign nationalist movements whereas *bozkurt* would ascribe a historical mission to these young people.⁴⁹⁰ The party, however, was not only composed of retired military officers and young nationalists. The party activities were largely dependent upon the individual contributions of a handful of committed nationalists. Kamil Turan, for instance, born into a prestigious family in the city of Şanlıurfa, in the southeast of Turkey, was an intriguing case with his PhD from the University of the Sorbonne in Paris. He was the secretary general of a trade union⁴⁹¹ and helped the party flourish among the workers. Similarly, Kamil Koç, the owner of one of the biggest coach companies at the time, was elected to the party board and made sure to provide his transportation for the benefit of party members and nationalist youth.⁴⁹² This logistical aid was sorely needed, as the party was not in receipt of any state funding⁴⁹³ and without such help was unable to fund the running of its activities.⁴⁹⁴ Mehmet Doğan, the treasurer of the party, noted that they had to sell books and organize fundraisers to collect even a very small amount of money. As a result, they could not

⁴⁸⁸ In cases where commandos became embroiled in physical aggression, Türkeş made statements deploring the aggression, yet at the same time supported the commandos in this physical battle against the communists. Türkeş also added that these young militants would help the party propaganda in the countryside. Alparslan Türkeş in Abdi İpekçi, *Liderler Diyor ki (The Leaders Say:..)* (İstanbul: Ant Yayınları, 1969), pp. 291-312; also see *AP Hükümetinin 1970’de Hazırlattığı MHP Raporu: Ülkücü Komando Kampları (The MHP Report by the AP Government: Ülkücü Commando Camps)* (İstanbul:Aydınlık, 1980).

⁴⁸⁹ See *AP Hükümetinin 1970’de Hazırlattığı MHP Raporu*.

⁴⁹⁰ Dündar Taşer, “Milliyetçi Hareket ve Gençlik (Nationalist Movement and Youth)” in *Devlet*, 28 December 1970.

⁴⁹¹ He worked in Şeker-İş (The union of workers in sugar factories), one of the leading trade unions of the time.

⁴⁹² Mehmet Doğan, *Gölgedeki Adam*, pp. 7-10.

⁴⁹³ A political party had to attain at least %5 of total votes in order to receive official state funding.

⁴⁹⁴ On donations made by locals Türkeş commented: “...we ask for people to give us grain, butter, meat and vegetables. We don’t ask for money; some party sympathizers have given money.” Alparslan Türkeş, *Liderler Diyor ki*, pp. 291-312.

afford to pay high rents and therefore opted to locate the party headquarters in an apartment in Ankara.⁴⁹⁵

Actually the incentive to go along with Türkeş in politics was not compelling enough for many; for those nationalists who prioritized the achievement of government power, alignment with the AP was more promising.⁴⁹⁶ Likewise, those in favor of moderate policies towards the socialists tended to join the AP and some members left the party for the AP.⁴⁹⁷ The rest of those who opted to join the party were, in general, inexperienced in the realm of politics.⁴⁹⁸ In addition to these, the culture of politics in Turkey necessitated the forging of intimate connections with local elites and offering them substantial means of economic prosperity, as the AP successfully did, or was dependent upon the management of patronage relations in the bureaucracy and civil service, as the CHP skillfully practiced.⁴⁹⁹ Yet these two parties were very well organized and consequently left no opening for the CKMP to flourish or achieve a political breakthrough.

Considering these circumstances, as mentioned above, the CKMP leadership was convinced that the priority rested with training young nationalists, and consequently aimed at rising to power in the long term. The military background of Türkeş and his friends along with the fact that the party aimed to grow on ideological premises made this choice more viable. Referring to this intention, Türkeş noted:

“...we are training the doctors, governors and engineers of our future... we do not want to be in government right now, because nationalist militants are not well prepared to rule a country and could easily be manipulated. Look at what happened to the NUC after the 27 May coup. They were driven into the wrong direction because they had no program”.⁵⁰⁰

⁴⁹⁵ Mehmed Doğan, *Gölgedeki Adam*, pp. 10-15.

⁴⁹⁶ See Chapter V.

⁴⁹⁷ *Milliyet*, 05 September 1969, 23 March 1969, 29 March 1969, 16 June 1968.

⁴⁹⁸ Ramiz Ogun, Interview.

⁴⁹⁹ İlkay Sunar, “Populism and Patronage: The Democrat Party and its Legacy in Turkey,” *II Politico* 55 (October-December 1990); Şerif Mardin, “Center-Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics”, *Daedalus*, Vol. 102, No. 1 (1973).

⁵⁰⁰ Alparslan Türkeş, Interview, *Milliyet*, 4 December 1969- 6 December 1969.

He also added that “the social transformation of the country could only be achieved in the long term” and that his party “would be ready to carry out this transformation once nationalists step up to the mark to embrace this mission”.⁵⁰¹ On the other hand, as the party leaned towards radicalism to appeal to the youth, it seems that its image in the rest of society changed as well. The impression one gains from the mainstream media of the time is that the commando camps and the party’s political discourse, which conjured up the image of militarist and authoritarian tendencies, had an intimidating impact upon the electorate, especially on those people who had suffered from the single-party rule and the 27 May regimes.

The years between 1967 and 1969 witnessed the process of integration of several nationalist groups into the CKMP. These were nationalist organizations run by independent groups with different priorities. As discussed in the previous chapter, the Society of Turkists (*Türkçüler Derneği*), was an organization controlled by those people who upheld an ethnic-racist view of Turkish nationalism and the ÜKD was a society founded by a group of educated nationalists; in addition to these, the TMTF (Türkiye Milli Talebe Federasyonu-The National Student Federation of Turkey) was a student association where conservative youth including nationalist groups came together and the KMD (The Society for the Struggle against Communism-*Komünizmle Mücadele Derneği*) was a society preoccupied with pursuing socialist groups in the country.⁵⁰² None of them, however, was involved in party politics or had married their forces with the mainstream parties.

As discussed, five members of the Fourteen resigned from the party in 1967 and 1968, criticizing the change in the party discourse. Following the transfer of power from the resigned members of the Fourteen to Türkeş and Dündar Taşer, the CKMP, then the MHP, became more determined to unite these various nationalist organizations under its leadership.

⁵⁰¹ Alparslan Türkeş, Interview, *Milliyet*, 4 December 1969- 6 December 1969.

⁵⁰² Hakkı Öznur, *Ülkücü Hareket*, Vol II, p. 44, 82, 97, 106, 127; Jacob Landau, *Radical Politics*, p. 203.

Following the elections of 1969, Dündar Taşer called on all nationalist student clubs in the universities to come together and join the *ülkü ocakları*.⁵⁰³ Likewise, he urged nationalist factory workers to form a strong union which would defend their rights in a collective manner.⁵⁰⁴ Türkeş too felt himself more confident in asserting the superiority of the party over other nationalist organizations; for example, he augmented the pressure on the ÜKD to shut itself down and be integrated into the party and compelled its members to become involved in the party's affairs.⁵⁰⁵ In addition to these actions, nationalist deputies in the AP were called back to the “real home of nationalists”, as academicians and intellectuals with a reputation in nationalist circles were encouraged to take their place in the party.⁵⁰⁶

In the meantime, the cult of the leader was in the making and Türkeş was elevated from the leadership of the CKMP to the leadership of all nationalists, being named the *Başbuğ*. As mentioned in the introduction, this innovation was a solid step in fostering the authority of Türkeş and discipline among the nationalists; the party members and young militants would feel a stronger sense of responsibility towards a leader who drew his legitimacy not only from democratic conventions but also from an ancient Turkic tradition. Dündar Taşer was the architect behind this construction; when he was once asked about the possibility of his becoming leader instead of Türkeş, his answer was: “Türkeş is the leader; what he does wrong is better than what I do right”.⁵⁰⁷ As noted, at the 1969 Congress the party changed its name to the Nationalist Movement Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*-MHP), adopting the explicit designation “nationalist” and changing its emblem to the three crescents. From 1969 onwards, the MHP gradually solidified its position of being the most legitimate choice for the

⁵⁰³ *Devlet*, 15 December 1969; Dündar Taşer, *Mesele*, pp. 232-240

⁵⁰⁴ Salih Dilek, founder of the first *Ülkücü* Workers Society, <www.eskimeyendostlar.com> (accessed 10-03-2011)

⁵⁰⁵ Hakkı Öznur, *Ülkücü Hareket*, Vol II, pp. 130-131, Nevzat Kösoğlu, *Hatıralar*, p. 256.

⁵⁰⁶ *Devlet*, 21 September 1970; it seems that after the joining of Osman Turan and O.Yüksel Serdengeçti, two leading deputies from the conservative wing in the AP, to the CKMP-MHP the party leadership's expectation increased. See Chapter V.

⁵⁰⁷ Galip Erdem, “Dündar Taşer'in *Ülkücülüğü*”, *Bozkurt* 21, June 1974; Ahmet Er, *Hatıralarım*, pp. 227-228.

political representation of nationalism, which in time led to the diminution of the influence of other nationalist groups in civil society and other parties.

It seems that in these years Taşer and Türkeş were keen to spread nationalist organizations across the country, and then bring these organizations under the control and authority of Türkeş. On the other hand, they had to handle the widening network at the grassroots level. The *ülkü ocakları* and the CKMP youth organization had not been given a clear shape prior to 1969. The first attempt to open an *ülkü ocağı* in Ankara in 1966, for instance, was postponed.⁵⁰⁸ Overall, the scope of activities was confined to unsystematic training seminars and semi-independent commando camps in Anatolia. The early origin of the *ülkü ocakları* is not very clear, but from the autobiographical accounts it can be inferred that the party leadership encouraged young students to open such clubs.⁵⁰⁹ From 1968 onwards the *ülkü ocakları* branches started to open and spread across universities very quickly; in some universities, such as Ankara and İstanbul, there were more than one *ülkü ocağı*, as each faculty formed its own organization with different students, whereas in certain others there was no nationalist student organization. The declaration of the first *ülkü ocağı*, founded in 1967 in Ankara University, read:

“Today our country is struggling with disorder and irresponsibility; some people are willing to tackle that question, but any suggestion or action without understanding the underlying causes of this chaotic situation is doomed to fail”.⁵¹⁰

As will be discussed in Chapter 4, socialist groups had started to organize in the universities from the mid-1960s, and held a tight grip on campuses. The leader who was most sensitive to the “socialist threat” was Türkeş, who quickly adjusted his political discourse to

⁵⁰⁸ Hakkı Öznur, *Ülkücü Hareket*, Vol. II, p. 224.

⁵⁰⁹ Sadi Somuncuoğlu, “40 Yıl Sonra” (After Forty Years) in *Yeniçağ*, 16 June 2012; Aytekin Yıldırım (The First Leader of the ÜOB), “Ağabey Dündar Taşer” (Brother Dündar Taşer), http://eskimeyendostlar.net/?s=yazilar_detay&bolum=1175599634&id=1960 (accessed on 31 October 2012); also see Dündar Soylu (Yılmaz Yalçınler), *Komando Sorunu (The Commandos Question)* (Ankara: Dağarcık, 1975).

⁵¹⁰ “Ankara Ülkü Ocağı Kuruluş Bildirgesi” (The Founding Declaration of Ankara University Ülkü Ocağı) in Hakkı Öznur, *Ülkücü Hareket*, Vol II, pp. 224-240.

center on the problems of university youth. Unlike his political counterparts, he paid several visits to university faculties, where he gave lectures on nationalism and other political issues of the day.⁵¹¹ Türkeş conveyed a simple but straightforward message: university students had to wake up and stand against socialism, imported from abroad as an alien ideology aiming to subvert Turkish national integrity, and take their place in the ranks of the nationalist movement.⁵¹² This easy framework was very helpful to those students who encountered socialists in student clubs but were not fully convinced by their arguments; as the *ülkü ocakları* emerged as the only non-socialist student bodies on the campuses, students who held conservative values started to join these societies.⁵¹³

The debates with the socialists in university canteens or even in the media, which involved both nationalist and socialist students, were intellectually stimulating in the early days. Students were publishing pamphlets and journals, and holding seminars, conferences and debates that brought into existence a pool of differing opinions; they were encouraged to exchange their views on various issues.⁵¹⁴ This atmosphere of intellectual competition, nevertheless, did not last long; the use of physical aggression by student activists in the universities gave rise to mutual hatred, which started to overwhelm each side from 1969 onwards.⁵¹⁵

The idea of nationalism was being activated through young university students, but it was proving hard to overcome the difficulties surrounding mobilizing those living in traditional neighborhoods. Since there were only a few cities with universities in the late 1960s in Turkey, the Young *Ülkücüler* Organization (*Genç Ülkücüler Teşkilatı* or GÜT) was

⁵¹¹ For example, Türkeş gave a speech at ODTÜ in 1969. See *Devlet* 1, April, 1969; Musa Serdar Çelebi says that he attended a speech of Türkeş and was deeply impressed with his knowledge of the university conflicts. Çelebi adds that Türkeş gave convincing explanations for the questions that had been troubling his mind for a while, which sparked in him an interest to know more about nationalist ideology. Musa Serdar Çelebi, Interview

⁵¹² Alparslan Türkeş's speech in the Nine Lights march held in Ankara in 1969, Metin Turhan, *Ülkü Ocakları*, p. 48.

⁵¹³ Musa Serdar Çelebi and Ahmet Çakar, Interviews; Turan Güven, *İnsan Gelecekte Yaşar*, pp. 215-221, 280-292; see Chapter 4.

⁵¹⁴ Ramiz Ongun and Sadi Somuncuoğlu, Interviews; *STMA*, pp. 2080-85, 2095-2097.

⁵¹⁵ See Chapter 4.

founded, with the advice of Dündar Taşer, by a group of young nationalists in 1968-9 to promote this movement across the provinces.⁵¹⁶ Mostly high school students were to be recruited to the movement, and within two years the number of GÜT branches far surpassed the number of *ülkü ocakları*, spreading particularly into conservative regions of central and eastern Anatolia.⁵¹⁷ In provincial towns there were neither open debates between competing ideologies nor an ongoing series of university demonstrations and boycotts. Instead, the GÜT organized various activities ranging from theater nights to public conferences, where a distinctive form of nationalist culture was propagated. It could be argued that coming to terms with local cultural values,⁵¹⁸ nationalist discourse was stripped of its secular attributions; a declaration released by the GÜT branch in Turgutlu, a west Anatolian town, read:

“Today there is a generation [meaning socialist students] that does not know Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi, but reads Christian philosophy. Against this, there is a flourishing generation that adheres to its religion, customs, traditions and history”⁵¹⁹

In this particular example, it can be seen that young nationalists employed a stark contrast between the Sufi mystic Celaleddin Rumi (d.1273) and Christian philosophy, displaying themselves as defenders of local tradition, intertwined with Islamic values, against a system of values drawn from Christianity and philosophy. It is obvious that Celaleddin Rumi is condired to be a foremost representative of local values whereas Western (philisohphy) is branded as Christian (infidel). As will be discussed in Chapter 5, the increasing visibility of certain practices that were considered to be the intrusion of an alien culture provoked a backlash in these provincial areas and these young nationalists gradually became more critical of socio-cultural westernization.

The *ülkü ocakları* and the GÜT were not officially linked to the party, but kept under the loose control of Taşer and Türkeş.⁵²⁰ Furthermore, alongside the *ülkü ocakları* and the

⁵¹⁶ Salih Dilek, “Genç Ülkücüler Teskilat’ının Kuruluşu” in http://www.eskimeyendostlar.net/?s=yazilar_detay&bolum=1182852967&id=124(accessed on 10 May 2012)

⁵¹⁷ Hakkı Öznur, *Ülkücü Hareket*, Vol II, pp. 206-224.

⁵¹⁸ Other activities such as *Yayla Şenlikleri* (festivals celebrated in high plateaus during the summer) and theatre nights in which historical plays were featured were well suited for this purpose.

⁵¹⁹ Metin Turhan, *Ülkü Ocakları*, p. 150.

GÜT, the CKMP had a youth branch which mainly existed for ceremonial and legal purposes. It could be said that this organization had a symbolic power over and above the GÜT and the *ülkü ocakları*, and its leader was at the top of the hierarchy of all these organizations.⁵²¹ Yet the contact between young nationalists in the *ülkü ocakları* and the party leadership was limited and somewhat nebulous; the first leader of the party youth organization in 1965 was a young university student, Namık Kemal Zeybek, who worked alongside three of Türkeş's friends from the Fourteen, Muzaffer Özdağ, Numan Esin and Rıfat Baykal.⁵²² Yet Sadi Somuncuoğlu notes that when he was appointed to the head of the party youth branch in 1968 there were only a handful of people working for it.⁵²³ Having a personal meeting with Türkeş was a rare experience enjoyed by only some *ülkü ocakları* leaders, and other members of the party board were said to be even more elusive. For instance, when Ramiz Ongun visited the CKMP party headquarters in 1968, two years before he became the ÜOB president (The Union of Ülkü Ocakları-*Ülkü Ocakları Birliği*), it was quite a novel experience for him to observe how the party conducted its business and to meet party representatives.⁵²⁴ Dündar Taşer was an exception to this; he was keen to build an intimate relationship with young nationalists, attending their meetings and participating in their activities.⁵²⁵

This relatively complicated nature of the organization of the nationalist movement reveals that, even if nationalist associations/groupings swiftly spread across the country, the party was experiencing difficulty in exerting direct control over them. For instance, the party leadership had to tackle the question of violence perpetrated by nationalist militants; Türkeş was often asked to comment on nationalist militants' physical violence. Replying to these

⁵²⁰ They and other party board members were frequent speakers in *ocak* and *GÜT* seminars. For some of these speeches delivered by Türkeş and Taşer see Metin Turhan, *Ülkü Ocakları*, pp. 19, 48-49, 121-123, 167.

⁵²¹ Ahmet Çakar, Interview, the party youth organization's relationship with the *ülkü ocakları* was complicated, depending on time and place.

⁵²² Sadi Somuncuoğlu, Interview; also see Ahmet Karabacak, *Üç Hilal'in Hikayesi*, pp. 23, 223.

⁵²³ Sadi Somuncuoğlu, Interview.

⁵²⁴ Ramiz Ongun, Interview.

⁵²⁵ This point was raised by most of the interviewees; also see Nevzat Kösoğlu, *Hatıralar*, pp. 170-172.

questions he tended to put the blame on provocateurs who “purposefully infiltrated the organization and manipulated young nationalists”, but at the same time he justified the use of violence against the communists.⁵²⁶

A similar problem was tangible in the realm of ideology; actually young nationalists embraced a nationalist-social-minded (*milliyetçi-toplumcu*) discourse in the late 1960s and early 1970s, which would imply that they were neither socialist nor capitalist, but represented a third way.⁵²⁷ The foundational declaration of the ODTÜ *ülkü ocağı* read:

“Some people are looking for the solution in America, defending the capitalism that has ruined under-developed countries; some others advocate a regime that makes fun of our national values and history, and which our nation should oppose. The fact that young people have got organized in all universities and faculties is a very natural reaction to the situation our fatherland is in...”⁵²⁸

On the other hand, since the party did not have an official journal or newspaper, small pamphlets and leaflets functioned as basic sources of propaganda. Thousands of pamphlets, either drawing attention to student conflicts or criticizing government policies, were circulated.⁵²⁹ These leaflets were not subject to editorial review by the party leadership and underscored the different contours of nationalist ideology.⁵³⁰

To instill ideological uniformity among the nationalist organizations, mass training sessions were launched by the party youth organization in 1968.⁵³¹ It was not a sophisticated program, but designed for the formation of a body of disciplined young militants. Through

⁵²⁶ Alparslan Türkeş, *Liderler Diyor ki*, pp. 291-312; he added: “It is not true that our young people are aggressive....our national doctrine is based on human love and the love of Turkishness... Our young people confronted them only to defend the existence of the great Turkish nation to which they have committed themselves. Those communists, being slaves to the most brutal imperialism history has ever seen, were shocked and confused when they saw young people who were nationalistic and filled with the great spirit of Turkishness. The Grey Wolves have never agitated or offended anyone; they are in compliance with the laws and attached to national moral values. It is true that some communists were beaten and some rootless ideas were suppressed by a set of superior ideas. But who were beaten? ...Those who wanted the Turkish nation to be enslaved, who blasphemed against the God of the Turk and scorned Turkish history.”

⁵²⁷ For nationalist-social-minded discourse see Chapter 2.

⁵²⁸ Metin Turhan, *Ülkü Ocakları*, p. 5.

⁵²⁹ For various examples of these declarations see Metin Turhan, *Ülkü Ocakları*; Turhan Feyizoğlu, *Fırtınalı Yıllarda*

⁵³⁰ Sadi Somuncuoğlu notes that the party youth organization was split between conservative nationalists, Turkists and “others”. Sadi Somuncuoğlu, Interview.

⁵³¹ Sadi Somuncuoğlu, Interview.

these sessions, nationalist militants were taught to think and act collectively.⁵³² We have only limited information on the content of these training sessions, but from some of the interviewees it can be testified that Dündar Taşer, Kamil Turan and Sadi Somuncuoğlu, who were known to hold conservative nationalist views, were involved in these training sessions.⁵³³ Türkeş participated in some of them, and it is likely that he was content with what was being taught in the program.⁵³⁴ Despite the fact that ideological diversity existed right across the nationalist movement at this period, these indoctrination sessions fostered a conservative form of nationalism, especially among the young nationalists, and eased the way for the shift to religious conservative nationalism in the 1969 congress.

Young Nationalists in Action and Post-1971 Recovery: 1969-1974

The period 1969-1971 can be seen as the first experiment with a political nationalist movement which relied on the energy of young people. In the 1969 elections the MHP won only one seat in parliament, which went to Alparslan Türkeş. This poor result probably led the leadership to keep its center of attention on recruiting new militants and organizing university activities rather than ploughing its resources into a political landscape in which they lagged far behind the two mainstream parties. Türkeş and Taşer continued to tour universities and towns where nationalist youth were present; they worked hard to promote the nationalist cause and make students believe that they stood at the forefront of a very crucial struggle to guard their nation.⁵³⁵ Following the 1969 congress, the party applied some new measures to

⁵³² For a comparative look at the patterns of disciplining young people in Germany in the Nazi period see Michael Kater, *Hitler Youth* (London: Harvard University Press, 2004), pp. 15-28.

⁵³³ Sadi Somuncuoğlu, Interview; İbrahim Metin, “Ey Kamil Turan”

http://eskimeyendostlar.net/?s=yazilar_detay&bolum=1175599634&id=360 (accessed on 16 January 2012).

⁵³⁴ Türkeş had been involved in training conferences since the early days of his takeover of the CKMP. Dündar Soylu (Yılmaz Yalçınar), *Komando Sorunu (The Problem of the Commandos)* (Ankara: Dağarcık, 1975), p. 12.

⁵³⁵ Musa Serdar Çelebi and Ahmet Çakar, Interviews. Also see Hakkı Öznur, *Ülkücü Hareket*, pp. 146, 220, 224.

tighten its control over the youth organizations; the first step was to call all nationalist youth to gather within the *ülkü ocakları*, as there were still some independent organizations like the MTTB (Milli Türk Talebe Birliği-National Turkish Student Union) and TMTF (Türkiye Milli Talebe Federasyonu- *National Federation of Students in Turkey*).⁵³⁶ With the same aim, the *ülkü ocakları* in the universities were linked with the *ülkü ocakları* branches in the cities, which were subsumed into the Union of *Ülkü Ocakları (Ülkü Ocakları Birliği-ÜOB)*.⁵³⁷

The president of the ÜOB in 1970-71 was İbrahim Doğan, but shortly after his election he was arrested for a crime he had committed during the university clashes.⁵³⁸ This marked the fact that the *ülkü ocakları* had started to get involved in the violence which had, as will be discussed in the next chapter, started to plague the universities. Actually, it can be said that nationalist and socialist militants had some common ground in the realm of ideas. For example, they both spoke out strongly against the American presence in the Turkish economy and foreign policy.⁵³⁹ Both groups complained about the technological and financial dependence on America. As will be discussed in the next chapter, however, this ideological proximity on certain issues was not enough to bridge the gulf between the two groups after they started to engage in physical confrontations. One of the fiercest conflicts took place on the visit of the American Sixth Fleet to İstanbul on 16 February 1969; a fight broke out when nationalists, including groups such as the MTTB, attacked the leftist students who were protesting against the Americans.⁵⁴⁰ More importantly, the death of three nationalist students in clashes in 1970 was a warning to the party leadership and nationalist youth that their lives were at stake and this war could become more destructive than they had envisioned;

⁵³⁶ *Devlet*, 15 December 1969.

⁵³⁷ Hakkı Öznur, *Ülkücü Hareket*, pp. 224-225.

⁵³⁸ *Milliyet*, 15 April 1970.

⁵³⁹ Metin Turhan, *Ülkü Ocakları*, p. 5.

⁵⁴⁰ *Milliyet*, 17 February 1969.

nationalist organizations were in a state of alarm, as similar incidents in the future were highly probable.⁵⁴¹

Although the physical violence gradually overwhelmed “the war of ideas”, some nationalist thinkers kept working on the education of nationalist militants; the *Töre* and *Ocak* journals, run by these people, made regular contributions to nationalist theory in nationalist publications while seminars in Kübitem continued.⁵⁴² It seems that these educated nationalists and some party board members felt dissatisfied with the Nine Lights as an ideological doctrine that would enable them to compete with the socialists and train eligible nationalists for the imagined nationalist government of the future.⁵⁴³ Furthermore, some of them held the view that young people should withdraw from violence before it became the key element of the movement.⁵⁴⁴ It could, therefore, be said that there was a lack of congruence in views concerning the strategy of nationalist politics between the Türkeş-Taşer clique, on the one hand, and nationalist thinkers and some other members of the party board, on the other.

The majority of the youth element and those board members who felt the greatest loyalty to Türkeş would follow Türkeş and Taşer, ignoring the others, whose sphere of influence was confined to a small number of university students and keen readers of nationalist journals.⁵⁴⁵ According to Taşer and Türkeş, the nationalist movement had no time to waste in the face of the socialist threat; therefore they had to recruit as many people as possible and get on with action.⁵⁴⁶ As a result of this tendency, new nationalist organizations continued to be founded; such organizations as the ÜİD (*Ülkücü İşçiler Derneği-Ülkücü Workers' Association*) and *Ülkü-Sen* (*Ülkücü Teachers' Union*) were established in 1970 and

⁵⁴¹ *Devlet*, 30 November 1970.

⁵⁴² Sadi Somuncuoğlu, Interview; Osman Çakır “‘Adı Devlet Olsun’” (Let its name be State) http://www.eskimeyendostlar.net/?s=yazilar_detay&bolum=1175599634&id=1936&pg=1. (Accessed 16 January 2013).

⁵⁴³ Ahmet Er, *Hatıralarım*, pp. 223-230; Taha Akyol, Interview.

⁵⁴⁴ Ahmet Er, *Hatıralarım*, pp. 223-230; Nevzat Kösoğlu, *Hatıralar*, pp. 230-231; Taha Akyol, Interview.

⁵⁴⁵ Nevzat Kösoğlu, *Hatıralar*, pp. 170-172, 259-260.

⁵⁴⁶ Nevzat Kösoğlu, *Hatıralar*, pp. 170-172, 219-226.

1971 to draw in people from other segments of society such as the working class, the civil service and the media.⁵⁴⁷

Meanwhile, in the early 1970s the socialist student movement reached its peak and the frequency of sensational operations such as bank robbery and abduction of Western diplomats in Turkey intensified.⁵⁴⁸ Dündar Taşer and Alparslan Türkeş were worried about the growing possibility of a coup led by the strengthening leftist faction in the army, and as will be discussed in the following chapter in detail; they gave the message that the nationalist militants were ready to help the state to halt the socialists. When the military high command delivered the 12 March memorandum, the party leadership and the nationalist organizations applauded the intervention and called for the immediate suppression of all socialist organizations.⁵⁴⁹ Nevertheless, the *ülkü ocakları* and GÜT were shut down by the martial administration to the bitter disappointment of the nationalists.⁵⁵⁰

In the three years following the 1971 coup and the suspension of the *ülkü ocakları*, the MHP and its youth organization underwent a period of recovery. The party was almost invisible in formal politics; the only deputy from the party was Alparslan Türkeş and he only appeared in the media very rarely. The activities of young nationalists were scaled down after the socialists were largely suppressed by the new regime.⁵⁵¹ A new organization, *Türk Ülkücüler Teşkilatı* (The Organization of Turkish *Ülkücüler*), was founded in 1972, having revived the networks already established during the pre-1971 period. A year later, the *ülkü ocakları* started to operate again under the title of *Ülkü Ocakları Derneği* (The Association of *Ülkü Ocakları*-ÜOD).⁵⁵² On the other hand, the death of Dündar Taşer in 1972 left Türkeş

⁵⁴⁷ Hakkı Öznur, *Ülkücü Hareket*, Vol II, Appendix Section.

⁵⁴⁸ See Chapter 4.

⁵⁴⁹ Devlet, 22 March 1971; Ziya Nur Aksun, *Dündar Taşer'in Büyük Türkiye'si*, pp. 208-214.

⁵⁵⁰ Devlet, 20 March 1972.

⁵⁵¹ Hakkı Öznur, *Ülkücü Hareket*, Vol. II, pp. 315-330.

⁵⁵² Hakkı Öznur, *Ülkücü Hareket*, Vol II, p. 346.

more isolated in party affairs and he was left as the only person in the party leadership able to exercise authority over the young militants.

The two congresses held in 1971 and 1973 gave a new shape to the party board; Türkeş invited some more of the ÜKD members to take part in the party administration.⁵⁵³ It seems he was quite careful in constructing a board profile he would like to work with, and involving people from diverse backgrounds. This would probably help him not to be exposed to strong pressure from a sub-group on the board, so that he could exercise his authority with greater ease. The 1973 elections would be the third important test for the party and expectations among the nationalists was high.⁵⁵⁴ The party, on the other hand, was still not able to appear strong in the whole country; the leadership had to ask their friends to fill the MHP lists in particular provinces.⁵⁵⁵

The election results brought a disappointment, with only three seats for the MHP, and the party's claim to be a mass political movement was undermined once again.⁵⁵⁶ Nevzat Kösoğlu, a newly elected board member at the time, explained the mood in the party as follows: “We were all depressed, our expectations were ruined and we were utterly disappointed”.⁵⁵⁷ The only person who was trying to put some fresh hope into the party members was Türkeş, who seemed not to be concerned with the results.⁵⁵⁸ Upon the foundation of the CHP-MSP government, the struggle with the socialists started to escalate again; in late 1974 the party youth organization called a youth congress, a meeting to spark a new beginning for the re-organization of the *ülkü ocakları* and coordination of young

⁵⁵³ Hakkı Öznur, *Ülkücü Hareket*, Vol I, pp. 270-296; *Devlet* 17 May 1971.

⁵⁵⁴ Nevzat Kösoğlu, *Hatıralar*, p. 226.

⁵⁵⁵ Nevzat Kösoğlu, *Hatıralar*, p. 226.

⁵⁵⁶ The MSP got 48 seats and the Democratic Party won 45 seats in the parliament. See Appendix 2

⁵⁵⁷ Nevzat Kösoğlu, *Hatıralar*, p. 226.

⁵⁵⁸ Nevzat Kösoğlu notes that Türkeş kept saying “...we did our best, we have to carry on”. Nevzat Kösoğlu, *Hatıralar*, p. 226.

militants. In this congress Türkeş called upon the nationalist youth to take the responsibility for defending the state and nation against the reviving socialists.⁵⁵⁹

“Our congress takes place in a chaotic period for our Turkish state; the Turkish genius, which taught the rest of the world how to rule the political order, is under the attack of alien and divisive ideologies. However, I have a very strong belief that you nationalist Turkish youth, who represent the heroic spirit of the Turkish nation, have the power and commitment to save our state from this turbulence and carry it into highness and peace...”⁵⁶⁰

In brief, the poor electoral performance in the 1969 elections showed that the CKMP-MHP had not been able to make any progress in electoral terms despite all their hard work between 1965 and 1969. As a consolation, the unification of various nationalist organizations, if not outstanding in size and impact, was successfully under way. On the other hand, the difficulty of configuring a political movement initiated by a group of retired soldiers but gradually becoming dependent upon the firepower of young militants was a serious question. Moreover, there was a lack of planning in the training of young militants and their integration with the party, whilst the Türkeş-Taşer clique solidified their authority over these young nationalists. Lastly, political developments in the aftermath of the 12 March intervention showed that ideologically driven political and civil organizations still had a considerable potential. Carrying the experience of the post-coup situation into the 1970s, the scope of nationalist organizations started to match the scope of socialist organizations, which had been seriously crippled during the martial law administration.

II- The Nationalist Movement in the Ascendancy: 1975-1980

The years between 1975 and 1980 stand out as years of chaos in Turkish political history. The nationalist movement achieved a political success with the formation of the

⁵⁵⁹ *Devlet*, 2 December 1974-9 December 1974.

⁵⁶⁰ *Devlet*, 2 December 1974.

Nationalist Front (*Milliyetçi Cephe* - MC) government in 1975, and the upward trend in the party's votes in the 1977 elections signaled a promising political prospect. On the other hand, the nationalist organizations and the *ülkü ocakları* grew faster than before, resulting in a deterioration in the coordination among them. The political and social visions of different groups within the movement multiplied, and the MHP itself struggled to find its way in the political turmoil and violence undermining social and economic stability in the country. The following section looks at the nexus between the party, leader and organization in the years leading to 1980.

The Spread of *Ülkü Ocakları*

The nationalist students of the pre-1971 period had graduated from university and were prepared to start on a career. Their appointments inevitably required activating patronage relations, which could easily be forged during the MC government. As the high ranks of the bureaucracy and security forces were prone to be filled by government nominees, high civil service positions in certain ministries such as the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of the Interior were swiftly filled with nationalist militants.⁵⁶¹ Despite the fact that the MHP held only two ministerial positions,⁵⁶² it was no longer difficult for the nationalists to learn which state department would announce available positions for new appointments. Moreover, since the MHP had by far the largest and most organized number of available people compared to its coalition partners, the other parties usually let the nationalist militants fill the positions under their administration.⁵⁶³

⁵⁶¹ For a list of appointments and the nationalists' network in the bureaucracy see *MHP ve Ülkücü Kuruluşlar Davası İddianamesi (Prosecutor's Statement: The MHP and Ülkücü Organizations Trial)*, pp. 217-255; 313-330; also see Chapter 4.

⁵⁶² See Footnote 420.

⁵⁶³ For instance, the nationalist militants gained the upper hand in the Ministry of Education and changed the rules and regulations in the university entrance procedures in favor of nationalist students. For a more detailed

In universities, teaching assistant or lecturer positions were highly popular among the nationalists, encouraged by their professors, either nationalist or simply anti-socialist, who preferred them to socialist students.⁵⁶⁴ To organize young nationalist scholars, the *Ülkücü Asistanlar Derneği*⁵⁶⁵ was founded in 1974. Apart from university posts, *ülküçüler* were keen to fill teaching positions in high schools, where the indoctrination of the next generation would start. To foster connections among nationalist teachers, the *Ülkücü Öğretmenler Birliği* (Ülkü-Bir, *Society of Ülkücü Teachers*) was established in 1975.⁵⁶⁶

It is clear that the recruitment of new young nationalists was made easier with the increasing number of nationalist civil servants and teachers in Anatolian towns and villages, especially during the first MC government. In a town or a village, a schoolteacher enjoyed high prestige and authority not only among students but also in the local community.⁵⁶⁷ He/she was in a position to dictate a reading list to students through which they would become familiar with nationalist ideas; and more significantly, these teachers, who could be a role model for a student, encouraged those students interested in what they preached to visit *ocak* branches.⁵⁶⁸ With the intensification of ideological antagonisms across the country after 1975, the number of *ülkü ocakları* branches topped more than one thousand in 1976 and probably reached more than one thousand two hundred in 1980.⁵⁶⁹ Unlike the ÜOB before 1971, the ÜOD was not confined to university cities and students; its sphere of activity spread into small towns, villages and high schools, where the GÜT (closed down in 1971) had earlier

discussion see Chapter 4. Mustafa Verkaya and Ahmet Çakar, Interview; also see *MHP İddianamesi*, pp. 217-255; 313-330.

⁵⁶⁴ Musa Serdar Çelebi, Interview; Turan Güven, *İnsan Gelecekte Yaşar*, pp. 415-416.

⁵⁶⁵ “*Asistan*” is a salaried position in Turkish universities, available to a young student in the course of his/her MA or PhD research, who is expected to assist professors in teaching and other administrative affairs. S/he is very likely to get a teaching position subsequently in the faculty s/he has served in this way.

⁵⁶⁶ Hakkı Öznur, *Ülkücü Hareket*, Vol II, pp. 613-614.

⁵⁶⁷ Abdullah Muradoğlu, Interview.

⁵⁶⁸ Abdullah Muradoğlu, Interview; Merdan Yanardağ, *Ülkücü Hareket*, pp. 317-318.

⁵⁶⁹ *Hergün*, 26 May 1977 and 1 March 1978; Ali Batman, the ÜOB leader in 1976, said “...our number will soon reach 1000; in our *ocaklar* we have trained around 700,000 young people. We will start a new training program soon, a comprehensive program”, Ali Batman, *Devlet*, 1 March 1976.

had a strong presence; in other words the two kinds of youth organizations were effectively merged.⁵⁷⁰

Each *ocak* had a representative board, but no official document was required to be an active participant in its events and activities. An *ülkü ocağı* was run by a leader called *reis* (chief), who would represent the authority of the *Başbuğ*, and held the ultimate power. He would not only be in charge of conducting activities, but he would also be held responsible for all violent confrontations taking place in his region.⁵⁷¹ Although the individual orientations of *ocak* leaders differed, what was common to all was their power to enforce authority and hierarchy in the structure. The order of the *reis* had to be obeyed and he was responsible to his superior only, who would be the *reis* of the whole city or the ÜOD leadership in Ankara.⁵⁷² The ÜOD leadership (board) in Ankara was composed of roughly eight to ten members, elected by the representatives of the *ocak* branches in the *ülkü ocakları* congress convened each year; this members of this leadership would serve for a year and be subject to reelection at the annual congress.⁵⁷³ The UOD leadership held regular board meetings, released publications to be sent to the *ocak branches* and had direct access to Türkeş.⁵⁷⁴ From the available evidence it appears that its relationship with the *ocak* branches was complicated; the ÜOD leadership were not responsible for appointing a *reis* for each *ocak* branch, but had a right to intervene in the affairs of any branch.⁵⁷⁵ In the end of his one-year term in the presidency, the ÜOD leader would leave his position to one of his friends and in choosing a new leader Türkeş would approve the candidate nominated by the outgoing leader.⁵⁷⁶ Upon leaving, the former ÜOD leader was expected to join Türkeş's close circle and assist him in

⁵⁷⁰ Hakkı Öznur, *Ülkücü Hareket*, Vol II, pp. 346-347.

⁵⁷¹ Mustafa Verkaya, Interview.

⁵⁷² Mustafa Verkaya, Interview.

⁵⁷³ See *Hergün*, 15 January 1976, 1-2 August 1977, 19 March 1979

⁵⁷⁴ Burhan Kavuncu and Hasan Çağlayan; Interviews.

⁵⁷⁵ Abdullah Muradoğlu, Interview.

⁵⁷⁶ Hasan Çağlayan, Interview.

the movement as an advisor in coordinating young militants.⁵⁷⁷

The profile of the *ocak* members and their modus operandi are difficult to analyze in depth because of the lack of evidence. Nationalist militants could be broadly divided into those who would go for action and those who would prioritize indoctrination and education, which would depend on the *reis*'s vision and the intensity of local tensions. Each *ocak* was supposed to be subject to strict supervision by the ÜOD leadership in Ankara, but the material and human resources of that body were not large enough to exercise a tight control over more than one thousand branches across the country.⁵⁷⁸ As young nationalist militants were motivated to protect and ensure the survival of the state or of religion, the use of violence was for them a justifiable means of political struggle. Not only did they get embroiled in fights with socialists in the streets, schools and universities, they also ran other activities such as marches, social nights and collecting money for the organization.⁵⁷⁹ The use of guns and weapons became more common after 1975, and especially after 1977 young militants could easily acquire increasing numbers of unauthorized weapons, ranging from rifles to hand grenades, to pursue the “war” against their enemies.⁵⁸⁰ In some cases, some militants were lured by the possibility of wealth easily acquired through underground networks and were drawn into thuggery and underground mafia.⁵⁸¹ In addition to this, when some *ocak* members went out to collect donations for the movement, anyone who refused to give the amount of money demanded could be exposed to physical coercion.⁵⁸²

In this structure, when an individual or a group claimed to be carrying out an

⁵⁷⁷ Hasan Çağlayan, Interview. For example, Ramiz Ongun, the ÜOB leader in 1971, served as the president of the MHP youth organization and then as consultant to Türkeş for three years. Ramiz Ongun, Interview; Hakkı Öznur, *Ülkücü Hareket*, Vol II, p. 174.

⁵⁷⁸ Abdullah Muradoğlu, Interview.

⁵⁷⁹ Abdullah Muradoğlu, Ahmet Çakar and Mustafa Verkaya, Interview.

⁵⁸⁰ Merdan Yanardağ, *Ülkücü Hareket*, pp. 152-161.

⁵⁸¹ Merdan Yanardağ, *Ülkücü Hareket*, pp. 163-168; Tanıl Bora and Kemal Can, *Devlet Ocak Dergah*, p. 99; 379-382.

⁵⁸² Sometimes shopkeepers were intimidated, being told that they would otherwise be harassed by communist bullies. Abdullah Muradoğlu, Interview by Ali Erken

operation on behalf of Türkeş, it was by no means easy to ask Türkeş for confirmation. In most cases it came down to the individual response of the *reis*, who had to react quickly to a developing situation.⁵⁸³ In the aftermath of a socialist assault that killed or wounded an *ülküçü*, the mood among *ocak* members would be overwhelmingly vengeful, and if some people appeared at these emotional moments to claim revenge, they were very unlikely to be stopped.⁵⁸⁴ Likewise, especially after 1977, in order to purge the rival group from a neighborhood or school indiscriminate violence was considered a legitimate means of behavior; these operations were often targeted at well-known socialists or intended to perpetrate mass murders.⁵⁸⁵ The structure of the nationalist movement, especially after 1977, became intrinsically open to such uncontrolled use of violence.⁵⁸⁶

In fact, the *ülkü ocağı* was the place in which these young people found a comfortable environment for socialization with a peer group in their teenage years. There is a lack of textual evidence on the daily programs of the *ülkü ocakları* branches as they differed from one branch to another, but from the accounts of some militants it can be understood that young nationalists spent most of their day in the *ocak* or in the house shared with their friends, almost isolated from their family and the outside world.⁵⁸⁷ The rituals and activities of the *ocak* were time-consuming, given that means of transportation and technology were limited. Attending the funeral of an *ülküçü* in another city, for instance, took a whole day.⁵⁸⁸ In addition, young *ocak* members had to learn how to behave in collective action, and this process was coupled with the obligation to behave in accordance with conservative cultural codes. *Ocak* members in central and eastern Anatolia, for instance, were expected to follow certain cultural practices such as not wearing jeans, not drinking Coca-Cola and alcohol, and

⁵⁸³ Mustafa Verkaya and Hasan Çağlayan, Interviews.

⁵⁸⁴ Mustafa Verkaya and Ahmet Cakar, Interviews.

⁵⁸⁵ Ali Yurtaslan, *İtiraflar (Concessions)* (İstanbul: Aydınlık, 1980), pp. 24-34; Abdullah Muradoğlu, Interview.

⁵⁸⁶ Musa Serdar Çelebi, Ramiz Ongun, Interview.

⁵⁸⁷ Abdullah Muradoğlu, Interview. Interview with Hasan Çağlayan in *Alperen Ocakları*, September 2009, Year 1, Issue III, pp. 44-48.

⁵⁸⁸ Abdullah Muradoğlu and Ahmet İyioldu, Interviews.

being strict in their relations with girls.⁵⁸⁹ For those who had left their families to go to university in the cities, an *ocak* could provide free shelter and food.⁵⁹⁰ Most of them felt a sense of security and protection under the auspices of older *ocak* members who would take care of them.⁵⁹¹ The *reis* could use his authority to punish those who behaved against the *ocak* code of conduct, applying strong pressure on them to either abandon “immoral” behavior or quit the *ocak*.⁵⁹² In this respect it could be argued that the *ülkü ocakları* maintained an independent organization, with particular moral principles and codes of practice.

The Indoctrination of Nationalist Militants

As discussed above, training sessions for young nationalists had been undertaken since the early days of the party, and Türkeş was known to attach special importance to indoctrination.⁵⁹³ It was, for instance, a regular practice for him to call in young nationalists for examination when he was dissatisfied with their performance. He expected them to explain the principles of the Nine Lights doctrine, or asked them questions about minute details of Turkish culture, Turkish history or Turkic geography.⁵⁹⁴ The *ülkü ocakları* functioned as houses of primary training and indoctrination; each *ocak* could run its own training sessions, but sometimes the training curriculum set out in the central committee of the

⁵⁸⁹Ali Batman, the ÜOD President in 1976-1977, reflected on his personal life and cultural practices: “I don’t have a girlfriend, as I am against such a practice. It is incompatible with our religious and national moral codes...I don’t like going to concerts; I prefer going to the events and nights organized by our friends; in these activities I like to listen to Turkish folk music and Turkish classical music and watch Turkish folkloric plays”. Ali Batman, *Hürriyet*, 15 December 1976; Abdullah Muradoğlu, however, notes that he was very surprised to see that in urban centers and some parts of western Anatolia these practices were less closely observed. Abdullah Muradoğlu, Interview.

⁵⁹⁰Tanıl Bora and Kemal Can, *Devlet Ocak Dergah*, pp. 76-78; Abdullah Muradoğlu, Interview.

⁵⁹¹Tanıl Bora and Kemal Can, *Devlet Ocak Dergah*, pp. 76-78.

⁵⁹²Abdullah Muradoğlu, Interview.

⁵⁹³Yaşar Okuyan refers to his own experience with Türkeş when he was only 14. Once he was asked to deliver food to Türkeş and went to see him in his house. Türkeş invited him to come in and delivered a lengthy monologue on Turkish history, politics and contemporary issues. Yaşar Okuyan, *O Yıllar*, p. 134.

⁵⁹⁴Hasan Çağlayan, Interview.

ÜOD in Ankara was applied.⁵⁹⁵ As explained above, the first widespread training programs in the party had been launched in the late 1960s, and in the late 1970s, again at a time when ideological antagonisms had sharpened and the party leadership was struggling to maintain its grip on the *ülkü ocakları*, another training program was launched⁵⁹⁶ It was more obvious now than in the late 1960s that the *ülkü ocakları* had taken over the operational as well as the ideological steering power of the movement. For instance, slogans shouted by the young nationalists, such as “Kanımız aksa da zafer İslam’ın” (The victory will be Islam’s even if our blood flows) were banned by the party leadership on several occasions, but these attempts were ignored and young nationalists continued to use their own slogans.⁵⁹⁷

The training program launched in 1977 was only able to go on for six months, due to the growing violence in the country, but for a couple of months a group of thirty experienced *ocak* leaders selected by Namık Kemal Zeybek and Ramiz Ongun, who were advisors to Türkeş in coordinating young militants, trained by Türkeş and some others from the party board such as Nevzat Kösoğlu, Sadi Somuncuoğlu, Galip Erdem and Taha Akyol.⁵⁹⁸ The members of this trained group, called trainers (*eğitimci*) in the movement, were expected to visit *ülkü ocakları* and other nationalist organizations to run training sessions, and did indeed do this in the following months.⁵⁹⁹ During their own training they had had a compulsory reading list and curriculum to follow, which included Turkish history, religion, ideologies and the methods of struggle against communism.⁶⁰⁰ The inclusion of training classes on oratory indicates that the trainers were supposed to have proficiency in public speaking, which would help them

⁵⁹⁵ Musa Serdar Çelebi, Interview; Abdullah Muradoğlu, Interview.

⁵⁹⁶ Musa Serdar Çelebi, Interview.

⁵⁹⁷ Ümit Özdağ, Interview.

⁵⁹⁸ Musa Serdar Çelebi, Taha Akyol, Sadi Somuncuoğlu, Interviews.

⁵⁹⁹ Musa Serdar Çelebi, Interview.

⁶⁰⁰ Musa Serdar Çelebi, Interview; Çelebi explained that Türkeş asked them to choose a specific topic to study and to give a presentation about it, and added that Türkeş presumably made use of these reports in his political speeches and party reports as well. For a detailed list of training programs see the *MHP İddianamesi*, pp. 165-178.

propagate the party's message during election campaigns.⁶⁰¹ This training program promoted a simple but a straightforward orientation for young *ülküçüler*, yet these “trainers” were young people from the *ülkü ocakları* as well and it seems that conditions after 1977 prevented the possibility of a more central indoctrination from the party leadership over the *ülkü ocakları*.

Actually, as mentioned in the previous chapter, from 1970 onwards works expounding the concepts of *ülküçü* and *ülküçülük* had an overriding presence across nationalist publications. In these texts it was suggested that being a nationalist did not necessarily mean that someone would be an *ülküçü*. An *ülküçü* was accorded a higher status than a nationalist, because s/he was to actualize the theory into practice and pursue his/her *ülkü* (ideal).⁶⁰² It was maintained that the quest of the *ülküçü* should be “a search for a higher cause, at the expense of one's own good or the good of family and friends” and that the *ülküçü*'s ideology was “nationalism”, specifically Turkish nationalism, with due respect to religion and firm belief in God.⁶⁰³ Whilst the *ülküçü* was called upon to take on this responsibility, s-he was urged to stay away from the domain of politics, which was corrupt and contemptible.⁶⁰⁴ The tacit message in this literature that the *ülküçü* held a superior position even to other nationalist people laid the groundwork for the separation of party and *ülküçü* identity, which would become more obvious in the years to come.

Ülküçüler were urged to stay a tightly knit group and act in common as if they all shared in the same state of consciousness, for they were few in number, “select and

⁶⁰¹ Mustafa Çalık, *MHP Hareketinin Kaynakları*, pp. 116-120.

⁶⁰² Sadi Somuncuoğlu, “Milliyetçilik, Türkçülük, Ülküçülük” (Nationalism, Turkism, *Ülküçülük*), *Bozkurt 1* (October 1971).

⁶⁰³ Galip Erdem “Ülkücü Olma İdeali” (The ideal of being an *Ülkücü*) *Bozkurt 14* (February 1972); “Milliyetçilik ve Ülküçülük” (Nationalism and *Ülküçülük*), *Bozkurt 18* (March 1974); Ayvaz Gokdemir, *Mücadelemizin Mantığı* (The Logic of our Struggle), *Ocak 27* (March 1970).

⁶⁰⁴ Şevket Bülent Yahnici, “Milliyetçilik ve Ülküçülük, Ülküçüler ve Siyaset (Nationalism and *Ülküçülük*, *Ülküçüler* and Politics)” in *Devlet*, 13 August 1973.

privileged’’ in society, seeking to transform it from within.⁶⁰⁵ In these writings on the idea of *ülküciü*, young people were called to be intellectually and physically well prepared for their mission, in order not to let their nation and companions down. Dündar Taşer commended young nationalists, whom he thought to have reacted against ‘‘what had been imposed upon them’’ and, unlike his own generation, to have taken responsibility in that ‘‘momentous stage’’ of Turkish history, which came after long years of material and spiritual degeneration.⁶⁰⁶

As discussed, Namık Kemal Zeybek’s *Ülkü Yolu* (1979), a basic textbook sent to *ocak* branches, largely drew on this literature; as mentioned in the previous chapter, the book stated that *ülküciü* youth were gifted with the same abilities and high moral standards as the *alperenler* (Sufi warriors) in the Ottoman Empire, and they should be ready to strive for *rızaullah* (the approval of God), following the principles set out by their ‘‘leader’’ in *Nine Lights*.⁶⁰⁷ Meshing a leadership cult with the idea of *ülküciülük*, it gave the message that an *ülküciü* should be willing to sacrifice him/herself for the sake of the state, religion and leader.⁶⁰⁸

Another training center for young nationalists was prisons. Between 1975 and 1980 thousands of nationalists were sent to prison. For a young *ülküciü*, spending some time behind bars was a matter of prestige on the one hand, and an opportunity to receive more intensive education on the other. In the letters sent out from these prisons it was underscored that prison was a *medrese* for nationalist inmates.⁶⁰⁹ Besides, prison life was far safer than life outside, plagued as that was with vicious battles between rival camps. In general, religiosity among *ülküciü* inmates was fairly strong and it seems that the communal lifestyle in such an enclosed

⁶⁰⁵ Sadi Somuncuoğlu, ‘‘Ülkücünün Sorumluluğu (The Responsibility of the *Ülküciü*)’’, *Bozkurt 21* (June 1974)

⁶⁰⁶ Dündar Taşer, ‘‘Youth’’ in *Devlet*, 28 December 1970.

⁶⁰⁷ In training sessions for *ocak* youth Alparslan Türkeş was described as a flawless person and unquestionable leader. Hasan Çağlayan, Interview.

⁶⁰⁸ Namık Kemal Zeybek, *Ülkü Yolu*, pp. 114-130.

⁶⁰⁹ *Genç Arkadaş*, 1 January 1979. For a collection of these letters see Hakkı Öznur, *Ülküciü Hareket*, Volume V, pp. 513-586.

environment was a rather compelling influence for others to turn to religion.⁶¹⁰ The impact of this acculturation began to be seen among the militants as they were released and reassumed their roles in the movement.

Finally it could be argued that the practice of writing was considered to be part of the education of young nationalist militants, who had until the mid 1970s had not been able to find a suitable environment to do this. Nationalist publications started to flourish especially after 1975. Before this date, there had been no daily newspaper covering the party's activities, just two journals, *Milli Hareket* (National Movement) and *Devlet* (State), published once a week or fortnight.⁶¹¹ The owner of *Devlet* was İbrahim Metin, a close follower of Türkeş since before 1960 and a party board member, and the journal appeared to represent the official views of the party in the early 1970s.⁶¹² However, it seems that scarcity of financial and human resources had prevented the party from sponsoring a nationalist media that would reach a wider audience. In time it became obvious for the leadership that the party needed more effective means of propaganda; *Hergün* (Every Day) newspaper, which had been in private ownership, was taken over by party members in 1975 and became the first nationalist daily newspaper.⁶¹³ Türkeş, again, chose to hand this task over to someone he had personally known for a long time, Ali Sahir Nariç, who had been a friend of Türkeş since the events of 1944.⁶¹⁴

These papers were seen by nationalist militants as reliable sources from which to pick up the news of the day, but actually the publications struggled to collect daily news properly. The information they provided about the movement was comprehensive, but there were only a

⁶¹⁰ Ali Yurtaslan, *İtirafılar*, p. 88; Hakkı Öznur, *Ülkücü Hareket*, pp. 531-535.

⁶¹¹ Aside from these, *Bozkurt*, a nationalist monthly journal for youth, was published between 1972 and 1977; *Töre*, the monthly journal which invited nationalist academicians and thinkers, started its venture in 1971. *Ocak* had a similar function to *Töre* between 1968 and 1971. See *Töre* 1 (June 1971); Hakkı Öznur, *Ülkücü Hareket*, Vo IV, pp. 15, 45-46.

⁶¹² İbrahim Metin, Interview.

⁶¹³ Ali Sahir Nariç, Interview.

⁶¹⁴ Ali Sahir Nariç, Interview.

few columns pertinent to wider issues. Instead, these papers provided space for nationalist thinkers to elaborate on various issues and make a name for themselves in nationalist circles. The authors were to some extent free to comment on any topic, not restricted by the editors or the party leadership to specific issues.⁶¹⁵ Türkeş did not read all the news and articles in these papers, and only in rare circumstances did he criticize the content of an article or the policy of the newspaper.⁶¹⁶ The selection of columnists was a painful process on account of the limited pool of eligible writers, most of whom had been regular contributors to nationalist journals like *Töre* and *Devlet*, and priority was given to a few young nationalist journalists such as Yaşar Okuyan, a party board member, and Necdet Sevinç.⁶¹⁷ The editorial writer of *Hergün*, Taha Akyol, was a member of the party board, but a relatively new face in the movement. Similarly, *ocak* publications were subject to loose control by the party leadership; the articles and commentaries in the weekly *ülkü ocakları* publications such as *Genç Arkadaş* (Young Friend) and *Hasret* (Longing) sometimes included differing views and perspectives on the idea of nationalism and issues of daily politics in the 1970s.⁶¹⁸ Sadi Somuncuoğlu explains that they had no chance to read these publications and the party board members felt short of supervising the indoctrination of young militants as they were swamped with various other responsibilities as a result of the growing party structure and increasing number of young militants after 1977.⁶¹⁹ He adds that even Türkeş could not read the publications released by the *ülkü ocakları* leadership.⁶²⁰

As a means of training, essay competitions and several other campaigns to encourage young people to submit their written works became regular activities run by the nationalist

⁶¹⁵ Ibrahim Metin and Ali Sahir Nariç, Interview.

⁶¹⁶ Ali Sahir Nariç, Interview.

⁶¹⁷ Ali Sahir Nariç, Interview.

⁶¹⁸ *Hasret* and *Nizam-ı Alem* were dispatched to *ülkü ocakları* by the *ülkü ocakları* leadership and reached roughly 100,000 readers; *Birliğe Çağrı* (*Call to Unity*), which was sold in kiosks, reached around 30,000. Hasan Çağlayan, Interview.

⁶¹⁹ Sadi Somuncuoğlu, Interview.

⁶²⁰ Sadi Somuncuoğlu, Interview.

magazines and newspapers. In the category of research, a writer would be asked to present a comprehensive analysis of a specific topic pertinent to social or economic issues of the day.⁶²¹ The articles submitted were either assessed by a few knowledgeable people who were in charge of the publications, or alternatively were treated as a writing exercise and given no serious editing.⁶²² There were a quite limited number of people who could give useful advice about style and content to these young writers.

From this discussion it is evident that there was no single center of training in the party for the indoctrination of nationalist militants. As briefly outlined in the previous chapter, this structure enabled some thinkers to preach their own views of nationalism and nationalist politics to young nationalists and other nationalist militants.⁶²³ Such figures as Galip Erdem, Erol G ng r and Ahmed Arvasi wrote extensively on issues of practical relevance such as “religion and nationalism” or “state and nation”.⁶²⁴ It could be argued that some of these people had a greater influence on the formation of the nationalist mindset than Alparslan T rkeş, owing to the intimate relationships they forged with young militants.⁶²⁵ T rkeş was respectful of these people revered by the youth and inclined to keep them within the party circles, preventing any possible split that would undermine his leadership.⁶²⁶ Even with Necip Fazıl, who had parted ways with Erbakan because of his leadership style in the MSP, he managed to work in cooperation from 1977.⁶²⁷

⁶²¹ İbrahim Metin, Interview.

⁶²² İbrahim Metin and Ali Sahir Nariç, Interview.

⁶²³ The research study of Mustafa alık, despite its geographical limitations, is the only available field study conducted on the MHP’s electoral base. From the answers given to the interview questions, it is clear that T rkeş’s *Nine Lights* was one of the most widely read books among MHP voters. Nevertheless, the book did not rank among the ten most influential books for this group. Mustafa alık, *MHP Hareketinin Kaynakları*, pp. 123-127.

⁶²⁴ Erol G ng r, *T re* 17-18 (October-November 1972); Galip Erdem, *Devlet* 27 August 1973; also see Galip Erdem, *T rk Kimdir Kime Denir?* (*Who is a T rk, Who is called a Turk?*), ed. İbrahim Metin (İstanbul: T re, 2008) and Ahmet Arvasi, *T rk-İslam  lk s * (*The Turkish-Islamic Ideal*) (İstanbul: Bilgeoğuz, 2012).

⁶²⁵ Galip Erdem, for instance, spent days and nights in one of the nationalist publication houses, and Ahmet Arvasi invited young nationalists to his house in İstanbul. İbrahim Metin and Musa Serdar elebi, Interviews.

⁶²⁶ For example, Arvasi published daily articles in *Herg n*, the party’s unofficial newspaper, and Erdem took administrative positions in various nationalist organizations.

⁶²⁷ See Chapter 5.

The most fragile relationship to handle was that with the Sufi orders and their sheikhs, who were disposed to win over nationalist youth and exert a tacit influence on the movement. In the late 1970s there was an increasing tendency among *ocak* youth to be involved in Sufi circles as well, creating the possibility of conflicting loyalties.⁶²⁸ This meant that young nationalists were beginning to join a different sphere of socialization and were imbued with a certain set of values that were hardly compatible with the creeds of political nationalism.⁶²⁹ Türkeş did not seem to be overly worried about this tendency among the youth, and presumably hoped that these visits could generate another source of faith among young people.⁶³⁰

In sum, it can be seen that Türkeş mostly displayed an accommodating profile as long as his views and decisions were not criticized. This absence of a central indoctrination process gave young nationalists more freedom, but on the other hand it posed a challenge for these young militants brought about its unintended consequences during the ideological polarization of the late 1970s.

The Party Board

The party board and deputies were one of the power hubs in the nationalist movement, especially after the 1977 elections, in which the MHP gained sixteen seats in parliament. It seems that Türkeş strove to keep the party board, composed of more than twenty-five members, in obedience to himself and encourage their involvement in party affairs.

Democratic procedures were applied within the party board, which were elected every two

⁶²⁸ Ahmet Er, *Hatıralarım*, pp. 228-230; Yılmaz Yalçiner, Interview.

⁶²⁹ On the other hand, as discussed in the previous chapter, these spiritual commandments were re-manufactured in accordance with the priorities of nationalist politics of the time.

⁶³⁰ We do not have enough evidence on the number of young nationalists visiting Sufi sheikhs of the time and their proximity to these sheikhs. It is possible that most of these young militants attended the sermons or gatherings of these sheikhs, but only a small number of them were in strict obedience to the Sheikhs. For a further discussion on the topic see Chapter 5.

years by the party delegates;⁶³¹ this fostered the image of the MHP as a legal organization in compliance with the regulating laws on political parties. In the party congresses any party member was allowed to run for the leadership, but in almost all of the congresses from 1967 to 1979 Türkeş was re-elected unanimously. On the other hand, his board list was opposed several times, and people not picked by him were elected to the party board.⁶³² This dissidence sometimes caused Türkeş to have to work with people he did not wish to see in his team, and eventually led him in 1977 to ask for more seats on the board to be allocated through his presidential quota.⁶³³ His preference in general was to invite retired soldiers such as Tahsin Ünal and Necati Gültekin or choose someone who showed total loyalty to him, such as Mehmet Irmak, Yaşar Okuyan or Turhan Koçal.⁶³⁴

The board decisions were taken at weekly meetings, and during these meetings the members were not compelled to follow Türkeş's commands. The convention was that Türkeş declined to express his opinion until all other members had declared their views.⁶³⁵ He was a good listener in these meetings, adding a few comments or just nodding; especially on controversial issues Türkeş declined to make any comment, asking the board to make a decision.⁶³⁶ For instance, when the party had to select the cabinet members for the second MC government he urged the board to choose the names to represent the party.⁶³⁷ Again, in the selection of party candidates for parliament the board had a say on who should be placed first and second.⁶³⁸ It was, on the other hand, implicitly taken for granted that the last word would be Türkeş's and there was no possibility of forcing an alternative decision if he was adamant

⁶³¹ Ahmet İyioldu and Sadi Somuncuoğlu, Interviews.

⁶³² Ahmet İyioldu, Interview; Nevzat Kösoğlu, *Hatıralar*, pp. 253-255.

⁶³³ Ahmet İyioldu, Interview.

⁶³⁴ Ahmet İyioldu, Interview, Yaşar Okuyan, *O Yıllar*, pp. 16-48.

⁶³⁵ Sadi Somuncuoğlu and İbrahim Metin, Interviews.

⁶³⁶ İbrahim Metin, Ahmet İyioldu and Sadi Somuncuoğlu, Interviews.

⁶³⁷ Sadi Somuncuoğlu, Interview.

⁶³⁸ İbrahim Metin, Interview; Nevzat Kösoğlu, *Hatıralar*, pp. 220-226

in his choice.⁶³⁹ For example, in the board meeting held after Gün Sazak, the former cabinet minister, was killed by socialist groups in April 1980, it was agreed that the party deputies would resign from parliament, forcing other parties to call for early elections. This was, however, a meeting not presided over by Türkeş, who was not in Ankara at the time. As soon as he returned to the party and heard the news, he convened a second meeting and overturned this decision.⁶⁴⁰ The policy of letting the board members take the initiative on behalf of the party may have been intended to make the board members feel that they were in charge of running the party's affairs, which would strengthen their attachment to the party as well.⁶⁴¹

Nevertheless, the dramatic expansion of the nationalist organizations, not only the *ülkü ocakları* but also other organizations such as MİSK, the union of nationalist workers, POL-BİR, the organization of nationalist police officers, or ÜLKÜ-BİR, the society of nationalist teachers, after 1977 gave the MHP party board serious problems in controlling the activities of nationalist militants.⁶⁴² Some members of the party board had been in the habit of coming to Ankara only for party meetings, not being willing to live in Ankara as their permanent residence.⁶⁴³ The party had not been at the centre of their lives; they had been running their own businesses and had life styles to match that. After 1975 these people found themselves in charge of an ever-growing organization, but there was no serious division of labor in the board.⁶⁴⁴

The members of the board were expected to carry out a multiplicity of unrelated tasks, such as publishing newspapers, participating in election campaigns in Anatolia and giving

⁶³⁹ Ahmet İyioldu, Interview; Nevzat Kösoğlu, *Hatıralar*, pp. 220-226, 253-262.

⁶⁴⁰ Ahmet İyioldu, Interview; Nevzat Kösoğlu, *Hatıralar*, p. 284.

⁶⁴¹ Türkeş had held private meetings with some of the board members as well; İbrahim Metin, Interview. This was another tactic used by him; he would invite a select group of board members for private meetings, which was presumably intended to raise their sense of participation and belonging.

⁶⁴² Ahmet İyioldu, Sadi Somuncuoğlu and İbrahim Metin, Interviews.

⁶⁴³ Ahmet Er, *Hatıralarım*, p. 252-254; Nevzat Kösoğlu, *Hatıralar*, p. 220-226

⁶⁴⁴ İbrahim Metin, Interview; Mehmet Doğan, *Gölgedeki Adam*, p. 70.

training speeches; all of these tasks should have been performed by different departments.⁶⁴⁵ During the years in government even more duties were added to the repertoire; one party board member was appointed as the advisor to one of the MHP ministers while continuing to write daily comment pieces in a paper and run his own business.⁶⁴⁶ It is clear that despite the increasing number of trained nationalist activists, the scarcity of men competent to carry out administrative tasks still remained a serious problem for the movement. These difficulties in the party administration were intensified by the fact that nationalist organizations were run independently and were presided over by their own governing boards. These organizations were ultimately linked to Türkeş, but the party board had no say in the internal affairs of these organizations with the exception of those board members who become involved in one of them.⁶⁴⁷ The president of the Society of *Ülkücü* Journalists, for instance, was Yaşar Okuyan, who was a member of the party board as well.⁶⁴⁸ Yet like the presidents of other nationalist organizations, he was not required to give a briefing on the activities of his association to his colleagues on the board.

With respect to the connectedness of these independent bodies among each other, a flow of personnel from one to another was common.⁶⁴⁹ When the leader of an *ülkü ocağı* started his career in the police or in a private company, he was expected to register with the nationalist organization in charge of this domain and be assigned administrative duties.⁶⁵⁰ The same practice applied when it happened the opposite way; some *ocak* leaders were drawn from the high ranks of the other nationalist organizations.⁶⁵¹ Türkeş wished to have ultimate

⁶⁴⁵ İbrahim Metin, Interview.

⁶⁴⁶ This problem became more severe in the second National Front government, in which the MHP obtained four ministries. İbrahim Metin, Interview.

⁶⁴⁷ Ahmet İyioldu, Interview.

⁶⁴⁸ Yaşar Okuyan, *O Yıllar*, pp. 71-74.

⁶⁴⁹ *MHP İddianamesi*, pp. 270-275; Interview with Hasan Çağlayan in *Alperen Ocakları*, pp. 44-48; Ali Yurtaslan, *İtirafı*, pp. 114-116; Yaşar Okuyan, *O Yıllar*, pp. 71-74.

⁶⁵⁰ Interview with Hasan Çağlayan in *Alperen Ocakları*, pp. 44-48; See “The author’s biography” in Turan Güven, *İnsan Gelecekte Yaşar*.

⁶⁵¹ Interview with Hasan Çağlayan in *Alperen Ocakları*, pp. 44-48;

control over the many fringes of the movement, relying on his contacts working in these organizations and the strict disciplinary measures he applied to the leaders. Nevertheless, this goal ceased to be viable as the scale of these organizations grew and ideological antagonisms between the socialists and nationalists sharpened at the same time.

In the early years, as related in Chapter 2, leading members of the board had deserted the party due to personal disagreements on the method and discourse of political nationalism; the same tendency replicated itself in a slightly different form in the mid and late 1970s. In contrast to the strict obedience of young militants to Türkeş, some board members raised objections to some of his actions. The most serious challenge to Türkeş came from the ÜKD members, who tended to cluster together on the party board.⁶⁵² Nevzat Kösoğlu, a leading figure of this clique, says they were always suspicious about Türkeş's decision-making style and ability to lead a mass political movement; besides, they considered him a relatively poor speaker, unfailingly egoistic, and soft in political bargaining.⁶⁵³ To them, Türkeş had a sound background in Turkish history, foreign affairs and some economic issues, but was not deep enough to build a theoretical vision for the MHP.⁶⁵⁴ As a result of this tension, Türkeş eliminated four of these ÜKD members from the party board in the 1977 and 1979 congresses.

This discontentment was not confined to the ÜKD clique only; the fact that Türkeş was inconsistent in the views he expressed on party affairs when he was asked his opinion and that he sometimes easily changed his mind on ideological issues eroded some board members' confidence in him.⁶⁵⁵ He did not even care about what was happening in parliament, attended

⁶⁵² Ahmet İyiođlu, Interview; Nevzat Kösođlu, *Hatıralar*, pp. 253-262.

⁶⁵³ Once they had protested to Türkeş on the occasion of his second marriage, defending that the leader should not marry with someone from the *ülkü ocakları*, and resigned from the party board. However, Türkeş asked them to resume their seats and the dispute was seemingly resolved. Nevzat Kösođlu, *Hatıralar*, p. 254.

⁶⁵⁴ Nevzat Kösođlu, *Hatıralar*, pp. 220-222. It seems that Kösođlu's criticism against Türkeş was shared by some of the leading members of the party board and ÜOD leadership, who parted ways with the MHP after the 12 September 1980 Coup.

⁶⁵⁵ Sadi Somuncuođlu and Taha Akyol, Interview.

its sessions very rarely and made a speech only once or twice in three years. It was upsetting for the deputies that their leader did not listen to their speeches, and that he underplayed parliamentary politics.⁶⁵⁶ Sadi Somuncuoğlu, for example, explains that he raised objections to Türkeş's consent for the book *Milliyetçi Toplumcu Düzen* (Nationalist Social-Minded Order) by Kurt Karaca, a nationalist professor, to be published by *Töre* publishing house, which operated under the control of the party. After a short conversation with Somuncuoğlu, Türkeş changed his mind and cancelled the publication; he then changed his mind again, but was again convinced by Somuncuoğlu. After a couple of similar exchanges between them, Türkeş made a final decision and sent the book to print. More strikingly, however, he banned the use of the epithet “*nationalist-social-minded*” in the nationalist movement just six months after he had given permission for the book.⁶⁵⁷ Likewise, Somuncuoğlu narrates that in the 1977 election campaign the party proposed that all insurance companies and banks would be under the control of the state, but these pledges had been introduced to the party discourse thanks to a couple of party board members who convinced Türkeş in private meetings. Shortly after this, other party board members asked Türkeş not to employ these slogans again.⁶⁵⁸

From the evidence presented above it can be inferred that Türkeş was not highly concerned with issues of ideology; he was more focused on speaking to the masses and to his followers in order to galvanize them. He had similar expectations from the party officials, wanting them to be more ambitious in the field, to visit towns and villages and to mobilize young militants. What he needed from the board members was more than lengthy speeches in meetings or theoretical essays in the newspapers, whereas many board members favored softer means of struggle and maintained that nationalist youth should be kept away from

⁶⁵⁶ Nevzat Kösoğlu, *Hatıralar*, pp. 282.

⁶⁵⁷ Sadi Somuncuoğlu, Interview.

⁶⁵⁸ Sadi Somuncuoğlu, Interview.

violence.⁶⁵⁹ To these concerns, they thought, Türkeş did not pay enough attention. That was why they became increasingly worried about Türkeş's private contacts that were never known to them and the private meetings he convened with young nationalists.⁶⁶⁰

The main reason behind these board members' commitment to the party was the belief that Türkeş was the only possible man to push the nationalist movement forward in the realities of the Cold War.⁶⁶¹ When the magnitude of the conflict between nationalists and socialists dramatically escalated in 1979 and 1980, many board members shared the conviction that the country was on the brink of civil war and Türkeş should lead the nationalists in this struggle.⁶⁶² On the other hand, the senior party officials and board members did not have a common strategy of nationalist politics at a time when the party and nationalist organizations experienced the most serious expansion since 1965, but stayed tight knit because of the external conditions that they had to deal with.

The Ülkü Ocakları and the Party

It has so far been underlined that Alparslan Türkeş was of central importance in coordinating nationalist youth; in the late 1970s, when the conflict between nationalists and socialists cost the lives of tens of people every day, this position became more significant for the movement as a whole. He applied various disciplinary and oratorical tactics to enhance his compelling authority over nationalist youth, which was what secured his leadership in the movement. His ability to motivate young people was striking, possibly aided by his training in

⁶⁵⁹ Kösoğlu explains "I fell into doubt as to whether anarchy was being manipulated as a means of politics; it had gone out of our control. I turned suspicious about our political method. Did we use anarchy as a means to achieve political goals? I knew many friends in the party shared the same doubts as me. Some of them stepped back, some of them did not....we were a political party, and it was fundamentally important for us to know where to position our party. We were at the centre of a battle, but we had to stick with democratic means.... What were we doing with weapons and the invasion of universities?"; Nevzat Kösoğlu, *Hatıralar*, p. 230-234; 287-289; Taha Akyol, Interview.

⁶⁶⁰ Ahmet İyioldu, Interview.

⁶⁶¹ Nevzat Kösoğlu, *Hatıralar*, pp. 287-289.

⁶⁶² Nevzat Kösoğlu, *Hatıralar*, pp. 287-289.

the military.⁶⁶³ One of his methods was to give young people responsibility and leave them an autonomous space to conduct their affairs. He ensured that the party youth would feel confident of themselves and believe that they were outstanding people who could revolutionize society. For example, he sent Musa Serdar Çelebi, who was 27, to Germany to re-organize all the *ülküci* groups in Europe against “communist propaganda”, and assigned him the leadership of the all *ülküci* organizations in Europe.⁶⁶⁴

Such relationships, however, would last only as long as Türkeş wished; for example, the ÜOD leader in 1979, Hasan Çağlayan, was fired by Türkeş and the next day re-appointed by him. Çağlayan notes that Türkeş seemed to have made the decision to fire him on the grounds that his (Türkeş’s) picture had been placed in the same column as another party leader (Necmettin Erbakan) in *Nizam-ı Alem* journal.⁶⁶⁵ In this case, board members were called to Türkeş’s room, and Türkeş asked them: “Who is your leader, me or another party leader?” He then rebuked Çağlayan, saying “Get out of this room ... and leave your position”. As Çağlayan was mortified by this decision, Türkeş sent a message to a party member and let him know that he would be awaiting the ÜOD leadership in his room the next day to conduct an examination on the Nine Lights doctrine.⁶⁶⁶ When ÜOD leadership gathered in the room the next day, Türkeş held an oral examination. Since they had studied hard during the day, it was not very difficult to answer Türkeş’s questions. In the end Türkeş concluded “So you know all these things very well; why do you behave like this?” and sent them back. But he asked the ÜOD president to stay with him, then asked “Tell me, who is Tuğrul [meaning his son]?” He answered “He is your son”. Following a couple of similar questions, Türkeş asked

⁶⁶³ Türkeş had multiple faces, especially when he spoke to *ocak* members. The day after he praised a leader before his peers, he might humiliate him in a public gathering. Hasan Çağlayan, Interview.

⁶⁶⁴ Musa Serdar Çelebi, Interview.

⁶⁶⁵ Hasan Çağlayan, Interview. For *Nizam-ı Alem* journal see Chapter 2.

⁶⁶⁶ This was a well-known tactic of Türkeş. Young nationalists had to memorize the nine principles of his doctrine in depth and give convincing answers. Even this knowledge might fall short of saving them, because Türkeş would ask difficult questions about the geography of the Turkic people and Turkish history. If they could not give the correct answer Türkeş’s response was: “You even don’t know this, go and learn these first”. Hasan Çağlayan, Interview.

“Who are you?” As Çağlayan struggled to give a proper answer, Türkeş interrupted and said “You are me, the *ocaklar* are me! You are me, I am you. If my son does something wrong, I can explain it; but if you make a mistake, or misbehave, I can’t explain that. What you do is what I do, so be careful of what you are doing. Now go and do your job”.⁶⁶⁷ This striking example reveals that Türkeş made young people believe that they represented his authority and acted on behalf of him. Besides, what the party board complained about was the deviation in the nationalist discourse employed by young militants, but Türkeş brought the issue of closure of the journal down to a question of leadership during the worsening civil strife of the late 1970s.

Some members of the *ülkü ocakları* leadership were regularly invited to meet with Türkeş, receiving orders directly from him.⁶⁶⁸ In fact, Türkeş never felt a scarcity of believers around him while thousands of young people with the utmost respect towards him were being recruited through the *ocak* system.⁶⁶⁹ In addition, he made use of his unquestionable authority over the young people to manipulate party affairs in his own interest. If the party board members or representatives in city branches and Türkeş were divided on party policies or fell into disagreement over anything else, the young nationalist militants always stood alongside Türkeş and executed his orders.⁶⁷⁰ Likewise, whenever he considered someone a potential contender against himself, or simply did not want to work with him or her, the rumor that this person was a “traitor” could spread swiftly among party circles.⁶⁷¹

As noted, Türkeş selected some of his advisors from among former *ocak* leaders who had completed their missions in the *ülkü ocakları*, and through this mechanism he was able to keep these people, who would update him about events involving the *ülkü ocakları*, in the

⁶⁶⁷ Hasan Çağlayan, Interview.

⁶⁶⁸ Hasan Çağlayan, Interview.

⁶⁶⁹ Hasan Çağlayan, Interview; Nevzat Kösoğlu, *Hatıralar*, pp. 259-260.

⁶⁷⁰ Nevzat Kösoğlu, *Hatıralar*, p. 220.

⁶⁷¹ Nevzat Kösoğlu, *Hatıralar*, pp. 259-260.

organization and close to him. However, he seems to have struggled, especially after 1977, to obtain comprehensive information about what these young nationalist leaders were planning to do with their groups. For instance, two nationalist militants, sentenced to death, were helped to escape from prison in 1980 and Türkeş, who did not know about the operation, was enraged when he heard the news.⁶⁷² He was rarely involved in the internal affairs of the *ülkü ocakları*, and seemed to be open to negotiation in some cases. He often consented to what youth leaders suggested to him, even if he was not truly convinced about a particular operation.⁶⁷³

The relationship between party members and young militants was two dimensional. The two groups usually complemented each other, party members often requesting assistance from the *ülkü ocakları*, just as young nationalists were in dire need of their patronage.⁶⁷⁴ The party's rise in the 1977 elections, especially in eastern and central Anatolia, was no doubt facilitated by the widespread network of *ülkü ocakları* across these regions. Indeed, the *ülkü ocakları* were founded not only in large urban centres but also in distant towns and villages where the party organization did not exist.⁶⁷⁵ The *ülkü ocakları* members were vigorous party propagandists before elections and some *ocak* branches forged friendly relations with ordinary people, functioning as community centers holding public events.⁶⁷⁶

Ülkü ocakları members, on the other hand, felt the need for someone who would give them logistical help and legal advice. The party board was concerned about the legal implications of the operations executed by young nationalists, but they had no choice but to look after these people.⁶⁷⁷ There were thousands of young nationalists who were living as fugitives or under arrest. The lawyer members of the party were expected to deal with these

⁶⁷² Emin Pazarcı, *Kurt Bakışı*, pp. 173-181.

⁶⁷³ Hasan Çağlayan and Ahmet Çakar, Interviews

⁶⁷⁴ Tanıl Bora and Kemal Can, *Devlet Ocak Dergah*, pp. 62-68; *MHP İddianamesi*, pp. 291-313.

⁶⁷⁵ There could be many *ocaks* in a village, town or city whereas the party branches were generally founded in town or city centres.

⁶⁷⁶ Abdullah Muradoğlu and Burhan Kavuncu Interview

⁶⁷⁷ Ahmet İyioğlu and Sadi Somuncuoğlu, Interview.

trials, and to do this on a *pro bono* basis; it not only cost them their time, but also prevented them from carrying on their own businesses.⁶⁷⁸ Looking after the families of imprisoned *ocak* members or those people who had lost their children was evidently the hardest task to endure for board members and they had to seek financial assistance or an endowment to ensure a stable income for these families, but mostly failed to achieve this.⁶⁷⁹ Indeed, the lack of financial resources was a more serious drawback than it had been in previous years for the party, even to the extent that party members could not find sufficient funds to visit party branches across the country.⁶⁸⁰ In addition to this financial burden, the party board had to cope with compounded grief towards 1980.⁶⁸¹ They were receiving news of deaths everyday; once, when Nevzat Kösoğlu and Sadi Somuncuoğlu visited the family of an “*ülküçü şehit* (martyr)” in Erzurum, his family used very harsh language, holding them responsible for not protecting their child, who had been brutally killed.⁶⁸²

Moreover, the party branches in cities and the party board in Ankara were sometimes put under irresistible pressure to provide young nationalists with materials for combat, such as guns and rifles.⁶⁸³ If young nationalists needed to use larger spaces for training activities or find hidden places to escape from the police, party elites who knew of such places helped them.⁶⁸⁴ Furthermore, young nationalists’ expectations from the party members were not confined to legal, financial or logistical aid. The young nationalist militants counted on the party deputies and the board to provide them with jobs either in the state or in private

⁶⁷⁸ Nevzat Kösoğlu, *Hatıralar*, p.216; Ali Yurtaslan, *İtiraf*, pp. 37-39, İbrahim Metin, Interview.

⁶⁷⁹ Ahmet İyioldu, Interview; *MHP İddianamesi*, pp. 330-350.

⁶⁸⁰ Nevzat Kösoğlu, *Hatıralar*; pp. 225, 262; this financial difficulty was, perhaps, one of the underlying reasons that led some *ocak* youth to resort to coercion.

⁶⁸¹ Nevzat Kösoğlu, *Hatıralar*, p. 231; Ahmet İyioldu and İbrahim Metin, Interviews.

⁶⁸² Kösoğlu says “Every time the phone rang I trembled, because we were receiving news... Sometimes even our closest friends and family members held us responsible; their attitude was changing”; he also notes that they were disappointed to see Türkeş not displaying the same sensitivity as them, for the leader of the movement, in their view, should be the one who would be most concerned. On the other hand, they appreciated Türkeş’s not being as emotionally fragile as themselves, especially since they sought someone resilient during this state of war. Nevzat Kösoğlu, *Hatıralar*, p.231, 288.

⁶⁸³ Kazım Ayaydın, Interview, İstanbul; Ali Yurtaslan, *İtiraf*, pp. 31-32.

⁶⁸⁴ *MHP İddianamesi*, pp. 565-570; Ömer Tanlak, *İtiraf (Confession)* (İstanbul: Aydınlık, 1980), pp. 58-69.

business.⁶⁸⁵ For instance, when TrkeŖ's training teams started to disperse across the country in 1977, the trainers were appointed to the Ministry of Customs and Monopolies by Namık Kemal Zeybek, formerly the party's youth organization leader, who held a high position in this ministry.⁶⁸⁶

The very basic expectation that *ocak* members had of a party deputy was that he should express loudly the grievances of nationalist militants, particularly during the CHP government of 1978-79. Once Nevzat Ksoęlu was highly criticized because at a time when young nationalists were expecting a speech condemning the CHP's refusal to employ them, he spoke instead on cultural issues surrounding Turkish folk music and Western music.⁶⁸⁷ In other words, as will be explained in the next chapter, in the late 1970s capturing the state apparatus was at the centre of politics in Turkey and nationalist militants sought patronage from the party members in Ankara.

Despite this manifestation of cordiality, the party board and party branches' relationship with the youth organization was not as close as that of TrkeŖ. They were caught in a delicate position between the leader and the young nationalist militants. TrkeŖ's policy of not informing the party board about his contacts with the youth organization could never be questioned, and he managed to remain as the only reliable bridge between the youth organization and the party board.⁶⁸⁸ The board was legally in charge of the party's affairs and was held accountable for its activities. However, it had no say in the affairs of the the *lk ocakları*. Some board members repeatedly echoed their anxiety over this bizarre situation; to overcome this problem they formed close friendships with *ocak* leaders, but it was barely

⁶⁸⁵ *MHP İddianamesi*, pp. 258-275.

⁶⁸⁶ *MHP İddianamesi*, pp.256-258; Musa Serdar elebi, Interview; elebi, who was one of these trainers, noted that these people traveled the country as ministerial officers in appearance, but actually they were providing training for the *lk ocakları*. The MC government fell six months later and they were dismissed.

⁶⁸⁷ Nevzat Ksoęlu, *Hatıralar*, p. 283.

⁶⁸⁸ Ahmet İyioldu and Hasan aęlayan, Interviews.

possible to make any impact on the decisions of the *ocak* leadership.⁶⁸⁹ Some members of the ÜOD leadership in the late 1970s, such as Burhan Kavuncu and Mahir Damatlar, narrate that they even considered the party board members from the ÜKD clique, who had taught them on the issues of ideology and culture, cowards and pacifists, not showing enough commitment in the struggle against the socialists.⁶⁹⁰

There was a feeling of resentment on the part of the *ülküçüler* towards those party board and senior party members who favored non-physical means of struggle. For example, Taha Akyol, who wrote daily articles defending this position, was excluded from training the trainers' group.⁶⁹¹ A senior party member who spoke out against the acts of aggression perpetrated by young nationalists was likely to be labeled a pacifist.⁶⁹² In such a delicate atmosphere, criticizing the militant stance against communism could be interpreted as treachery.⁶⁹³ This state of grievance in the *ülkü ocakları* sometimes turned against party representatives in towns and cities as well, when the young militants felt that the official party representatives did not show sufficient commitment and devotion.⁶⁹⁴

As opposed to the electoral achievements in certain provinces, there were many other towns where *ocak* members provoked negative sentiments in the local community, which led to the failure of the party. For instance, Nevzat Kösoğlu explains that when he visited Rize, a small coastal city in the northeast, to give his support as a party deputy to the party branch there. He was confronted with complaints about the aggressive behavior of *ocak* members in the city and when he went to the *ocak* to investigate the case, even though he was a high-standing board member and one of the few ideologues in the party, the leader of *ülkü ocağı* in

⁶⁸⁹ Hasan Çağlayan and Ahmet İyiöldü, Interview.

⁶⁹⁰ Burhan Kavuncu, Interview. Interview with Mahir Damatlar in <http://www.habererk.com/haber/22458/mahir-damatlar-roportaj.html> (last accessed on 06-11-2012).

⁶⁹¹ Taha Akyol, Interview. Taha Akyol is a contemporary journalist well-known for his pro-liberal political stance; yet he was the editor of *Hergün* before 12 September 1980 and published daily articles on the political clashes of the time.

⁶⁹² Taha Akyol, Interview; Ahmet Er, *Hatıralarım*, pp. 227-228.

⁶⁹³ Taha Akyol, Interview.

⁶⁹⁴ Ahmet Çakar and Burhan Kavuncu, Interviews.

Rize disregarded him and reiterated that he would continue with the “action”.⁶⁹⁵ It could be argued that this aggressive behavior was detrimental to the party branch in a city, especially when it came to winning over the local elites of the town and convincing them that MHP rule would underpin social and economic stability in the country.⁶⁹⁶

It was a fact that the party board and deputies saw the party as a serious contender for government in the forthcoming elections, especially after the rise in the party’s votes in the 1977 elections. Their focus was on party politics and on challenging their political rivals, especially Bülent Ecevit’s CHP, which obtained 42% in this election and formed the new government.⁶⁹⁷ The party deputies had difficult times in defending the physical confrontations and perpetuated violence young nationalists involved when the CHP deputies blasted the MHP and its representatives in the parliament, holding them responsible for these clashes.

As discussed in depth in the previous chapter, there were disagreements in the nationalist movement over the construction of nationalist discourse as well. The party board members and deputies held differing, sometimes conflicting, views of nationalism, but only a few of the party deputies between 1977 and 1980 were able to speak on nationalist politics in parliament, the others being ill-equipped to represent the party ideology.⁶⁹⁸ However, there was resentment among some of the board members about certain of the slogans embraced by the young nationalists; for example, they cautioned the leader against those that resembled the popular left-wing slogans of the time.⁶⁹⁹ More strikingly, most of the party board was anxious about the growing religiosity among the nationalist youth.⁷⁰⁰ As discussed previously, in the

⁶⁹⁵ Nevzat Kösoğlu, *Hatıralar*, pp. 217-230.

⁶⁹⁶ Some of the party board members complained that there were some people infiltrating into the *ülkü ocakları* branches and purposefully escalated the violence between the socialists and nationalists; see Yaşar Okuyan, *O Yıllar*, pp. 16-18; Nevzat Kösoğlu, *Hatıralar*, pp. 228-233. This is another example of the diminishing coordination amongst the party leadership and *ülkü ocakları* branches.

⁶⁹⁷ Nevzat Kösoğlu, *Hatıralar*, p. 282.

⁶⁹⁸ Sadi Somuncuoğlu and Taha Akyol, Interviews.

⁶⁹⁹ Sadi Somuncuoğlu, Interview. Somuncuoğlu narrates that in a funeral of a party representative young militants shouted: “Murderer capitalists will be held responsible”, a slogan employed by the left-wing militants.

⁷⁰⁰ Sadi Somuncuoğlu and Burhan Kavuncu, Interviews.

late 1970s young nationalists deemed themselves upholders of a “holy war” in which they were ready to sacrifice their lives to restore the order of God on earth. Eventually, even those board members who were devoted to religious conservative nationalism were annoyed by the extent to which religious symbols were being used in the political discourse of the ÜOD leadership.⁷⁰¹ It is clear that the banning of the *Nizam-ı Alem* journal in 1979 occurred due to complaints by such people about the paper, as Somuncuoğlu had asked Türkeş to read the articles in *Nizam-ı Alem* carefully and take any necessary measures. Later on it was decided that any article to be published in the journals⁷⁰² published by the ÜOD leadership should be subject to editorial review by Galip Erdem.⁷⁰³

At times when the tension between the party branches, the leadership and the *ülküçüler* rose too high, Türkeş played a mediating role. The *ocak* youth knew that Türkeş would favor them against the party representatives, and quite confidently felt a sense of superiority towards them.⁷⁰⁴ On the other hand, Türkeş strove to assure board members that their demands regarding the young *ülküçüler* would be fulfilled. To satisfy both camps he played some tricks, too; he often summoned the ÜOD leaders to be present at the party board meeting to account for their controversial activities involving violence, but he would invite the *ocak* leaders beforehand to explain what questions he would ask them the next day in front of the board, and taught them how to answer these questions.⁷⁰⁵ As the *ocak* leaders gave convincing answers at the board meeting, he would nod, saying “...you see, my friends they were innocent”, and thereby they would be exonerated before the party board.⁷⁰⁶ On the other hand, it seems that the party board members were not satisfied with Türkeş’s approach

⁷⁰¹ Sadi Somuncuoğlu, Interview.

⁷⁰² *Birliğe Çağrı*, published in late 1979 and 1980, was the next journal of the ÜOD leadership.

⁷⁰³ Sadi Somuncuoğlu, Interview; Lütfü Şehsuvaroğlu narrates the closure of *Nizam-ı Alem* and the launch of *Birliğe Çağrı* in detail, yet he does not mention the supervision of Galip Erdem over these publications. see Lütfü Şehsuvaroğlu, <http://ulkucuyazarlartirliigi.org/?p=964> (last accessed on 29 December 2012).

⁷⁰⁴ Burhan Kavuncu, Hasan Çağlayan and Musa Serdar Çelebi, Interviews.

⁷⁰⁵ Hasan Çağlayan, Interview.

⁷⁰⁶ Hasan Çağlayan, Interview.

towards violent clashes in which young militants were involved; Nevzat Kösoğlu narrates that when they complained to Türkeş about the rising number of deaths among young militants Türkeş's answer was "The commander has no time to cry over his losses".⁷⁰⁷

In private talks with young nationalists Türkeş was keen to draw a line between politics and *ülküçülük*, advising young nationalists to keep their idealist vision alive and stand up for it. He would confess to them that in the party there were people from different backgrounds with diverging intentions, some of whom could by no means understand their behavior.⁷⁰⁸ Party politics, therefore, was to be seen as a waste of time, and Türkeş suggested that *ocak* leaders and young nationalists should avoid it.⁷⁰⁹ Young nationalists recruited into the *ülkü ocakları* were "the stars in the sky, innocent and not corrupted by the poisonous tricks of politics".⁷¹⁰ When he was confronted with complaints about board members, his answer was striking:

"You are complaining about these people, but how many of them were trained in an *ülkü ocağı*? How many of them come from an *ocak*? These are people above a certain age that I brought together to run a political party. Do you think [giving some names] believe in the same *dava* as you?"⁷¹¹

By this kind of treatment he was motivating the young nationalists and making clear to them that he shared their concerns. Ultimately they could be assured that the *ülkü ocakları* were the real actors of the nationalist movement and the rest were supposed to fall in line with them.

III- Conclusion

All in all, the evolution of the nationalist movement proceeded along two

⁷⁰⁷ Nevzat Kösoğlu, *Hatıralar*, pp.231, 288.

⁷⁰⁸ Hasan Çağlayan and Musa Serdar Çelebi, Interviews.

⁷⁰⁹ Hasan Çağlayan, Interview.

⁷¹⁰ Hasan Çağlayan and Musa Serdar Çelebi, Interviews.

⁷¹¹ Hasan Çağlayan, Interview.

complementary but divergent axes: on the one hand the official party organization and on the other the wider fringes of the nationalist movement. Yet the nationalist movement, especially during the late 1970s, was in disarray because of the lack of coordination among the various branches of its organization. All branches of this structure, however, were linked to Alparslan Türkeş through personal connection. The party members fell short in meeting the expectations of young militants, who were in need of financial, legal and even logistical help. This pressure on the party board, who had high expectations for the elections due in 1981, put them into a delicate position between them parliamentary politics and para-military operations. The task of indoctrination of the increasing number of youngsters in the *ülkü ocakları* structure was obviously too much for them. Most of young nationalists sought for a decisive victory through physical struggle, which can be carried out in the flexible structure of the *ülkü ocakları*. The evolution of the party and youth organization can be read to some extent as a reaction to the socialist movement that dominated the universities, media and unions in the country for more than a decade; this is what the next chapter will look at.

Chapter 4

THE NATIONALIST MOVEMENT FACES THE SOCIALIST MOVEMENT

This chapter investigates the confrontation between the nationalist movement and the socialist movement in the late 1960s and 1970s. Based on the framework set out in the previous chapters, this chapter aims to demonstrate that certain patterns of political strategy and organization in the nationalist movement evolved in relation to the socialist movement. It argues that the party leadership, young militants and other nationalist organizations saw the socialists as their major enemy, but they differed among themselves as to their priorities in entering this confrontation and their perception of its eventual effects on them. There was not one single modus operandi in the various parts of the nationalist movement and young nationalists acquired a prestigious position in the movement as a result of the escalating struggle. The chapter uses primary sources and information gathered in interviews undertaken with the nationalist activists of the time.

The chapter starts with an analysis of the growth of the socialist movement in the universities, media and trade unions and in the state institutions in the 1960s. The next section looks at how the CKMP-MHP leadership orchestrated a socio-political movement to compete with the socialists, ascribing to itself the role of defending the ‘state, nation and religion’, and established nationalist organizations. The last section discusses the second stage of this confrontation in post-1971 politics during which ideological polarization deepened in various segments of society.

I-The Socialist Movement in the Wake of 27 May: 1960-1968

The 1961 Constitution granted certain rights and freedoms to civil society; asked by journalists whether they would draft a constitution resembling that of Nasserite Egypt, the head of the Constitutional Committee, Hıfzı Veldet Velidedeoğlu, declared that “never” in Turkey would such a model be put in force.⁷¹² Under the new constitution the governing party had no right to meddle in university affairs and civil organizations; trade unions especially were given a broader sphere of freedom.⁷¹³ The surge of a pluralist civil society was accompanied by the foundation of ideologically driven political parties and the question of underdevelopment and economic sovereignty rose to prominence among Turkish politicians, the educated elite and students.⁷¹⁴ Furthermore, American-Turkish relations were marred after the disagreement between the two countries over the clashes in Cyprus. American President Johnson’s letter, sent in June 1964, to İsmet İnönü, followed by İnönü’s reaction to this letter inflamed anti-American sentiments among the youth and intellectual circles.⁷¹⁵ Until 1968, socialist thought in Turkey was closely interlinked with Kemalism, which had a strong appeal among the intellectuals and students in the universities.⁷¹⁶ The *Yön* journal spearheaded this synthesis of Kemalism and socialist thinking and, as noted, the question of Turkey’s economic independence and industrialization started to receive extensive coverage in Kemalist as well as socialist publications.

⁷¹² Abdi İpekçi and Ömer Sami Coşar, *İhtilalin İç Yüzü*, p. 256.

⁷¹³ In addition to this, the labor law that was passed in July 1963 gave workers new rights. Jacob Landau, *Radical Politics in Modern Turkey* (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1974), pp. 10-11; also see articles 35-53 of the 1961 Constitution.

⁷¹⁴ Kerem Ünüvar, “Öğrenci Hareketleri ve Sol (Student Movements and the Left)” in *MTSD*, Vol.VIII, pp. 811-847.

⁷¹⁵ Turhan Feyizoğlu, *Gençlik Liderleri Konuşuyor (Youth Leaders Speak)* (İstanbul: Ozan, 2010), p. 60; Oğuzhan Müftüoğlu, *Bitmeyen Yolculuk*, p. 31; Bedri Baykam, *68’li Yıllar: Eylemciler (68: Activists)* (İstanbul: İmge, 2008) p. 45. In this letter Johnson urged the Turkish government not to intervene in the conflict in Cyprus and noted that Nato would not protect Turkey if it engaged in confrontation with the USSR. See *Milliyet* 06 June 1964; Nasuh Uslu, *The Cyprus Question as an Issue of Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish-American Relations 1959-2003* (New York: Nova, 2003), pp. 49-50.

⁷¹⁶ Turhan Feyizoğlu, *Gençlik Liderleri Konuşuyor*, pp. 90-91,108, 206-210.

The TİP and the *Yön* Movement

The first socialist party in Turkey, the Turkish Labour Party (*Türkiye İşçi Partisi-TİP*), was founded on 13 February 1961 by the leading union leaders of the time. The following year they were joined by socialist thinkers and intellectuals such as Sadun Aren, Behice Boran, Fethi Naci and Mehmet Ali Aybar.⁷¹⁷ The union leaders still represented the majority within the party, but nominated Aybar, a university lecturer and lawyer, to the party leadership in 1962.⁷¹⁸ The TİP program, published in the same year, reflected the central importance of the working class within the party's policies and aimed to appeal to a wide range of social groups:

“The TİP is the political organization of the Turkish labor class, and of all other groups (peasant, monthly salaried, shopkeeper, those who have lower income, progressive youth and socialist intellectuals) around it.”⁷¹⁹

In the early days of its foundation the TİP had no representative in the Parliament or Senate. This structural impediment was removed when the former CKMP senator Niyazi Ağırnaslı and the senator Esat Çağa joined the party in 1963.⁷²⁰ These two members added weight to the parliamentary capacity of the TİP; only Senate members had the right to refer government legislation to the Supreme Court, and the party launched a massive campaign for the revocation of articles 141-142 of the Turkish Penal Code, which rendered communist propaganda unlawful.⁷²¹ The party had as yet no means to open branches across the country or run a propaganda campaign on a mass scale. It did not participate in the 1963 general elections and in local elections only managed to appear in nine cities, where it failed to

⁷¹⁷ Jacob Landau, *Radical Politics*, pp. 123-128.

⁷¹⁸ Doğan Özgüden, “Türkiye İşçi Partisi'nin Kuruluşu (The Foundation of the Turkish Labour Party)” in *STMA*, pp. 1998-1999.

⁷¹⁹ Doğan Özgüden, “Türkiye İşçi Partisi'nin Kuruluşu”, p. 1999; Ferruh Bozbeyli, *Parti Programları*, pp. 239-242.

⁷²⁰ Later on Esat Çağa left the party in 1964; Jacob Landau, *Radical Politics*, p. 124.

⁷²¹ Doğan Özgüden, “Türkiye İşçi Partisi'nin Kuruluşu”, p. 1999.

achieve any considerable success.⁷²² Its most serious weakness was the inability to amass a wider working class support; the leaders of *TÜRK-İŞ*, the biggest workers' union confederation of the time, with a clear anti-communist stance, were not attracted by the TİP's ideological commitments.⁷²³ The party gradually solidified its ideological position; it advocated the transition from a capitalist economic model to a state-led industrialization within a strict state plan and land reform to break down the hegemony of big landowners in favor of landless peasants.⁷²⁴ The party's pledge to revoke the treaties signed with the US matched rising anti-imperialist sentiments among the youth and working class.⁷²⁵ The results of the 1965 elections marked a successful step for the TİP, which acquired 3% of votes and sent 15 deputies to parliament, in its claim to pursue socialist ends through democratic means.

Whilst the socialist movement of the early 1960s was headed by the TİP in parliamentary politics, the educated leftist elite clustered around the *Yön* (Direction) journal. In the realm of socialist thinking, the *Yön* Journal, founded in 1961, made a critical contribution to the evolution of socialism in Turkey in the 1960s. In the *Yön* journal's first issue 164 people from a wide range of backgrounds signed the “*Yön* Declaration”, which received more than five hundred signatures in subsequent issues.⁷²⁶ Nearly a year later, in 1963, these socialist intellectuals and journalists formed the Socialist Culture Society, where they hosted seminars and conferences. Many of its contributors had been frustrated by the DP's populism, which, they believed, had made “regressive” concessions to popular religious sentiments to the detriment of Mustafa Kemal's westernization reforms; they also

⁷²² Due to legal obstructions, neither did they participate in the Senate elections. A political party had to have branches in at least fifteen provinces to participate in the elections.

⁷²³ Jacob Landau, *Radical Politics*, pp. 92, 262; the *TÜRK-İŞ* leaders had organized a mass demonstration in 1962 to defame communism, *Milliyet*, 25 December 1962.

⁷²⁴ See Jacob Landau, *Radical Politics*, p. 145, 150-151.

⁷²⁵ *Türkiye İşçi Partisi 1965 Milletvekili Seçimi Radyo Konuşmaları (TİP 1965 Election Speeches)* (İstanbul: Sosyal Adalet Yayınları, Ankara: 1965) p. 8

⁷²⁶ *Yön* 1 (December 1961); Jacob Landau, *Radical Politics*, p. 52.

lauded the 27 May coup.⁷²⁷ They maintained that military intervention to get rid of the Democrat Party was inevitable, but felt disappointment with the reforms promised, but not implemented, by the NUC.⁷²⁸ To overcome this failure it was suggested that ‘‘progressive’’ reforms should be implemented by a military-bureaucratic elite, guided by ‘‘reformist’’ intellectuals.⁷²⁹ The *Yön* authors asserted the superiority of socialism to capitalism; but it was a sophisticated treatment of socialism, differentiating it from Soviet and Chinese communism, so that it could be co-opted into the idea that the Kemalist revolution, which had been left unfinished, should be completed.⁷³⁰ In other words, the *Yön* movement was an attempt to redefine Kemalist goals in concord with socialist creeds.

The semi-militarist model of the *Yön* movement drew on two hypotheses: that current socio-economic malaise in Turkey could only be healed through state-led development policies, and as long as structural flaws persisted in the country there was no chance of a progressive party winning elections.⁷³¹ The foremost ideologue of the *Yön* movement, Doğan Avcıoğlu⁷³², held the view that socialism was single in theory, but in application took three different forms: Eastern socialism, Western socialism and socialism in under-developed countries.⁷³³ He criticized the model the TİP espoused, because, he maintained, the smooth transition to socialism through democracy, as exemplified by the European social democrats, would not work in Turkey. To him, Turkey was neither a part of the Western bloc nor the

⁷²⁷ Ertuğrul Kürkçü, ‘‘Kapitalizm ile Komünizm Arasında: Geleneksel Aydınlar, Yön Hareketi (Between Capitalism and Communism: Traditional Intellectuals: The *Yön* Movement)’’ in *STMA*, pp. 2006-2008.

⁷²⁸ Ertuğrul Kürkçü quotes Mümtaz Soysal, one of the leading *Yön* thinkers, who said: ‘‘The DP’s coming to power meant that the government in Turkey had passed to tradesmen, landowners and the bourgeoisie, whereas 27 May meant that the vanguard of republican cadres, or at least its mindset, returned. 27 May was a revolution, but a half-completed revolution’’; Ertuğrul Kürkçü, ‘‘Kapitalizm ile Komünizm Arasında’’; pp. 2006-2008.

⁷²⁹ Doğan Avcıoğlu argued that the history of Turkey was the history of so called ‘‘vibrant forces’’, composed of the graduates and students of the Military Academy and the Faculties of Medicine and Public Administration (*Harbiye, Tıbbiye, Mülkiye*). *Devrim* (January 1970); Ertuğrul Kürkçü, ‘‘Kapitalizm ile Komünizm Arasında’’, pp. 2006-2008.

⁷³⁰ See Landau, *Radical Politics*, pp. 51-55; Gökhan Atılğan, ‘‘Yön-Devrim Hareketi (The *Yön*-Revolution Movement)’’ in *MTSD*, Vol VIII., pp. 615-630.

⁷³¹ The *Yön* Declaration, *Yön* 1 (December 1961).

⁷³² Avcıoğlu had studied in France and worked in several journals before 1960. He was elected to be a member to the constitutive assembly from the CHP in 1961.

⁷³³ Ertuğrul Kürkçü, ‘‘Kapitalizm ile Komünizm Arasında’’, pp. 2006-2008.

Eastern bloc, and therefore should turn its face to third-world countries, where the army still retained considerable power in politics.⁷³⁴ Highly inspired by the success of the Baath model in the region, the *Yön* authors encouraged the military officers to take the leading role ahead of other revolutionary forces.⁷³⁵

The Rise of Socialist Student Activism

The transition to democracy after the coup was arguably completed when the 1965 election was successfully held and resulted in a resounding victory for the AP, which obtained 52% of the total votes.⁷³⁶ The political landscape of the 1950s duplicated itself with a strong liberal-conservative government against the CHP opposition. In the realm of international politics, however, the recent success of political movements fuelled by anti-Americanism in the Arab world had demonstrated that the region was no longer safe territory for the Americans.⁷³⁷ The Western bloc could have lost the Middle East to the Soviets if a socialist regime was established in Turkey, and this shifting balance of power in the region at the expense of the Western bloc was exacerbated with the rising student movements in Turkey after 1967.

Despite the resounding AP victory in the elections and Süleyman Demirel's friendly connections with the Americans, 1965 marked the expansion of the socialist movement in various respects. The leftist students had already started to show a strong presence on university campuses in the early 1960s, gaining the control of student clubs, especially those

⁷³⁴ See *Devrim* (Revolution), founded in 1969 by Doğan Avcıoğlu and some of the *Yön* authors, from October 1969 to January 1970; Ertuğrul Kürkçü, “Kapitalizm ile Komünizm Arasında” pp. 2006-2008.

⁷³⁵ Numan Esin notes that *Yön* thinkers were heavily under the influence of Baath Regimes; Numan Esin, Interview. Also see Hasan Cemal, *Kimse Kızmasın Kendimi Yazdım* (İstanbul: Doğan, 2008), pp. 214-216.

⁷³⁶ See Appendix 2

⁷³⁷ William Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East* (Oxford: Westview, 2000), pp. 314-336.

of political science faculties.⁷³⁸ Those students eager to hear and read more about socialist ideology faced no difficulty in obtaining this knowledge, thanks to the rapidly increasing number of socialist publications, most of which were translated from a Western language.⁷³⁹ So too, the frequent appearance of socialist intellectuals in the media and the atmosphere of freedom, as a result of the 1961 constitution, across the university lecture halls brought socialist views even greater popularity.⁷⁴⁰ According to fieldwork carried out in the mid-1960s, more than 60% of students preferred socialism to other ideologies and saw it as a more equitable system.⁷⁴¹ Student adherence to mass parties eroded somewhat as the TİP managed to become a popular political organization across the university campuses.⁷⁴²

On the other hand, until the early 1960s the university youth had predominantly been in favor of Kemalist reforms.⁷⁴³ University clubs run by socialist students did not abandon Kemalist tenets right away, opening the way for a merger of Kemalism with socialist views.⁷⁴⁴ These student clubs united in 1965 in the Federation of Thinking and Idea Clubs (*Fikir ve Düşünce Klüpleri Federasyonu*, FKF), easing the building of a network among socialist student movements, which expanded the scope of student activism in universities.⁷⁴⁵ Some CHP members such as Sırrı Hocaoğlu, Cemal Reşit Eyüboğlu and Cahit Tanyol were in alignment with these groups, but İsmet İnönü stayed away from such ideologically driven politics.⁷⁴⁶ Viewed against this background, İnönü's public description

⁷³⁸ The number of university students rose from 65,000 in 1960 to 159,000 in 1971; see Bill Williamson, *Education and Social Change in Egypt and Turkey* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), p. 205. See Artun Ünsal *Türkiye İşçi Partisi (Labor Party of Turkey)* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları), pp. 273-285.

⁷³⁹ Jacob Landau, *Radical Politics*, pp. 23-26.

⁷⁴⁰ Jacob Landau, *Radical Politics*, pp. 21-35.

⁷⁴¹ Jacob Landau, *Radical Politics*, pp. 33-35; the survey, carried out in eight faculties of Ankara University, showed that 63.4% of all students were inclined towards left-wing views. For the full report of the survey see Özer Ozankaya, *Üniversite Öğrencilerinin Siyasal Yönelimleri (Political Orientations of University Students)* (Ankara: 1966).

⁷⁴² Jacob Landau, *Radical Politics*, pp. 33-35. Furthermore, the *Yön* journal was the favorite magazine among student leaders; 40% of these students read *Yön*. Jacob Landau, *Radical Politics in Modern Turkey*, pp. 50-51.

⁷⁴³ Turhan Feyizoğlu, *Gençlik Liderleri Konuşuyor*, pp. 41-43, 60-63, 215-216.

⁷⁴⁴ Kerem Ünüvar, 'Fikir Klüpleri Federasyonu' in *MTSD*, Vol VIII, pp. 823-825.

⁷⁴⁵ Kerem Ünüvar, 'Fikir Klüpleri Federasyonu', pp. 823-830.

⁷⁴⁶ See Kemal Karpat, 'Ideology in Turkey After the Revolution of 1960', in *Social Change and Politics in Turkey: A Structural-Historical Analysis* ed. Kemal Karpat (Leiden: Brill, 1973) p. 360; When he was asked

in the election campaign of 1965 of his party's position as "left of center" marked a very dramatic change in the party discourse.⁷⁴⁷ This maneuver was backed by Bülent Ecevit, then CHP Secretary General, who had gained power in the party and was determined to accommodate the party structure and ideological discourse to the popular currents of the day.⁷⁴⁸ Nevertheless, İnönü remained at the helm, and his damaged credibility after long years of single party rule and his failure to use an inspirational discourse were serious shortcomings for the party's ability to appeal to young activists.

The Six Day War between Arab and Israeli forces in that year changed the political landscape in the Middle East again; it notoriously undermined the reputation of socialist Arab leaders and caused anti-imperialist sentiments to flare up across the region once more, resulting in the foundation of the socialist paramilitary PLO organization.⁷⁴⁹ In 1967, two years after the AP's victory, ideological polarization in Turkey was accelerating too. Left-wing students started to feel disenchanted with the democratic socialism of the TİP; internal frictions that had emerged in the 1966 party congress split the TİP into two major camps: those favoring "democratic Turkish socialism" (*Demokratik Türk Sosyalizmi*) and those wanting "national democratic revolution" (*MDD-Milli Demokratik Devrim*).⁷⁵⁰ The MDD faction, which drew on the activism of young socialists at large, lost its bid to seize the party administration and continued to fight the party leadership in protest against its pacifism.⁷⁵¹ The MDD's challenge to the party leadership was joined by criticism from Doğan

about his party's political stance İnönü replied "our party is a statist party", *Milliyet*, 14 May 1965; likewise in the opening speech of the 18th party congress in 1966 he said: "The CHP is not a socialist party", *Milliyet*, 19 June 1966.

⁷⁴⁷ *Milliyet*, 29 July 1965; yet as indicated in the previous footnote he was keen not to be aligned with socialist ideology.

⁷⁴⁸ Necmi Erdoğan, "1970'larda Sol Popülizm Üzerine Notlar (Notes on Leftist Populism in the 1970s)" in *MTSD*, Vol. VIII, pp. 262-275; also see Feroz Ahmad, *Turkish Experiment in Democracy*, p. 252.

⁷⁴⁹ Eugene Rogan, *The Arabs* (New York: Basic, 2009), pp. 310-325.

⁷⁵⁰ Mihri Belli, "Milli Demokratik Devrim" (National Democratic Revolution) in *STMA*, pp. 2144-2145; Abdurrahman Atalay, "1961-1969: Türkiye İşçi Partisi (1961-1969: Turkish Labor Party)", in *STMA*, pp. 2142-2143, 2147.

⁷⁵¹ Mehmet Ali Aybar, *TİP Tarihi (The History of the TİP)* (İstanbul: BDS, 1988), pp. 67-68, p. 63. The party leadership held that the historical and social contingencies of Turkey should be taken into account and socialist class struggle should stick with democratic means, whereas the *MDD* view, led by old left-wing militant Mihri

Avcioğlu and his friends, who had long been skeptical of the TİP's policies.⁷⁵² As noted, Avcioğlu had serious doubts about the prospect of democratic socialism in Turkey and advocated top-down revolution led by the military forces and intellectuals. Indeed, Avcioğlu's views appealed to those military officers and some former members of the NUC as well.⁷⁵³ The foundation of the *Devrim* (Revolution) journal in 1969, where Avcioğlu served as editor-in-chief, was a significant step in forging this network between left-wing scholars and military officers, as well as some student leaders aligned with the MDD.⁷⁵⁴ In sum, from 1968 onwards the revolutionist view grew among the socialist groups at the expense of parliamentarianism.

To link this brief introduction on the evolution of the socialist movement with the formation of nationalist politics, it would be useful to reflect upon the early years of the CKMP again. Indeed, drawing on available sources from socialist publications of the early 1960s, especially that of *Yön*, it could hardly be argued that the CKMP party program offered a vision conflicting with socialist ends. As discussed in Chapter 2, the CKMP program of 1965 was written by two retired soldiers involved in 27 May, and to a certain degree reflected views concurring with the left. The party program boldly underlined that national independence could not be sustained without economic independence, and that the state should play a supervising role in advancing industrial investment.⁷⁵⁵ The presence of foreign investment in certain sectors of the Turkish economy was observed with suspicion; the *Yön*

Belli and youngsters around him, saw revolution as the sole way of achieving the socialist state; Gökhan Atılğan, "Mihri Belli" in *MTSD*, Vol. III, pp. 552-554, 565.

⁷⁵² Doğan Avcioğlu, "TİP'e Dair... (On the TİP)", *Yön* 168 (June, 1966) p. 168; Doğan Avcioğlu, "Bir Sosyalist Stratejinin Esasları", *Yön* 185 (October, 1966), p. 185.

⁷⁵³ Oğuzhan Müftoğlu, *Bitmeyen Yolculuk*, p. 44-46; Hasan Cemal, *Kimse Kızmasın*, pp. 37-39.

⁷⁵⁴ Hasan Cemal, *Kimse Kızmasın*, pp.197-202; Bedri Baykam, *68'liler*, p. 287; Oğuzhan Müftoğlu, *Bitmeyen Yolculuk*, pp. 44-46.

⁷⁵⁵ Türkeş was very much concerned with the question of development, too. In his speech to young nationalist students about the socio-economic problems of the country in 1969 he said: "Modern nations are organized according to modern technologies of production; for the Turkish nation economic development is an issue of technical, social and occupational development in comparison to what advanced economies have achieved. Turkish society will be reorganized in accordance with modern production techniques and the scientific revolution." Metin Turhan, *Ülkü Ocakları*, pp. 19-25.

journal castigated American companies, and the Turkish business elite representing these organizations in Turkey, whilst the CKMP party program pledged the protection of domestic investors against international capital.⁷⁵⁶ The unity of the state and nation was of primary importance for both sides; Avcıoğlu warned that he would stand against any separatist movement in Eastern Turkey in the name of socialism and the CKMP program stressed the importance of this issue in its fourth article.⁷⁵⁷ Moreover, the advancement of Kemalist westernization reforms, despite the fact that their content was not clearly agreed upon, stood as the ultimate goal of both groups.⁷⁵⁸ Both sides urged the re-appropriation of secular values in party politics in the face of right-wing populism that attempted to appeal to the religious masses.⁷⁵⁹

Therefore it was no surprise to see Numan Esin, one of the authors of the party program, pen articles in *Yön* in 1966 criticizing economic dependency on the west and suggesting a new perspective in Turkish foreign policy, seeing no future in NATO membership.⁷⁶⁰ Converging with *Yön*'s positive view of the avant-garde forces of society (military-bureaucracy-intellectuals), Türkeş's insistence on training national elites reflected the view that the elites of the country should guide the direction of social transformation.⁷⁶¹ His early statements in the wake of 27 May, praising secular Kemalist reformism, hinted that he held an identical vision of society and politics to that described in the pages of *Yön*, with the exception of his Pan-Turkist ambitions and obvious commitment to the Western alliance.⁷⁶² In parallel, *Yön* published an essay on Türkeş in 1965 and expressed appreciation of the CKMP party

⁷⁵⁶ *CKMP Parti Programı*, p. 28

⁷⁵⁷ *CKMP Parti Programı*, pp. 4-5; *CKMP Seçim Bildirgesi* 1965; *Yön* 194 (December 1966).

⁷⁵⁸ Numan Esin, Interview.

⁷⁵⁹ See *Devrim* 5 (December 1969) and *CKMP Parti Programı*, pp. 8-9.

⁷⁶⁰ Numan Esin, Interview.

⁷⁶¹ *Devlet* 17 May 1971, 11 June 1973, 18 June 1973.

⁷⁶² See the discussion on Türkeş's early views on nationalist ideology in Chapter 2.

program; to *Yön*, Türkeş's view of nationalism did not resemble fascism but romantic nationalism.⁷⁶³

The blurred boundaries between these groups became more clearly demarcated after 1967. Türkeş pushed the party to hard-line anti-communism, whereas the *Yön* movement leaned to capitalize on left-wing activism in the universities and revolutionary colonels in the army.⁷⁶⁴ Türkeş no longer tolerated ideological deviations in the party; he was deeply incensed by a speech Numan Esin gave to the Socialist Culture Society against NATO.⁷⁶⁵ Indeed, following his departure from the CKMP, Numan Esin approached the Avcıoğlu clique and worked in collaboration with them until 1971.⁷⁶⁶ As discussed in Chapter 2, Rıfat Baykal and Muzaffer Özdağ were keen that corporatism should stay as one of the defining pillars of the party ideology; in the 1969 congress they proposed *Köylü İşçi Partisi* as the new name of the party instead of *Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*.⁷⁶⁷ In many of their speeches they addressed the question of underdevelopment and the dependency of the Turkish economy on advanced economies, claiming that structural flaws were leading the country into mass poverty.⁷⁶⁸ Nevertheless, from 1967 onwards the CKMP leadership, especially Alparslan Türkeş, put the question of socialism at the top of their political agenda; other political debates on the economy, foreign policy, education and culture were subordinated to this major problem that had to be dealt with first.

In parliamentary politics, the CKMP leadership castigated the TİP, on the grounds that it advocated socialist internationalism and defended the rights of ethnic minorities in Turkey; in his speech to the 1967 CKMP Congress, Türkeş attacked the TİP: “Now the CKMP is in a ferocious struggle against malicious movements disposed to destroy the unity and integrity of

⁷⁶³ *Yön*, 123 (August 1965).

⁷⁶⁴ For the views of Avcıoğlu at this period see Jacob Landau, *Radical Politics*, pp. 79-86.

⁷⁶⁵ Numan Esin, Interview.

⁷⁶⁶ Numan Esin, Interview.

⁷⁶⁷ Hulusi Turgut, *Şahinlerin Dansı*, p. 399.

⁷⁶⁸ Rıfat Baykal, *CKMP Seçim Konuşmaları; Milli Hareket 2* (November 1966).

the Turkish nation''.⁷⁶⁹ The relations of the CKMP leadership with the CHP were no less problematic. Türkeş and his friends felt a deep hostility to İnönü, whom they saw as the man behind the plot that had sent them into exile.⁷⁷⁰ Also, as discussed in Chapter 1, in the view of Türkeş and some nationalists, İnönü had hampered the nationalists even earlier in the events of 1944 and had been responsible for the spread of socialist ideology across the country by socialist teachers in the Village Institutes.⁷⁷¹ Actually İnönü's political stance could have appealed to the CKMP leadership with his statist views and aversion to the Soviet influence over Turkey, but the baggage of old personal rivalries overshadowed these convergences. In the 1960s the dividing lines of politics were still drawn as much by personal rivalries as by conflicting politico-social views.

II- Socialists vs. Nationalists: First Confrontation (1968-1971)

The MHP leadership encouraged the involvement of university students and young people in political activism to counter left-wing groups after 1968, yet the nature of the struggle gave some young militants a lot of free space to build their own reputation and authority in the movement. Türkeş and Taşer were determined to challenge the increasing popularity of socialism among civil servants and military officers, and young militants were eager to take on this mission to "defend the state", but they were not as experienced as their leaders in observing the power relations in the higher ranks of the state apparatus. For young nationalists the struggle was as much about life style as ideology; the inclination of young nationalists towards conservative nationalist doctrine made them more sensitive to certain behavioral and cultural patterns to which the older party members paid less attention.

⁷⁶⁹ Alparslan Türkeş, 1967 Congress Speech in *Milli Hareket* 17 (December 1967).

⁷⁷⁰ Numan Esin, Interview; see the discussion on the exile of Fourteen in Chapter 2.

⁷⁷¹ See Nejdet Sancar, *İnönü ile Hesaplaşma (The Showdown with İnönü)* (Ankara: Afşin, 1973).

Actually, growing student activism and the increasing number of civil organizations were indicative of the growing level of democratic awareness, but the tide of civil movements shifted to a different direction after 1968. Viewed from another perspective, the course of developments from 1968 to 1971 exposed the flaws in the culture of liberal democracy in Turkey.

Disenchantment with Parliamentary Politics

The student invasion of the Sorbonne in 1968 instigated a wave of student militancy across the globe. The motivation of demonstrations varied in each country; American youth protested against the Vietnam War and the widespread oppression of black people in the country, students in Germany demanded more freedom in the universities and equality of opportunity, and French students were determined to overthrow the De Gaulle government, which symbolized to them corrupt power relations sustaining inequality in French society.⁷⁷² In Turkey students had shown up in anti-government demonstrations in the late 1950s and mid 1960s, but after 1968 the leftist students started to hold anti-government demonstrations in the streets and, more frequently, to stage university boycotts and force the cancellation of lectures, all of which indicates that the events of 1968 across the globe brought fresh inspiration to student activism in Turkey.⁷⁷³

From 1968 onwards the TİP started to lose its dominant position in the socialist movement. Fractious conflicts had already crippled cohesion in the party and the fact that the majority of the leadership supported the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 weakened their credibility further.⁷⁷⁴ Many students had left the TİP youth organization to join MDD

⁷⁷² See Cornils Ingo and Sarah Waters; (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2010); Gerd-Rainer Hord, *The Spirit of '68: Rebellion in Western Europe and North America, 1956-1976* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

⁷⁷³ Bağış Erten, “Türkiye’de 68 (‘68 in Turkey)” in *MTSD*, Vol. VIII, pp. 838-840

⁷⁷⁴ See Artun Ünsal, *Türkiye İşçi Partisi*, pp. 10, 283; Ümit Fırat, “Çekoslovakya’nın 12 Eylül’ü Sovyet Tankları ile Yapıldı” (Czechoslovakia’s 12 September was carried out by Soviet

movement⁷⁷⁵, which became increasingly attractive for the socialist youngsters with its revolutionary discourse, and in the same year control of FKF was taken over by MDD supporters.⁷⁷⁶ In accordance with this ideological shift, at the 1969 FKF Congress the federation changed its name to DEV-GENÇ (*Devrimci Gençlik*-Revolutionary Youth), and became the first collective student body to subscribe to the revolutionary cause.⁷⁷⁷ As a final blow to parliamentary socialism, the TİP lost thirteen of its fifteen deputies in the 1969 elections and was reduced to being a political lightweight.⁷⁷⁸

The CHP leadership was unable to fill the gap left by the TİP. The party had long sided with the educated elites of the country, who appreciated the CHP's will to defend Kemalist reforms. The party leadership was aware that the party was losing ground among students and leftist intellectuals but was not able to reverse this trend. The secretary general Bülent Ecevit had made a bid to give the party discourse a social democratic tone to catch the wave of revolutionary sentiments, but his insistence that the party would appeal to the working class and ideological electorate with the left-of-center discourse proved to be in vain; the 1969 elections showed that the CHP was far from regaining its pre-1960 position, as it performed slightly worse than in 1965.⁷⁷⁹ The link between students and the CHP was utterly broken when Ecevit condemned student activism in the universities. Talking to the press in 1969 after the events at ODTÜ (the Middle East Technical University), a stronghold of leftist students, where left-wing activists had invaded the campus, Ecevit called the socialist students “a small group of militants and mobs bullying people, who aim to impose fascist rule,

Tanks’’, <http://bianet.org/bianet/bianet/109110-cekoslovakya-nin-12-eylul-u-bizzat-sovyet-tanklariyla-yapildi> (Accessed on 16 May 2012).

⁷⁷⁵ After young militants backed by the TİP lost control of the FKF in the 1969 congress to militants from the MDD clique, members of the MDD clique were gradually expelled from the TİP. See Artun Ünsal, *Türkiye İşçi Partisi*, pp. 282-286.

⁷⁷⁶ Kerem Ünüvar, ‘‘Fikir Klüpleri Federasyonu’’, pp. 827-828; Turhan Feyizoğlu, *Gençlik Liderleri Konuşuyor*, pp. 126-140.

⁷⁷⁷ Kerem Ünüvar, ‘‘Türkiye Devrimci Gençlik Federasyonu’’ in *MTSD*, Vol VIII, pp. 830-834.

⁷⁷⁸ Abdurrahman Atalay, ‘‘1961-1969: Türkiye İşçi Partisi’’, pp. 2142-2143, 2147.

⁷⁷⁹ Feroz Ahmad, *Turkish Experiment in Democracy*, p. 252; See Bülent Ecevit, *Bu Düzen Değişmelidir (This Order Must Change)* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, 2009) and *Ortanın Solu (Left of Centre)* (İstanbul: Kim Yayınları, 1966).

abolishing democracy” and accused them of being “in collaboration with secret powers who aim to divide the Turkish nation.”⁷⁸⁰

Excluded from the socialist party in parliament and snubbed by the centre left, student activists turned their backs on parliamentarianism.⁷⁸¹ The frequency of public demonstrations and campus boycotts, causing physical confrontations with the security forces, dramatically increased. From 1969 onwards, the making of a nexus among leftist intellectuals, university students and a group of high-ranking generals from the army was under way. At the centre of this juncture there were retired NUC members, including some of those who had been expelled from the Committee with Alparslan Türkeş.⁷⁸²

Deeply anxious of a possible repetition of 27 May, the AP government took certain steps in order to forestall this network’s growth; on 12 December 1968 the parliamentary immunity of five former NUC members⁷⁸³ was removed on the grounds that they were allegedly in contact with a secret organization, the “National Revolutionary Army”, in the army.⁷⁸⁴ On the other hand, the Doğan Avcıoğlu clique continued to publish articles and commentaries on the “progressive (*ilerici*) role” played by military forces in Arab and Latin American countries in *Devrim* (Revolution) from 1969 to 1971.⁷⁸⁵ They also sought to draw left-wing student activists closer to the Kemalist revolutionary discourse; in fact, socialist student leaders of the time, such as Deniz Gezmiş, felt inspired by the Kemalist Revolution

⁷⁸⁰ *STMA*, pp. 2134-36.

⁷⁸¹ Kemal Karpat, “Political Developments in Turkey, 1950-1970”, *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 8. No. 3.(1972), p. 367; in this shift of direction the *Yön* movement again made a significant contribution. Doğan Avcıoğlu, for instance, wrote in 1969: “...Parliamentarianism is a system helping Anglo-Saxon interests...a coalition of extreme conservative forces and their foreign allies”, *Devrim* 5 (December 1969).

⁷⁸² Murat Belge, *Linç Kültürünün Tarihsel Kökeni: Milliyetçilik (Historical Origin of the Lynch Culture: Nationalism)* (İstanbul: Agore, 2006), pp. 162-170; Hasan Cemal, *Kimse Kızmasın*, pp. 30-34, 55-57.

⁷⁸³ According to the 1961 constitution former NUC members were made members of the Senate.

⁷⁸⁴ These five senators were: Sezai Okan, Mucip Ataklı, Ekrem Acuner, Şükran Özkaya and Suphi Karaman; *Milliyet*, 13 December 1968.

⁷⁸⁵ Avcıoğlu maintained that army members should not stay away from politics, because the revolutionary army forces had been the reality of modern Turkish history for a hundred years, *Devrim* (June, 1970). That Mustafa Kemal was a member of a secret revolutionary organization in the army in the late Ottoman period and that this group managed to overthrow Abdulhamid II was appreciated *Devrim* (December 1970); declarations released by Revolutionary Army Forces, a secret organization in the army, were published several times in *Devrim*.

and its commitment to national independence.⁷⁸⁶ Yet ideological splits sometimes arose among the revolutionary groups, a problem with which the *Yön* movement dealt seriously by undertaking a two-sided mission: it sought to make radical soldiers sure that the revolution would operate independently of the Soviet sphere of influence, and to explain to socialist young militants that without the assistance of the army a socialist revolution was unachievable.⁷⁸⁷

The Involvement of Youth in Politics and Violence

It has been so far underlined that there was a propensity to use violence among the nationalist youth, yet it was also a fact that many left-wing activists had a similar tendency. Some socialist groups justified the use of the gun and “revolutionary violence” (*devrimci şiddet*) to achieve revolution; the Foundational Statement of THKP-C (Turkish People’s Liberation Party-Front- Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Partisi Cephesi) in May 1971 read:

“...Against the yoke of imperialism and aggression of counter-revolution, there was no other solution but to use the gun. Our party saw the path of salvation in people’s armed warfare”.⁷⁸⁸

They not only clashed with the police and nationalists, but perpetrated aggression towards foreign workers in international companies.⁷⁸⁹ This attitude started to become evident during the visits of the American 6th Fleet to Turkey in 1968; American soldiers were attacked and beaten by socialist students in the streets.⁷⁹⁰ The most serious incident took place

⁷⁸⁶ Süleyman Kocabaş, *Bir Kuşağın Dramı (The Tragedy of a Generation)* (İstanbul: Vatan, 2004), p. 277; Bedri Baykam, *68’li Yıllar*, p. 67, 288, Deniz Gezmiş and his friends led a “Mustafa Kemal march” from Samsun to Ankara; Turhan Feyizoğlu, *Deniz: Bir İsyancının İzleri (Deniz: Tracks of a Rebel)* (İstanbul: Ozan, 2005), p. 440.

⁷⁸⁷ Hasan Cemal, *Kimse Kızmasın*, pp. 30-34; articles and interviews in *Devrim* encouraging left-wing student activists in 1970 and 1971 were striking; some of these texts were authored by former NUC members such as Cemal Madanoğlu and Sami Küçük. Backing the guerilla movements led by students, for instance, it was underlined that the Turkish Independence War was guerilla warfare too. *Devrim* (February, 1970).

⁷⁸⁸ *THKP-C Kuruluş Bildirisi (The Foundational Statement of the THKP-C)* (Ankara: 1969); also see Turhan Feyizoğlu, *Gençlik Liderleri Konuşuyor*, pp. 187-189.

⁷⁸⁹ Four workers in an American company were kidnapped by Deniz Gezmiş and his friends in 1971. *Milliyet*, 10 March 1971.

⁷⁹⁰ *Milliyet*, 18 July 1968-20 July 1968.

in July 1968 when more than a dozen soldiers were thrown into the Bosphorus from the coast of Dolmabahçe.⁷⁹¹

The nationalists considered this aggression a part of the political trap designed by Soviet imperialism to make Turkey “fall” into the socialist bloc.⁷⁹² The following year, as mentioned in Chapter 2, in the days before the biggest demonstration to be organized by socialist groups against the 6th Fleet, conservative newspapers called for a halt to the “atheist-communist” challenge.⁷⁹³ When the socialist protestors gathered in Taksim to protest against the 6th Fleet on 16 February 1969 another group filled Beyazıt Square and the first serious physical confrontation between the groups broke out, causing several deaths and casualties on each side.⁷⁹⁴

Shortly after FKF changed its name to DEV-GENÇ a group of socialist students visited the guerrilla camps in Palestine. These activists admired Che Guevara and his paramilitary guerrillas’ success in toppling the government in Chile and were eager to receive guerrilla training.⁷⁹⁵ The guerrilla camps in Palestine, established by Fatah, which led the Palestinian resistance movement against Israel, appealed to them; besides, fighting against Israel meant to fight against American imperialism. They set off for Palestine to join the Fatah forces and spent some time in camps to familiarize themselves with guerrilla tactics.⁷⁹⁶ After having trained in these camps they returned to Turkey in 1969 and early 1970, but some of them were arrested on the border by the police.⁷⁹⁷ Their stories found a wide audience in both socialist and nationalist circles; socialist activists raised their expectations about the prospect

⁷⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹² Alparslan Türkeş “ Milli Dış Politika (National Foreign Policy)” in Metin Turhan, *Ülkü Ocakları*, p. 49.

⁷⁹³ *Bugün*, 15 February 1969.

⁷⁹⁴ *Milliyet*, 17 February 1969

⁷⁹⁵ Bedri Baykam, *68’li Yıllar*, p. 84; Hasan Cemal, *Kimse Kızmasın*, pp. 90-92; Turhan Feyizoğlu, *Gençlik Liderleri Konuşuyor*, pp. 170-171.

⁷⁹⁶ Ömer Özökmenler, “1960’ların Enternasyonalizmi veya Türkiye’li Devrimcilerin Filistin Çıkarması” (The Internationalism of the 1960s or the Turkish Revolutionists’ Palestine Campaign” in *STMA*, pp. 2138-2139.

⁷⁹⁷ Turhan Feyizoğlu, *Gençlik Liderleri Konuşuyor*, pp. 170-171.

of a Chilean-like experience in Turkey, whereas the MHP leadership and young nationalists released declarations criticizing it:

“These communists hold people’s trials as Mao did in China, beating and threatening students and scholars. They put up pictures of Mao, Che and Lenin on the walls of the university campus, hoping to copy the communist Fatah organization in Turkey”.⁷⁹⁸

Young nationalist militants quickly adopted a statist discourse, which led them to perceive socialist groups in the universities as separatists or traitors.⁷⁹⁹ They seized the chance to justify their own commando camps on the grounds that the nationalist commandos were being trained not outside the country but in Anatolia. The party leadership lauded the commandos, with Dündar Taşer describing them as “the steel woven by silk”.⁸⁰⁰

The expansion of the socialist movement spawned more than a dozen factions and organizations from 1961 to 1971. The TİP, the *Yön* movement and *DİSK*⁸⁰¹ (*Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu*-The Confederation of Revolutionary Trade Unions), founded in 1967 in reaction to the perceived pro-American stance of *TÜRK-İŞ*, which had been the biggest labour organization until then, were the leading organizations in the realms of politics and ideology. These groups were later added to by a variety of socialist student movements and a number of sub-groups such as MDD, *Aydınlık* (Enlightenment), THKP-C, THKO (People’s Liberation Army of Turkey-Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Ordusu) and TIKKO (Workers’ and Peasants’ Liberation Army of Turkey-Türkiye İşçi Köylü Kurtuluş Ordusu).⁸⁰² THKP-C, led by charismatic student leader Mahir Çayan and his friends, for instance, advocated urban guerrilla warfare to achieve socialist revolution, whereas the *Aydınlık* group defended a less

⁷⁹⁸ Metin Turhan, *Ülkü Ocakları*, pp. 57-58; Hasan Cemal, *Kimse Kızmasın*, pp. 33-35.

⁷⁹⁹ Metin Turhan, *Ülkü Ocakları*, pp. 33-36.

⁸⁰⁰ *Devlet*, 8 September 1969.

⁸⁰¹ Jacob Landau, *Radical Politics*, pp. 93-94; also see İlhan Akalın, *Disk Kısa Tarihi, 1960-1980 (Disk: A Short History)* (İstanbul: Öteki, 1995).

⁸⁰² Jacob Landau, *Radical Politics in Modern Turkey*, pp. 41-44; for a comprehensive analysis of the socialist groups in the 1960s and 1970s see Ahmet Samim, “The Left”, in *Turkey in Transition*, ed. Irvin Schick and Ertuğrul Tonak, pp. 154-176 in *Turkey in Transition* ed. Irvin Schick and Ertuğrul Tonak (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

radical path of revolution.⁸⁰³ From 1968 onwards socialists were hampered by frequent inter-group rivalries, which became endemic by 1971. Conversely, as explained in the previous chapter, during the same period the nationalist organizations and militants were subsumed under the MHP and the leadership of Alparslan Türkeş.

This reverse trend among the nationalists could be attributed to the culture of politics, exhorting strict obedience to authority, among the conservative groups. Added to this, Türkeş had secured the backing of Dündar Taşer, who wove the image of the unquestionable leader in the party. Aside from these factors, Türkeş's leadership had a very practical dimension; as will be discussed in chapter five, the protection and patronage of nationalist militants could be expedited with Türkeş's personal connections in the governing party. Secondly, as the nationalists were organized on a smaller scale in the universities and trade unions compared to the socialists in the late 1960s,⁸⁰⁴ any fractious conflict in the nationalist movement could have been detrimental to the collective group spirit and its efficiency to a greater extent than it would have been to the latter. Any dissident movement, therefore, was shown no tolerance: for example, the reaction of Türkeş and the *ülkü ocakları* to a group of extreme nationalists in İzmir, who formed the *Nazi (Nasyonel Aktivite Zinde İnkişaf-National Activity Vibrant Growth)* in 1970, resulted in casualties.⁸⁰⁵

The centrality of the leader in the movement did not mean that each activity of young nationalists took place only after Türkeş's approval. Nationalist militants faced the socialist challenge every day on campus on different occasions and they were on their own to act against a class boycott, a conference or a declaration distributed to students by the

⁸⁰³ Ahmet Samim, "The Left", pp. 159-165; Doğu Perinçek, *Doğru Eylem Nedir? (What is the Right Action)* (İstanbul: Aydınlık, 1978), pp. 9-12.

⁸⁰⁴ Ramiz Ogun, Musa Serdar Çelebi and Ahmet Çakar, Interviews. Akalın notes that the number of DİSK members was around 300.000 in 1969. İlhan Akalın, *Disk Kısa Tarihi*, pp. 68-75. There was no organized nationalist worker's movement in 1969.

⁸⁰⁵ In 1969 *ülkü ocakları* members attacked the *Nazi* office and destroyed the flat they used; Türkeş swiftly renounced the *Nazi* connection with the MHP. Turan Güven, *İnsan Geçmişte Yaşar*, pp. 322-326. This quick response from the nationalists does not only show the party leadership's sensitivity to avoid any allegiance with the *Nazi* brand, but also their, especially Türkeş's, keenness on preserving the uniformity of the organization.

socialists.⁸⁰⁶ For instance, the leader of the İstanbul *ocak* in the 1970s, Mustafa Verkaya, notes that they had to compete with socialist slogans every day, because it was a race over who would produce a better slogan and the nationalist youngsters had to be innovative in this realm.⁸⁰⁷ Young nationalists in each university released dozens of documents to defend free education for students, castigating the government's new bill for private schools.⁸⁰⁸ This proposal on education had neither been covered in the party program nor aired by the party representatives; it seems that young nationalists had to make swift decisions to appeal to uncommitted students who would otherwise be "lost" to the socialists.

In addition, when young nationalists confronted socialist militants, it was their choice whether to use physical violence, release declarations or hold demonstrations.⁸⁰⁹ This flexibility and growing self-confidence of young militants to take the initiative in the name of the nationalist movement laid the foundations for the dual structure of the movement that was to operate in the following years. There were no nationalist student leaders whose status remotely compared with the prominent student leaders on the left such as Deniz Gezmiş and Mahir Çayan, who formed their guerrilla groups and undertook sensational operations, but some young nationalists did make a reputation in the movement.⁸¹⁰ It was evident that in the nationalist movement a pattern of group formation around young and charismatic leaders was starting to emerge.

The Struggle in the State and Civil Society

Related to this confrontation, as indicated in the previous chapter, the nationalist movement gave itself a mission to defend the Turkish state against the "subversive plans" of

⁸⁰⁶ Burhan Kavuncu, Mustafa Verkaya and Musa Serdar Çelebi, Interviews.

⁸⁰⁷ Mustafa Verkaya and Musa Serdar Çelebi, Interviews.

⁸⁰⁸ Turhan Feyizoğlu, *Fırtınalı Yıllarda Ülkücü Hareket*, p. 353.

⁸⁰⁹ Turhan Güven, *İnsan Gelecekte Yaşar*, pp. 266-268, 311-313, 380-81; Turhan Feyizoğlu, *Fırtınalı Yıllarda*, pp. 395-97; also see *Milliyet*, 5 December 1969.

⁸¹⁰ Hakkı Öznur, *Ülkücü Hareket*, Vol II, pp. 122, 157.

communist imperialism. Nevertheless, the credibility of the MHP leadership's and *ilkü ocakları*'s pretension that they protected the state on behalf of the state was not very strong during the 1960s and early 1970s. A large number of teachers, university professors and military personnel still adhered to Kemalist views and appreciated the activism of socialist students and workers, who opposed the AP government; as a testament to this, the Teachers' Union of Turkey, *TÖS (Türkiye Öğretmenler Sendikası)*, succeeded in holding mass gatherings and carrying out the first successful strike in 1969.⁸¹¹

In response, Türkeş and Taşer repeatedly asserted that communist ideology had managed to penetrate some of the state institutions, taking control of the security forces, the judiciary and the TRT, (*Türkiye Radyo ve Televizyon Kurumu*-Turkish Radio and Television Corporation), founded in 1964, the only Television broadcasting organization of the time.⁸¹² Of course, the party leadership was hoping to hear a more favourable treatment of nationalists in the state media and were quick to accuse the TRT administration of sponsoring socialist propaganda once this expectation was not fulfilled. The available evidence does not give clear information about the ideological views of the TRT administration in the late 1960s, yet it seems obvious that the MHP leadership saw the TRT a tool of the ideological struggle in the state institutions and sought hard to pressure the TRT administration as well.

Dündar Taşer was fiercely critical of people in high positions in the government who, he said, behaved irresponsibly in the face of socialists.⁸¹³ To counteract the strength of socialist views among the educated elites in the country, they encouraged the nationalist youth

⁸¹¹ The *TÖS*, founded by leftist teachers, reached around seventy thousand branches, see *İlk İki Yılda Türkiye Öğretmenler Sendikası (The Teachers' Union of Turkey in Its First Two Years)* (Ankara: 1967); Yıldırım Koç, *Aydınlık* (October 2006); Feyzullah Ertuğrul, "Türkiye Öğretmenler Sendikası", in *STMA*, pp. 2330-2331; *Cumhuriyet*, 16-18 December 1969); similarly, many young military officers were involved in the leftist activism; see Sarp Kuray, *İsyân ve Tevekkül (Rebellion and Submission)* (İstanbul: Birharf, 2008).

⁸¹² As will be discussed in the following chapter, Dündar Taşer accused the AP government of being lenient towards the socialists. See Dündar Taşer, *Mesele*, pp. 300-318

⁸¹³ Dündar Taşer, *Mesele*, pp. 296-298.

to take their places in the service of the state.⁸¹⁴ This call to university students found resonance among those students who complained about the presence of socialists in the universities; Ahmet Çakar, then the MHP Youth Organization leader, testifies:

“We were in the lecture hall when the elections for the student clubs were held; when the socialist candidates were presented the whole hall raised their left hand, so did I. I was not a socialist but the hall was packed with socialists. It was the moment I realized that we were in a grave danger because these people would soon rule the state as we were students in the faculty of law”.⁸¹⁵

Another theatre of nationalist-socialist confrontation was the army. As discussed above, the *Yön* movement had achieved considerable popularity among military officers during the years preceding the 1971 intervention. On the night of 9 March, three days before the 12 March Intervention, radical officers in the army, working in partnership with former NUC members, approached two Commanders-in-Chief, Faruk Gürler, the Commander of Land Forces, and Muhsin Batur, the Commander of Air Forces, to ask them to lead a military intervention, but their operation plan could not be executed.⁸¹⁶ This power scramble was indicative of how powerful the socialist movement was in the army as opposed to the nationalists, who could only rely on some old friends of Türkeş and Taşer in the military forces.

In fact, Türkeş and Taşer had somewhat lost their popularity among the young officers after becoming involved in parliamentary politics and embracing a religious populist discourse. It seems that what Alparslan Türkeş and Dündar Taşer aimed for, rather, was to sow doubt among those military officers who regarded left-wing activism as the advancement of a second Kemalism, and to warn the generals that the military forces were being

⁸¹⁴ Hakkı Öznur, *Ülkücü Hareket*, Volume V, pp. 272-274; Aytekin Yıldırım, “Dündar Ağabey” http://www.eskimeyendostlar.net/?s=yazilar_detay&bolum=1175599634&id=1960

⁸¹⁵ Ahmet Çakar, Interview.

⁸¹⁶ Mehmet Ali Birand, Can Dündar and Bülent Çaplı, *12 Mart İhtilali'nin Pençesinde Demokrasi* (İstanbul: İmge: 1994), p. 196. Sırrı Öztürk, *12 Mart 1971'den Portreler*, Vol.III, (İstanbul: Sorun, 1997), p. 166; these former NUC members included Cemal Madanoğlu, Orhan Kabibay, Osman Köksal, Numan Esin, and İrfan Solmazer; Numan Esin, *Devrim ve Demokrasi*, pp. 289-291. Sarp Kuray, *İsyân ve Tevekkül*, pp. 411, 419. Hasan Cemal, *Kimse Kızmasın*, pp. 55-57.

manipulated as a means to achieve socialist revolution. Dündar Taşer wrote in this vein in the days before the 12 March memorandum:

“...the army can stand against anything but nationalism...now the leftists are in transgression, attacking the heritage of Atatürk and the army, whom they had so far been exploiting; the leftists raided the army headquarters, which was the house of Atatürk and military officers, namely the spring of nationalists...but they encountered resistance from the *ülkü ocakları*”⁸¹⁷

Overall, Türkeş and Taşer gave the impression that nationalist forces were ready to help the state forces to thwart what they saw as the hidden plans of the socialists to destroy the Turkish state.

In the delicate situation preceding the 12 March intervention, it became crucial for the nationalist movement to stay away from confrontation with the state forces. The party leadership repeatedly claimed that there was a “political trap of Russian imperialism” and that “separatist groups” aided by international socialist organizations were set to divide the country and therefore dared to attack police or gendarme forces; in a speech in 1969 Türkeş said:

“...communism is a trap of the most brutal imperialism humanity has ever seen, namely Russian imperialism. If someone proclaims himself communist, he is the servant of the enemy, a spy and in a state of betrayal...”⁸¹⁸

Each time the media and politicians called for an end to “the fight between the extreme left and the extreme right” or “the events of anarchy” the party and *ülkü ocakları* retorted that they were neither anarchists nor the extreme right; Ramiz Ongun, the leader of the ÜOB in 1971, sent a telegram to İsmet İnönü, who had called both groups anarchists, claiming that the *ülkü ocakları* could not be seen in the same category with the leftists⁸¹⁹ The *ülkü ocakları* also held several marches to protest against the TRT, who had called them “actors of anarchy”.⁸²⁰ In a similar fashion, as will be discussed in the following chapter, the nationalists criticized the government, claiming that the state was in need of a new

⁸¹⁷ Dündar Taşer, *Mesele*, pp. 303-304, 308.

⁸¹⁸ Metin Turhan, *Ülkü Ocakları*, pp. 19-25

⁸¹⁹ Metin Turhan, *Ülkü Ocakları*, p. 119.

⁸²⁰ Metin Turhan, *Ülkü Ocakları*, pp. 59-60.

protector.⁸²¹ The MHP leadership and *ülkü ocakları* were confident that this new protector should be the nationalists, young nationalist militants in particular, and hence they deserved the assistance of the state apparatus; the ÜOB president Aytekin Yıldırım, for instance, sent a letter to President Cevdet Sunay in 1970, complaining about the aggression of left-wing students in the universities and demanding the protection of nationalist students' lives by the state security forces. He added that young nationalists were resolved to save the state and fatherland from the communists.⁸²²

Lastly, the foundation of the *Ülkücü Workers' Society (ÜİD-Ülkücü İşçiler Derneği)* in 1971 was indicative of the MHP leadership's strategical orientation with civil organizations. Left-wing working class activism had gained strength with the foundation of DİSK in 1967. Working class activism reached its peak on 15-16 June 1970 when thousands of workers went on strike and poured into Taksim Square at DİSK's instigation; the physical confrontation with the police was violent, with more than a dozen workers wounded.⁸²³ During these confrontations left-wing student activists lent their help to the workers in the streets and these events received extensive coverage in socialist journals. In socialist circles this event was considered as a demonstration that working class activism, which had been lagging behind student activism, could regain its leading force despite the reluctance of TÜRK-İŞ leadership.⁸²⁴ In these conditions, Türkeş and Taşer did not urge nationalist workers to stay in TÜRK-İŞ, which enjoyed the AP government's backing. They endorsed a new organization to

⁸²¹ See Chapter 5. The declaration released by the MHP after the 12 March memorandum read: "...all state institutions and staff should be investigated; the extreme left is a threat aimed at destroying the Turkish state and nation....halting communist anarchy can only be ensured if communist cliques and groups are cleared away from those institutions where they have intruded, established their hegemony and drawn support..."; *Devlet* 22 March 1971.

⁸²² Metin Turhan, *Ülkü Ocakları*, pp. 32-34.

⁸²³ See *Devrim* (June 1970)

⁸²⁴ *STMA*, 2155-2158.

be controlled by nationalist workers; the foundation of ÜİD was a challenge to the socialists in a domain where, as in the universities, they claimed hegemony.⁸²⁵

Conservative Nationalism against Socialism

As discussed in Chapter 2, the ideological lines of the MHP differed from that of the CKMP in some respects. The confrontation with the socialists raised awareness among the nationalist young militants of the current state of international relations and the political economy of Turkey. For instance, the fact that a great majority of Turks and Turkic people were living under socialist administrations made it convenient for the nationalists to voice Pan-Turkist ideas against the socialists in the media and universities; the *ülkü ocakları* members frequently demanded freedom for the Turks in Bulgaria, the Turkmens in Northern Iraq under the Baath regime, the Turkic people of Eastern Turkistan in the Chinese Republic and the Turkic people living under the Soviet regime.⁸²⁶ Likewise, nationalist students struggled to win over their socialist opponents in debating on socio-economic issues and soon realized they lagged behind the socialists in appealing to those workers living in poverty.⁸²⁷ Like most students of the time, nationalist students had limited means of livelihood and some socialist slogans made sense to them because of this; thus the nationalist groups worked hard to invent compelling slogans in the face of socialist arguments about poverty.⁸²⁸ The party leadership and the nationalist youth fought hard to convey to the masses their message regarding social disparities, industrial underdevelopment and backwardness in the

⁸²⁵ Salih Dilek (founder of the ÜİD), “Ülkücü İşçiler Derneği” (Ülkücü Workers’ Society) in http://www.eskimevendostlar.net/?s=yazilar_detay&bolum=1182853069&id=100 (Accessed on 11 March 2012). The ÜİD, however, played a secondary role in the nationalist movement as opposed to DİSK’s driving position in the socialist movement. Neither in the party board nor in nationalist publications did the ÜİD representatives or people from a working class background assume leading roles.

⁸²⁶ Gazi University *ülkü ocakları* declaration in 1969 reads: “Those who are mourning about Vietnam ignore the oppression faced by the Turks who live in Cyprus and Western Thrace. In order to deal with this situation, to awaken those who are asleep, we founded the *ülkü ocakları*”. Metin Turhan, *Ülkü Ocakları*, p. 11. The *ülkü ocakları* leadership organized “Esir Türkler Haftası” (Captive Turks Week), see *Milliyet*, 13 July 1977.

⁸²⁷ Musar Serdar Çelebi, Ahmet Çakar and Mustafa Verkaya, Interviews.

⁸²⁸ Musa Serdar Çelebi and Ahmet Çakar, Interviews.

countryside.⁸²⁹ It was crucial for the nationalists to distinguish themselves from the socialists without sliding into capitalist discourse; for instance, they proposed that society would be divided into six sectors, each of which should run on its own.⁸³⁰

Nevertheless, these discussions on foreign and economic policy and society were slowly overtaken by contentions surrounding cultural issues. It could be argued that the shift in the MHP discourse in 1969 owed much to the evolution of socialist schools of thought in Turkey. The socialist literature in the late 1960s and early 1970s presented a new set of role-models such as Lenin, Mao and Che to the youth. Indeed, the photos of socialist revolutionary leaders on the walls of universities reinforced the nationalist allegation that socialists were alien forces; in one of the earliest *ülkü ocakları* declarations in 1969 it read:

“...those reading the works of communist leaders such as Marx, Lenin, Stalin and Mao relentlessly work, either deliberately or not, to break our young people away from their tradition and history like rootless trees...”⁸³¹

The nationalists had little theoretical work to offer as counterweight, save some epic novels and pamphlets authored by Turkists, praising the Turkish ethno-cultural heritage. Young militants started to promote the Seljukid and Ottoman rulers such as Sultan Alparslan, Mehmed II and Selim I as role models from whom young people should draw inspiration; the Turkish youth, descendants of the “Ottoman *akıncı*,”⁸³² were not supposed to follow the footsteps of Marxist revolutionary armies.⁸³³

⁸²⁹ In his congress speech in 1971 Türkeş said: “...we don’t believe in a capitalist system where the capitalist class makes the Turkish nation its slave. In the *milliyetçi-toplumcu* system the ownership of the means of production would be given to those who save money. This is not class ownership but ownership by the nation”. See *Devlet* 17 May 1971.

⁸³⁰ These six sectors were: Peasant, worker, shopkeeper-craftsman, public sector, employer, freelancer; and all these sectors would be supposed to operate in their own unions. In congress speeches in 1971 and 1973 Türkeş dwelled heavily on the question of economic development; he pledged that workers would share the ownership of factories and their profit. As for peasants, since there were more than fifty thousand villages in the country these villages would be linked to each other and allowed to expand with factories and new agricultural lands. See *Devlet* 17 May 1971, 11 June 1973, 18 June 1973.

⁸³¹ Metin Turhan, *Ülkü Ocakları*, pp. 10-11

⁸³² See footnote 44

⁸³³ Ramiz Ongun, Interview in *Devlet* 7 December, 1970; especially in the writings of Dündar Taşer this dichotomy of the Turkish-Islamic warriors and communist revolutionaries was repeatedly invoked.

This tussle in the realm of culture included differing perceptions of each side towards religion. The left-wing activists, especially the *Yön* thinkers, treated the question of religion through a ‘progressivist’ - ‘regressivist’ dichotomy, which gave religiously based ideas, indicative of regressiveness, no place in politics, intellectual life or public life, a stance which resonated well with the secular views of army members.⁸³⁴ The MHP and *ülkü ocakları*, on the other hand, employed a very straightforward language on this issue; in their view, whoever defended socialism was simply ‘irreligious’, because communism was the ideology of godlessness and atheism. In one of the *ülkü ocakları* declarations it said:

“This struggle is the life-or-death struggle between those who believe in God and those who do not; this struggle is the struggle of the Muslim Turk with those who assault his life”.⁸³⁵

Upon the killing of a nationalist student in 1970, the İstanbul *ülkü ocakları* released a statement including the following:

“ These [murderers] were a handful of communist servants devoid of the consciousness of the fatherland, nation and religion as a result of materialist education .If no one stands against these traitors who are preparing a bloody communist revolution, they will raid your houses; every Muslim who believes in God and every nationalist who loves his fatherland will be brutally killed”.⁸³⁶

In a speech in 1969 Türkeş had stated:

“This poisonous ideology argues that nationalism is unnecessary, that Islam is unnecessary, [and] that Islam is the cause of our backwardness.”⁸³⁷

Reflecting a similar view, Musa Serdar Çelebi tells his own story of joining the *ülkü ocakları*:

“I had been with the socialists at first; but when I had gone to the Friday Prayer I had been challenged...they asked me why I was still practicing these feudal customs...Then I decided there was a problem with these people and started to search for a new group”.⁸³⁸

The aversion of young nationalists towards the “foreign” was extended to the code of daily practices that the left-wing activists adopted. One’s dress and external appearance, for instance, was a serious marker of one’s ideological persuasion; socialists males preferred to sport thick beards and wear long green jackets with blue jeans, whereas an *ülküücü* was

⁸³⁴ *Devrim* was replete with news and articles covering the spread of regressive (*gerici*) groups in the country. In addition, in some articles the army was called upon to stop this challenge from religious groups to the republican reforms. See the article “Turkish Military Always Suppresses Regressivism” in *Devrim* (April, 1970); also see Doğan Avcıoğlu, *Türkiye’nin Düzeni (The Order of Turkey)* (İstanbul: Tekin 1982), pp. 564-565.

⁸³⁵ Metin Turhan, *Ülkü Ocakları*, pp. 25-26. One of the interviewees in Mustafa Çalık’s study notes that he considered communist as someone who denies God. Mustafa Çalık, *MHP Hareketinin Kaynakları*, p. 141.

⁸³⁶ Metin Turhan, *Ülkü Ocakları*, pp. 35-36

⁸³⁷ Metin Turhan, *Ülkü Ocakları*, pp. 19-25.

⁸³⁸ Musa Serdar Çelebi, Interview.

supposed to have a long slim beard and be dressed more formally.⁸³⁹ The nationalists claimed that the socialists did not observe the hierarchical bonds of human relations, and boasted of their adherence to traditional social codes such as the reverence of youngsters for their elders and of not speaking before one's superior in the group.⁸⁴⁰ In an interview carried out by Mustafa Çalık, some nationalist militants, who lived in the countryside in the 1970s, said that they were furious about the fact that socialist militants had long hair.⁸⁴¹ Being a nationalist or socialist was sometimes reduced to the differences of cultural practices; it was likely that some young male students chose to align with the socialist groups just because of their dress codes or to go socialize with girls, or vice versa.⁸⁴² Most of the party leadership, however, did not follow such a strict observance of particular behavioral patterns, nor did they care about what the socialist politicians did. This is one of the reasons that in the following years the young nationalist militants trained in *ülkü ocakları* started to complain about the poor religious observance of some party members or their "self-indulgent" or "reckless" behavior, which young nationalists saw as incompatible with being a nationalist and *ülküci*.⁸⁴³

It can be seen that from these turbulent years onwards the nationalists faced the pressing question: Was the nationalist movement solely a reaction to the left? There was no clear answer; in the 1970s the party leaders and *ülkü ocakları* repeatedly underlined that they had a dream of a "great nationalist Turkey" to which socialists posed the most serious obstacle.⁸⁴⁴ Consequently, the nationalist movement put a lot of effort into specifying its socio-economic projects with specific reference to the economic and other structural

⁸³⁹ On the importance of these symbols in youth movements in Turkey see Şerif Mardin, "Youth and Violence in Turkey" in Şerif Mardin, *Religion, Society and Modernity in Turkey* (New York: Syracuse, 2006), pp. 211-213, 220-224.

⁸⁴⁰ Mustafa Çalık, *MHP Hareketinin Kaynakları*, pp. 131-161.

⁸⁴¹ Mustafa Çalık, *MHP Hareketinin Kaynakları*, pp. 139-141.

⁸⁴² Musa Serdar Çelebi, Interview.

⁸⁴³ This issue was raised by most of the interviewees who were in the *ülkü ocakları* in the 1970s.

⁸⁴⁴ Musa Serdar Çelebi, Interview, Süleyman Kocabaş, *Bir Kuşağın Dramı*, pp. 265-267; also see Genç Arkadaş, 15 December 1976, 15 January 1977.

hardships suffered by ordinary citizens. Arguably, it might not have been so organized had such a wide-ranging socialist network not existed. This antagonism gave the MHP and *ülkü ocakları* credibility in the eyes of those the rightist electorate, who saw in communism a grave threat to their lifestyle.⁸⁴⁵ The political endeavour of the nationalist movement became deeply connected to the achievement of nationalist militants in turning this potential into a real political force in their fight against the socialists.

III- The Nationalists vs. Socialists: The Second Confrontation

The martial-law administration in charge from 1971 to 1973 set out to destroy all currents of socialism in the country, yet it proved unable to halt the ascension of Bülent Ecevit in parliamentary politics. Forging more friendly relations with the left-wing labour and student activism, Ecevit managed to secure the backing of socialist civil organizations, such as the DİSK, under the framework of the CHP thanks to the existing democratic mechanisms, which gave social democratic forces their due representation in the politics of the 1970s.⁸⁴⁶ The MHP leadership was poised to use government power to slow down the rise of Bülent Ecevit and the re-organization of socialist groups. During the two years of the MC governments (1975-1977) the nationalists tasted the benefits of power. Outside of government, the same period saw an escalation in clashes between young nationalists and socialists, resulting in an increase in the number of killings and casualties. Moreover, the rough treatment young nationalists faced from the police, governors and military officers during the CHP government

⁸⁴⁵ Mustafa Çalık. *MHP Hareketinin Kaynakları*, pp. 131-161; however, as will be discussed in Chapter 5, this credibility did not bring electoral success.

⁸⁴⁶ For example, the working class support behind the CHP increased from 20% in 1965 to 62% in 1973 in İstanbul; see Ergun Özbudun, “Voting Behaviour: Turkey” in *Electoral Politics in the Middle East*, ed. Jacob Landau, Ergun Özbudun, Franz Tachau (London: Hoover, 1981), p. 121.

in 1978 and 1979 shattered their perception of ‘‘the father state,’’⁸⁴⁷ although Türkeş tried hard to repair this damage. Finally, young militants applied various means of resistance to undermine the authority of the government, giving rise to anarchy in the country.

The Breakdown and Revival of the Left: 1971-1975

The memorandum of the Turkish Armed Forces on 12 March came as a shock to the Demirel government. It became clear that the army saw no future in the AP government, but the memorandum did not give any detail about the reformist policies the new government should bring in.⁸⁴⁸ It was initially thought that radical forces in the army were in control of the movement; hence the socialist groups celebrated this coup as the triumph of progressive forces.⁸⁴⁹ However, the dismissal of radicals from the army on 16 March revealed that the socialists’ bid to take over the administration had failed. Worse, the new government formed under the premiership of former CHP MP Nihat Erim was far from meeting the expectations of these socialist groups.⁸⁵⁰

More worrying news for socialists came from Sivas on 16th March, when Deniz Gezmiş and his friends were arrested after they had released four American soldiers abducted on 4 March.⁸⁵¹ The military regime became gradually more repressive: on 26 April 1971, martial law was declared in eleven provinces and thousands of people from a wide range of professions were arrested on the grounds that they had propagated communist ideology.⁸⁵²

⁸⁴⁷ Father state is colloquial term which means ‘‘protective state’’, *TDK Güncel Türkçe Sözlük*, s.v. ‘‘Devlet Baba’’.

⁸⁴⁸ *Milliyet*, 13 March 1971.

⁸⁴⁹ Hasan Cemal, *Kimse Kızmasın*, pp. 254-256; Jacob Landau, *Radical Politics*, pp. 84-85.

⁸⁵⁰ Hasan Cemal, *Kimse Kızmasın*, p. 263; Jacob Landau, *Radical Politics*, pp. 44-48.

⁸⁵¹ *Milliyet*, 09 March 1971. Feeling bitter disappointment with these developments, the left-wing youngsters resumed their urban and rural guerrilla warfare; the group led by Mahir Çayan, for instance, proved very resilient. They kidnapped the Israeli ambassador in May 1971 and killed him in a house in İstanbul. The next month they engaged in a fierce gun battle with the police and Çayan was seriously wounded, and then imprisoned. He, together with three of his friends, managed to break out of prison in November and abducted two English and one Canadian technician in 1972. They could not escape from the tightening manhunt and were killed in a gun battle in March 1972; *STMA*, 2178-2185.

⁸⁵² Feroz Ahmad, *Turkish Experiment in Democracy*, pp. 293-295; William Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military*, p. 197.

Those under arrest were treated very badly and faced torture intended to make them sign the confessions that were forced upon them.⁸⁵³ Between mid-1971 and early 1973, the socialist movement in the country was dealt a serious blow that was to affect their organization for the decade to come.⁸⁵⁴

As noted in Chapter 2, the MHP and *ülkü ocakları* declared their support for the intervention of the Turkish Army in the face of the worsening political chaos. A few days after 16 March the ÜOB released a statement which read:

‘The Turkish *ülkü* youth declares its support for our army and our state in exterminating the malicious elements from our nation. Only Turkish nationalists can save Turkey. Long live the ideal of unity and solidarity of the Turks, long live whoever guards the independence of the Turkish state’.⁸⁵⁵

Yet on 27 April 1971 the martial law administration shut down the *ülkü ocakları* along with socialist organizations such as DEV-GENÇ and the DDKD (*Devrimci Doğu Kültür Ocakları*-Revolutionary Hearths of Eastern Culture). Even though they were treated with much less hostility than were the socialists, it can be seen the party leadership and young were frustrated with this attitude of the new administration.⁸⁵⁶

In the meantime, the CHP underwent a very dramatic process of change which resulted in the resignation of the party’s longstanding leader İsmet İnönü. His leadership skills and political decisions had been under criticism since the mid-1960s, but the most serious challenge came in the aftermath of 12 March from Bülent Ecevit, who reacted strongly to İnönü’s acceptance of the formation of Nihat Erim’s military-backed government.⁸⁵⁷ At the party congress of 1972 İsmet İnönü asked the delegates for a vote of confidence, but failed to

⁸⁵³ Numan Esin, Interview; *STMA*, pp. 2184-2186; Hasan Cemal, *Kimse Kızmasın*, pp. 189-199.

⁸⁵⁴ Adnan Bostancıoğlu, *Oğuzhan Müftüoğlu ile Bitmeyen Yolculuk (Unfinished Journey with Oğuzhan Müftüoğlu [leader of Dev-Yol before 1980])* (İstanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları, 2011), p. 153.

⁸⁵⁵ *Devlet*, 22 March 1971.

⁸⁵⁶ *Devlet*, 20 March 1972

⁸⁵⁷ *Milliyet*, 22 March 1971; many socialists had seen him as a pragmatic man with high political ambitions and an impediment to the revolutionary movement before the 1971 coup, but Ecevit managed to change his image in the socialist movement after he defiantly resisted the political engineering of the 12 March regime, claiming that the military intervention was against the “left of centre” movement, and resigned from the party secretary generalship in March 1971. *Milliyet*, 22-23 March, 1971, also see Feroz Ahmad, *Experiment*, p. 312

obtain it by 709 votes to 507. İnönü quit the party chairmanship the next day, leaving his position to be filled by Bülent Ecevit on 14 May 1972.⁸⁵⁸

The elections of 1973 brought the CHP back into government, for the first time since 1950, albeit in coalition with the MSP. Bülent Ecevit, with his emotional speeches and proximity to the socialist left, represented a different political profile from İnönü.⁸⁵⁹ He was adept at garnering the support of those among the masses who were politically disaffected, especially workers, and tended to make more open criticisms of the nationalist movement, calling them ‘‘bullying and murdering people under the cover of rightism’’.⁸⁶⁰ The nationalists became deeply worried about the government’s decision to pardon political criminals who had been sent to prison during the 12 March regime.⁸⁶¹

The 12 March regime had cut the links between the socialist groups and radical soldiers in the army, but in other state institutions they managed to re-organize very quickly. The MHP leadership soon realized that Ecevit was in partnership with socialist civil foundations such as TÖB-DER,⁸⁶² a foundation whose members were predominantly high-school teachers of a socialist persuasion, POL-DER, founded in 1973 by police officers in sympathy with socialist views, and DİSK, whose members were appointed to the positions in the civil service and bureaucracy controlled by the CHP ministers.⁸⁶³

⁸⁵⁸ *Milliyet*, 09 May 1972-15 May 1972.

⁸⁵⁹ Emin Alper, ‘‘Bülent Ecevit’’ in *MTSD*, Vol. VIII, pp. 208-211; Necmi Erdoğan, ‘‘1970’larda Sol Populizm Üzerine Notlar’’, pp. 262-275.

⁸⁶⁰ *Milliyet*, 16 April 1970.

⁸⁶¹ See Ahmad, *Experiment*, pp. 336, 339, 341.

⁸⁶² Founded in 1972 in succession to the TÖS, TÖB-DER reached around 200,000 members towards the late 1970s. Gültekin Gazioğlu, ‘‘Töb-Der ve Toplumsal Mücadele’deki Yeri’’ (Töb-Der and its Place in the Societal Struggle) in *STMA*, pp. 2351-2352.

⁸⁶³ Ali Bozkurt, the TÖB-DER President of the time, relates that Mustafa Üstündağ, the CHP MP and Minister of Education, assured him that he would employ TÖB-DER members in his ministry. For the influence of TÖB-DER in the Ministry of Education see Ali Bozkurt, *12’den 12’ye, Anılar II (From 12 to 12: Memories II)* (Ankara: Eğitim-Sen, 2000), pp. 91-93; Moreover, 104 teachers who had been suspended from teaching during the martial law period were granted pardon during this government. Erdoğan Başar, ‘‘Eğitim Görüşleri ve Uygulamalarıyla Milli Eğitim Bakanı Mustafa Üstündağ’ın Türk Milli Eğitimi’ndeki Yeri’’ (Mustafa Üstündağ’s Place in Turkish National Education: His Educational Views and Policies) in *Ondokuz Mayıs Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, Eylül 2001, pp. 58-61. Also see Sıtkı Öner, *Halkın Polisi: Pol-Der Anıları* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2003), pp. 121-124.

It seems that the large-scale arrests of socialist students and the disappearance of the only socialist party from the parliament had deprived the nationalist movement of its opponent in the aftermath of the 12 March intervention, and this result awakened the nationalists again. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the first Congress of Nationalist Youth was convened in 1974 to re-unite disbanded nationalist organizations; the *ülkü ocakları* and other nationalist foundations such as MİSK, ÜLKÜ-TEK, where the nationalist technicians and engineers gathered, and ÜLKÜ-BİR, where nationalist teachers were organized against TÖB-DER, managed to spread their branches across the country, outnumbering the number of party branches in towns and cities.⁸⁶⁴ Ecevit's maneuver of resigning in September 1974 in the hope of achieving early elections failed, and in March 1975 the MC government was founded.⁸⁶⁵ In the foundation of the MC government the MHP leadership successfully used the fear of socialism to unite with the other rightist parties against the left. Thus the mission of anti-communism functioned as the binding tie of the government from its early days, and the MHP leadership hoped that this political conjuncture would help the growth of the nationalist movement at the expense of the leftist movements.

The MC Governments: 1975-1977

During the period of the MC government the revived ideological struggle between right and left gradually intensified in the state administration, universities and civil foundations. In the civil service, the Ministry of Education and its sub-branches such as the Higher Education Agency were the most obviously ideologically divided.⁸⁶⁶ The MHP leadership and *ülküçüler* had been working to establish their control in this realm and nearly

⁸⁶⁴ *MHP İddianamesi*, pp. 305-312; see Chapter 3.

⁸⁶⁵ Feroz Ahmad, *Turkish Experiment in Democracy*, pp. 343-348.

⁸⁶⁶ In the first MC government the MSP controlled the Ministry of the Interior and the AP controlled the Ministry of Education, whereas the MHP obtained two ministries and Alparslan Türkeş became the Deputy Prime Minister. In the second MC government the MSP again controlled the Ministry of the Interior and the AP the Ministry of Education. The MHP controlled the Ministry of Trade, the Ministry of Customs and the Ministry of Health, and Türkeş was again Deputy Prime Minister. *Milliyet*, 01 April 1975, 22 July 1977

accomplished complete control during the MC governments.⁸⁶⁷ This control was so extensive that *ülkü ocakları* leaders could decide which students would be registered at teacher-training institutes.⁸⁶⁸ Likewise, nationalist teachers who had complained about unfair treatment from socialist school heads under the Ecevit government had little to complain of during the MC government.⁸⁶⁹ Right-wing scholars were appointed to the university administrations and important state agencies such as the TRT were filled with rightist bureaucrats.⁸⁷⁰ Lastly, it seems that the MHP and their coalition partners wanted to re-design the higher ranks of the military forces, but could not agree among themselves; Namık Esun, the designated successor of the incumbent Chief of the General Staff, who was known to have nationalist views and was therefore favored by the MHP leadership, was forced to retire by Demirel in 1977, the year when he was due to succeed to the top position.⁸⁷¹

In the universities conflicts between nationalist and socialist students were becoming more violent. In many universities classes were cancelled as leftist students engaged in physical confrontations with the police forces.⁸⁷² It could be argued that the socialists were not as organized as in the pre-1971 era and lacked the leadership of the prominent student activists killed after the coup. Yet, new organizations such as DEV-YOL (Revolutionary Path) and DEV-SOL (Revolutionary Left), founded in succession to DEV-GENÇ (Revolutionary Youth), managed to re-organize left-wing militants, who were predominantly

⁸⁶⁷ In the Prosecutor's Statement the MHP's control of this Ministry is described in detail, pp. 220-224.

⁸⁶⁸ Mustafa Verkaya, Interview; see also Mehmet Ali Ağaoğulları, "The Ultrationalist Right" in *Turkey in Transition* ed. Irvin Schick and Ertuğrul Tonak, pp. 201-202; *MHP İddianamesi*, pp. 212-217, 272-275.

⁸⁶⁹ *Ortadoğu* (Middle East) newspaper, run by the nationalists in the 1970s, published during the period of the CHP-MSP coalition dozens of complaint letters sent by nationalist teachers and civil servants of unfair treatment they faced because of their ideological persuasion.

⁸⁷⁰ For example, the left-wing chairman of the TRT, İsmail Cem, was replaced by Nevzat Yalçıntaş, who was a well-known conservative scholar. Similarly, the Rector of ODTÜ, one of the strongholds of left-wing activism, was changed. *Milliyet*, 07 June 1975, 24 December 1976

⁸⁷¹ Merdan Yanardağ, *Ülkücü Hareket*, pp. 94-97; Türkeş's contact with the army was becoming weaker; in the night of 11 September 1980 he was very surprised to hear that the military forces were about to execute a coup and was deeply worried about its consequences. See Hulusi Turgut, *Şahinlerin Dansı*, pp. 435-440.

⁸⁷² *Milliyet*, 13 January 1976, 10 April 1976.

in favour of guerrilla warfare to achieve the revolution.⁸⁷³ Against these groups, the *ülkü ocakları* were more defiant than they used to be before 1971, thanks to the high number of militants left untouched during the 12 March regime. Consequently, the use of guns, a rare practice in the events prior to 1971, proliferated in the universities and the number of students killed in student conflicts dramatically increased.⁸⁷⁴

Aside from these, the party and *ülkü ocakları* leadership struggled to control the permeation of socialist slogans amongst nationalist militants. Burhan Kavuncu, for example, explains that they invented a specific slogan, “Yıkılsın Vurguncu Düzen (Collapse Corrupt Order!)”, so that nationalist militants could answer the socialists who mocked them as the “Guardians of Order”.⁸⁷⁵ Likewise, Sadi Somuncuoğlu notes that some members of the board were eager to employ more statist and corporatist slogans in order to give the impression that the MHP was as much concerned with social inequalities as the socialists.⁸⁷⁶

Not only in the schools and universities, but also in factories, the nationalists fought hard to counteract the expansion of socialist organizations. DİSK, with its pro-active organization, had been gaining ground among the workers at the expense of TÜRK-İŞ.⁸⁷⁷ The socialist groups had a chance to recruit new militants, as the factories provided militants with ample space and other technical facilities to run their training activities, and DİSK could mobilize tens of thousands of people to maintain its pressure on the government as well as on the factory owners.⁸⁷⁸ Breaking the strikes organized by DİSK was crucial for the political success of the government, and nationalist militants undertook this task.⁸⁷⁹ Some militants and MİSK members visited the factories where DİSK hegemony had been established and

⁸⁷³ Oğuzhan Müftüoğlu (one of the leaders of Dev-Yol), “Devrimci Yol Üzerine Notlar (Notes on the Revolutionary Path)” in *STMA*, pp. 2250-2252; Dursun Karataş (one of the leaders of Dev-Sol), “Devrimci Sol” (Revolutionary Left) in *STMA*, pp. 2252-2255.

⁸⁷⁴ See Footnote 904.

⁸⁷⁵ Burhan Kavuncu, Interview; Lütfü Şehsuvaroğlu “Bizim Muhsin (Our Muhsin)”, www.<http://ulkucuyazarlarbirligi.org/?p=964>. (Accessed 06 November 2012).

⁸⁷⁶ Sadi Somuncuoğlu, Interview.

⁸⁷⁷ Faruk Pekin, “Farklı Olmanın Adı: Disk (The Name of Being Different: Disk)” in *STMA*, pp. 2290-2291.

⁸⁷⁸ Ahmet Çakar, Interview.

⁸⁷⁹ Ahmet Çakar, Interview.

appealed to the workers by addressing the “hidden agenda” of DİSK, delivering a plain-speaking message to the workers that suggested they were being “abused” by the socialists and were no more than pawns in a revolutionary plot.⁸⁸⁰ The fact that MİSK managed to attract thousands of workers in a couple of years was partly a result of these campaigns abusing their socialist rivals.⁸⁸¹

In the pre-1971 period, the ideological struggle had been mostly spearheaded by those in elite circles. From 1973 onwards the political language of Türkeş and Ecevit made more people familiar with the ideological antagonisms.⁸⁸² As a result, a number of attempts on the lives of Ecevit and Türkeş took place during their political trips. In the election rallies of both parties, and during some of the AP meetings as well, violent clashes with the police and the opposing groups became frequent events.⁸⁸³ The realm of politics and the use of violence on ideological grounds became connected to each other; in other words, despite MHP now being in government, the party and *ülkü ocakları* failed to fulfill their political pledge to halt the clashes in the universities and suppress the socialists.

The triumph of Ecevit in the 1977 elections owed a lot to the support lent to the CHP by the socialist groups resentful of MC rule.⁸⁸⁴ The socialists brought fresh energy to the CHP election campaign, which subsequently mobilized a disaffected portion of the electorate who had not voted for any party in previous elections.⁸⁸⁵ After two years of the MC government, the result could have been discouraging for the MHP, but in actuality the party doubled its

⁸⁸⁰ Ahmet Çakar, Interview; *MHP İddianamesi*, pp. 295-298.

⁸⁸¹ MİSK claimed to represent 283,908 workers in 1978; Yıldırım Koç, *Türkiye’de İşçiler ve Sendikalar* (Workers and Unions in Turkey) (İstanbul: Türkiye Yol İş Yayınları, 2000), pp. 108-110; also see *MİSK 3. Olağan Genel Kurulu’nda Sayın Ömer Faruk Akıncı, Sayın Mete Beşen, Sayın Hüsnü Çetiner ve Sayın Kadri Çatmakaş’ın Yaptığı Konuşma Metinleri* (Speeches Delivered in the 3rd Congress of the MİSK) (İstanbul, 1978), p. 29.

⁸⁸² *Milliyet*, 02 February, 1976, 18 February 1976, 21 March 1976.

⁸⁸³ Feroz Ahmad, *Turkish Experiment in Democracy*, pp. 351-353.

⁸⁸⁴ DİSK, for example, declared that it would support the CHP in the 1977 elections. *Milliyet*, 23 February 1977; also see Ayşe Güneş Ayata, *CHP: Örgüt ve İdeoloji*, pp. 187-188. The CHP got 41.39% of total votes in the 1977 elections. See Appendix 2.

⁸⁸⁵ See Appendix 2, in the 1973 elections the turnout was 66.8%, whereas in 1977 it was 72.4%.

http://www.belgenet.net/ayrinti.php?yil_id=8 and http://www.belgenet.net/ayrinti.php?yil_id=7 (accessed on 23 August 2012).

votes, reaching the highest number since its foundation with 6.4% of the poll and 16 seats in parliament, a result which exhilarated the party leadership and its supporters.⁸⁸⁶

It was perhaps because of this misreading of the election results that the rightist parties joined their forces to form the second MC government. However, towards the end of the first MC era the signs of a more violent phase in the nationalist-socialist antagonism were looming large. On 1 May 1977 hundreds of thousands of workers gathered in Taksim Square to celebrate May Day, but all of a sudden gunfire started from the top of various buildings around the square, resulting in a state of panic and stampede among the people below.⁸⁸⁷ During this chaos, according to the official toll, thirty-four people died and many more were wounded.⁸⁸⁸ No clear evidence about the perpetrators could be found at the end of the government investigation, but eye-witness accounts indicated that some people from the intelligence services, including foreign intelligence services, and the police were involved in this plot.⁸⁸⁹ This bloody conflict in Taksim revealed that the government was no longer in control of its security forces.

It can be argued that the MC governments exposed the flaws in the nationalist movement, especially the lack of coordination between the nationalist youth and the MHP branches. Young nationalist militants seemed not to be impressed by the MHP being a coalition partner; they complained that the government had not been able to stop the leftist university boycotts and the coalition partners tended to be obstructive.⁸⁹⁰ In *Genç Arkadaş*, the weekly journal of *ülkü ocakları*, Korkut Özal, the Minister of the Interior, in the second National Front government was severely criticized:

⁸⁸⁶ See Appendix 2.

⁸⁸⁷ *Milliyet*, 2 May 1977-3 May 1977.

⁸⁸⁸ *Milliyet*, 3 May 1977, Merdan Yanardağ, *Ülkücü Hareket*, p. 92.

⁸⁸⁹ Süleyman Çelebi, the leader of *DİSK* (2000-2011), interviewed in the documentary “Oradaydım” (I was there). Contra-Guerilla forces operated in the western countries such as Italy and Spain to stop the socialist expansion in the Western bloc and it was almost certain that a similar kind of organization existed in Turkey. Bülent Ecevit, when he was prime minister in 1978, stirred a debate over the existence of Contra- Guerilla in Turkey. Demirel and Türkeş retorted and asked him to bring evidence to prove his claims. See *Milliyet*, 01 February 1978-06 February 1978.

⁸⁹⁰ Mustafa Verkaya notes that it was no use to go to Ankara frequently. Mustafa Verkaya, Interview

“The Minister of the Interior still talks about protecting the ‘balance’; he should know that the *ülkü ocakları* fight for independence, they fight against the communists. The previous National Front government had embraced a similar discourse, but ninety-five *ülküci* were killed’”.⁸⁹¹

From the viewpoint of the youngsters it was too time-consuming to await orders from Ankara; the party leadership was busy with government affairs and the coalition partners were not always helpful.⁸⁹² For the party leadership, the violent behavior of the *ülkü ocakları* was counter to their position; they faced complaints from their coalition partners about the anti-government protests and the aggression of the *ülkü ocakları*.⁸⁹³ The nationalists were undergoing contrasting experiences; young militants were becoming more involved in violence, which started to cost their lives, whereas the politicians tasted the power of state and government in the cabinet. The strategy of this struggle against the socialists was the question that most occupied the nationalist movement in the late 1970s.

The ‘Fall’ of the State and Young Nationalists: 1977-1979

After the dissolution of the second MC, Ecevit managed to form a CHP government on 5 January 1978. There was a state of alarm in the nationalist movement as they faced a leftist single party government for the first time ever; in a public meeting in 1978 Türkeş said:

“While they had been in the opposition, the CHP leadership patronized those involved in anarchic, and illegal activities and enemies of the state. When they became the government, they continued their collaboration with these people. The CHP government filled the state ranks with Marxist and separatist groups’”.⁸⁹⁴

The party group in the parliament was determined to get rid of this government to hold off the mounting pressure on the nationalist organizations. Undermining Ecevit’s credibility was likely to change the delicate balance of power in the parliament given that the CHP

⁸⁹¹ This article also read “...the *ülkü ocakları* had relied on the state to protect the rights and lives of its members, but schools and many other places were invaded by the puppets of foreign hands...in this atmosphere the Minister of the Interior still talks about shutting down the *ülkü ocakları*”, *Genç Arkadaş* 10 August, 1977. For similar criticism against the coalition partners see Chapter 5.

⁸⁹² Mustafa Verkaya, Interview.

⁸⁹³ *Milliyet*, 28 January 1976.

⁸⁹⁴ *Hergün*, 16 April 1978

government needed the backing of thirteen former AP deputies as well as independents.⁸⁹⁵ In the aftermath of the murder of a nationalist youngster or a party representative, the MHP deputies gave lengthy speeches putting the blame on the police forces linked to POL-DER and Ecevit's patronage of socialist groups.⁸⁹⁶ Attempts were made to stop appointments in the bureaucracy or to bring them to the Supreme Court to delay the expulsion of nationalist bureaucrats from their positions.⁸⁹⁷

Nevertheless, the opposition in parliament was not very forceful. It seems that the party leadership was also hoping to instigate a strong social opposition against the Ecevit government with the help of young militants. The *ülkü ocakları* leadership applied some new tactics to compound the government's failure to provide such daily basics as bread and gas in the economic crisis of the late 1970s, forcing shop owners to shut their stores and distribute these things on their own.⁸⁹⁸ Helping the elderly and poor to reach these foods and daily necessities helped the nationalist youngsters form friendly relations with these people.⁸⁹⁹ Arguably the political impact of the meetings and marches held by the *ülkü ocakları* was greater than the speeches delivered in parliament by the MHP deputies. The organizational ability of the *ülkü ocakları* allowed them to hold big marches and demonstrations or perform funeral prayers on the occasion of the death of young nationalists.⁹⁰⁰ Again, they organized anti-communist gatherings or marches to defend student rights in various cities, especially in big cities where the MHP performed poorly in the elections. It can be claimed that Türkeş was content with this activism of the young militants, because it was likely to generate stronger

⁸⁹⁵ Kemal Karpat, "Domestic Politics" in Kemal Karpat, *Studies on Turkish Politics and Society* (Leiden, Brill, 2004), pp. 135-136.

⁸⁹⁶ See Sadi Somuncuoğlu, *666 Gün (666 Days)* (Ankara: Emel 1980).

⁸⁹⁷ Nevzat Kösoğlu, *Hatıralar*, pp. 282-283.

⁸⁹⁸ Burhan Kavuncu and Kazım Ayaydın, Interviews by Ali Erken. The socialists carried out similar operations; a branch of Migros Supermarket, the biggest in Turkey, was invaded by socialist activists to provide food to the poor. <http://www.ozgurluk.org/kitaplik/webarsiv/kurtulus/eskisayilar/byolunda05/kampanya.htm>

⁸⁹⁹ Abdullah Muradoğlu, Interview.

⁹⁰⁰ Ahmet Cakar, Interview.

opposition to the government and increase the sympathy among the rightist electorate for the MHP.

As had been the case throughout the 1960s and 1970s, during the CHP government the ideological rivalry continued to be intense and to paralyze the state apparatus. Bureaucrats and civil servants did not obey the hierarchical decision-making process, but instead acted on what their ideological persuasion or friends dictated.⁹⁰¹ Another manifestation of the politicization of the bureaucracy in this period was that a provincial governor stayed in his/her position for an average of 3.1 years between 1962 and 1974, whereas it became 1.5 years between 1974 and 1980.⁹⁰² In many of the institutions each group imposed their own conditions that could easily be changed depending on ideological motivations.⁹⁰³ Despite all these problems, becoming embroiled in a confrontation with the state forces was the last thing to be desired by Türkeş and the nationalists, who had ascribed themselves the mission to defend the state. That said, even if the boundaries of legality and illegality were becoming increasingly blurred, the MHP leadership fought hard to keep their activities within the legal framework, at least in appearance. It seems that Türkeş still thought that in the state there were a considerable number of nationalist, or anti-communist, officers and repeatedly urged young militants to work in cooperation with the state forces.⁹⁰⁴

Nevertheless, it can be seen that the *ülkü ocakları* leadership did not share this view completely. To young nationalists, Ecevit government rule was akin to a “failed state” that

⁹⁰¹ Metin Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey* (Beverly: Eothen 1985), pp. 110-114; from 1962 to 1974 the average length of a DPT official’s stay in his/her position was 3.5 years, whereas it fell to 1.7 between 1974 and 1980.

⁹⁰² Turgay Ergun and Bülent Ardanıç, “Siyasal Nitelikli Yüksek Yönetici Atamaları (Political Appointments of High Rank Bureaucrats)” in *Amme İdaresi Dergisi*, Vol.13, Issue 2, pp. 51-69.

⁹⁰³ Metin Heper, *The State Tradition*; pp. 110-115; *MHP İddianamesi* gives an account of the MHP’s control of appointments in the police organization; pp. 224-251; Ecevit, too, in his 1979 party congress speech, criticized some CHP cabinet ministers for appointing their socialist friends to positions in the ministries, *Milliyet*, 5 November 1979.

⁹⁰⁴ Türkeş’s memorandum to the party organization in June 1979 warned the party branches: “...in the face of attacks against our party representatives and members you should remain within legal boundaries; all information and documents should be handed to the state security forces... party members should comply with the laws, as they have so far done with credit”, Hakkı Öznur, *Ülkücü Hareket*, p. 557.

fell short of protecting citizens' security and livelihoods. In a meeting in 1978 Muhsin Yazıcıoğlu, the *ülkü ocakları* leader in 1977-1978, stated that the Turkish state was on the verge of collapse:

“...the government aims to divide the Turkish nation and destroy the last independent Turkish state. It manipulates the security forces and the police for illegal operations and against nationalist goals. Current government has made Turkey a country where illegality reigns ...”⁹⁰⁵

Young nationalists started to face the hostile side of the state as the socialists mobilized their forces to halt the advance of nationalists which had reached a peak during the MC governments. For instance, in 1978 the Interior Ministry launched a prosecution against the ÜOD and it was shut down on 15 May 1978; the *ülkü ocakları* leadership managed to mitigate the consequences of this decision, having transferred the ÜOD branches to a new organization, the Society of *Ülkücü* Youth (*ÜGD-Ülkücü Gençlik Derneği*).⁹⁰⁶ It seems that the nationalists were losing the strategic advantage which they had previously owed to their control over the security and administrative forces of the state; the governors sent from Ankara by the CHP government showed no tolerance towards nationalist militants as new police chiefs, affiliated with *POL-DER*, handed out intelligence about the party and *ülkü ocakları* members to the socialist groups.⁹⁰⁷ The number of nationalists arrested by the police sharply increased and left-wing militants gained the advantage over nationalist militants in the street.⁹⁰⁸ Eventually the nationalist vision of the state and the role they assigned for themselves in it started to unravel; in April 1978 the *ülkü ocakları* leader Yazıcıoğlu complained of the loosening connection between “the state and the nation”.⁹⁰⁹ His successor Şefkat Çetin made a similar comment on this issue:

⁹⁰⁵ *Hergün*, 1 March 1978; on the other hand, there was a prevailing optimism among young militants that they would save the state apparatus from the communists and restore their hegemony. Hasan Çağlayan, for instance, said: “those who have done nothing against those who put the Turkish state in jeopardy and tear the Turkish flag apart now want to shut down the organization of young people working for their state...”. Hakkı Öznur, *Ülkücü Hareket*, Vol. II, p. 585

⁹⁰⁶ Hakkı Öznur, *Ülkücü Hareket*, Vol. VIII, pp. 502-505.

⁹⁰⁷ İbrahim Metin, Interview. *Hergün*, 26 April 1978.

⁹⁰⁸ *Hergün*, 19-26 April 1978.

⁹⁰⁹ Hakkı Öznur, *Ülkücü Hareket*, Vol. II, p. 492.

“Police stations are no longer places where the ‘father state’ does justice and shows compassion; these places are becoming houses of torture and injustice”⁹¹⁰

Aside from this, the statements released show an *ülkü ocakları* leadership willing to speak on any aspect of the country’s affairs.⁹¹¹ Yet their priorities were somewhat different from those of the party, as was reflected in the respective discourse of party and *ülkü ocakları*. In February 1978 the *ülkü ocakları* leadership released a statement composed of fifteen articles, which included such phrases as

“...we are against those who want to make Education Institutes houses of malevolence like the Village Institutes⁹¹²...the history charts will not be removed from the walls in the schools... we are with the Turkish peasant and villager...student loans should increase to a substantial level...we are against the prevention of reading particular sermons on Friday....we are against any attack against Islam under the cover of laicism and will run campaigns to have the Quran read in the schools.... we will force the police to return within the boundaries of legality”⁹¹³

The party’s proposal to the coalition protocol in 1977, on the other hand, was more balanced and less concerned with issues of religion:

“1-The Ministry of Education and Ministry of the Interior should be given to the MHP, 2-The problems of youth should be addressed and youngsters should be trained in accordance with national values 3-Purchasing power should be stronger, national industry should be advanced, 4-Conditions in trade and agriculture should be ameliorated, 5- The Common Market question should be tackled, 6- Religion should be taught as a compulsory course and the İmam-Hatip⁹¹⁴ graduates should enter any faculty they wish.”⁹¹⁵

This divergence between the party view and the perception of the *ülkü ocakları* leadership on the issues of religion and how to treat the state forces was not too great to bridge, but as demonstrated in previous chapters, the nationalist youth leaders of the late

⁹¹⁰ *Hergün*, 8 December 1978.

⁹¹¹ *Hergün*, 1 March 1978

⁹¹² The article is striking to reveal how the legacy of the Education Institutes was still pertinent to the politics of the time.

⁹¹³ *Hergün*, 1 March 1978. In the headlines of *Genç Arkadaş* in the same year slogans such as the following appeared: “*Ülkücü* youth will die, but Islam’s light won’t go away”; “We derive our strength from Islam; Belief and morality come first”; “Whoever sleeps comfortably while his/her neighbor is hungry is not one of us; Belief-Islam-Turk”; “Victory will belong to the carriers of Islam’s flag”; “The MHP: The party that infidels attack”.

⁹¹⁴ The İmam-Hatip schools were introduced in 1924 to train religious officers; these schools were closed in 1931 but re-opened in 1946 and the number of the students in İmam-Hatip schools rose to 178.013 in 1979; See Halis Ayhan, *Türkiye’de Din Eğitimi (Religious Education in Turkey)* (İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Yayınları, 1999), pp. 35-38, Faruk Özcan, “Sosyo-İdeolojik ve Sembolik Yönüyle Türkiye’de Örgün Din Eğitimi: İmam-Hatip Okulları Örneği (Religious Education in Turkey and Its Socio-Ideological Dimension: The Case of İmam-Hatip Schools)”, (Ma Thesis, Uludağ Üniversitesi, 2006), p. 81.

⁹¹⁵ *Devlet*, 11 July 1977.

1970s started to impose their own terms on their followers to obtain the most efficient result on their battlefield.

Anarchy and Civil Strife

In response to the perception of a “fallen state”, young nationalist militants mobilized their forces to establish hegemony in the streets, universities and schools at whatever cost. They did not hesitate to increase the frequency of their attacks against the socialists, but this strategy resulted in a violent backlash from the socialists as the fragmentation of the socialist groups and paramilitary forces was chaotic towards the late 1970s. These socialist groups engaged in fierce competition with each other in the streets and were prone to committing more spectacular operations in order to gain leverage in the socialist movement.⁹¹⁶ It could be argued that compared to the leadership and activist profile of the 1968 generation, the level of education was low and recourse to the intellectual guidance of socialist thinkers had diminished.⁹¹⁷ Furthermore, most of the young nationalist and socialist militants lived in student residences where their own group held sway and forced the other out; young militants, therefore, had little chance to observe their rivals’ lifestyle and characteristics.⁹¹⁸ These places also functioned as headquarters, expediting the mobilization of students in case a physical confrontation took place.⁹¹⁹ The governments in power failed to appease their vengeful feelings, and their sense of frustration was aggravated after each clash.⁹²⁰ Eventually the magnitude of the violence rose dramatically; there had been a few incidents resulting in the

⁹¹⁶ Adnan Bostancıoğlu, *Oğuzhan Müftüoğlu*, pp. 214-231.

⁹¹⁷ Diminishing tolerance both within the group and towards outsiders was another problem for some of the left-wing para-military groups; Adnan Bostancıoğlu, *Bitmeyen Yolculuk*, pp. 214-231; Faruk Pekin, “Farklı Olmanın Adı: Disk”, pp. 2290-2291.

⁹¹⁸ That is why nationalists and socialists were surprised to see each other when they were put in the same cells in prison. Hasan Çağlayan, Interview.

⁹¹⁹ Turhan Feyizoğlu, *Gençlik Liderleri Konuşuyor*, pp. 167-169; Mustafa Verkaya, Interview; *STMA*, p. 2165.

⁹²⁰ Mustafa Verkaya, Abdullah Muradoğlu, Interviews by Ali Erken

deaths of students and politicians before 1977, but from 1977 on both groups started to carry out organized crimes against each other.⁹²¹

On 16 March 1978 seven socialist students at İstanbul University were killed in a bomb attack, while on 17 March 1978 five nationalist workers in İstanbul were tortured to death.⁹²² In the same year, the assassinations took place of socialist university professors Bedrettin Cömert (11 July 1978), Bedri Karafakioğlu (20 October 1978) and Necdet Bulut (26 November 1978). The head of the MHP's İstanbul branch Recep Haşatlı was killed along with his son on 4 October 1978, and Hamit Fendoğlu, the Mayor of Malatya who had been elected to the post with the backing of the MHP, MSP and AP, was murdered along with his daughter-in-law and two grandchildren on 17 April 1978.⁹²³ In the following two years, many prominent thinkers and politicians were killed in such assassinations: Abdi İpekçi, the editor of *Milliyet* newspaper on 1 February 1979; Gün Sazak, MHP vice president and former cabinet member on 27 May; Kemal Türkler, the leader of *DİSK* on 19 July; and Nihat Erim, who had been prime minister from 1971 to 1972, in the aftermath of the 12 March intervention, on 22 July. The MHP and the CHP lost more than fifty party representatives in towns and cities.⁹²⁴ The coffeehouses which people from either political persuasion visited regularly became obvious targets for terrorist attacks; on 16 May 1978 the coffeehouse in Piyangotepe, Ankara was attacked and seven people were killed, on 27 October 1979 in Bayrampaşa, İstanbul, six people, and on 16 December 1979 in Beşiktaş, İstanbul, five people were killed.⁹²⁵ The attacking of houses or flats shared by students also became frequent: on 8 October 1978 seven socialist students were killed in a house in Ankara; on 19 September

⁹²¹ See Mehmet Ali Ağaoğulları, "The Ultrnationalist Right", pp. 203-204; Merdan Yanardağ, *Ülkücü Hareket*, p. 172; Musa Serdar Çelebi, Interview.

⁹²² See *Milliyet*, 17 March 1978-19 March 1978.

⁹²³ *Milliyet*, 12 July 1978, 21 October 1978, 27 November 1978, 5 October 1978, 18 April 1978.

⁹²⁴ Merdan Yanardağ, *Ülkücü Hareket*, p. 192..

⁹²⁵ These coffee houses were regularly patronized by the socialist groups, see *STMA*, pp. 2339-2350.

1979 six teachers were killed in the same house in Adana and on 21 February 1980 three students were killed in a flat in Beşiktaş.⁹²⁶

As the scale of this conflict intensified and became more destructive, both sides aimed to gather broader support from the masses. Until the mid-1970s those involved in the ideological confrontation from both sides were predominantly the educated people or young undergoing education, perhaps less than one per cent of the total population.⁹²⁷ The profile of activists and the mass perception of ideological antagonisms began to change from the mid 1970s onward, as the anti-communist propaganda carried out by the MHP leadership and young nationalists was heavily loaded with religious motivation, which aggravated conservative people's resentment towards the CHP, a result of the worrisome legacy of single party rule from 1923 to 1950, especially in rural Anatolian towns.⁹²⁸ On the other hand, the CHP leadership in the 1970s helped socialist militants reach a wider audience.⁹²⁹ It can therefore be argued that the rift left by the republican cultural reforms in society had persisted and somehow started to reproduce itself in the anti-communist vs. communist dichotomy.

This tension had a sectarian dimension as well; the majority of Alevis backed the CHP in the 1970s and gained the upper hand in the leadership of some socialist groups.⁹³⁰ For example, Alevis had a strong presence in TİKKO, TKPM-L and DEV-SOL, militant revolutionary leftist movements, and were involved in physical confrontations with the

⁹²⁶ Merdan Yanardağ, *Ülkücü Hareket*, p. 232; Hakkı Öznur, *Ülkücü Hareket*, p. 272.

⁹²⁷ Only seventy three thousand students from a population of thirty-five million were enrolled in a university in 1970. See *Rakam ve Grafiklerle Cumhuriyetimizin 50.Yılında Milli Eğitimimiz (Our National Education in the Fiftieth Year of our Republic, with Charts and Figures)* (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1973).

⁹²⁸ *STMA*, pp. 2282-2283.

⁹²⁹ Ayşe Sencer Ayata, *CHP: Örgüt ve İdeoloji*, pp. 242-244, 257, 265.

⁹³⁰ Harald Schüller, *Türkiye'de Sosyal Demokrasi: Particilik, Hemşehrilik, Alevilik* Trans. Yılmaz Tonbul (İstanbul: İletişim, 1999), pp. 163-164; Michiel Liezenberg, "Kurdish Alevis and the Kurdish Nationalist Movement in the 1990" and Emma Sinclair Webb, "Sectarian Violence, the Alevi Minority and the Left: Kahramanmaraş 1978" in *Turkey's Alevi Enigma: A Comprehensive Overview*, ed. Paul White, Joost Jongerden (Leiden: Brill, 2002), pp. 198-200 and pp. 215-218; see also Murat Küçük, "Türkiye'de Sol Düşünce ve Aleviler (Leftist Thought in Turkey and the Alevis)" in *MTSD*, Vol 8, pp. 909-912.

nationalist militants.⁹³¹ It can be said that in some towns, where the Alevi population was high, the conservative Sunnis felt aversion towards the increased public visibility of Alevis in public demonstrations and political activities, independent of their separate party affiliations.⁹³² In fact, it could be argued that lying behind the high proportion of Alevi militants in the socialist movements was the fact that Alevis found a free space for expressing their identity more overtly in the left wing movements.⁹³³ Küçük also notes that in certain regions where Sunni-Alevi communities lived together there had been an ongoing tension and the ideological divide fuelled this mutual hostility.⁹³⁴ The first serious incident took place in Malatya, a city in Eastern Turkey, on 18 April 1978 and was followed by a similar event in the neighboring city of Sivas on 3-4 September.⁹³⁵ In both cities the Alevis accounted for approximately 35% of the population, and in both incidents the scenario was almost the same: a small crowd gathered to protest against socialist attacks in the city, but this number quickly reached thousands; hundreds of nationalist militants joined these crowds, and the Alevi quarters and storehouses were plundered.⁹³⁶ The worst incident of all broke out from 19 to 23 December 1978 in Maraş, a city in southeastern Turkey with a composite population resembling those of Sivas and Malatya. The details of this event have long been contested; during four days of escalating tension more than a hundred people, most of whom were Alevis, were killed.⁹³⁷ The warring sides did not only consist of socialist militants against

⁹³¹ *Turkey's Alevi Enigma*, pp.198-200; Martin Van Bruinessen ‘‘The Debate on the Ethnic Identity of Kurdish Alevis’’ in *Syncretistic Religious Communities in the Near East*, ed. Krisztina Kehl Bodrogi, Barbara Kellner Heinkele, Anke Otter Beaujean (Leiden: Brill, 1997), pp. 14-16.

⁹³² See Tanıl Bora and Kemal Can, *Devlet Ocak Dergah*, p. 86.

⁹³³ Emma Sinclair Webb; ‘‘Sectarian Violence, the Alevi Minority and the Left’’ in *Turkey's Alevi Enigma*, pp. 217-221.

⁹³⁴ Murat Küçük, ‘‘Türkiye’de Sol Düşünce ve Aleviler’’; pp. 914-916; David Shankland’s study demonstrates the dynamics behind the dislike of each group towards the cultural and religious practices of the other. See David Shankland, ‘‘Responses to Modernization in an Alevi Village’’ in *Turkey's Alevi Enigma*, pp. 40-46.

⁹³⁵ *Milliyet*, 19 April 1978-23 April 1978, 04 September 1978-09 September 1978. Hamid Fendoğlu, the mayor of Malatya, who had been elected as the candidate of the rightist parties, was assassinated one day before the clashes broke out. *Milliyet*, 18 April 1978. There had been some small-scale confrontations before then, see *Milliyet*, 05 September 1976.

⁹³⁶ *Milliyet*, 19 April 1978-23 April 1978, 04 September 1978-09 September 1978.

⁹³⁷ The official death toll was 111, but this number has been contested; Tanıl Bora and Kemal Can, *Devlet Ocak Dergah*, pp. 490-493; *Milliyet*, 27 December 1978.

their nationalist counterparts; ordinary people with no political affiliation were also involved in the clashes. Nearly one and a half years later, similar tensions, though less devastating, were replicated in Çorum, a central Anatolian city.⁹³⁸

The nationalists claimed to have lost sixty-three people before 1977 and more than a hundred people in 1977, whereas the socialists claimed to have lost a hundred militants in the first five months of 1977.⁹³⁹ In 1978 these numbers multiplied; in 1979 more than one thousand two hundred people and in 1980, by 12 September, more than two thousand people lost their lives in these conflicts.⁹⁴⁰ In this atmosphere the priority for both groups lay with providing a safe environment for their friends in towns and schools, which required the expulsion of the opposite groups from these areas.⁹⁴¹ As it was almost impossible for a person, either socialist or nationalist, to continue his livelihood in regions where the rivals held sway, many young people were forced to leave their schools, and families moved their place of residence on grounds of security.⁹⁴²

The pressure on the CHP government finally led Ecevit to step down as prime minister on 12 November 1979 and on 25 November 1979 Demirel formed a minority government backed by the MHP and the MSP.⁹⁴³ The nationalists had pledged at various times that the anarchy would stop if Ecevit stepped down, but even though many nationalist governors and

⁹³⁸ *Milliyet*, 03 July 1980-05 July 1980.

⁹³⁹ Hakkı Öznur, *Ülkücü Hareket*, pp. 626-628; Merdan Yanardağ, *Ülkücü Hareket*, p. 106.

⁹⁴⁰ The exact numbers of victims after 1975 are still not known. William Hale estimates that between December 1978 and September 1979 898 people were killed, and in the following twelve months 2,812. William Hale, *Turkish Politics and Military*, pp. 224; Alparslan Türkeş in his defense to the court following the 1980 coup claimed that four thousand *ülküçü* were killed in these conflicts. Journalist Merdan Yanardağ in his book on the MHP quotes different figures, saying 2,109 socialists 1,286 rightists, 281 security forces and 1,444 people from both background were killed. Merdan Yanardağ, *Ülkücü Hareket'in Analitik Tarihi*, p. 144; in another account, Kenneth MacKenzie states that in the last two years preceding the coup 2000 people were killed. See Kenneth MacKenzie, *Turkey in Transition: The recovery of a nation from the trauma of terrorism* (Ankara, 1981), p. 6

⁹⁴¹ As a result, towns, schools and faculties were divided into camps where the other was not tolerated. In Fatsa, a town on the Black Sea coast, for instance, socialist groups formed a revolutionary council under the leadership of Fikri the Tailor, the mayor of the town, whereas in certain central Anatolian towns and the districts of Ankara where Türkeş and other party board members resided, nationalists ruled the streets. *STMA*, pp. 2379-2381; Tanıl Bora Kemal Can, *Devlet Ocak Dergah*, pp. 89-91.

⁹⁴² This point was made by most of the interviewees.

⁹⁴³ Kemal Karpat, "Domestic Politics" in Kemal Karpat, *Studies on Turkish Politics and Society* (Leiden, Brill, 2004), pp. 135-136.

civil servants were re-appointed to their previous positions after Ecevit's fall, violent clashes continued to escalate.⁹⁴⁴ It is clear that the nationalist strategy in politics did not work as had been envisaged; despite the considerable number of nationalists serving in the civil service, university positions and schools, no significant improvement in the socio-political turbulence was achieved.

There is a view in the available literature suggesting that the MHP escalated violence by purpose to prepare the ground for a fascist military intervention.⁹⁴⁵ However, aside from the MHP leadership's weakening contact with the military officers⁹⁴⁶, the lack of coordination among the party leadership and militants rendered such a complex political plot untenable. Furthermore, it became manifest that the party leadership was struggling to hold control even in those regions where the party showed the strongest presence, as hundreds of civilians lost their lives in civil strife. Most of the party board did not have a say on these clashes to which the nationalist militants and paramilitary forces gave rise, and the escalation of the anarchy caused disagreements in the party administration.⁹⁴⁷ In fact, some members of the party leadership were aware of the fact that the growing cost of this struggle to the nationalist movement was getting more burdensome as thousands of nationalist university students had left their schools and hundreds of them had lost their lives.⁹⁴⁸ The conditions in 1980, however, were such that there was no easy solution for either the party leadership or young militants. They were set to face bitter violence in the following months and when the 12

⁹⁴⁴ Metin Heper notes that nearly 1500 new appointments were made during the 1979-80 Demirel government. *The State Tradition*, p. 115.

⁹⁴⁵ Mehmet Ali Ağaoğulları, "The Ultranationalist Right", p. 208; Tanıl Bora and Kemal Can, *Devlet Ocak Dergah*, pp. 91-93.

⁹⁴⁶ After the death of Dündar Taşer Alparslan Türkeş struggled to maintain his contacts within the army. Besides, as will be discussed in chapter 5, it was very likely that religious tone in the MHP discourse displeased the army members. Yaşar Okuyan narrates that on the night of 12 September Türkeş had no idea about the ideological orientation of the military coup and could get no reliable information from a small number of officers he knew from the army. See Tanıl Bora and Kemal Can, *Devlet Ocak Dergah*, pp. 101-103.

⁹⁴⁷ See Chapter 3.

⁹⁴⁸ Ahmet İyioğlu and İbrahim Metin, Interviews by Ali Erken; Nevzat Kösoğlu, *Hatıralar*, pp. 230-237, 288-291.

September coup took place it came as a surprise to the nationalists to see how all these violent confrontations came to a rapid end in a couple of weeks.⁹⁴⁹

IV-Conclusion

The confrontation with the left made a definitive impact on the ideological and structural formation of the nationalist movement in the 1960s. Türkeş, Taşer, and other party ideologues, saw young nationalists both as the ruling elite of the future and as the present-day warriors best equipped to battle the socialist forces. Yet, these two missions conflicted with each other. For young militants, the nature of the struggle was less to do with competing ideas but revolved around cultural and behavioral patterns of symbolic importance, or local tensions; the party leadership was less concerned with these aspects of the confrontation. Likewise, the party elite considered the state apparatus a political tool to advance the nationalist movement, but there was a frustration on the part of young militants that the party's control of the state apparatus was insufficient to meet nationalist needs. When the wider masses started to be involved in the right-left confrontation, the flaws of the political strategy of the nationalist movement became more salient.

In the late 1970s young nationalists were in a position to dictate a more radical discourse and strategy in their struggle against the socialists. As mentioned above, the young nationalists placed religion at the centre of their activities, a shift that posed a direct challenge to the secular regime. This was one of the demarcating lines among the rightist parties in Turkey in the 1970s. The next chapter looks at the relationship between the nationalist movement, political Islam and the centre-right.

⁹⁴⁹ This point was raised by most of the interviewees.

CHAPTER 5

THE POLITICAL RIGHT AND THE NATIONALIST MOVEMENT

This final chapter investigates the place of the CKMP-MHP within the broader political right. Little has been said on this complicated relationship and this chapter aims to make a contribution to the study of the political right in modern Turkish history. The chapter starts with an analysis of the CKMP's struggle against the Justice Party, which is followed by a discussion of the blurred boundaries between the MSP and the MHP, with a specific regard to their attempts to the use of Islamic discourse in politics. The party leadership and young militants raised the question of authority and pledged to do away with the traditional contours of centre-right politics. From the late 1960s onwards religion and westernization took a larger share in the political discourse of the rightist parties; dealing with these questions the party leadership and young nationalists had different priorities considering the electoral, training and mobilizational concerns.

Sections II and III look at post-1971 politics with thematic subdivisions. During the MC governments the nationalists benefited from state resources to a considerable extent, but they struggled to impose their own terms on the coalition's ideological and strategical orientation. This chapter aims to demonstrate that throughout these years young militants exerted pressure on the party leadership and the other rightist parties. As nationalist militants started to compete with another youth movement promoting an Islamic state, their discourse became more challenging towards the secular establishment, with which the party leadership was not willing to clash. Furthermore, the chapter argues that young nationalists felt increasingly resentful of the centre right and some of the AP voters, whom they found overly

pragmatist and selfish. Their obsession with the ideological struggle, however, made it increasingly impossible for the MHP to grow electorally at the expense of other parties.

I- Defining the Boundaries of the Political Right: CKMP-MHP from 1965 to 1971.

The Demirel Governments and the Question of Authority

The CKMP-MHP leadership was not at ease with the post-1960 political settlement in which the military forces and the CHP exercised a considerable pressure on the government and bureaucracy. Coupled to this, the rise of left-wing activism and the increasing power of socialist groups in universities and the media exacerbated their resentment. They were not satisfied with the way the AP government handled this tension and asserted that they were ready, with the help of young nationalist militants, to restore the state's authority. In an election speech on the radio O.Yüksel Serdengeçti, one of the outspoken ideologues of conservative nationalism in the party, stated:

“... order, law and the honor of the state are being trampled on...these extremists [meaning the socialists] fear no one but nationalist youth. The AP is cowardly, fainthearted and dodderly. It is not a government, but a mass. The nation looks forward to seeing a disciplined government which would impose its powerful and mighty will”⁹⁵⁰

The AP, under the leadership of a former General Ragıp Gümüşpala, regrouped most of the former DP members in its organization during its early years. The AP leadership claimed to represent those people who felt abandoned after the fall of the DP government and advocated that the rule of democracy should be restored.⁹⁵¹ In the meantime, they had to restore the strained relations with the military, media and high bureaucracy after the 27 May

⁹⁵⁰ Osman Yüksel Serdengeçti, “1969 Seçimleri Radyo Konuşmalarım (My Election Speeches on the Radio: 1969 Elections)” in Osman Yüksel Serdengeçti, *Bir Nesli Nasıl Mahvettiler (How They Wrecked a Generation)* (İstanbul: Tev, 2010).

⁹⁵¹ Feroz Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Democracy: 1950-1975* (London: Hurst, 1977), p. 214.

coup, which proved to be a difficult test for them.⁹⁵² It could be said that this discourse promoting democracy fell on deaf ears in Ankara as the army was still heavily involved in politics after the 27 May coup, as evidenced by two abortive coups led by Talat Aydemir, the head of the military academy, on the grounds that 27 May had not fulfilled its pledges.⁹⁵³

Upon their return to the country Alparslan Türkeş and his friends engaged in talks with the AP leadership over a possible political alliance of the right.⁹⁵⁴ From the viewpoint of the Fourteen, being on the loser's side of the 27 May coup would be more beneficial for their political prospects in the future.⁹⁵⁵ The fact that Saadettin Bilgiç, brother of Said Bilgiç, one of the founders of the Society of Nationalists in the 1950s, was appointed to the vice presidency of the AP generated a lot of hope for the nationalist circles and Türkeş.⁹⁵⁶ It seems that joining forces with Türkeş and his friends was a feasible option for some of these conservative right-wing politicians in the AP as they needed the backing of soldiers and university students, who had turned hostile to the DP, in the aftermath of the 27 May. Yet collaborating with those people who had toppled the DP government raised anxiety among some of the AP members; these plans were dashed after Süleyman Demirel, backed by the liberal wing in the party, won the party leadership against Saadettin Bilgiç in 1963.⁹⁵⁷ Following this change of leadership, the only feasible choice for the Fourteen to continue in politics was the CKMP; yet in the restoration of democracy during the AP governments the major actors of politics were the AP leadership on the one side and the anti-parliamentary forces, led by the retired and active military officers involved in the 27 May coup and revolutionary left-wing activists and intellectuals, on the other.

⁹⁵² Ümit Cizre, *Ordu-AP ilişkileri*, pp. 58-62.

⁹⁵³ William Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 153-168.

⁹⁵⁴ İrfan Ülkü, *12 Eylül'de Türkeş (Türkeş in 12 September 1980)* (İstanbul: Kamer, 1995), p. 75.

⁹⁵⁵ This was one of the reasons that they always put the blame on the remaining members of the NUC for not preventing Adnan Menderes' execution.

⁹⁵⁶ Hulusi Turgut, *Şahinlerin Dansı*, pp. 366-369.

⁹⁵⁷ Ümit Cizre points out the complexity of the various factions in the AP: nationalists and Islamists, liberals, secular-kemalists and others. Ümit Cizre; *AP Ordu İlişkileri*, pp. 61-62.

The general elections in 1965 and the Senate elections in 1966 showed that the AP had managed to amass widespread support from every segment of society, being able to unite a mixture of differing ideological threads in the party.⁹⁵⁸ The party leadership was roughly divided into two major camps, liberals and conservatives, but they were successful in complementing each other to satisfy the economic needs and the socio-cultural expectations of the majority.⁹⁵⁹ The socialist opposition led by the TİP and the CHP villified this coalition of liberal capitalist businessmen, local power holders and religious groups under the framework of the centre-right, yet their discourse failed to generate a counter mobilization against the AP in the 1965 elections in which the CHP and the TİP could only acquire 32% of the total votes.⁹⁶⁰

The CKMP, after the resignation of the former NUC members from the party, was likely to pose a more serious challenge to the AP. However, the CKMP leadership was deprived of sufficient funds and resources to offer socio-political benefits to local power holders and religious groups. As explained in previous chapters, they invested in the training of indoctrinated young militants, which necessitated the invention of a language of opposition against the AP from a different point of view. In this attempt to build a new political discourse within the right, the CKMP leadership drew heavily on the question of authority.

The early CKMP leadership considered their involvement in the 27 May coup as an unfulfilled promise to restore the authority of the state.⁹⁶¹ Worse, their old friends, who had expelled them from the NUC, had established strong power networks in the state administration, media and intellectual circles. The CKMP leadership held that the AP, with its absolute majority in parliament, was not able, and willing, to expel these people from the

⁹⁵⁸ Ümit Cizre; *AP Ordu İlişkileri*, pp. 61-62.

⁹⁵⁹ İlkey Sunar; *State Society and Democracy in Turkey* (İstanbul: Bahçeşehir, 2004), pp. 76-77.

⁹⁶⁰ See Appendix 2.

⁹⁶¹ Dündar Taşer, Senate Election Speech 1966 and *Mesele*, pp. 11-20; 368-373; in an interview in 1969 Türkeş commented on 27 May: “...we don’t want to be in government before we have trained our young people. The failure of 27 May was stemmed from the lack of idealist people in the administration; so we are not in a rush to be in the government now”, *Milliyet*, 06 June 1969.

power hubs.⁹⁶² According to Türkeş and Taşer, the Demirel government could not govern the country as they lacked the authority to rule, Türkeş commented on this:

“Citizens have some priorities: Security and safety. They complain about the lack of security. We think this is the weakness of government. Citizens want strong administration and strong government. This government is weak, powerless, awkward and feeble.”⁹⁶³

And Taşer was confident that they would be more robust when they came to government:

“When we come to government there won’t be a prime minister who would gump down. These scandals under the name of faculty invasion or boycott will be stopped. Communists, who keep their eyes on events abroad, like Maoists, destroy the nation, but they will not be allowed to open their eyes when we come to government.”⁹⁶⁴

The CKMP-MHP leadership’s criticism of the AP carried a democratic undertone, on the other hand; they avowedly showed concern for the will of the people to be represented in parliament. In most of their speeches and declarations it was stressed that the AP was incapable of ruling the country according to what its electorate wished:

“The AP is ruled by those who have lost their dignity in the eyes of the nation and those who are not able to rule the country despite the power granted to them by the will of the nation.”⁹⁶⁵

The straightforward message was that the AP’s great majority in the parliament had ascribed them a greater mission, but the AP leadership was concerned with the interest of a small minority close to the party leadership.⁹⁶⁶ This criticism intensified from 1968 onwards and the MHP leadership implied that there was a big rift between the AP leadership and its electorate, and that the AP elite just manipulated their voters for their own political benefit.⁹⁶⁷

A significant yardstick to test the government’s exercise of authority was its handling of the question of socialism. The CKMP-MHP leadership maintained that the AP was lenient towards the expansion of communists who could comfortably make use of the state

⁹⁶² Alparslan Türkeş, *Milliyet*, 4 December 1969- 6 Decemeber.1969.

⁹⁶³ Alpaslan Türkeş, *Milliyet*, 4 December 1969- 6 December 1969.

⁹⁶⁴ Dündar Taşer, *Milliyet*, 13 June 1969.

⁹⁶⁵ *CKMP Basın Bülteni (The CKMP Press Bulletin)* (Ankara: 20 May 1966). In his election speech on the radio Rıfat Baykal stated: “...The AP leadership has no executive skills; If I had so many deputies I would have swept the parliament”. Rıfat Baykal, *CKMP Radyo Seçim Konuşmaları*.

⁹⁶⁶ In his election speech on radio, O.Yüksel Serdengeçti harshly criticized the AP: “... one the one side there are people whose pockets are packed with dollars and on the other side there are people who could not find a robe to pull their donkeys.... The AP turned its back the way of Haqq, and now turned its back the folk (halk)”.. O.Yüksel Serdengeçti, “*Seçim Konuşmaları*”.

⁹⁶⁷ *CKMP Basın Bülteni* read: “...the AP is divided into two: those expecting service and justice and those ruling the party”, *CKMP Basın Bülteni* 18.5.1966; Dündar Taşer, *Mesele*, p. 320.

institutions to recruit new militants.⁹⁶⁸ The party leadership often complained that irresponsible AP ministers, and their bureaucrats, left students in high schools in the hands of socialist teachers while socialist propaganda in universities was condoned; Taşer repeatedly castigated Demirel:

“The leftists work hard to make Turkey a venue for class struggle and build communist dictatorship. What has Demirel done in response to this? He doesn’t feel responsible. He gave an extra term for the Rector of ODTÜ, who condoned the rise of the left there.”⁹⁶⁹

So too, the allegedly increasing presence of left-wing bureaucrats in the state institutions was a manifestation of the same attitude.⁹⁷⁰ Worse than these, the nationalists worried that the AP was not able to impose its will on the crucial institutions such as the army and higher judiciary, which were, according to the nationalists, being filled by hidden socialist cliques.⁹⁷¹

Actually there had been a lingering tension between the rightist politicians and the military-bureaucratic elites since the DP years; as Mardin suggests, this was a struggle between the centre, mainly the high bureaucracy and the army, and the periphery, which represented provincial networks.⁹⁷² Like the DP, which had been unpopular amongst university students and military officers, the AP struggled with this stalemate. Demirel fought hard to escape from this mounting pressure by embracing the discourse of democratic freedom; he frequently called these forces to respect the will of the people.⁹⁷³ Reinforcing his image as the defender of freedoms and plural society, he favored giving more freedom to the

⁹⁶⁸ Dündar Taşer wrote: “The nation degenerates, institutions are dismantled, but Demirel does not care as far as he keeps the majority in parliament. They (left-wing militants) called workers to rise in revolt and plunder their factories, to swear at the military and soldiers.”, *Mesele*, pp. 316-318.

⁹⁶⁹ Dündar Taşer, *Mesele*, p. 318.

⁹⁷⁰ Dündar Taşer, *Mesele*, p. 320.

⁹⁷¹ Dündar Taşer, *Mesele*, pp. 245-247.

⁹⁷² Şerif Mardin; “Center-Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics”, *Daedalus*, Vol. 102, No. 1 (1973); Sabri Sayarı, “The Changing Party System” in *Politics, Parties and Democracy in Turkey*, ed. Sabri Sayarı and Yılmaz Esmer; (Colorado: Rienner, 2002), pp. 10-12.

⁹⁷³ Yeşim Arat, “Süleyman Demirel” in *Political Leaders and Democracy in Turkey*, ed. Metin Heper and Sabri Sayarı (Lexington: Lexington 2002), p. 99; Ümit Cizre, *AP-Ordu İlişkileri*, pp. 48-52.

universities and civil society.⁹⁷⁴ According to the MHP leadership, however, his search for reconciliation with the establishment and loosening of the authoritarian measures was an entirely misguided strategy.⁹⁷⁵ Each political concession they claimed would bring no good to the country but to encourage the CHP, socialist militants and revolutionary cliques poised to replicate the 27 May coup.⁹⁷⁶

Despite the heavy load of criticism from the MHP, at the time *ülkü ocakları* were founded in the universities the AP was the party young nationalists' parents predominantly voted for.⁹⁷⁷ However, *ülküçüler* were taught that they had a demanding mission that their parents had not.⁹⁷⁸ As the conditions in the universities and high-schools drove students to the political extremes, the uselessness of the AP's politics of balance became a common conviction among them.⁹⁷⁹ The AP leadership obviously failed to generate the emotional component that these young students sought upon their involvement in the ideological conflict. In fact, the AP government was not very willing to take sides in this conflict, which they blamed on the mutual provocation of certain extremist groups.⁹⁸⁰ In the aftermath of student clashes in the universities in the late 1960s, Demirel sought to divert public attention to his government's economic and social policies, assuring that "the anarchy of a few" would not cause damage the peace and stability of the country.⁹⁸¹

It is clear that young nationalists entirely lost confidence in the government after 1970. They had the impression that the government deliberately refrained from employing

⁹⁷⁴ The *AP Party Program* included such articles as: "We accept Democratic order in the Western sense and appreciate human honor and dignity. Again, we aim to actualize and protect individual rights and fundamental freedoms as they were defined in the Declaration of Human Rights. This is an inevitable component of a free and democratic social order in the Western sense (article 2). We believe that thinking clubs and guild organizations are inevitable components of a plural political order (article 4). Only through multi-party democratic order people can participate in the state administration (article 7)." *AP Parti Programı (The AP Party Program)*(Ankara: 1965), pp. 3-5.

⁹⁷⁵ Dündar Taşer, *Mesele*, pp. 294, 298; Osman Yüksel Serdengeçti, *Devlet* 26 May 1969.

⁹⁷⁶ Dündar Taşer, *Mesele*, p. 288-294

⁹⁷⁷ Musa Serdar Çelebi and Ramiz Ongun, Interviews.

⁹⁷⁸ Dündar Taşer, "Milliyetçi Hareket ve Gençlik" (The Nationalist Movement and Youth), in *Devlet*, 8 September 1969, "Gençlik" (Youth), in *Devlet*, 28 December 1970.

⁹⁷⁹ Musa Serdar Çelebi and Taha Akyol, Interview.

⁹⁸⁰ Süleyman Demirel, *Milliyet*, 26 May 1970.

⁹⁸¹ Süleyman Demirel, *Milliyet*, 7 October 1970.

security forces against the socialists, letting the young nationalists confront with the right-wing activists.⁹⁸² The tension between the AP government and *ülkü ocakları* escalated dramatically when the police raided *ülkü ocakları* and *Türk ocakları* buildings in Ankara and İstanbul after a nationalist student was killed in December 1970. A declaration released by the *ülkü ocakları* in 1970 on this issue criticized the government decision very sharply: “we remind (you) that the Turkish nation will use its legitimate right of resistance against a government which is in breach of the constitution and hence loses its legitimacy.”⁹⁸³ Their anger towards the AP was fuelled by Taşer’s bitter reproach of the government on this issue:

“No one, even the Ministry of Interior, could invade a *Türk ocağı*; and Demirel’s power would not be enough for this. Invading a *Türk ocağı* was something that even Lloyd George failed to do. How on earth could Demirel succeed in this? Don’t mess with *ocaklar*, there you would see nothing but *bozkurt* (grey wolf).”⁹⁸⁴

As can be seen, it could be argued that in the period 1965-1971 the CKMP-MHP leadership and young militants were in agreement about changing the strategy of politics on the right. The leadership was keen to reverse the tense relations between the right-wing parties and the army and aimed to win over students in universities to recruit new indoctrinated elite whilst young militants were convinced of the uselessness of the centre-right mass parties.

Religion in Politics and the Fragmentation of the Right

The question of religion started to be a stronger factor in shaping the nature of rightist politics from the mid 1960s onwards. The attitudes of politicians towards the place of religion in politics varied, and it was not necessarily determined by their party identities. Inherent in this debate was the westernization question. Likewise, there could be overlapping as well as conflicting views within the same party. Moreover, political pragmatism sometimes hindered

⁹⁸² A declaration released by the *ülkü ocakları* in 1970 clearly revealed this disappointment: “socialists closed the university and the university administration told us to leave. We asked them to shelter us as we were poor Anatolian children, but they told us to go back home.”. Metin Turhan, *Ülkü Ocakları*, p. 92.

⁹⁸³ Metin Turhan, *Ülkü Ocakları*, p. 94.

⁹⁸⁴ Dündar Taşer, *Mesele*, p. 293.

consistency in party discourses on the issue of religion and westernization. Eventually, as discussed in previous chapters, the number of political parties on the right increased and the CKMP-MHP leadership found itself in competition on a slippery ground. Compared to them, young nationalists were at ease with the notion of religion supporting their struggle against communism, and not worried by the political implications of anti-Westernism.

As briefly outlined above, the AP leadership was adept in securing the backing of religious organizations. Such groups as *Nurcular*, the followers of Said-i Nursi, *Süleymanlılar*, the followers of Süleyman H. Tunahan, various Sufi circles and civil foundations such as *İlim Yayma Society*, founded to foster religious education, supported the AP in the 1965 elections.⁹⁸⁵ These organizations were given assurances by the AP government that they would be left free to run their activities and in response to the AP's political patronage, they offered to mobilize their followers to underpin the AP's propaganda machine.⁹⁸⁶ Finally, some popular conservative figures of the time such as Osman Yüksel Serdengeçti, Osman Turan and Saadettin Bilgiç assumed significant positions in the AP.⁹⁸⁷

The late CKMP and its successor the MHP became the first party to challenge the AP's coalition with religious groups; the initial criticism targeted at the AP leadership was the charge of exploiting religion for its own political ends. The nationalists felt no doubt that the AP was hypocritical towards sincere Muslims, who voted for them to escape the CHP rule.⁹⁸⁸ The forced resignation of İbrahim Elmalı, the head of *Diyanet* (The Presidency of Religious Affairs) in 1967, for example, provoked anger in the CKMP leadership, which accused the

⁹⁸⁵ Mustafa Aydın, "Süleymanlılık" in *MTSD*, Vol.VI, pp. 308-311; Ruşen Çakır, *Ayet ve Slogan* (İstanbul: Metis, 1990), pp. 88-90, 131.

⁹⁸⁶ Kemal Kaçar, the leader of the *Süleymanlı* movement, was MP from the AP between 1969-1971 and 1977-1980.

⁹⁸⁷ For detailed information on the ideological and political background of O.Yüksel Serdengeçti see Chapter 1 and for Osman Turan see Chapter 2.

⁹⁸⁸ O.Yüksel Serdengeçti, former AP MP frequently dwelled on this issue: "We will show you a scene from the AP; one the one side Demirel prays with Muslims in Hacıbayram Mosque, on the other side he tussles his drinking glass with Kosigin, the President of the USSR, in the month of Ramadan." O.Yüksel Serdengeçti, "Seçim Konuşmaları".

government of favoring Masonic groups against a respectable man of religion.⁹⁸⁹ In fact, especially from the 1960s onwards in nationalist and religious publications Masonic groups had often been held responsible for acting as the agents of foreign powers to subvert Turkish national identity and religion⁹⁹⁰. Implying that a political decision was taken with the direction of these groups was instrumental in appealing to the conservative electorate.⁹⁹¹ This conviction of hypocrisy among the nationalists became stronger as the AP leadership, especially Demirel, used a political language replete with religious terminology and observed prayers while the media was recording them. In the eyes of the CKMP-MHP leadership and young nationalists these gestures were nothing but political tricks to deceive the religiously minded electorate:

“Demirel sometimes prays, sometimes pretends to pray. The news is circulated and the word is spread at least one week in advance that he is going to pray. People make preparations as if he is going to open a factory. These are political, official prayers.”⁹⁹²

Indeed, the AP leader was a controversial political figure for the religious electorate and politicians, including those AP members representing the party's conservative faction.⁹⁹³ He had worked for the local office in Turkey of an American company (Morrison Construction) and was allegedly affiliated to a Masonic lodge, which had aroused bitter controversy in the 1963 party congress between the liberal and conservative factions.⁹⁹⁴ Fuelling these anxieties over his personality, he chose to work in the party board with those in favor of a liberal creed and gradually excluded the conservatives from high positions in the party administration and in the government.⁹⁹⁵

⁹⁸⁹ The nationalists claimed that the Masonic groups exerted pressure on the AP government. Hakkı Öznur, *Ülkücü Hareket*, Vol.1, p. 140.

⁹⁹⁰ Orhan Koloğlu, *Cumhuriyet Devrinde Masonlar (Masonic Groups in the Republic Era)* (İstanbul: Pozitif, 2004) pp.160-168

⁹⁹¹ We can speculate that the legal and practical difficulties of criticizing Republican reforms in the 1960s caused religious and some nationalist publications and politicians to use Masonic groups as a cover to raise their objections against certain social practices and political orientations.

⁹⁹² O.Yüksel Serdengeçti, “*Seçim Konuşmaları*”.

⁹⁹³ Feroz Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment*, p. 242.

⁹⁹⁴ Feroz Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment*, p. 236.

⁹⁹⁵ Feroz Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment*, pp. 237-239.

The AP's resounding victory in the 1969 election did not reverse the growing dissatisfaction with Demirel, from both within and outside the party, over his leadership profile.⁹⁹⁶ Some of his political maneuvers before the elections propelled the foundation of a new party on the right, namely the MNP, and helped the MHP sharpen its conservative standing against the AP's liberal creed. Demirel had refused Necmettin Erbakan's admission to the AP and his application to run for a parliamentary seat in the 1969 elections, and this denial had led Erbakan to form a "movement of the independents" before the election, earning him the parliamentary seat for Konya. A few months later, Erbakan founded the MNP (*Milli Nizam Partisi-National Order Party*), claiming to represent the true voice of the religious-conservative electorate in politics.⁹⁹⁷ By refusing the admission to the AP and the parliamentary candidacy of a renowned technocrat, who had gained public attention with his religious conservative views during his TOBB presidency in 1969, Demirel did not only weaken his credibility in the eyes of religious-conservatives but also paved the way for the emergence of another rival party from the right. Added to these developments, Osman Turan and Osman Yüksel Serdengeçti were expelled from the party before the 1969 elections due to their stark criticism of Demirel and their public speeches scorning the Kemalist reforms.⁹⁹⁸

Meanwhile the internal opposition within the AP was planning a final putsch to challenge Demirel's authority in the party. The hottest contention took place during the budget meetings in 1970; a conservative wing led by Demirel's rival Saadettin Bilgiç voted against the proposed budget plan and resigned from the party.⁹⁹⁹ The resignation of forty one members of parliament from the AP and the failure to pass the budget caused a serious government crisis, which could not be repaired fully before the 12 March Memorandum.¹⁰⁰⁰

⁹⁹⁶ Feroz Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment*, p. 246.

⁹⁹⁷ Jacob Landau, *Radical Politics*, pp. 188-189; see *Milli Nizam Partisi Kuruluş Bildirgesi (National Order Party: Foundational Declaration)* (Nüve Matbası, n.d).

⁹⁹⁸ As noted, shortly after this they joined the MHP.

⁹⁹⁹ Feroz Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment*, pp. 246-248.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Feroz Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment*, pp. 246-248.

Those deputies that resigned decided to found a new party in close partnership with the former Democrat leader Celal Bayar, and established the Democratic Party in 1970.¹⁰⁰¹

Despite the moral boost of the 1969 Congress and new admissions to the party, the MHP was unable to capitalize on this crisis for the right and could not fill the power gap left by the weakening AP. Actually, the MHP leadership was optimistic about joining their forces with the rebellious AP deputies as these had often been called “the nationalists” in the AP.¹⁰⁰² Their union with the former AP members could have reinforced the MHP’s assertion that it was the mother party representing Turkish nationalism in party politics, but this expectation proved to be in vain once the Democratic Party was founded. One and half years later, in October 1972, former members of the MNP (National Order Party), shut down by the martial law administration, founded the MSP (National Salvation Party).¹⁰⁰³ There is no doubt that these developments hindered the MHP from reaping the electoral fruits of its new political orientation as expressed in the party congress in 1969.

It can be argued that the MHP leadership, having made no serious headway in consecutive elections, and given its approval of the use of physical violence as a political strategy, fell short of appealing to the electorate and a wider range of politicians. Neither Türkeş nor other prominent members of the party board could match the expectations of these groups. They were not as overt and straightforward as Erbakan in advocating the inclusion of religious principles in the statecraft, which earned him the backing of conservative and

¹⁰⁰¹ It can be said that the DP leadership did pose an ideological challenge to the AP. Rather, invoking the legacy of the DP, they aimed to take the leading position in the centre-right.

¹⁰⁰² An article in *Devlet* called on these politicians to join the MHP: “As Turkish nationalists we wanted to count you among us and tried to support your struggle in the AP. We backed you, even if it harmed our party. You lost your struggle in the AP, we know how you lost the congress in 1964. You were not invited to the MHP after your resignation because there was no doubt that you would come to your home. Now we hear that you will found another party, this is the worst step against the service of Turkish nationalism. It is an obligation that nationalists should come to government owner, the only way to achieve this is to prevent the dispersal and disunity and work together. There are those who look like friends but harm the Turkish nationalists, we don’t want Bilgiç to be one of them.” *Devlet*, 21 September 1970.

¹⁰⁰³ Feroz Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment*, pp. 246-248; Sadık Albayrak, *Türk Siyasi Hayatında MSP Olayı (The Case of MSP in Turkish Political Life)* (İstanbul: Araştırma, 1989), pp. 1-21.

religious electorate.¹⁰⁰⁴ Neither were they as skilful as Demirel in employing political maneuvering and chanting rhetoric in gaining the confidence of religious organization and conservative politicians in the AP.¹⁰⁰⁵ Lastly, Türkeş and Taşer's involvement in the 27 May coup added heavy baggage on their shoulders in attempting to open a dialogue with the victims of the coup.

This increasing competition within rightist politics did not find a resonance among the youth; the *ülküçüler* were almost unrivalled in universities and high-schools. There were a few students attached to the *Süleymancı* and *Nur* movements, who ran their activities mostly through clandestine networks staying away from ideological confrontations and physical conflicts, which the nationalists saw as incompatible with their strategy of training new members.¹⁰⁰⁶ It was obvious that the *Süleymancı* and *Nurcu* movements, run by an already established leadership, had already set out their doctrinal program, with a set of texts and principles, aimed at strict training in religious practices and mastering Islamic knowledge.¹⁰⁰⁷ In their educational strategy the encouragement of physical confrontations and clashes was avoided. Nationalist student leader Ahmet Çakar, for instance, explains that nationalists had a good friendship with these young disciples of religious groups in the university, but could never get them involved in "resistance" against the left-wing students, who were numerically far superior at that time.¹⁰⁰⁸

As a result of the insufficient capacity of official religious institutions in Turkey in the 1940s and 1950s, these religious movements had found an easy way to disseminate their activities across the countryside, placing their focus essentially on religious training.¹⁰⁰⁹ It can be argued that the rise in the number of students after 1960 provided them with more fertile

¹⁰⁰⁴ For a discussion on Erbakan see Şerif Mardin, *Religion, Society and Modernity in Turkey* (New York: Syracuse, 2003), pp. 238-239.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Yeşim Arat, "Süleyman Demirel", p. 98.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Mustafa Aydın, "Süleymanlık", pp. 308-320; Ruşen Çakır, *Ayet ve Slogan*, pp. 80-90, 102-104, 132-138.

¹⁰⁰⁷ For the tension between the CKMP-MHP leadership and the leaders of the *Nurcu* movement see Footnote 367.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Ahmet Çakar, Interview.

¹⁰⁰⁹ The İmam-Hatip schools were re-introduced in 1946; see Footnote 914

ground to advance their organization further.¹⁰¹⁰ Yet the foundation of the GÜT in conservative rural areas did presumably have a counter-effect on this advancement; the nationalist movement was essentially political in nature and could easily mobilize those young people who were in search of an organization which had a political voice. Its method and strategy, prioritizing the pursuit of political goals through action and confrontation with a rival group, were totally different from those of the *Nur* and the *Süleymancı* movements.

On the other hand, as discussed in Chapter 2, through this process of drawing young people from the conservative grassroots, the permeation of religious creeds into the nationalist doctrine was tangible. This orientation did not advocate the application of (what would now be called) Islamist policy at the level of the state, but raised awareness amongst nationalist militants as to the preservation of religious customs at the cultural level.

Anti-Westernization and the Dependency Problem

The question of westernization occupied a prominent place on the nationalist political agenda, concomitant to the gradual shift in the party's discourse from secular nationalism to conservative nationalism. This trend was spearheaded by some members of the party leadership, Dündar Taşer and Yüksel Serdengeçti in particular, who held a confrontationist view of the Ottoman-Turkish encounter with the West.¹⁰¹¹ Serdengeçti was keen to invoke historical antagonisms between the West and the Ottomans:

“They couldn't succeed in defeating us in the Gallipoli War but now they have found other channels to overcome this resistance. We call it cultural imperialism. Committed and religious soldiers of the nationalist movement will stand against them and won't allow anything that does not belong to us to enter these lands.”¹⁰¹²

¹⁰¹⁰ The number of high-school students rose from approximately 60.000 to 350.000; the number of university students rose approximately from 65.000 to 159.000 between 1960 and 1970. See Brian Williamson, *Education and Social Change*, pp. 143-205. Musa Serdar Çelebi notes that the level of religious education was low in the countryside; this point is raised by Turan Güven as well; see Turan Güven, *İnsan Gelecekte Yaşar*, p. 355.

¹⁰¹¹ O.Yüksel Serdengeçti, *Seçim Konuşmaları*.

¹⁰¹² O.Yüksel Serdengeçti, *Seçim Konuşmaları*.

They urged young nationalists to be cautious and critical of whatever came from the west or under the banner of the “new”.¹⁰¹³ Unlike them, Türkeş did not promote such a stark anti-Westernism and usually remained discreet especially on issues pertaining to culture. It seems, however, that young nationalists were more receptive towards the views of the Taşer and Serdengeçti; in many of the documents released by the *ülkü ocakları* and GÜT, they expressed their discontentment with the AP’s liberal creed and its overt promotion of liberalism, which they saw as expediting the transmission of Western cultural values into the country.¹⁰¹⁴

The *ülküçüler*’s opposition towards certain practices varied from region to region or town to town. The birth control campaign, for example, was protested against by a group of GÜT members in İzmir in April 1969.¹⁰¹⁵ They held a protest at the airport when the president of the international Rotary clubs paid a visit to Turkey in 1970.¹⁰¹⁶ As noted, especially in the late 1960s and early 1970s Masonic lodges and Rotary clubs became the target of *ülküçüler* and some members of the party leadership¹⁰¹⁷; despite being different organizations in terms of aims and membership profiles, they were treated under the same category and accused of being the tools of American cultural and political propaganda. It seems that neither the MHP leadership nor young militants had substantial knowledge about these organizations, but it is obvious that this discourse was instrumental in fostering the image of the MHP and nationalist organizations as local powers fighting against

¹⁰¹³ Dündar Taşer, “*Batılılaşmak (Westernization)*”, *Devlet*, 19 October 1970.

¹⁰¹⁴ For a variety of declarations displaying this resentment examples see Turhan Feyizoğlu, *Fırtınalı Yıllarda Ülkücü Hareket*, pp. 508-513.

¹⁰¹⁵ Turan Güven, one of the early leaders of the *ülkü ocakları*, argues that they attacked this meeting because they believed imperialist forces aimed to prevent Turkey having population of one hundred million, Turan Güven, *İnsan Gelecekte Yaşar*, p. 325; also see Turhan Feyizoğlu, *Fırtınalı Yıllarda Ülkücü Hareket*, p. 610.

¹⁰¹⁶ Turhan Feyizoğlu, *Fırtınalı Yıllarda*, pp. 510-12; on the other hand, Türkeş stated in an interview that he would never approve aggressive behavior towards Masonic lodges and added that he fired some militants from the organization because of their recent protests against these lodges; Alparslan Türkeş, Interview, *Milliyet*, 5 June 1969.

¹⁰¹⁷ As will be discussed in this chapter, MNP-MSP leadership adapted a similar attitude towards the Masonic groups in its early years.

“international” forces, as attributed to the Masonic groups and Rotary clubs.¹⁰¹⁸ This would especially help young nationalists catch anti-American sentiments spreading in the universities, giving the impression that they were as anti-imperialist as the socialists. Accordingly, the nationalists frequently underlined that the presence of Masonic lodges in the AP as a sign of their lack of connection with the “poor and religious Anatolian” masses.¹⁰¹⁹

This dichotomy between the Masonic groups and “Anatolian people” was often employed in nationalist publications to signify a struggle between “local” and “foreign”, in which “poor” and “traditional” Turkish people were left unaided against a minority of well organized “rich” and “Westernist”.¹⁰²⁰ It can be argued that through this confrontational discourse, the nationalists gave a message that the AP no longer represented conservative and religious people and hoped to win over this audience. Besides, this discourse seemed to be instrumental in mobilizing young nationalists especially in the countryside.

In the same vein, private high-schools run by American foundations could not escape these protests; a declaration released by the *ülkü ocağı* of İstanbul University Law Faculty in 1969 called these places: “spy schools and institutions that foreign cultures sponsored to exploit Turkish culture”.¹⁰²¹ Likewise some young nationalists in İzmir in 1969 directed their protests to cancel the showing of a cinema film or the performance of a theatre play, which they thought to be incompatible with the Turkish-Islamic moral values.¹⁰²² Certain dress codes received criticism as well; for instance, a branch of the *ülkü ocakları* released a declaration in May 1969 criticizing the dressing code of female students on the day of an

¹⁰¹⁸ We should note that after the mid-1970s this anti-Masonic discourse diminished among the MHP leadership and young militants.

¹⁰¹⁹ Metin Turhan, *Ülkü Ocakları*, pp. 4-6; O.Yüksel Serdengeçti, “*Seçim Konuşmaları*”.

¹⁰²⁰ Turhan Feyizoğlu, *Fırtınalı Yıllarda*, pp. 609-611; Metin Turhan, *Ülkü Ocakları*, pp. 3-7.

¹⁰²¹ Turhan Feyizoğlu, *Fırtınalı Yıllarda*, pp. 609-610; Metin Turhan, *Ülkü Ocakları*, p. 4

¹⁰²² In Ephesus, where cultural festivals were held, the *ülkü ocakları* organized a protest and accused the organizers of promoting Western-Christian culture. Turhan Feyizoğlu, *Fırtınalı Yıllarda*, p. 611

official celebration.¹⁰²³ This crude anti-Westernism sometimes even led them to view left-wing activists, who wore blue jeans, in the same category with the Americans.¹⁰²⁴

Linked to this debate, economic dependency on the West preoccupied the nationalists, who felt resentment towards AP policies. The AP, like the DP, was determined to advance economic policies favoring private investment, fostering integration with the Western markets.¹⁰²⁵ This goal relied largely on foreign investment and government subsidies for private entrepreneurship in industrial production. To this end, Demirel sought hard to finalize Turkey's entrance to the European Economic Community.¹⁰²⁶ The MHP leadership and *ülkü ocakları* were opposed to this policy and maintained that the free-market economy would be a blow to the Turkish peasant and businessman, who lacked the necessary capital and technological resources to compete with foreigners.¹⁰²⁷

It appears that young militants were more worried by the fact that their socialist rivals comfortably gained ground because of this economic model that brought about widened inequality. As an example, in 1970 the *ülkü ocakları* organized weekly demonstrations in different cities against the government proposal to introduce private education, even though the party leadership mostly remained silent on this issue.¹⁰²⁸ Whereas Türkeş and Taşer seemed to avoid using condemning words towards the bourgeoisie and wealthy elite, in declarations of the *ülkü ocakları* and GÜT a robust anti-rich discourse, blasting "capitalists" and factory owners, prevailed.¹⁰²⁹ The party leadership and young generation agreed that the

¹⁰²³ See Turhan Feyizoğlu, *Fırtınalı Yıllarda*, pp. 612, 621-622.

¹⁰²⁴ An *ülkü ocakları* statement in read: "...those communist wearing American clothes and living like the westerners...". Turhan Feyizoğlu, *Fırtınalı Yıllarda*, p. 512.

¹⁰²⁵ In the AP Party Program it was stated: "...we believe in free economy and private investment as a part of democratic order...", *AP Parti Programı*, p. 7; Ümit Cizre, *Ordu-AP İlişkileri*, pp. 44-45

¹⁰²⁶ *AP Parti Programı*, pp. 30-31.

¹⁰²⁷ Alparslan Türkeş, *Milliyet*, 11 December 1969; The *ülkü ocakları* held weekly gatherings in 1969 to protest against the entry to the EEC; to see these declarations and statements see Metin Turhan, *Ülkü Ocakları*, pp. 28-32.

¹⁰²⁸ Metin Turhan, *Ülkü Ocakları*, pp. 9-13, 28-32.

¹⁰²⁹ Tuhan Feyzioğlu, *Fırtınalı Yıllarda*, pp.507-515; Metin Turhan, *Ülkü Ocakları*, pp.28-32.

dependency on the West should be broken, but they diverged over how to handle its possible repercussions in domestic politics.

The most salient division between the party and young nationalists was on their treatment of the AP's foreign policy. Both groups favored more active involvement in Middle Eastern affairs and the protection of Turkish minorities in the Balkans and Soviet Union. Nevertheless, the party leadership, especially Trkeř and Tařer, gave full support to the government's priority of sustaining amicable relations with the Western bloc, and even wanted to strengthen Turkey's strategic partnership with NATO and the US. In a speech to the press about NATO Trkeř stated:

“We need American aid. Even if the government changes, the NATO policy should continue. Turkey needs to speed up its development and needs western and American aid. Today there are some people who do not want our friendship with America and membership in NATO; they are anarchists and communists devoid of the love of patrie and nation.”¹⁰³⁰

On this issue, young nationalist militants were hardly in line with the party leadership; a statement released by the İstanbul *lk ocakları* leadership in 1970 warned that American imperialism exploited Turkey.¹⁰³¹ This disagreement over the attitude towards America, however, did not come to the surface in the late 60s and early 70s as the motivation of anti-communism continued to mask lingering discords amongst the nationalist politicians and militants.

Overall, in their ideological challenge to the traditional rightist politics there were still some ambiguities within the party leadership and young militants. On the question of westernization, on the one side there was the AP leadership's vision of promoting faster and more comprehensive westernization, and on the other side was the aversion towards the “new” and “Western”. Some of the MHP leadership stood closer to the former whereas some others propagated the latter, which was embraced by the young nationalists. On the question

¹⁰³⁰ *Milliyet*, 13 June 1969. Similarly in his 1966 election speech Trkeř said: “Our alliance with the US is crucial, we could not buy our weapons, so we need American and NATO aid.” Alparslan Trkeř, *CKMP Seęim Konuřmaları*

¹⁰³¹ *Devlet*, 21 December 1970.

of religion, the party leadership and nationalist militants had the same conviction about the hypocrisy of the AP in employing religion for political benefit, and recognized the importance of religion as a strong political tool. Nevertheless, the MNP-MSP's coming into the picture made it more complicated for them to carve out a consistent discourse on the relationship between nationalism and religion.

II- THE MSP QUESTION AND THE MC YEARS: 1972-1977

The nationalists boasted that the military intervention of 12 March 1971 bore out their warnings on the question of authority. In the aftermath of the coup, Demirel seemed to be convinced that to stay in the government he would need the organized force of nationalists in the state institutions and on the street. Likewise, it became clear that the MHP and MSP shared more than they disagreed over in respect of the issues of religion and westernization. After the dissolution of the CHP-MSP government, these conditions made it possible for the parties to come together and join their forces against the rising CHP, yet most of the time party interest overshadowed their rapprochement. However, the nationalist militants had higher expectations than being the third party in a coalition government. They did not feel sympathy towards the other coalition partners, nor did the AP and MSP leaderships appreciate the strategy of nationalist militants in the state institutions, universities and streets. Furthermore, the *ülkü ocakları* leadership started to question the MHP leadership over its participation in the government. This tension made it more difficult for the party leadership to follow a consistent political discourse and strategy heading into the 1977 elections

The Rise of the MSP

The Muslim Brotherhood and its off-shoots defending the Islamic cause in politics had begun to gain a significant following, though often in very adverse circumstances, in most of the Middle Eastern countries from the 1950s onwards, but in Turkey such a political movement based on Islamic political discourse did not develop until the late 1960s.¹⁰³² The foundation of the MNP thus marked a watershed in Turkish politics. In its founding declaration, it was underlined that the MNP had long been awaited in the spirit of the Turkish nation, which was chosen by God “to enjoin the right and forbid the wrong”.¹⁰³³ The party’s early slogan was “we will stamp ‘The Right (Haqq) way is Islam’ on the Masonic Lodge, head of the leftist and the desk of civil officer”.¹⁰³⁴ Erbakan called this movement as the true representative of the National Idea (*Milli Görüş*) and in the founding declaration it was stated:

“Our nation, as the greatest nation of history, saw itself responsible for bringing order to the world; so far our nation has fought against the Western nations all together, not one by one, and defeated them every time: The Crusades, the conquest of İstanbul, the siege of Vienna. However, now our nation is left helpless against foreign cultures, communists and cosmopolitan minds.”¹⁰³⁵

These slogans pleased the nationalists, but it was obvious that the MSP would have to win over the AP electorate and the MHP had already invested in becoming the main opposition party against the AP and facing another competition in this realm was a serious setback for the MHP.

In the 1973 elections the MHP was not able to establish itself as the first or second preference of the rightist electorate. The MSP, on the other hand, acquired 48 seats in the parliament, becoming the third biggest group after the CHP and the AP.¹⁰³⁶ These results demonstrated that a significant percentage of the rightist electorate approved the MSP’s goal of promoting Islamic policies through democratic means; building a novel political consciousness, the MNP-MSP generated a sense of belonging to the Islamic cause in politics,

¹⁰³² See the evolution of different cases in the region in Quintan Witkowitz ed. *Islamic Activism: A Social Movement Theory Approach* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 2004).

¹⁰³³ *Milli Nizam Partisi Kuruluş Bildirgesi*

¹⁰³⁴ Mehmet Ö.Alkan, “‘Osmanlı’dan Cumhuriyet’e Seçim Tarihimizden Manzaralar” (Scenes from the Elections from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic), *Toplumsal Tarih*, Haziran 2011, p. 210.

¹⁰³⁵ *Milli Nizam Partisi Kuruluş Bildirgesi*.

¹⁰³⁶ See Appendix 2

to which the MHP had so far been unable to attain. The MSP successfully converted the prevailing anxieties of the religious electorate into the language of politics; Erbakan was more straightforward than Türkeş in airing out what these people wished to hear:

“Why do we choose Sunday as the official holiday instead of Friday? What happens if we let people free on Friday so that they can go to the mosque freely? In all of the Western states religion controls politics...the idea that religion and state are two different things makes no sense. These two run together. There could be great benefits if the Caliphate is restored, political benefits as well. I don't insist that it should come back, but if people want it to come back...it can”.¹⁰³⁷

As a solution to overhaul socio-economic problems, the MSP simply offered the application of certain religious beliefs in the realm of politics:

“The MSP is the leading flag of moral values and spirituality. With regard to its fundamental belief, the MSP representative is against the waste of resources and corruption. Cleanliness is inherent in our belief we will clean the roads and streets. We work as if we worship, in our belief the best of humans is he who helps the others.”¹⁰³⁸

In addition, Erbakan was a renowned mechanical engineer, who used to teach in İstanbul Technical University as a Professor of Engineering, and mustered a group of technocrats from a similar background on the MSP board.¹⁰³⁹ The MSP leadership was able to present a more convincing set of economic plans than the MHP and often underscored its commitment to the industrial development and advancement of national heavy industry.¹⁰⁴⁰ It seems that this profile in the party administration reinforced the perception that a group of pious engineers were set to lead the long awaited Turkish industrialization.

Actually, both parties shared common ground in building a defiant political discourse against the West. Erbakan used the term “imitation-ist” (*taklitçi*) and accused all the other parties and ideologies of imitating Western values and political strategies.¹⁰⁴¹ Some of the MHP members maintained that the current state of affairs in Turkey was a result of the long

¹⁰³⁷ Necmettin Erbakan, *Milliyet*, 25 September 1969.

¹⁰³⁸ Necmettin Erbakan, *MSP Seçim Konuşmaları: 1977 Seçimleri (MSP Election Speeches: 1977 Elections)* (Ankara: 1977).

¹⁰³⁹ Frank Tachau “Parliamentary Elites: Turkey” in *Electoral Politics in the Middle East*, ed. Jacob Landau, Ergun Özbudun, Franz Tachau, pp. 230-232.

¹⁰⁴⁰ In one of his election speeches Erbakan raised this issue: “...we wish to have a hundred thousand tractors. Our goal is to produce the machines that we use in our country. So far we have built machines factories, lorry and motor factories”. *MSP Seçim Konuşmaları: 1977 Seçimleri*.

¹⁰⁴¹ *Milliyet*, 01 January 1980, 09 October 1979, 21 May 1977.

years of conflict between Islam and Christianity.¹⁰⁴² As briefly discussed, this vision was quickly embraced by young nationalist militants. The MSP, too, insistently advocated that Turkey was a unique battleground between the forces of Islam, Christian West, Communism and Zionists; they frequently claimed that the Masonic groups acted as agents of foreign imperial powers.¹⁰⁴³

In addition to all this, the praise of Ottoman ancestors in the MSP was no different to the pro-Ottomanist discourse of the MHP after 1969; Erbakan declared:

“Anyone who doesn’t feel our rearing up in Malazgirt, being a sword in the War of Kosovo, being a soldier to conquer İstanbul, being Fatih II to ride his horse to the sea, being Süleyman I to march his armies into Europe could not understand what the National Salvation Party is”¹⁰⁴⁴

This extremely favorable interpretation of the Ottoman heritage was instrumental for the MSP, which sought to reclaim the prestigious legacy of the Ottomans and forge stronger links with the Muslim world. The MSP used a much more bitter language than the MHP in criticizing the Americans and the Zionists, whom they considered responsible for all the grievances the Muslim world suffered. It can be said that Erbakan was the first political leader that embraced this anti-Zionist discourse in Turkish politics; this discourse implied that Turkey was a significant actor in the international power struggle and the MSP was the only party that could defend the interests of Turkey. In this respect, it seems that the MSP leadership, capitalizing on the Ottoman heritage, was willing to undertake a much more assertive role in Middle-Eastern as well as global politics.

The Zionists, to Erbakan, were well aware of the importance of Turkey in the Middle East and did everything to hinder its revival and Turkey’s admission to the EEC was a Zionist plot:

¹⁰⁴² Osman Yüksel Serdengeçti’s election speech in 1969 was illustrative: “They invented a story of Mary in İzmir and made it a sacred place of Christianity. Then Santa Claus appeared in Antalya. They want to change this glorious land into a former Roman, Byzantium country.... one day they will say hey you barbaric Turks you came after us.... despite our all pressures, the AP could not open Hagia Sophia, the sacred place of conquest, to worship.... yet they hosted the Pope with great reverence”. O.Yüksel Serdengeçti, “*Seçim Konuşmaları*”.

¹⁰⁴³ Necmettin Erbakan, Interview, *Milliyet*, 25 September 1969. In the MNP regulation book it was forbidden for a Mason to register in the party. *The MNP Party Regulation Book* (Ankara: Haktanır, 1970).

¹⁰⁴⁴ Necmettin Erbakan, The MSP Congress Speech available on “Milli Görüş’ün Tanımı” www.youtube.com_

“Why do Zionists want Turkey to join the EEC? Turkey is the leader of Islamic World; now they want Turkey to melt into an union of Catholics and Protestant Christians.”¹⁰⁴⁵

Furthermore, the MSP leadership, like the MHP, sternly opposed Turkey’s integration to the European Economic Community, maintaining that the feeble Turkish economy would fall into the hands of “Western economic imperialism” once it became a part of the EEC.¹⁰⁴⁶ As can be seen, the MSP described the EEC as a Christian club and categorically rejected Turkey’s being a member of such an organization. This emphasis on the Christian roots of Europe was not voiced by the MHP leadership, but young nationalists brought this issue to the fore when they spoke against the EEC.¹⁰⁴⁷ Lastly, no less than this salient antipathy with the capitalist West, the atheist-communist left was under constant criticism among the followers of the *Milli Görüş*.¹⁰⁴⁸ This proximity between the two parties was at such a level that Türkeş and Erbakan held a series of meetings in 1977 with a view to joining their forces in a single party, but these meetings ended in failure as the leaders could not agree upon the issues of leadership and political strategy.¹⁰⁴⁹

The gist of ideological division between the two parties was clear; “Being Muslim or being Turk, which one comes first?” was the question young nationalists frequently discussed among each other, or were asked by their friends voting for the MSP.¹⁰⁵⁰ The MSP prioritized religious identity over national identity, which suggested that Turkish nation was privileged not because of its pre-Islamic heritage but because of its service to the religion through centuries.¹⁰⁵¹ The use of pre-Islamic symbols pertaining to Turkic culture in the MHP,

¹⁰⁴⁵ 20 Mayıs 1971 MNP’yi Kapatma Anayasa Mahkemesi Kararı (*The Supreme Court Decision that shut down the MNP on 20 May 1971*) (Ankara: 1972); pp. 17, 68.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Necmettin Erbakan, Interview, *Milliyet*, 28 September 1972

¹⁰⁴⁷ See the declaration released by the İstanbul ÜOB in 1970 in Metin Turhan, *Ülkü Ocakları*, p. 28

¹⁰⁴⁸ *Milliyet*, 16 September 1979.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Yılmaz Yalçın, Interview; Yavuz Bülent Bakiler, *Gidenlerin Ardından* (İstanbul: Türk Edebiyatı Vakfı Yayınları: 2010), pp. 283-285

¹⁰⁵⁰ İbrahim Metin, Interview. Another similar question for the nationalists was “whom you would save first in the sea, a Muslim or a Turk?”, Mustafa Verkaya, Interview. Ali Batman (The ÜOD Leader), “İnananların Yeri MHP’dir” (The Home of Believers is the MHP)” in *Hasret*, 15 May 1977.

¹⁰⁵¹ Necmettin Erbakan, *MSP Seçim Konuşmaları: 1977 Seçimleri*.

therefore, was simply a sign of irreligiosity.¹⁰⁵² While the MSP blamed the MHP for confounding religion with a secular ideology, the nationalists complained about the electoral consequences of this competition with the MSP. In Eastern Turkey the MSP averaged almost the same percentage of votes as the AP and the CHP, which owed a lot to its appeal to the conservative Kurdish population in this region.¹⁰⁵³ The nationalists questioned the MSP's high popularity, arguing that the MSP manipulated ethnic concerns for political gain.¹⁰⁵⁴

In fact, the nationalists concentrated their criticism of the MNP-MSP on political strategy rather than ideological division. The MHP leadership had been watching Erbakan and his movement with suspicion; in the aftermath of the 1969 elections, for instance, Türkeş was angry with independent candidates led by Erbakan, arguing that they inflicted larger damage to the MHP than the AP and that Demirel manipulated Erbakan's movement to halt the expansion of the MHP.¹⁰⁵⁵ They condemned the MSP of doing politics for the sake of power and lacking the courage to resist the socialists in civil and political sphere.¹⁰⁵⁶ That the MSP accepted Ecevit's offer to form the coalition government in 1974 provided a sensible ground for the MHP leadership to launch a serious opposition against the MSP. To them, the coalition protocol revealed that the MSP leadership was not as sensitive to the defense of religion as it had proclaimed, but was instead tempted by the charms of political power, which led them to strike an agreement with the gravest enemies of conservative people, Bülent Ecevit and the CHP.¹⁰⁵⁷

¹⁰⁵² The nationalists retorted: "...those carrying the placards of grey wolf in a crescent are accused of paganism. Are we the enemy of Sharia?" *Devlet*, 10 May 1976.

¹⁰⁵³ See the MSP electoral performance in Adıyaman (22%), Bingöl (25.5%), Diyarbakır (18.5%), Şanlıurfa (17.5%), Malatya (19.9%), http://www.belgenet.net/ayrinti.php?yil_id=7&il_id=436 (accessed on 16 August 2012).

¹⁰⁵⁴ *Hergün*, 2 June 1977-4 June 1977; the MHP won the municipality of Bingöl in 1977, a city which was predominantly populated by religious Kurds.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Alparslan Türkeş, *Milliyet*, 6 December 1969.

¹⁰⁵⁶ *Devlet*, 8 October 1973, 29 October, 1973.

¹⁰⁵⁷ *Devlet*, 5 November 1973; also see İleriş Metin, "Milli Selamet Partisi ve Milliyetçilik" (The MSP and Nationalism) in *Devlet*, 8 October 1973.

The MHP leadership and the *ülkü ocakları* disparaged the MSP as submissive and indolent in their relations with the left during its first four years in the parliament.¹⁰⁵⁸ This criticism was advanced further with Necip Fazıl's castigation of the MSP leadership upon his leaving the party over their inability to lead the mission of Islamic politics and the fight against communism. Necip Fazıl's comments on the MSP gained extensive coverage in the nationalist publications, boasted with his joining to the MHP, the nationalists proclaimed that they were more eligible than the MSP to carry out the anti-communist struggle.¹⁰⁵⁹

The MSP's style of using religion in its political discourse and propaganda sometimes infuriated the nationalists.¹⁰⁶⁰ Erbakan did not care being photographed by the media when he was praying in a mosque and comfortably employed religious vocabulary in his political language. He often called on people to vote for "the order of Haqq (that which is right, godly)" instead of "the order of Batıl (that which is wrong, corrupt)", implying that the MSP represented the path of God.¹⁰⁶¹ The MHP leadership, on the other hand, declined to display such an overt expression of individual religiosity and was less willing to use, compared to the MSP, stark religious terminology in the party discourse. Furthermore, the party leadership and *ülküçüler* complained about the backing of religious foundations and mosque preachers for the MSP as a high number of imams called on people to vote for the MSP and some Sufi sheikhs, notably in the East, asked their disciples to lend their support to the MSP.¹⁰⁶²

This attitude gave the MSP an edge in the ballots ahead of the other rightist parties in claiming to be the best representative of Islam in politics. Yet the MSP's comfortable position received a blow following their coalition pact with the CHP in 1974, and in the meantime the

¹⁰⁵⁸ An article in *Devlet* read: "so are we the enemies of *Şeriat*? We sacrifice ourselves in the way of *Şeriat*. Where were you while we died in the way of God and the Prophet?" *Devlet*, 10 May 1976. Also see *Hergün* 23 May 1977-7 June 1977.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Ali Batman, "İnananların Birliğine Doğru" (Towards the Unification of Believers) in *Hasret*, 15 Ocak 1977

¹⁰⁶⁰ Taha Akyol, "İstiklal Marşı ve İslamiyet" (National Anthem and Islam) and "İslam ve Şaşkınlık" (Islam and Perplexed), *Hergün*, 9 September 1970 and 10 September 1970.

¹⁰⁶¹ Erbakan frequently used the Quranic verse "And say, "Truth has come, and falsehood has departed. Indeed is falsehood, [by nature], ever bound to depart." (17:81) to distinguish the MNP-MSP from the other parties, see *Milliyet*, 03 September 1969.

¹⁰⁶² Nevzat Kösoğlu, *Hatıralar*, p. 184; Ahmet Er, *Hatıralarım*, p.257-261; *Devlet*, 19 December.

MHP leadership gradually became more flexible in displaying a religious profile in public. Türkeş decided to perform the Hajj in 1977, a decision which was quickly popularized by the party publications and young nationalists. This trend accelerated with the growing religiosity in the *ülkü ocakları* leadership and *ülküciüler* broke the MSP's grip in mosques, forming closer ties with local men of religion and religious organizations.¹⁰⁶³ In most of these activities young nationalists took the initiative without consulting Türkeş or the party representatives; for example, the decision to meet in front of the Ayasofya and perform symbolic prayer in the building in 1975, which was likely to add a lot of points to the rating of approval for the MHP among conservative people, was made by a leader of the *ülkü ocakları* city branch.¹⁰⁶⁴

Moreover, the vibrant civil society of the 1970s spawned dozens of different foundations and organizations with definite ideological goals; this dynamism had its impact on religious organizations as well. Once the MSP made its headway claiming to represent Islam in politics, some of these religious movements, the most important one of which was the *nur* movement, felt resentment with the way the MSP carried out this endeavor.¹⁰⁶⁵ As the MSP did not seek an organic connection with these movements, Erbakan's political maneuvers raised doubts in some of these movements about the MSP's decision-making process.¹⁰⁶⁶ In such circumstances young nationalists stepped in and sought to convince disillusioned groups such strong Nakşibendi brotherhoods like *Menzil* and *İskenderpaşa* to vote for them instead.¹⁰⁶⁷

Lastly, the difference between the two parties in their political strategies was in part pertinent to the question of state administration; the MSP embraced a different vision of the

¹⁰⁶³ Şerif Mardin explains Erbakan's link to Nakşibendi Sheykh Mehmed Zahit Kotku, the spiritual leader of Naklibendi brotherhood called *İskenderpaşa*, in detail, see Şerif Mardin, "Islam in Nineteenth and Twentieth-Century Turkey" in *Religion, Society and Modernity in Turkey* (London: Syracuse, 2006), pp. 283-285.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Mustafa Verkaya, Interview.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Ruşen Çakır, *Ayet ve Slogan*, pp. 88-90.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Ruşen Çakır, *Ayet ve Slogan*, pp. 37-38, 101-102.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Yılmaz Yalçiner, Abdullah Muradoğlu, Interviews; Tanıl Bora and Kemal Can, *Devlet Ocak Dergah*, p. 286.

government, relying on the professional knowledge of the party leadership and technocrats selected by them. The party leadership did not seek to recruit young militants and the party supporters did not undertake a variety of activities outside election time. In this sense, it did not aim to generate a political movement as the MHP leadership and nationalist militants intended. Nevertheless, with the deepening ideological polarization in the late 1970s the MSP leadership started to pay more attention to the associations around the party and, as will be discussed, initiated the foundation of a youth organization.

The MC Years

The tension between the AP and the MHP seemed to have softened in the aftermath of the 12 March Memorandum. Demirel had to re-orientate the party's direction after the foundation of the DP in order to restore the AP's leading position on the right. The 1973 election results demonstrated that he would need the backing of another party to remain in power and more importantly he had learnt that extra-parliamentary forces such as trade unions, student organizations and civil servants, including the high ranking bureaucracy, would play a crucial role in the efficient work of government. In the party congress speech in 1973 Demirel undertook a re-appraisal of the political developments preceding the 1971 intervention and made following comments:

“Turkey had become the land of freedom; but the CHP and TİP had manipulated and abused this atmosphere. The country couldn't be ruled with the 1961 Constitution; the TRT and University had become state within state. Our weakness had made some others happy.”¹⁰⁶⁸

When the coalition between the CHP and the MSP came to an end in 1974, the AP leader found himself in a position to steer the process of government formation. When Türkeş approached Demirel to lead a National Front government, Demirel, considering the political

¹⁰⁶⁸ Süleyman Demirel, *1973 Kongre Konuşması (1973 Congress Speech)*, pp. 18-29.

realities of the time, responded to the MHP with a more benign attitude, accepting their offer and giving the nationalists two seats in his government in 1975.¹⁰⁶⁹

The involvement of the rightist intelligentsia in politics had so far been limited compared to the leftists. The political context of the early 1970s did apparently stir a reaction among rightist thinkers and scholars; from the mid 1970s they started to have a bigger say in the shaping of rightist politics. *Aydınlar Ocağı* (The Intellectuals' Hearth),¹⁰⁷⁰ re-opened in the early 1970s, led the civil initiative to bring the rightist leaders together, playing an intermediary role with the politicians.¹⁰⁷¹ In the rightist newspapers such as *Ortadoğu*, *Tercüman* and *Son Havadis*, the party leaders were called upon to form a nationalist government.¹⁰⁷² These intellectuals were worried about the allocation of key jobs in the civil service, especially in the education and culture, to the socialists.¹⁰⁷³ In a bid to unify the rightist parties, Muharrem Ergin, another prominent nationalist scholar in connection with *Aydınlar Ocağı*, wrote a pamphlet, "Nationalists, Unite", in which he praised the MHP and their young militants, the *ülküçüler*, as an important force that should not be overlooked by other rightist parties:

"Nationalists don't be afraid; the wind of socialism descends upon Turkey and you are responsible for saving Turkey from this...it would be heedless to exclude the MHP, with its increasing number of votes and powerful young forces, from this coalition"¹⁰⁷⁴

It could be said that from the viewpoint of the MHP leadership and *ülkü ocakları*, it was a sign of their growing power that they were finally seen in the rightist press and intelligentsia as a legitimate political organization. It was again an achievement of the MHP that the other coalition partners agreed to unite under the banner of nationalism and the party members often boasted that the foundation of this government was a real achievement for

¹⁰⁶⁹ Tanıl Bora and Kemal Can, *Devlet Ocak Dergah*, p. 61.

¹⁰⁷⁰ For a discussion on *Aydınlar Ocağı* see Chapter 2.

¹⁰⁷¹ Emin Alper-Özgür Sevgi Göral, "Aydınlar Ocağı" in *MTSD*, Vol. V, pp. 583-584.

¹⁰⁷² See *Ortadoğu*, *Tercüman*, *Son Havadis*, February and March 1975.

¹⁰⁷³ Yüksel Taşkın, *Milliyetçi Muhafazakar Entelijansiya*, pp. 133-143, 181-191.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Muharrem Ergin wrote: *Milliyetçiler Korkmayınız Birleşiniz (Nationalists Don't Be Afraid: Unite!)* (Ankara: Sosyal, 1976), pp. 130-132, p. 204.

Turkish nationalism.¹⁰⁷⁵ This change of discourse on the right was an indicator that the nationalists had managed to strengthen other parties' anti-communist standing in the late 1970s as well.

The establishment of this coalition government, however, did not mean that the parties worked in a friendly partnership. The AP and the MHP still defended different orientations in the realm of the economy; the MHP's economic program, which was against integration in the EEC and proposed the centralization of the banks and insurance companies, was incompatible with the AP's economic policies. During the coalition talks Demirel left the meeting complaining about the MHP's proposals on economic policy, which he found as statist as a socialist model.¹⁰⁷⁶ For the *ülkü ocakları* leadership, this clash was not only a matter of policy orientation, but a question of integrity and a yardstick that would test the AP's genuine commitment to nationalism; the number of articles castigating Western imperialism and American involvement in domestic affairs tangibly increased in nationalist publications and they complained that the AP behaved no differently from the agents of the imperialist companies that upheld Western interests in Turkey. An article in *Genç Arkadaş*, the official paper of the *ülkü ocakları*, said:

“The order of oppression and corruption of the Westernist bureaucrats will one day fail. Corrupt capital holders and Westernist bureaucrats have become loyal slaves of imperialism, and have made our country a slave to Western imperialism.”¹⁰⁷⁷

In addition, young nationalists felt a deep resentment towards the fact that nationalism was used by the other coalition partners as a political tool. The AP and the MSP, as the leading partners of the MC government, were willing to capitalize on the fear of socialism, and the need to protect “nationalism” from the intrusion of its coalition partners was a pressing question for the young nationalists; an article in *Genç Arkadaş* read: “Nationalism,

¹⁰⁷⁵ *Devlet*, 12 May 1975; *Hergün*, 23 April 1977.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Sadi Somuncuoğlu, Interview.

¹⁰⁷⁷ *Genç Arkadaş*, 5 November 1977.

as in the mouth of Demirel, has become the name of a corrupt order and the spread of cosmopolitanism’’¹⁰⁷⁸ and another article in *Hasret* loudly criticized this tendency:

‘‘The MC government put the nationalist label, but has neither understood nor applied the consciousness of nationalism. It has not advanced politics of nationalism, and thus emptied it of its content and meaning...but we won’t allow nationalism to be abused and corrupted’’.¹⁰⁷⁹

The question of authority was still a hot topic among the rightist parties. It seems that the MHP leadership and young nationalists had high confidence in their political strategy against the socialist groups, but imposing this code of conduct in a coalition government was hardly feasible. The magnitude of the struggle with the socialists was often complained by the coalition partners, who could be said to be in a dilemma regarding the increasing number of nationalist militants in the civil service and state institutions. The AP and MSP ministers were not content with the activities of nationalist students and militants, but in the meantime they appointed them in the civil service and bureaucracy.¹⁰⁸⁰ As discussed earlier, in the Ministry of Education and the Interior Ministry the AP and MSP ministers needed the nationalist militants to fill the ranks that were taken back from the CHP. Again, the government needed nationalist workers and militants to break longstanding strikes in some of the significant state factories, which would otherwise have resulted in severe hardships in the industrial and service sectors.¹⁰⁸¹ This attitude towards the nationalist militants provoked more anger in the *lk ocakları* and they kept criticizing the AP and MSP for being unwilling to help young nationalists in the universities.¹⁰⁸² Keeping pressure high on these parties, the *lk ocakları* held marches to protest against the other parties’ cabinet ministers; such demonstrations which were instrumental in preventing laxity among the nationalist militants as well. Upon the foundation of the second MC an article in *Gen Arkadaş* read:

¹⁰⁷⁸ *Gen Arkadaş*, 10 August, 1977.

¹⁰⁷⁹ *Hasret*, 15 December, 1976.

¹⁰⁸⁰ For example, Ayvaz Gkdemir, one of the leading UKD members, was appointed to the head of Teacher Training Institute by the Minister of Interior from the AP.

¹⁰⁸¹ *STMA*, pp. 2999-3000; for a list of conflicts see zgr Erdem, ‘‘lkclerin İři Direniřlerine Saldırılarının řanlı Tarihi’’ in *Trk Solu (Turkish Left)*, 08 February 2010, Issue 270, pp. 13-14.

¹⁰⁸² *Gen Arkadaş*, 15 April 1975.

“We don't expect this coalition to establish a nationalist Turkey. This government was founded in partnership with a liberal capitalist mentality, giving them concessions, to be able to fight against communism actively. If they see us as a balancing power against the left, it means they deny this government's cause of existence.”¹⁰⁸³

Aside from this, the brewing resentment and disappointment among young nationalists started to deepen the rift between young militants and the party leadership. It was manifest that young nationalists were anxious at being in the same basket with the other parties and two years of coalition in the government sharpened their dissatisfaction with party politics.¹⁰⁸⁴ A few months after the second MC government was formed an editorial article in *Genç Arkadaş* asked: “is our goal government power (*iktidar*)?” and delivered an extensive coverage of the MHP's involvement in the coalition government. In the commentary section it was asserted:

“*Ülkücüler* should know what the real goal of the *ülküci* movement is...our goal is to realize the Turkish domination of the world (*Türk-Cihan Hakimiyeti*)...and the national state was the precondition of this. If there are people amongst us dreaming of a seat in the government, or if there are those who could not find a place for themselves in the *ülküci* movement, we don't grant them anything”.¹⁰⁸⁵

This point of view was totally at odds with the party leadership's hard-fought struggle to form the second MC; Türkeş was enraged when he saw the paper and suspended the circulation of this issue.¹⁰⁸⁶ This furore between the leadership and young militants showed that *ülküci* were not only discontent with the coalition partners, but also were angered with the practicalities of party politics, which undermined the strength of their challenge to the status-quo.¹⁰⁸⁷

Finally, the coalition partners turned more hostile against each other when the election propaganda commenced before the 1977 elections. The unification of the right seemed to

¹⁰⁸³ *Genç Arkadaş*, 10 August 1977.

¹⁰⁸⁴ In the beginning of 1977 the government was again under fire: “We entered 1976 with a government of four parties; in a country where politicians see the government not as a means but an end itself. Actually there is not a real government”, *Hasret*, 15 December, 1976.

¹⁰⁸⁵ *Hasret*, 6 October, 1977.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Burhan Kavuncu, Interview. It is worth adding that Burhan Kavuncu was fiercely critical of the party leadership of the time and penned several articles displaying this attitude whereas some other members of the ÜOD leadership sought to appease this tension. Kavuncu parted ways with the nationalist movement after the 12 September Coup.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Burhan Kavuncu, Interview.

have radicalized the leftist electorate, which had no other choice than the CHP. Contrary to this, the division in the right worried the coalition partners, especially the MHP, which was likely to suffer from the negative propaganda of the AP, underscoring that voting for the MHP would mean to vote for the CHP.¹⁰⁸⁸ That said, the MHP was hit with its own weapon, the fear of communism. The rightist electorate who felt sympathy to the MHP could vote for the AP in the ballot as it was still the most powerful party to stand against communism.¹⁰⁸⁹ Even though the MHP leadership and young militants sought hard to break this perception, the party joined its forces with the AP in some electoral districts.¹⁰⁹⁰ These alliances were considered the only way to stop the CHP, but there was no doubt that each electoral success helped the recovery of the AP after the 1973 elections at the expense of other rightist parties.

III- The MHP as the Carrier of Radical Politics: 1977-1980

Turkey was one of the few countries in the Middle East to preserve friendly relations with the Western bloc in the 1970s. Nevertheless, the late 1970s witnessed a change in the prevailing political language in the region and Islamist movements started to raise their discontentment with secular statecraft more loudly.¹⁰⁹¹ The fall of the Shah's regime in Iran demonstrated the capacity of anti-establishment forces against a regime backed by the west. In a different vein, the MHP and nationalist organizations in Turkey had evolved on the anti-communist reflex and the MSP had not posed a powerful challenge to the secular regime. This political standing had arguably started to change after 1977; the goal of nationalist student organizations was no longer confined to wiping out the socialist movement, it was also set to mount a challenge to the pro-western secular regime.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Süleyman Demirel, *AP Radyo Seçim Konuşmaları (The AP Speeches on the Radio) (Ankara: 1977)*.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Nevzat Kösoğlu, *Hatıralar*, pp. 277-279.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Nevzat Kösoğlu, *Hatıralar*, p. 277.

¹⁰⁹¹ See Sami Zubaida, *Islam, the People and the State: Essays on Political Ideas and Movements in the Middle East* (London: Routledge, 1989).

In the meantime, the failure to defeat the socialists during the MC government and the loss of the power to the CHP in 1978 nullified young nationalists' expectations of the leadership of the other rightist parties. They were poised to take more direct action, expecting the backing of the AP electorate of whom they had always been hopeful for more active engagement in their fight against the socialists. However, as only a small percent of the AP voters shifted to the MHP, young *ülküçüler* became increasingly averse to their "passivity" of them, arguing that the existing social conflict was a reflection of the clash between idealist and materialist worldviews. The party leadership held similar expectations about an electoral swing from the AP as well. It seems, however, that both sides fell short of apprehending the expectations of the rightist electorate, which helped the AP hold firm on the right.

In this conjuncture, most of the party leadership was tempted by the political fruits of becoming a mass party, but the radicalism of young nationalists made it arduous to steer a shift in the party discourse and structure towards this goal. The former sought to carve a path to power within the system whereas the *ülkü ocakları* leadership became more determined to confront the status quo.

Unresolved Rivalry with the MSP

The MHP had managed to win over part of the MSP electorate in the 1977 elections, especially in Central Anatolia, coming as the second party in some towns where the MSP had performed highly in 1973.¹⁰⁹² These results sent a message for the MSP leadership as well; they had been in government for four years from 1973, but lost votes while the MHP, the AP and the CHP made significant gains in the ballot box.¹⁰⁹³ This political failure led to them to take a new position vis-à-vis ideological politics; the most marked step was to initiate in

¹⁰⁹² Some of these cities were Erzurum, Sivas, Kayseri, Yozgat, Elazığ, Erzincan, Konya. www.belgenet.net (Accessed on 18 June 012). See Footnote 1123.

¹⁰⁹³ See Appendix 2

1978¹⁰⁹⁴ a new student movement called the *akıncılar*.¹⁰⁹⁵ The MSP party leadership exercised a more direct control over *akıncılar* compared to the MHP's over the *ülkü ocakları* partly because of the scale of the *akıncılar*'s organization and partly because of the leadership style in the MSP.¹⁰⁹⁶

The foundation of the *akıncılar* and their activities were closely watched by the young nationalists. As explained in Chapter 3, being an *ülküciü* had meant adopting a particular mode of behavior, which involved swift and overt physical reaction to socialist activities whereas youngsters who favored the MSP had stayed away from this confrontation. That was, perhaps, the most important reason that *ülküciüler* had claimed to have a moral high ground until 1977. The *akıncılar*, which became more popular after 1977, started to break this prototype and displayed themselves in confrontation with the socialists or even with *ülküciüler*.¹⁰⁹⁷ The scale of their clashes with the socialists was not as widespread as that of the nationalists, but between 1978 and 1980 more than a hundred people from the *akıncılar* were killed.¹⁰⁹⁸ This shift in the attitude of young militants supporting the MSP also revealed that violence and confrontational activism was gradually acquiring a more widespread legitimacy amongst religiously conservative young people.

It seems that the *akıncılar*, as a new group, were determined to assert their distinctive identity in the ideological struggle of the late 1970s.¹⁰⁹⁹ Even though the *ülküciüler* and the *akıncılar* usually behaved amicably towards each other, in some places, especially in big cities, the two groups started to clash. It was understandable that this conflict was something that Türkiye could not condone, because it would distract and weaken the nationalists' striking

¹⁰⁹⁴ The Society of *Akıncı* Youth was founded by a group of religiously conservative young students in 1976, but it was not a popular organization until the late 1977, in which the MSP leadership urged its youth organization to work in collaboration with this society. Kadir Yaman, "Türkiye İslami Hareketinin Dünü Bugünü", *Genç Birikim* 114 (December 2009), also Yılmaz Yalçiner, Interview.

¹⁰⁹⁵ See the Footnote 44.

¹⁰⁹⁶ Yılmaz Yalçiner, Interview.

¹⁰⁹⁷ Hakkı Öznur, *Ülkücü Hareket*, Vol III, pp. 169.

¹⁰⁹⁸ See Mehmet Ali Tekin, *Şehitlerimiz (Our Martyrs)* (İstanbul: Beka, 2007).

¹⁰⁹⁹ See the first issue of *Akıncılar*, official paper of *akıncılar*; its subheading was "Life is Belief and Jihad" (Hayat İman ve Cihat'dır); *Akıncılar*, 3 Ağustos 1977.

power against the communists and cripple the MHP's sphere of maneuver while it bargained with the other rightist parties. Türkeş ordered nationalist militants several times to calm the tension between them and the *akıncılar*, and forbade the *ülküçüler* to retaliate even if they were assaulted.¹¹⁰⁰ This imperative tone did not always work, however; nationalist militants carried out some operations targeted at the MSP youth, and when they were questioned by Türkeş about these operation and they simply rejected the allegations.¹¹⁰¹ The most serious event between the two groups took place in 1978 in Fatih, one of the old conservative districts of İstanbul, where both groups competed for local control; an Akıncı leader, Metin Yüksel was killed in the garden of the Fatih Mosque in a fight with nationalists.¹¹⁰² This murder significantly inflamed the tension between the two groups; publications released by the *ülküçüler* and *akıncılar*, and both parties' official newspapers, were replete with declarations accusing each other for weeks.¹¹⁰³ This tension got worse following the murder of some of the individuals who had sought to bridge the two movements; for instance, the murder of Sedat Yenigün, an activist highly respected by the *akıncılar* and *ülküçüler*, escalated the tension between these groups in 1980.¹¹⁰⁴

On the other hand, the socialist militants and the CHP were still the major enemies for most of the young Islamists, who saw socialism simply as a means of promoting atheism.¹¹⁰⁵ It can be pointed out that *akıncılar* and *ülküçüler* shared converging views regarding geopolitics as well; the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan provoked a fierce reaction among the *ülküçüler* and the *akıncılar*, who condemned this military step as another manifestation of the hostile face of atheist Soviet imperialism against Islam.¹¹⁰⁶ Lastly, in the view of *akıncılar* the Iranian revolution was a victory won against American and Jewish imperialism, which could

¹¹⁰⁰ Hasan Çağlayan, Interview.

¹¹⁰¹ Hasan Çağlayan, Interview.

¹¹⁰² *Milli Gazete*, 24 February 1979.

¹¹⁰³ In *Hasret* Hasan Çağlayan responded to the *akıncılar*, who accused *ülküçüler* of being infidel: "We feel pity for those who call Muslims infidels and leave them to the justice of Allah". *Hasret*, 7 May 1979.

¹¹⁰⁴ Hakkı Öznur, *Ülkücü Hareket*, Vol III, pp. 192-196.

¹¹⁰⁵ *Akıncılar*, 18 August 1979, 21 October 1979.

¹¹⁰⁶ *Akıncılar*, 4 October 1979, 3 September 1979.

be replicated in Turkey; in a similar fashion, the *ülküçüler* appreciated what was achieved by Khomeini's supporters in Iran and celebrated it as a major victory against the Americans.¹¹⁰⁷

Moreover, the followers of both groups usually came together when they went to hear a prestigious preacher of the time or attended a Sufi gathering.¹¹⁰⁸ Being in the company of the same people developed a sense of solidarity and companionship among them, and sometimes resulted in the transfer of young militants from one group to another.¹¹⁰⁹ This tendency was quickly noticed by Türkeş, who did not tolerate the slightest sign of disobedience, and he threatened those people who promoted “other ideological beliefs” than nationalism with dismissal from the *ülkü ocakları*.¹¹¹⁰ He called on these militants to join the MSP if they wished; making it clear that he would never permit the MSP discourse to prevail in his organization.¹¹¹¹

Türkeş was very careful with the language he, and his organization, employed vis-a-vis the military and the Kemalist establishment, avoiding any clash with them. For example, when Nevzat Kösoğlu, the party MP and board member consulted him about a speech in which he was to criticize the army in parliament, Türkeş did not allow him to speak on this topic.¹¹¹² Similarly, Musa Serdar Çelebi narrates that Türkeş was frustrated after hearing young militants pray in a funeral ceremony that did not mention Mustafa Kemal and warned them to pay due respect to Mustafa Kemal.¹¹¹³ When the *ülkü ocakları* published *Genç Arkadaş* under the subheading “This order must change”, Türkeş called the *ülkü ocakları* leadership and asked them to explain which aspect of “this order” they did not like.¹¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰⁷ Abdullah Muradoğlu and Burhan Kavuncu, Interviews.

¹¹⁰⁸ Abdullah Muradoğlu, Interviews.

¹¹⁰⁹ Burhan Kavuncu, Yılmaz Yalçınmer and Abdullah Muradoğlu, Interviews.

¹¹¹⁰ Burhan Kavuncu, Interview.

¹¹¹¹ Burhan Kavuncu, Interview.

¹¹¹² Nevzat Kösoğlu, *Hatıralar*, p. 285.

¹¹¹³ Musa Serdar Çelebi, Interview. Çelebi explains that they prayed for the state, religion and nation but not for Mustafa Kemal.

¹¹¹⁴ Burhan Kavuncu, Interview.

Despite these warnings, calls for a change towards a more Islamic government continued to be made in the *ülkü ocakları* publications:

“ The goal of Turkish nationalism is to change the social order that corrupts our people, and establish a national order, which would elevate our people in the way of God and make them stronger in the struggle of nations.”¹¹¹⁵

The MSP leadership and *akıncılar*, however, were less concerned with such political balancing than with the army’s obvious contempt for Erbakan’s movement; the MNP had been the only party that had been shut down in the period of military-backed martial administration after 12 March.¹¹¹⁶ The following lines published in a publication by an ideologue highly respected among the *akıncılar* were indicative of this challenge to the Kemalist-republican premises in several aspects:

“Why do not we embrace our civilization, become the leader of the Middle East rather than sticking with sick bodies or becoming their puppets? Why do we need anything else once we have the Quran, the Prophet’s personality, the exemplary lives of his friends? Why do we need anything else rather than to look at the Seljuks and the Ottomans, and Islam, which made them possible?”¹¹¹⁷

These views were in tune with lines published in *Nizam-ı Alem* in 1979¹¹¹⁸

“All ideas and relations established by those who don’t make their decisions according to God’s commands are invalid...the *nizam-ı alem* has been shaken, and this journal starts its journey as a weapon of those who want to restore this *nizam-ı alem* and do not give consent to *küfr* (unbelief)...”¹¹¹⁹

It could be argued that along with the anti-secular discourse of the *ülkü ocakları*, the increasing popularity of *akıncılar* alarmed the military-bureaucratic establishment against both groups. This potential for conflict must have caused Türkeş a lot of discomfort, but it seems that the magnitude of the conflicts obliged him to make a choice. It is therefore fair to say that the 12 September coup saved Türkeş from this painful dilemma and showed the strength of the bureaucratic-military establishment against its challengers. This fragmentation

¹¹¹⁵ *Genç Arkadaş*, 10 August 1977.

¹¹¹⁶ The MSP held a gathering in Konya (called the gathering of Jerusalem), six days before the 12 September. In this meeting such placards as ‘Nation of Islam, State of Sharia’ and ‘Borderless and Classless Islamic State’ were carried. *Milliyet*, 7 September 1980.

¹¹¹⁷ Sedat Yenigün, ‘Görünür Kavgada Yerimiz (Our Place in the Tangible Struggle)’ in *Bir Şehid’in Notları (Notes of a Martyr)* (İstanbul: İnkilap, 1990).

¹¹¹⁸ Lütfü Şehsuvaroğlu, the ÜOD leadership member and one of the editorials of this journal, narrates that in the aftermath of 12 September coup Muzaffer Özdağ argued that the military officers were worried with the ideological orientation displayed in *Nizam-ı Alem* Journal. See Lütfü Şehsuvaroğlu ‘Bizim Muhsin’.

¹¹¹⁹ *Nizam-ı Alem*, 5 October 1979.

was also exposed in the party leadership and young nationalists' differing reactions in the face of the coup, as will be discussed in the Conclusion.

The Question of Idealism and the Nationalist Movement

Socio-economic transformation from the early 1960s onwards caused a massive wave of migration from rural areas to urban centres, leading to the emergence of working class neighborhoods in the suburbs of big cities.¹¹²⁰ Most of these immigrants lived in economically deprived conditions and struggled to sustain their livelihood whereas the wealthy elites enjoyed a luxurious life.¹¹²¹ As discussed in previous chapters, the MHP and nationalists always considered this economic inequality as the most serious cause behind the popular appeal of socialism, and kept claiming that they would tackle this issue better than the socialists. However, their pledges appeared not to be convincing enough to capture these masses while the CHP managed to hold firm in the working class neighborhoods.¹¹²² Actually, the nationalists acknowledged the political failure of their appeal to the emerging working class, but preferred to put the blame on the social and moral degeneration that this social change, they claimed, had brought about in Turkey; to the nationalists recent social transformation had impoverished people, which had made them more “materialistic” and “selfish”.¹¹²³ They reasoned that the MHP performed better in some regions where socio-economic conditions were worse than the working class neighborhoods, because people in these regions had a higher level of national consciousness:

“...from the countryside to the urban industrial centres, we observe the change from national character to material character. The MHP is strong in those regions where the national character is not under oppression and is still strong.”¹¹²⁴

¹¹²⁰ Kemal Karpat, *The Gecekondu: Rural Migration and Urbanization* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1976), pp. 48-53; Şerif Mardin, “Youth and Violence in Turkey” in Şerif Mardin, *Religion, Society and Modernity in Turkey*, p. 219-221.

¹¹²¹ Kemal Karpat, *The Gecekondu: Rural Migration and Urbanization*, pp. 140-150.

¹¹²² Harald Schüller, *Türkiye’de Sosyal Demokrasi: Particilik, Hemşehrilik, Alevilik*, p. 142.

¹¹²³ *Genç Arkadaş*, 1 July 1977.

¹¹²⁴ *Genç Arkadaş*, 1 July 1977.

It can be seen that young nationalists had a particular ideological reaction to developing social realities, which they considered a danger to be resisted; the *ülkü ocakları* publications called their militants to resist this materialistic social order, and challenge it:

“...*ülküciü* youth should be aware of the conflict between the degenerated social life and themselves. We have to live as a group, according to what our belief and *ülkü* (ideal) require, to resist this materialist social order. In a society where materialist values prevailed, individuals have to undergo hardships to preserve their *ülküciü* identity”¹¹²⁵

The MHP, nevertheless, faced another problem in the regions where this “national character” prevailed. The AP got a higher number of votes than the MHP and the CHP was as successful as the MHP in some of these provinces.¹¹²⁶ The nationalists attributed this contradiction to the stubborn party rivalries; in order to overcome this handicap *ülküciüler* were urged to propagate the importance of nationalist ideology and nationalist action.¹¹²⁷

Based on these discussions it can be argued that the ideological divide that had sharpened during the MC governments was misleading for the nationalists. The party leadership and nationalist militants assumed that whoever disliked the socialists would one day side with the MHP.¹¹²⁸ Likewise, they easily hoped that the masses, especially those voting for the AP, would give electoral backing to the nationalist movement if they were made more conscious about the imminent threat of the socialists.¹¹²⁹ Nevertheless, the electoral results demonstrated that the MHP was not the first choice of even those people who had strong anti-communist feelings.

It was a fact that the AP managed to appeal to the mainstream of society, from every age group to different professions and most of the AP voters demanded economic stability,

¹¹²⁵ *Genç Arkadaş*, 1 July 1977.

¹¹²⁶ The MHP was successful in central and eastern Anatolia, yet the CHP and the AP were the leading parties in those cities where the MHP performed well. Yozgat (MHP 22.9%, AP 29%, CHP 30%), Erzincan (MHP 18%, AP 27%, CHP 45%), Elazığ, (MHP 18%, AP 20, CHP 28%), Erzurum (MHP 12%, AP 43%, CHP 12%), Sivas (MHP 13%, AP 23%, CHP 42%) and Kahramanmaraş (MHP 15%, AP 26%, CHP 34%). See http://www.belgenet.net/ayrinti.php?yil_id=8 (accessed on 13 September 2012)

¹¹²⁷ *Genç Arkadaş*, 1 July 1977.

¹¹²⁸ Musa Serdar Çelebi, Sadi Somuncuoğlu, İbrahim Metin, Interviews.

¹¹²⁹ *Genç Arkadaş*, 1 July 1977; Sadi Somuncuoğlu and İbrahim Metin, Interviews.

the security of jobs and the security of life in an increasingly volatile context of civil strife.¹¹³⁰ It was evident that the nationalist militants showed no interest in meeting these demands, pushing ideological struggle ahead at the expense of economic stability and the security. The anarchy in the streets became very distracting for the lives of ordinary people, even to those not involved in the conflicts.¹¹³¹ Furthermore, the rightists started to suffer from the nationalist attacks as nationalist militants bombed the wrong coffeehouses, where conservative people gathered, or beat up the wrong person, who was an AP member, just because they did not double-check the intelligence given to them.¹¹³²

Actually, the AP's victory in the 1979 by-elections, at a time when these clashes were severely escalating, was telling. It not only showed that the AP was still very strong, but also revealed that the parties spearheading the ideological struggle, namely the MHP, the MSP and the CHP were not able to make any progress.¹¹³³ Moreover, by not staying away from violence, the MHP missed the opportunity of attracting disaffected AP and MSP followers in that being affiliated with the MHP meant to be an open target for socialist attacks.¹¹³⁴ The nationalist militants, however, were not very concerned with the election results; the *ülkü ocakları* leadership held that casualties or accidents could happen and sometimes should happen, because it was a state of war.¹¹³⁵ It was underlined that at a time when the survival of the state and nation was at stake, whoever stood against communism should be ready to make such sacrifices.¹¹³⁶

As we saw, young nationalists set out a clear division between those living for their ideals and those pursuing a materialistic lifestyle. The contours of this vision were first outlined a decade earlier by Dündar Taşer, who had urged that *ülküçüler* should, and would,

¹¹³⁰ Taha Akyol notes that they were questioning why the party could not get higher votes; to him it was a problem of falling away from people's life agenda. Taha Akyol, Interview.

¹¹³¹ Taha Akyol, Interview.

¹¹³² Burhan Kavuncu, Interview; *MHP İddianamesi*, pp. 300-302.

¹¹³³ See Appendix 2

¹¹³⁴ Ahmet İyioğlu and İbrahim Metin, Interviews.

¹¹³⁵ *Hasret*, 7 May 1979.

¹¹³⁶ *Hasret*, 7 May 1979.

be willing to undertake a painstaking and self-sacrificing mission that their fathers could not.¹¹³⁷ He had exhorted that young *ülküçüler* should bring a new spirit that the previous generation, who had been “indolent” and “colorless”, lacked.¹¹³⁸ Urged to be critical of the political attitudes of their elders, it was no surprise that young nationalists could easily dismiss a large majority of the populace as of no help for their struggle. It was clear that there was a conviction amongst young nationalist militants that the generational difference between them and their elders constrained their activities. They often quarreled with their parents or older relatives over their participation in the ideological struggle, criticizing their apathy on the fate of nation and state.¹¹³⁹ Young militants sometimes saw the real obstacle to their victory against the socialists in the indifference of their elders, who tended to vote for the AP, the symbol of “status- quo” and “selfish” individual interest.¹¹⁴⁰

Preoccupied with these concerns, the *ülkü ocakları* leadership was insistent that the recruitment and training of young nationalists should be carried out within the *ocak* organization.¹¹⁴¹ Thus they sometimes became suspicious about the real intentions of newcomers who joined the party after its electoral success in 1977.¹¹⁴² Moreover, former AP and the MSP members had a hard time comprehending the expectations and modus operandi in the nationalist movement.¹¹⁴³ The same concern held true for the increasing number of nationalist militants; the *ülkü ocakları* leadership complained that the prestige and power of

¹¹³⁷ Dündar Taşer, “Milliyetçi Hareket ve Gençlik (Nationalist Movement and Youth)”, *Devlet*, 8 September 1969, ‘Gençlik (Youth)’, *Devlet*, 28 December 1970 and “Muntazam Ailesi (‘Order’ Family)”, *Devlet*, 24 August, 1970.

¹¹³⁸ Dündar Taşer, “Milliyetçi Hareket ve Gençlik (Nationalist Movement and Youth)” in *Devlet*, 8 September 1969 and “Gençlik (Youth)” in *Devlet*, 28 December 1970.

¹¹³⁹ Hasan Çağlayan, Interview.

¹¹⁴⁰ *Hasret*, 5 April 1979.

¹¹⁴¹ The article in *Genç Arkadaş* read: “Our principle is not to be distracted from our main goal, which is to encourage all *ülküçü* youth to keep fighting in the way of the right purpose, recruiting our militants and strengthen our organization.”, *Genç Arkadaş*, 10 August 1977.

¹¹⁴² It was doubtful for them that these people shared their idealism; Hasan Çağlayan and Musa Serdar Çelebi, Interviews.

¹¹⁴³ Sadi Somuncuoğlu and Musa Serdar Çelebi, Interviews.

the organization had drawn so many young people to the movement, but few of them could match the level of commitment and idealism that they sought.¹¹⁴⁴

This ideological standing led the *ülkü ocakları* leadership to robustly reject any kind of cooperation with the power elites such as wealthy businessmen, local power holders or the media patrons. Despite all this intransigent opposition from young militants, however, most of the party leadership was poised to use political means to form alliances with domestic power elites to achieve swift political headway in the short run.¹¹⁴⁵ For instance, as we discussed earlier, the MHP had opposed entry to the EEC, but Türkeş intended to make a turn on this issue as some party board members were in favor of Turkey's admission to the EEC.¹¹⁴⁶ However, the *ülkü ocakları* leadership resisted the party leadership's bid for a change in the party discourse.¹¹⁴⁷ As an another example, when Türkeş organised a private meeting with the prominent businessmen of the time such as Sakıb Sabancı and İshak Alaton, seeking to develop collaboration between the party and these people, the only two individuals who knew this meeting would take place were Türkeş and a young nationalist militant from MİSK, Ahmet Çakar, who contacted the businessmen; it was likely that Türkeş predicted the negative reaction of young nationalists.¹¹⁴⁸ In the aftermath of the MHP's electoral success in 1977, the editorial of *Hasret* sent a clear message not only to the other parties but also to the MHP deputies and the party board:

“They should know what the real goal of the *ülküücü* movement is. Turkish nationalists know that their goal is not government; government is just a means to reach the end. Today's political developments may worry us to some extent, but the real goal does not change, and it should not change. Our goal is neither having 226 deputies nor 450 deputies, neither to wipe out communism, nor to achieve national democracy nor to destroy this order and capitalist interests. Our goal is to realize the ideal of the Turkish domination of the world ...”¹¹⁴⁹ and in *Genç Arkadaş* similar comments were passed:

¹¹⁴⁴ This point was raised by most of the interviewees.

¹¹⁴⁵ Taha Akyol, Interview.

¹¹⁴⁶ Burhan Kavuncu and Taha Akyol, Interview.

¹¹⁴⁷ Burhan Kavuncu, Interview.

¹¹⁴⁸ Ahmet Çakar, Interview.

¹¹⁴⁹ *Hasret*, 6 October, 1977.

“...the growth of the MHP was not depending on conjuncture, because the MHP was not a party of conjuncture. Our victory does not mean that we had AP’s votes and reached 226 seats in the parliament; our victory will be more valuable than this”.¹¹⁵⁰

It is fair to say that the political strategy of young militants was a direct challenge to the traditional contours of rightist politics in Turkey, which was detrimental to the party’s sphere of negotiation and compromise. As a result, the MHP failed to gather strong popular support behind itself, despite the turbulences the AP suffered in the 1970s.

IV- Conclusion

Türkeş and Taşer invented a novel political strategy that aimed to capitalize on the electoral potential of the rightist parties under the leadership of educated nationalist elites. Yet this strategy involved active participation in the ideological struggle and violence that posed a threat to the rightist electorate’s principal demand for stability. Eventually, the MHP failed to turn this potential into actuality and failed to make such political headway. Another obstacle was the ambiguity on the question of religion as the party leadership was neither willing to accede to the young militants’ demands for a more central place for religion in the politics, nor forceful enough to halt this trend amongst the youth. The fragmentation of the nationalists in the aftermath of the coup was therefore not surprising; as will be briefly discussed in the conclusion, some of them continued in the MHP and some other militants founded a new political party with religious-nationalism being its core ideology, whereas many members of the nationalist movement joined the centre right and parted their ways with Türkeş to found a new political party, Büyük Birlik Partisi (Great Unity Party), in the 1990s.

¹¹⁵⁰ *Genç Arkadaş*, 1 July 1977.

6. CONCLUSION

This thesis has sought to demonstrate that the actors of nationalist politics changed between 1965 and 1980 and that the CKMP- MHP was not only a political party, but stood at the center of a widespread network of organizations. In this structure parliamentary politics went along with paramilitary forces; recruiting activists and young militants was as important as obtaining electoral success and different forms of nationalist thinking could work together depending on context.

As discussed in the introduction, there are a limited number of scholarly studies on the MHP and the current literature fails to identify, or substantiate, the multiplicity of actors and differing orientations within the MHP and nationalist movement more broadly in the 1960s and 1970s. Non-scholarly studies suffer from overemphasizing certain aspects of the party or *ocak* structure, such as the use of violence or the authority of the leader over nationalist militants, whilst ignoring contradictory views and practices within the nationalist movement. Only in Tanil Bora and Kemal Can's study can we see a brief analysis of this complicated structure of the nationalist movement and the overall picture they present of the structure of the nationalist movement is similar with the findings of this thesis; yet even this study fails to provide us with convincing evidence, especially in its discussion on the differing motivations of the actors in the nationalist movement during this period and ignores the impact of nationalist ideologues on the party and young militants. Related to this, the attempts in the current literature simply to compare the MHP with the fascist movements in Europe fail to map the similarities and different orientations between these movements in any detail.¹¹⁵¹

¹¹⁵¹ Hugh Poulton, *Top Hat*, pp. 163-165, Jacob Landau, "The Nationalist Action Party in Turkey", p. 603; Mehmet Ali Ağaoğulları, "The Ultranationalist Right"; p. 206. Burak Arıkan, "Turkish Ultra-Nationalists under Review", pp. 366-373.

This thesis makes a contribution to the understanding of the MHP and nationalist movement by supplying some of the missing elements: it demonstrates how the party leader, party board and youth organizations worked in connection with each other. Some findings in this research study, for instance, clearly show that young nationalist militants gradually gained leverage against the party members and leadership, a crucial point which previous studies have failed to uncover or investigate in depth.¹¹⁵² The tension between these actors has so far been addressed only very briefly.¹¹⁵³ In addition to correcting this oversight, the study presents a number of examples showing the impact of various nationalist thinkers on both the party and *ülkü ocakları* discourse at different times. It helps correct the received picture of a planned and centralized indoctrination of young militants. This perspective helps us discern different concerns and priorities amongst the nationalists in their reaction to the left and attitudes towards the right-wing parties, instead of viewing this relationship just as a pragmatic collaboration against the socialism.¹¹⁵⁴ A comparative study of the MHP with any of the fascist and nationalist movements in Europe or in the Middle East that took account of these nuances would have a more solid background and produce a historically grounded discussion of the peculiarities of the MHP or the similarities between these movements.

In addition to the careful examination of party documents and publications or statements released by young nationalists, a number of recently published autobiographical accounts and oral interviews has made it possible to collect novel evidence on the topic and cross-check the information gathered.

The principal conclusion of the study is that a change in the profile of the party leadership and nationalist activists brought about a change in the political strategies and

¹¹⁵² Landau, for example, portrays that young nationalist militants were in strict control of the CKMP-MHP leadership. As his study was completed in 1974 it was not possible to cover the post-1974 developments as well. See Jacob Landau, *Radical Politics in Turkey*, pp. 215-217.

¹¹⁵³ Ağaoğulları claims that decisions taken by the party leadership were straightforwardly implemented by the *ülkü ocakları*. Mehmet Ali Ağaoğulları, “The Ultranationalist Right”, p. 198

¹¹⁵⁴ Cizre puts emphasis on the AP’s benign attitude towards the MHP, but does not discuss the challenge from young militants against this collaboration and the consequences of this conflict within the movement.

ideological discourse of the nationalist movement. In the early years of the new CKMP leadership, the party board and activists were composed of retired army officers, bureaucrats, professionals and a small number of Turkist thinkers. From the late 1960s onwards, the number of young nationalist militants within the nationalist movement started to increase, leading to a generational split within the movement, and in the late 1970s these young militants gained preponderance over the party board and local branches.

In the introduction to this thesis certain research questions were posed. One concerned the tension between the party leadership and young nationalists and a second one was about the differing views on the political strategy of the nationalist movement. The strategic orientation of the party leadership displayed paradoxical approaches to parliamentary politics and the use of violence. Türkeş and Taşer in particular worked hard to draw university and high-school students into the movement, insisting that the nationalist youth would be the future elites of the country, and that at the same time they should lead the struggle against the then-growing socialist movement in civil society and state institutions. In fact, the competition with the socialists rendered both of these goals viable for the nationalists. Furthermore, despite the party's seeming commitment to democracy, it is obvious that Türkeş considered the use of violence against the socialists, including socialist politicians and the CHP members, a legitimate tactic. It has been suggested that most of the party board felt discomfort with this attitude of Türkeş and the excessive involvement of young militants into physical confrontations. There were some party board members who thought that training and education in pursuing long-term political-administrative goals was more important. Yet the propensity to use violence became dominant among young nationalist militants, to the extent that those nationalists calling for a change in this approach were dismissed as "pacifist".

The 1977 election results raised political expectations in the MHP and gaining more votes or achieving political success started to be a major preoccupation for the party deputies,

board members and representatives in local branches. In the meanwhile, especially after 1977, the extra-parliamentarian clashes that involved *ülkü ocakları* militants overshadowed the activities of the party board and local branches. Eventually, young militants became more critical of the party politics and the party leaderships' collaboration with the other right-wing parties "for the sake of power". Most of the young *ülküçüiler* had a perception that the party members were predominantly "pragmatic" people who could not comply with their idealist vision. In fact, however, some party board members were concerned with the lack of ideological clarity in the party. Moreover, the party board members felt themselves responsible for solving the legal and financial problems of young militants. These tensions were kept in check until 1980 as nationalists unified around the common cause and against a common enemy, but in the aftermath of the military regime these divisions became more overt.

The thesis has argued that what contributed to the creation of this disjuncture was the spontaneous nature of political and paramilitary confrontation on the ground and the flexibility that enabled young nationalists to act independently. This was thanks to the loose structure which, on the other hand, enabled different nationalist organizations to operate under the same framework.

Another of the questions investigated in this study was the role of young nationalist militants in shaping the MHP's strategy and discourse. The transformation of the ideological discourse of the party went hand in hand with a change in the party board and the spread of the *ülkü ocakları*. Seven of Türkeş's friends who were involved in the 27 May coup left the party between 1967 and 1971, complaining that the CKMP no longer represented secular-Kemalist nationalism. This was basically a result of the conflict between the increasing number of young militants in the party and these military-trained party leaders. It appears that Türkeş made a choice that would give young nationalists more influence on the ideological

orientation of the party by allowing conservative nationalist doctrine to appear in the party discourse. In this shift, young nationalists' expectations and the initiative taken by the party leadership seem to have complemented each other. In the early years of the party's shift towards conservative nationalism, the Turkist stream was still strong and persistent in both the party and *ülkü ocakları* discourse. In fact, conservative nationalism and Turkism shared a lot in common, promoting anti-Westernism, anti-communism and the re-appropriation of Ottoman history. The centrality of religion in nationalist thinking (for the conservative nationalist) and the importance attributed to pre-Islamic history (for the Turkists) were the demarcating lines between these strands. It can also be said that critical interpretation of the Republican reforms received was more prominent in the conservative nationalist thinking.

A third research question was how young militants were trained within the nationalist movement. The thesis shows that there were different channels for the training of young *ülküçüler*; the party leadership did not exercise a strict supervision over the indoctrination through publications, nor could it control the training sessions run in prisons. Likewise, despite some attempts by the party leadership, it was hard to coordinate activities aimed at indoctrination in all *ocak* branches. We know that journals and papers released by the ÜOD were sent to the *ocaks*, but there is a lack of evidence on the varieties and content of training in these places. Owing to this loose structure, certain thinkers and ideologues promoted among young militants a conservative view of nationalism, one which focused heavily on particular themes from Turkish-Islamic history and anti-Western discourse.

This ideological stance attributed importance to the question of culture and nationalist-socialist struggle was considered to be a clash of "atheist communism" with the Turkish-Islamic tradition. The dichotomy generated a strong motivation for young militants who were fighting on the ground. It seems that the majority of the party leadership in the 1970s, including such ideologues as Nevzat Kösoğlu, Sadi Somuncuoğlu and Ahmet Arvasi, were

happy with this orientation; there was also a conviction among them that this ideology would be politically advantageous for the MHP. Yet in the official party discourse certain slogans invoking Turkish-Islamic history, popular amongst young nationalists, did not appear. In the late 1970s the *ülkü ocakları* leadership propounded a more religious tone in their nationalist discourse, which caused anxiety among the party board members, who did not give religion as high a priority as these youngsters did.

On the basis of what has been discussed in this thesis, it can be argued that the opening of political space enabled by the 1961 constitution played a crucial role in the way that the MHP and nationalist organizations took the forms they did. The 1961 constitution had laid out a political framework in which civil society was given a free space to organize and exert pressure on the parties, and there was freedom for the political opposition to express its criticism of the government. The same freedom, on the other hand, can be seen as a contributory factor in the rising political violence, which eventually brought about the breakdown of the democratic process during the same period.

Lastly, the thesis has highlighted how politicians and political activists of the time in Turkey closely followed political struggles taking place across the globe; Turkey stood at the borderline of both Cold War politics and important events in the Middle East. The Soviet intervention in Czechlovakia, the Arab-Israeli War in 1967 and the Iranian revolution were important events that influenced the political and intellectual climate in Turkey.

A brief discussion of the political developments following the 1980 coup could provide some complementary insight for our analysis of the nationalist movement in the 1960s and 1970s. Despite the fact that thousands of young nationalist militants, along with the party leadership, were imprisoned (and some brutally tortured), these nationalists started to fill positions in the state bureaucracy, civil service and universities during the ANAP

(Anavatan Partisi-Motherland Party)¹¹⁵⁵ governments between 1983 and 1991. Many young nationalist militants of the 1960s and 1970s had university degrees, which was still a privilege that only a small number of people enjoyed in Turkey.¹¹⁵⁶ Furthermore, among the ANAP leadership and deputies there were a considerable number of nationalist militants of the 1970s.¹¹⁵⁷ ANAP was not the only party that *ülküçüler* opted to join; the DYP (Doğru Yol Partisi-True Path Party), under the leadership of Süleyman Demirel, was the other centre-right party in which nationalists found their place in the 1990s.¹¹⁵⁸ Even in the MHP leadership of the 1990s and 2000s the number of former *ülkü ocakları* members was very high, a testament to what had been taught to the young nationalists¹¹⁵⁹ and the effective training and political socialization in the 1970s, despite the fact that in the 1970s they often espoused extra-parliamentary direct action. It can be seen that the strategy of nationalist leadership in the late 1960s and 1970s to train the politicians, bureaucrats and scholars of the future had been successful as well. As discussed, Türkeş and Taşer had insisted that nationalist youngsters would be the future elites of the country and young *ülküçüler* had been willing to take on this mission. The party's board members, too, had taken it upon themselves to make sure that committed nationalists were appointed to positions in the public service and bureaucracy.

On the other hand, not all the young nationalist militants of the 70s were able to make careers in politics or the bureaucracy; many others struggled to sustain their livelihood and some of them were involved in illegal underground organizations; some of these nationalists

¹¹⁵⁵ ANAP was founded by Turgut Özal, a high-ranking bureaucrat during the AP government in 1980, in 1983. See *Milliyet*, 21 May 1983.

¹¹⁵⁶ *Kasım 1981-Kasım 1988 Döneminde Yükseköğretimdeki Gelişmeler* (Ankara: 1988), p. 6

¹¹⁵⁷ Tanıl Bora and Kemal Can, *Devlet Ocak Dergah*, pp. 206-251; Nevzat Kösoğlu, *Hatıralar*, p. 345. All political parties were closed after 1980 coup and political leaders were banned from politics for 10 years; see *Milliyet*, 20 October 1982

¹¹⁵⁸ Tanıl Bora and Kemal Can, *Devlet ve Kuzgun (State and Raven)* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2007); pp. 25-29, Nevzat Kösoğlu, *Hatıralar*, p. 375-377.

¹¹⁵⁹ As mentioned, in private speeches to young nationalists Türkeş said that they will take place in MHP leadership in the future.

formed mafia groups.¹¹⁶⁰ This was mainly a result of the use of violence as a political tool, because thousands of nationalists either had criminal records, had acquired bad reputations, or had spent long years in prison after the coup, which restricted the range of possible vocations they were offered after they returned to normal life.

The MHP had been closed by the martial law administration and only after the foundation of the MÇP (*Milliyetçi Çalışma Partisi*-Nationalist Work Party) in 1985, on the instructions of Türkeş while he was in prison, did some of the nationalists begin to re-group within the framework of their own political party. Türkeş, who had been charged with a capital offence,¹¹⁶¹ was released from prison in 1985 and his suspension from active politics, like other party leaders in charge before the coup, for ten years was revoked in the referendum in 1987,¹¹⁶² yet the nationalists struggled to unify their forces. Many young militants and party members of the 1970s preferred to stay in the centre-right parties, where they enjoyed high political status; some former party members left politics altogether and some *ülkü* *ocakları* leaders and loyal friends of Türkeş joined the MÇP.¹¹⁶³

Those who opted to stay in the centre-right were accused by the others of bowing to power politics and pragmatism of the right, which young nationalists had renounced and discredited in the 1970s.¹¹⁶⁴ The MÇP changed its name back to MHP in January 1993, but Türkeş's bid for the leadership of this party was challenged by a great majority of the former MHP board members.¹¹⁶⁵ After serious clashes in the last congress of the MÇP in December 1992 Türkeş managed to retain his leadership against his old friends from the party board, who had been critical of his political leadership and refused to work with him again.¹¹⁶⁶

¹¹⁶⁰ Tanıl Bora and Kemal Can, *Devlet Ocak Dergah*, p. 377.

¹¹⁶¹ Party board members, too, were charged with a capital offence, *Milliyet*, 30 April 1981. It was on the ground of the charge: "To change the constitutional order by force, violating the principles of republicanism and democracy, with the intention of establishing one-man rule", See *MHP İddianamesi*, pp. 895-897.

¹¹⁶² *Milliyet*, 10 March 1985, 07 September 1987.

¹¹⁶³ Tanıl Bora and Kemal Can, *Devlet Ocak Dergah*, pp. 278, 409.

¹¹⁶⁴ Tanıl Bora and Kemal Can, *Devlet Ocak Dergah*, pp. 231-251.

¹¹⁶⁵ Nevzat Kösoğlu, *Hatıralar*, pp. 387-389.

¹¹⁶⁶ *Milliyet*, 28 December 1992, Tanıl Bora and Kemal Can, *Devlet ve Kuzgun*, pp. 76-78.

In addition, the ideological division in the nationalist movement had become more pronounced. Some young militants had become more religious during the time they had spent in prison. Some of them completely broke off from the nationalist movement, whilst most of the *ülkü ocakları* leaders from the late 1970s stayed in the party and sought to ensure that the conservative religious discourse persisted in the party.¹¹⁶⁷ The MÇP entered the 1991 election in alliance with Erbakan's RP (*Refah Partisi*-Welfare Party); this alliance got 16.4% of the total votes and won 62 seats, making it possible for the MÇP-MHP to re-appear in parliament after 11 years.¹¹⁶⁸ Nevertheless, in the 1990s Türkeş was not as willing as he had been to accommodate younger generations' expectations in steering the political discourse of the MHP; the disagreements between Türkeş and a group of former *ülkü ocakları* leaders escalated and they left the MHP in July 1992.¹¹⁶⁹ The BBP (Büyük Birlik Partisi-Great Unity Party) was founded in 1993 under the leadership of Muhsin Yazıcıoğlu, who had been the ÜOD president in 1977-1978; along some of the *ülkü ocakları* leaders from the 1970s, leading ideologues such as Galip Erdem, Ahmet Arvasi, and Ahmet Er, the only remaining member of the Fourteen in the MHP, joined the party. The BBP members were critical of Türkeş, arguing that he was shifting back to secular nationalism.¹¹⁷⁰ On the other hand, only a small number of the MHP board members of the 1970s supported the BBP, which was indicative of the incongruity between the strategical views of the party leadership and that of young nationalist militants of the late 1970s who in the 90s formed the BBP.¹¹⁷¹ These rifts in the nationalist movement in the 1980s and 1990s might be seen a continuation of the lingering tension amongst the nationalist cadres over strategy and ideological orientation in the 1970s

¹¹⁶⁷ Tanıl Bora and Kemal Can, *Devlet Ocak Dergah*, pp. 468-474.

¹¹⁶⁸ *Milliyet*, 13 September 1991; Erol Tuncer, *Osmanlı'dan Günümüze Seçimler (1877-2002)* (Ankara: Toplumsal Ekonomik Siyasal Araştırmalar Vakfı, 2003), pp. 362-372.

¹¹⁶⁹ This split occurred six months before the MÇP's conversion to the MHP.

¹¹⁷⁰ Tanıl Bora and Kemal Can, *Devlet Ocak Dergah*, pp. 423-434 and *Devlet ve Kuzgun*, pp. 32-61; Hasan Çağlayan, Interview.

¹¹⁷¹ Ahmet Er, *Hatıralarım*, pp. 274-276.

In fact, the treatment many young militants faced in the aftermath of the coup from the state and security forces had shattered their view of the state; they questioned why the state they had been defending showed them no favor.¹¹⁷² There was a deep resentment towards the generals and the army in particular, to which the nationalists had previously paid a lot of respect. Nevertheless, a small number of the nationalist militants of the 1970s were offered work as secret agents of the state security forces, who wanted to make use of their operational experience.¹¹⁷³ In other words, there was disillusionment amongst the nationalists with the conception of a ‘‘father state’’, but working for it could still be attractive to them as well.

The fact that the 1980 coup crushed the socialist movement in Turkey, as well as the fall of the Soviet Union along with the decline of socialist ideology as a political force after the 1980s, dramatically reduced the scale of the socialist movement in Turkey. With the exception of minor extreme groups, the socialists disappeared from the universities and were not able to revive their organized activism in civil society and the state institutions.¹¹⁷⁴ The thesis has shown that young nationalist university students were ascribed the role of leading the struggle against the growing socialist movement. Bereft of this instrumental tool in recruiting young militants, the *lk ocakları* too gradually lost their prestigious status after 1980. In this diminishing popularity of the *lk ocakları*, the rise of Erbakan’s RP and the *Nurcu* movement, both appealing to conservative young people in the 1980s and 1990s, the legacy of the bloody clashes of the previous decades, followed by the bad treatment of young activists in the aftermath of the coup were all significant factors as well.

Alparslan Trke passed away on 4 April 1997, aged 80. Two years after his death, despite the divisions in the movement and the decline of socialism, the MHP scored its highest electoral result ever in the 17 April 1999 elections, acquiring 17.98% of the total

¹¹⁷² Tanıl Bora and Kemal Can, *Devlet Ocak Dergah*, p. 129.

¹¹⁷³ See Gken atlı, *Babam atlı (atlı: My Father)* (İstanbul: Tima, 2000).

¹¹⁷⁴ Adnan Bostancıođlu, *Bitmeyen Yolculuk*, see pp. 290-295, 310-315.

votes, which gave them 129 deputies in the parliament.¹¹⁷⁵ They were the second biggest party in the coalition government that was formed, and, rather ironically for most of the nationalist militants of the 1970s, the party leadership agreed to be in coalition with Bülent Ecevit, the archrival of the nationalists in the 1970s, who became prime minister.

The period of the 1960s and 1970s in modern Turkish history deserves advanced study in the light of newly available sources. The growing interest in contemporary history among Turkish academia and public opinion shows itself on the anniversaries of the military coups and political clashes of the late 1960s and 1970s. However, these debates are mostly marred by the politico-ideological concerns of the day and make little reference to regional and global events. This study has aimed to provide new, first hand evidence and a more nuanced framework for the study of this important aspect of modern Turkish history.

¹¹⁷⁵ Erol Tuncer, *Osmanlı'dan Günümüze Seçimler (1877-2002)*, pp. 362-372.

APPENDIX 1

ELECTION TABLES: 1950-1977 ¹¹⁷⁶

1950 Elections

| Parties | Number of Votes | Percentage | Number of Seats |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|-----------------|
| CHP | 3.176.561 | 39.4 | 69 |
| DP | 4.241.393 | 52.7 | 415 |
| MP | 250.414 | 3.1 | 1 |
| Independents | 383.282 | 4.8 | 2 |
| Total | 8.051.650 | 100.0 | 487 |

1954 Elections

| Parties | Number of Votes | Percentage | Number of Seats |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|-----------------|
| CHP | 3.161.696 | 35.4 | 31 |
| CMP | 434.085 | 4.9 | 5 |
| DP | 5.151.550 | 57.6 | 502 |
| TKP | 57.011 | 0.6 | -- |
| Independents | 137.318 | 1.5 | 3 |
| Total | 8.941.660 | 100.0 | 541 |

¹¹⁷⁶ Erol Tuncer, *Osmanlı'dan Günümüze Seçimler (1877-2002)* (Ankara: Toplumsal Ekonomik Siyasal Araştırmalar Vakfı, 2003), pp. 362-372.

1957 Elections

| Parties | Number of Votes | Percentage | Number of Seats |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|-----------------|
| CHP | 3.753.136 | 41.1 | 178 |
| CMP | 652.064 | 7.1 | 4 |
| DP | 4.372.621 | 47.96 | 424 |
| HP | 350.597 | 3.8 | 4 |
| Independents | 4.994 | 0.1 | -- |
| Total | 9.133.412 | 100.0 | 610 |

1961 Elections

| Parties | Number of Votes | Percentage | Number of Seats |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|-----------------|
| CHP | 3.724.752 | 36.72 | 173 |
| AP | 3.527.435 | 34.8 | 158 |
| CKMP | 1.415.390 | 14.0 | 54 |
| YTP | 1.391.934 | 13.7 | 65 |
| Independents | 81.732 | 0.8 | -- |
| Total | 10.137.435 | 100.0 | 610 |

1965 Elections

| Parties | Number of Votes | Percentage | Number of Seats |
|--------------|------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| CHP | 2.675.785 | 28.7 | 134 |
| AP | 4.921.235 | 52.9 | 240 |
| CKMP | 208.696 | 2.2 | 11 |
| TİP | 276.101 | 3.0 | 15 |
| MP | 582.704 | 6.3 | 31 |
| YTP | 346.514 | 3.7 | 19 |
| Independents | 2 6.523 | 3.2 | -- |
| Total | 9.308.120 | 100.0 | 610 |

1969 Elections

| Parties | Number of Votes | Percentage | Number of Seats |
|--------------|------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| AP | 4.229.712 | 46.5 | 256 |
| CHP | 2.487.006 | 27.4 | 143 |
| MHP | 275.091 | 3.0 | 1 |
| TİP | 243.631 | 2.7 | 2 |
| MP | 292.961 | 3.2 | 6 |
| YTP | 197.92 | 2.2 | 6 |
| GP | 597.818 | 6.6 | 1 |
| TBP | 254.695 | 2.8 | 8 |
| Independents | 511.023 | 5.6 | 13 |
| Total | 9.089.866 | 100.0 | 610 |

1973 Elections

| Parties | Number of Votes | Percentage | Number of Seats |
|--------------|-------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| AP | 3.197.897 | 29.8 | 149 |
| CHP | 3.570.583 | 33.3 | 185 |
| MHP | 362.208 | 3.4 | 3 |
| DP | 1.275.502 | 11.9 | 45 |
| MP | 62.377 | 0.6 | -- |
| MSP | 1.265.771 | 11.8 | 48 |
| CGP | 564.343 | 5.3 | 13 |
| TBP | 121.759 | 1.1 | 1 |
| Independents | 303.218 | 2.8 | 6 |
| Total | 10.723.658 | 100.0 | 450 |

1977 Elections

| Parties | Number of Votes | Percentage | Number of Seats |
|--------------|-------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| AP | 5.468.202 | 36.9 | 189 |
| CHP | 6.136.171 | 41.4 | 213 |
| MHP | 951.544 | 6.4 | 16 |
| DP | 274.484 | 1.9 | 1 |
| Ti | 62.377 | 0.1 | -- |
| MSP | 1.269.918 | 8.6 | 24 |
| CGP | 277.713 | 1.9 | 3 |
| TBP | 58.540 | 0.4 | -- |
| Independents | 370.035 | 2.5 | 4 |
| Total | 14.827.172 | 100.0 | 450 |

Appendix 2

Biographical Details of Leading Personalities and Interviewees.

Taha Akyol

Party board member from 1973 to 1979.

Taught in the training and indoctrination sessions to young militants.

Editor in *Hergün* newspaper.

Imprisoned after the coup.

Wrote in *Milliyet*, served as the Manager of CNN Türk and published several books.

Kazım Ayaydın

Head of Istanbul MHP Youth Organization in the late 1970s.

Joined the BBP.

Ahmet Çakar

Head of İstanbul MHP youth organization in 1975.

One of the founders of the MİSK in the 1970s.

Joined the MHP and won a seat in parliament in 1999.

Ejected from the party.

Rejoined the party; currently a candidate for the party leadership in 2012 Congress.

Hasan Çağlayan

Joined the *ülkü ocakları* in the early 1970s.

Became a ÜOD leadership board member in 1977.

Became the Leader of the ÜOD in 1979.

Imprisoned after the coup.

Became an MHP MP in 1991.

Left the party in 1993 and became Vice-President of the BBP.

Musa Serdar Çelebi

Joined the *ülkü ocakları* in the late 1960s.

Selected to the ‘the trainers’ group in 1977.

Sent by Türkeş to Germany before 1980.

Founded a nationalist organization in Germany.

Parted ways with Türkeş and founded another nationalist organization in Europe in 1987.

Joined the BBP in 2002.

Yılma Durak

One of the nationalist youth leaders in the East in the early 1970s.

A member of the ‘trainers’ group formed by Türkeş in 1977 to indoctrinate young militants.

Vice-President of the MHP İstanbul branch in the late 1970s.

Imprisoned after the 1980 coup.
Joined the MHP again in the 1990s.

Numan Esin

One of the NUC members and Fourteen.
Joined the CKMP with Türkeş and served as Vice-President.
Wrote the CKMP party program in 1965.
Left the CKMP in 1967 and worked in cooperation with some of the NUC members before the 12 March.
Imprisoned during the 1971 Martial Administration

Burhan Kavuncu

A ÜOD leadership board member between 1977-1979.
Imprisoned in 1980.
Left the nationalist movement and joined religious organizations after the coup.

Ahmet İyioldu

The ÜKD member in the 1960s.
One of the founders of the Ötüken, the most popular nationalist publishing house.
Was a board member 1975-1979.

Abdullah Muradođlu

Young militant in the late 1970s in Sivas.
Imprisoned after the coup.
Became journalist in the 1990s; wrote documentaries on contemporary history in *Yeni Şafak*.

İbrahim Metin

Close follower of Türkeş since the 1960 Coup.
Joined the CKMP and party board member in 1969-1979.
Launched *Devlet* newspaper.
Founded *Töre-Devlet* Publishing House.

Ali Sahir Nariç

Close friend of Türkeş since the events of 1944.
Joined the CKMP in the 1960s.
Became the owner of *Hergün* newspaper in 1975.

Ramiz Ogun

Joined the *ülkü ocakları* in the late 1960s.
Became the leader of ÜOD in 1970.
Became the Head of the MHP Youth Organization in 1977.
Joined the 'trainers' group in 1977.
Sent by Türkeş to Germany in 1979.

Ran for the party leadership after the death of Türkeş in 1997, 2001, and 2004.

Sadi Somuncuoğlu

One of the founders of the ÜKD.

Joined the CKMP in the late 1960s.

Became Head of party's youth organization in 1968.

Party board member from 1969-1980.

Party MP (1977-1980) and Cabinet Member in 1977.

Imprisoned after the coup.

Joined the ANAP and won a seat in parliament in 1995.

Joined the MHP again, won a seat in parliament in 1999, became Cabinet Member 1999.

Ran for the Presidency in 2001.

Ejected from the party in 2001.

Prof. Ümit Özdağ

Son of Muzaffer Özdağ, one of the Fourteen who joined the CKMP with Türkeş.

One of the writers of the CKMP party program.

Completed a PhD study on Military-DP relations.

Mustafa Verkaya

The leader of İstanbul *ülkü ocakları* in 1975-1976.

Served in the party's youth organization in the late 1970s.

Imprisoned after the coup.

Became MHP MP in 1999.

Yılmaz Yalçiner

Joined the CKMP youth organization in the 1960s.

Close follower of Dündar Taşer.

Left the nationalist movement after the death of Taşer.

Joined the MSP and *akıncılar* in the late 1970s.

Hijacked a plane to protest the 1980 coup.

Imprisoned after the coup.

Wrote for magazines and newspapers.

Alparslan Türkeş

Born in 1917 in Cyprus.

Attended the Military Academy.

Arrested and tried because of his involvement in the events of 1944.

Involved in the 27 May Coup and became Vice-President.

Exiled to India in 13 November 1960.

Returned to Turkey in 1963.
Imprisoned in 1963 because of his involvement in Talat Aydemir's Coup.
Joined the CKMP in 1964.
Became the CKMP leader in 1965.
ChangeStayed in prison for five years after the 1980 coup.
Joined the MÇP in 1987 after his release.
Became the leader of the MHP again in 1991.
Died in 1997.

Dündar Taşer

One of the members of the NUC
Exiled to Morocco with the Fourteen.
Joined the CKMP in 1965
Became the MHP's Vice-President until 1971.
Died in a traffic accident in 1972.

Ahmet Er

One of the NUC members and Fourteen.
Joined the CKMP with Türkeş in 1965.
Party board member from 1965 to 1980.
Imprisoned after the coup.
Parted ways with Türkeş after the coup and joined the BBP in 1993.

Nevzat Kösoğlu

One of the ÜKD founders in the 1960s
Joined the party in the late 1960s
Party board member in 1973-1980
The party's Vice Secretary General 1975-1980 and MP between 1977-1980
Imprisoned after the coup.
Published several books on nationalism in the 1990s and 2000s

Yaşar Okuyan

Family friend of Türkeş since the 1960s.
Party board member, 1973-1980.
Imprisoned after the coup.
Joined the ANAP and won a seat in parliament in 1999 and became a Cabinet Member.

Mehmet Dođan

The party's Treasurer and board member from 1969 to 1980.
Imprisoned after the coup.

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Aydınlık

Birliğe Çağrı

Bozkurt

Cumhuriyet

Devlet

Devrim

Genç Arkadaş

Hasret

Hergün

Hürriyet

Kurtuluş

Millet

Milliyet

Milli Hareket

Nizam-ı Alem

Ortadoğu

Resmi Gazete

Yeni Gazete

Yön

Tercüman

Töre

Yeniçağ

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Kazım Ayaydın, 2 August 2011, İstanbul
Ahmet Çakar, 26 July 2011, İstanbul
Hasan Çağlayan, 22 July 2010, Ankara
Musa Serdar Çelebi, 20 August 2010-11 August 2011, İstanbul.
Yılma Durak, 18 July 2010, İstanbul
Numan Esin, 9 July 2011, Çanakkale
Ahmet İyioldu, 13 September 2010, İstanbul
Burhan Kavuncu, 26 November 2011, İstanbul
İbrahim Metin, 23 January 2011, İstanbul
Abdullah Muradoğlu, İstanbul, 11 January 2011
Ali Sahir Nariç, 24 January 2011, İstanbul
Ramiz Ongun, 22 July 2010, Ankara
Sadi Somuncuoğlu, 2 September 2010 Ankara
Prof. Ümit Özdağ, 21 July 2010, Ankara
Mustafa Verkaya, 25 July 2011, İstanbul
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