

PECULIARISM IN THE TURKISH LEFT DURING THE 1960's

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
OF
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY
A. İREM TUNÇER

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE
IN
THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND PUBLIC
ADMINISTRATION

SEPTEMBER 2008

Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

Prof. Dr. Sencer Ayata
Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of
Master of Science

Prof. Dr. Raşit Kaya
Head of Department

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully
adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

Assoc. Dr. Necmi Erdoğan
Supervisor

Examining Committee Members

Assoc. Dr. Necmi Erdoğan (METU, ADM) _____

Prof. Dr. Raşit Kaya (METU, ADM) _____

Assoc. Dr. Suavi Aydın (HU, ANTHR.) _____

I hereby declare that all the information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original in this work.

Name, Last Name: A. İrem Tunçer

Signature:

ABSTRACT

PECULIARISM IN THE TURKISH LEFT THE CASE OF THE 1960s

Tunçer, Ayşe İrem

M.S., Department of Political Science and Public Administration

Supervisor: Assoc. Dr. Necmi Erdoğan

September 2008, 143 pages

In this study, the Turkish left in the 1960s is discussed in the light of the term peculiarism. This is done on the basis of three groups of the Turkish left in the period, namely the Yön journal, the MDD group and the TİP with specific reference to Mehmet Ali Aybar. The main premises of the term peculiarism are considered to be nationalism, Kemalism, developmentalism or non-capitalist path of development, the idea of a “popular national front” and anti-imperialism. Accordingly, each group is discussed on the basis of the above told concepts.

Key Words: Turkish Left, Yön, MDD, Aybar, Peculiarism

ÖZ

TÜRKİYE SOLUNDA ÖZGÜCÜLÜK 1960'LI YILLAR ÖRNEĞİ

Tunçer, Ayşe İrem

Yüksek Lisans, Siyaset Bilimi ve Kamu Yönetimi Bölümü

Tez yöneticisi: Doç. Dr. Necmi Erdoğan

Eylül, 2008, 143 sayfa

Bu çalışmada 1960'lı yılların Türkiye Solu özgüçlük kavramı çerçevesinde tartışılmıştır. 1960'lı yılların Türkiye Solu içerisinde Yön dergisi, 1971 öncesi Milli Demokratik Devrim grubu ve Mehmet Ali Aybar özelinde TİP ele alınmıştır. Özgüçlük kavramı ise milliyetçilik, Kemalizm, gelişmecilik ya da kapitalist olmayan kalkınma yolu, halkçı cephe fikri ve anti-emperyalizm kavramları ekseninde anlaşılmaya çalışılmıştır. Bu anlamda yukarıda sayılan her grup bu kavramlar çerçevesinde tek tek analiz edilmiştir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Türkiye Solu, Yön, MDD, Aybar, Özgüçlük

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisors, Prof. Dr. Hasan Ünal Nalbantođlu and Assoc. Dr. Necmi Erdođan for their supports and critiques in every steps of my thesis. I am thankful to my examining committee members, Prof. Dr. Rařit Kaya and Assoc. Dr. Suavi Aydın for their careful reading and critical comments.

During the writing process, my housemates Pınar and Duygu encouraged me in dealing with the difficulties of concentration and gave me strength. I would like to express my thanks to them. Irmak, who opened her quiet and peaceful home to me at the very critical times of my thesis, provided me with great help. Together with her, Grkem, whom I shared my office during my assistantship was very helpful in sharing each step of the thesis-writing.

I would like to express my special thanks to Emre, who supported me not only about this thesis but also in every step of being a candidate of a social scientist. With him this journey is definitely more pleasant. My last but not the least thanks go to my family: iđdem, Engin and Eser. They have always encouraged my decisions and trusted in me.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iv
ÖZ.....	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vii
ABBREVIATIONS.....	ix
CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
2. THE YÖN JOURNAL AND THE MDD GROUP ON “TURKISH SOCIALISM”	10
2.1 A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE YÖN JOURNAL AND THE MDD GROUP	10
2.2 MAIN PREMISES OF TURKISH SOCIALISM AND YÖN AND THE MDD GROUPS	13
2.2.1 Nationalism	13
2.2.2 Kemalism	22
2.2.3 Anti-Imperialism and Independence.....	28
2.2.4 Class Alliances and the Idea of the Popular Front.....	36
2.2.5 Non-Capitalist Path of Development and “Developmentalist Socialism”	43
2.3 CLASS CONCEPTIONS AND REVOLUTIONARY STRATEGIES OF YÖN AND THE MDD.....	49
2.4 ASSESSMENT OF THE YÖN AND MDD GROUPS ON “PECULIARISM”	59

3. THE TİP AND AYBAR ON	
“SOCIALISM PECULIAR TO TURKEY”	66
3.1 A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE TİP	66
3.2 THE TİP: A DIFFERENT CASE?	68
3.2.1 Nationalism	69
3.2.2 Kemalism	71
3.2.3 Anti-Imperialism	73
3.2.4 Class Alliances and the “National Front”	75
3.2.5 “Non-Capitalist Path of Development and	
“Developmentalist Socialism”	77
3.3 CLASS ANALYSIS AND REVOLUTIONARY STRATEGY	81
3.4 AYBAR AND “SOCIALISM PECULIAR TO TURKEY”	87
3.5 ASSESSMENT OF THE TİP AND AYBAR ON “PECULIARISM”	94
4. THEORETICAL AND CONJUNCTURAL SOURCES OF	
“SOCIALISM PECULIAR TO TURKEY”	98
4.1 THEORETICAL SOURCES	99
4.1.1 Third Worldism	101
4.1.2 Marxism on/in the Third World	103
4.1.3 Debates on Asiatic Mode of Production and	
the Legacy of the Ottoman Empire	113
4.2 CONJUNCTURAL SOURCES	123
4.2.1 The Comintern and TKP	126
4.3 ASSESSMENT OF INFLUENCES ON THE TURKISH LEFT	130
5. CONCLUSION	132
BIBLIOGRAPHY	137

ABBREVIATIONS

AP Adalet Partisi (Party of Justice)

DP Demokrat Parti (Democratic Party)

CHP Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (Republican People's Party)

MDD Milli Demokratik Devrim (National Democratic Revolution)

SBKP Sovyetler Birliđi Komünist Partisi (Communist Party of Soviet Union)

TKP Türkiye Komünist Partisi (Communist Party of Turkey)

TİP Türkiye İşçi Partisi (Turkish Labor Party)

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Since Marxism's inception, the relationship of Marxism with the underdeveloped world has been problematic. The main reason for this tension stems from the thought that Marxism was essentially a Eurocentric theory and its political reflections could only be observed in the West. However, with the 1917 Russian Revolution, what came out to be with the history is different. Especially when the hopes from a world revolution starting from the West came to an end, the eyes are turned to the East and Africa and revolutions there. Together with those developments, Marxist theory gained a new content which is termed "Third World Marxism." What gave it its shape was not only the theory but also the developments in the Third World as well as their histories and Third World countries' relations with the Comintern.

Classical Marxist theory presupposes that the main conflict between labor and capital and socialism was marked by anti-capitalism. However, Marxism with its perceptions in the Third World had undergone some changes. Accordingly, since the underdeveloped countries had just gained their national independence, the main problem facing each of the countries was being a nation against external forces. Here, the primary conflict came to be seen as between the external forces, such as imperialism, and the country itself. Thus, socialism in this context had an essential anti-imperialist content rather than being anti-capitalist. Certainly, such a view brought some further questions and analysis to Marxism.

To this point, this new form of Marxism has been labeled Third World Marxism. However, since the title of the thesis is “Peculiarism in the Turkish Left,”¹ the term peculiarism should be explained.² Actually, the features of Third World Marxism correspond to what is termed peculiarism in Turkey to a great extent. Here, it can be stated that what has been called Third World Marxism has presented as “Socialism Peculiar to Turkey” within the Turkish Left.³ Of course, there are certain features specific to the perception of Marxism, or more truly the theory of socialism, in Turkey such as Kemalism. Nevertheless, if comparing those features with the other Third World countries and the way they recognize socialism, it is possible to see many common points which will be discussed below.

Before a brief summary of the chapters and the concept of peculiarism are offered, the main questions of this study are explained. A study that deals with historical data have references to the recent times. That is to say, an exploration of history likely includes some references to the present. In this case, the main problematics are on the one hand the debates within the left in Turkey and on the other the confusion about the left’s relation with other ideologies, i.e. nationalism. In Turkey, the relationship of the left with nationalism is a complex one that like in other Third World countries, nationalism has some positive connotations regarding its anti-imperialist content. The origins of this complexity go back to the 1960s, in which many underdeveloped countries gained independence and thus identified nationalism with anti-imperialism. In Turkey, this feature of

¹ Throughout the thesis, the term “Turkish left” is used to correspond to the leftists groups that define themselves as socialist. In that sense it will exclude the center left groups.

² It can be said that peculiarism corresponds to one of the strains of the approaches and methods of looking at history. In Aydın’s words:

“While nomothetic approach is an option through the exploration of universal laws, idiographic approach inclines through a reference archeology that would uncover the knowledge of particular incidents and relations, and in this way it prefers to ignore the universal regularities, relations, connections and definitions. It is an approach that underestimates the specificity of the fact itself and treats each event and relation in its own time and space.” (Aydın, 2001b: 39)

³ In some studies, the term “Turkish Socialism” is used synonomous with what is called peculiarism or Third World Marxism in Turkey. See Lipovsky 1992, Yurtsever 1992.

nationalism is combined with Kemalism, which provides a safe guard for the leftists. Moreover, the concepts of nationalism and anti-imperialism were presented with another dominant trend of the 1960s, namely developmentalism. For almost all of the leftist groups in the 1960s, socialism has meant to be a method of rapid economic development. However, although those three concepts are common for the Third World, Turkish socialists tended to present them as the components of a “peculiar way for Turkey”. This study analyzes what Turkish leftists meant by the term “peculiar”, what they associated with peculiarism, and what were the main influences on their peculiarism.

Another dimension to be noted is that the thesis of the uniqueness of the social formation in Turkey is not specific to the period of the 1960s or to the left. This thesis is also owned by right. Furthermore, starting with the Ottoman Empire, the historical processes Turkey experienced were very different from other parts of the world. Thus, sometimes this idea forms the basis for claims against Marxism and its class schema. However, this understanding mostly exhibits itself in anti-Westernist discourses. This anti-Westernist discourse sometimes displays itself also within the left; however the progressive (*ilerlemeci*) and enlightenment (*aydınlanmacı*) strands of Kemalism played a preventive role in those discourses of the left to some extent.⁴

In this study, it is examined how this line of uniqueness found a place within the left in the 1960s. This has been done by analyzing the different forms the claim of uniqueness took. In that sense, some key concepts are determined as the main premises of peculiarism. Yet, here a methodological problem arises, for some concepts on the one hand are the reason of this uniqueness claim and on the other are the result of it. For instance, Kemalism shapes the left and plays a role in its

⁴ Another strand of this thought is the theories built on the “strong state/weak society” dichotomy . Proponents of this view are Keyder, Heper and Mardin. In recent times, these scholars have noted the development of civil society against a strong state. For a criticism of this school of thought, see Demet Dinler (2003), “Türkiye’de Güçlü Devlet Geleneği Tezinin Eleştirisi,” *Praksis* vol. 9: 17-54.

presentation of itself as a way peculiar to Turkey while the left also claims that because of Kemalism, socialism in Turkey is different from the other countries.

Returning to the summary of the study, to begin with, it can be said that all of the groups that will be mentioned below have the intention of finding an understanding of socialism that can be put to practice in Turkey. Here, it should be questioned why were they in the search of this? In other words, what were their assumptions about Turkey that made them search for a different way? Before, answering this question, it should be stated that the assumptions of the groups can sometimes be in conflict with each other. Nevertheless, since the result which is the search for a peculiar way is common, the differences are not very decisive for the content of this study.

The main assumptions of the primary figures of the Turkish left, which prompted them to search for a different way, can be enumerated as the following:

- 1- Turkey is an underdeveloped country.
- 2- Since capitalist development is not complete, the working class in Turkey is few in number and its political consciousness is not developed enough.
- 3- There are still remnants of feudalism in Turkey.
- 4- Turkey experienced the “first liberation war” of history.
- 5- It possesses a constitution which is open to socialism.
- 6- There are classes which are specific to Turkey (i.e. bureaucracy).

If accepting that there are two currents in the left, which are universalist and peculiarist, the latter can be said to be dominant within the Turkish left. For Aydın, the main reason for this is being a peripheral country. He states that in all of the peripheral countries, the main streams of the socialist left have a special understanding of Marxism which is “third worldist” (Aydın, 1998). Aydın explains the basic difference between these two streams in the following way:

“While socialists are in the anti-imperialist side just because they are socialist and because the main argument of socialism is being against the exploitation of labor, ‘third worldists’ are leftist because they are anti-imperialist” (1998: 60).

This study focuses upon the period of 1960-1971, which corresponds to the period between the first recognition of left by the masses in Turkey and the military coup of 1971. Between these years:

The liberalization of the political life in the country following the 27 May revolution with the adoption of a new constitution for Turkey –the most democratic in its history-created favorable subjective preconditions for legal activity by proponents of socialist ideology. (Lipovsky, 1992: 11)

In this period, analysis is centered upon three main groups which are the intellectuals around the Yön Journal, the MDD group⁵ which was lead by Mihri Belli and the TİP led by Mehmet Ali Aybar. Although, those figures can be said to have had immense ideological and political differences in their views on socialism peculiar to Turkey, there were also similar notions that were shared. Nevertheless, it should be stated that that such a generalization can bring some problems especially about the political traditions these different groups came from. In order to escape that kind of misunderstanding, it should be said from the beginning that these groups were thought of as neither having an organic link nor as owning the same political tradition. For instance, the MDD debate has not been thought of merely as the continuation of the Yön movement. What is attempted is to find their common points and determine if their sources are common or not.

In terms of peculiarism it is possible to find some common elements which are reflected in different manners. In all, emphasis was on the rejection of imitation. For instance Aybar states that, “The socialism of TİP is not imported. It is neither like its examples in the West nor in the East. Because Turkey is neither West nor East. Turkey is a country that has its specific conditions” (1968: 639).

⁵ Within the scope of this study, the MDD group is limited to the pre-1971 period and the Aydınlık groups are excluded. The pre-1971 period of the MDD is investigated through the newspaper of Türk Solu and through the writings of Belli.

Similarly for Avciođlu, Turkish socialism have the bases from its own history, thus Turkish socialists do not need any foreign references: “Turkish socialism is in the light of scientific socialism but avoiding all kinds of dogmatism, imitation. Turkey found support from its own history since the time of the ghazis to the War of Liberation” (Yön: 7 May 1965: 10).

Belli’s understanding of Turkish socialism reflects the attempt to answer the accusations of imitating the Soviet model for Turkey. He states that:

To have a positive attitude towards the Soviet Republic and to the party that rules this country, for the benefits of Turkish proletarians is something different than being a ‘Moskowitz’. Our answer to the epithets of being Maoist, Castroist or Moskowitz is that: We are *Türkiyeci* and we are the defenders of Turkish proletarians. (Belli, *Türk Solu*, 14 May 1968)

In this study, the concept of peculiarism is analyzed under five main headings which are thought to be the main features of peculiarism in the Turkish left. Each group is separately analyzed under those concepts. These concepts are nationalism, Kemalism, developmentalism or non-capitalist path of development, anti-imperialism (in some cases anti-Westernism) and the idea of “popular national front.” At the end of each section, the class conceptions and the revolutionary strategies of each group are also clarified. Definitely, the conceptions of class are the main problematic for the concept of peculiarism. From the understandings of class it is possible to distinguish different currents within left. Here, conception of class implies not only how the figures of the Turkish left categorize different classes in society but also through this, what kind of a power-holding strategy has been developed or what classes are seen as the main agents of revolutionary change in society. For Gökhan Atılgan, the key differences about the leftist groups were about their ideas of the working class and its capacity to change the society (2007a: 395)⁶.

⁶ Thoroughly, Atılgan states that between 1962 and 1971, there are three tendencies in the analysis originated from Marxism. First understanding takes Western countries as the ideal types and since the characteristics of those were not found in Turkey, it is concluded that Turkey is a unique and peculiar country. This brings the quest for a new socialist strategy in Turkey. The representatives of this current are S. Aydemir, D. Avciođlu and M. A. Aybar. Second understanding rejected that Marxism is specifically for Western societies and tried to adapt the revolutionary theories of China

It can be questioned why the thesis does not include the period after 1970. Such an objection is valid since beginning with 1970s the divisions within left increased due to three different international sources (European communisms which criticize Soviet socialism and accordingly a new student movement in Europe; national liberation movements in Latin America, Asia and Africa and lastly Cultural Revolution of China). There has also a considerable increase in the mass movements in Turkey that included youth, working class and the peasantry (Atılgan, 2007a: 443). Nevertheless, there are defensible reasons for the exclusion of the post-70s from the content of the thesis. The period until 1970 is the main phase in which theoretical discussions have been made. In that period, not many books have been written about the socialist theory or Marxism but in the newspapers and journals there were a vast number of debates regarding the nature of socialism, the forces of revolution, the structure of Ottoman and other eastern societies, the main contradiction in Turkish society, the development level of capitalism and the working class in Turkey. The grounds of these debates were mainly Yön, Türk Solu and Emek.

After a brief explanation of what is meant with the concept of peculiarism, the structure of the thesis is as follows: This study consists of four parts. In the first chapter, the Yön and MDD groups are analyzed in terms of the concepts of nationalism, Kemalism, developmentalism or non-capitalist path of development, anti-imperialism and the idea of “popular national front.” As stated before, for the Yön group, the books of Avcıoğlu and the journal itself are explored. For the MDD group, two sources have been taken into consideration. The first is the newspaper of *Türk Solu* (Turkish Left) which was published between 1968 and 1971. The second source is the book by Belli, titled *Yazılar* (Writings) which is a collection of his writings between 1965 and 1970.

and Latin America to Turkey. The last understanding, which is represented by the line of TKP, took the theses of SBKP about the underdeveloped countries to the base and tried to develop a revolutionary strategy from these theses. (Atılgan, 2007a: 311-12)

The second chapter is about the TİP and it asks the question of whether the TİP is a different case or not. In other words, if regarding MDD and Yön groups as peculiarist, is it possible to consider TİP as the representative of the universalist side? The purpose of asking such a question is that the MDD group and the TİP are known for their opposing ideas, for they are the actors of the famous MDD-SD debate. That is why, although the TİP is analyzed under the same concepts as the MDD and Yön, it is done so in a different chapter. In other words, although the concepts assumed as the premises of peculiarism are same for the TİP, the forms that they take can be considered different. In this chapter, apart from the analysis of TİP leaders' discourses on nationalism, Kemalism, developmentalism or non-capitalist path of development, anti-imperialism and on "popular national front," Aybar's ideas on the "Socialism Peculiar to Turkey" is given. Between the lines the dispute within the TİP, particularly between the Aybar and Behice Boran is given. The reason of that is from their debates it is possible to watch the traces of the peculiarism of Aybar and how it was criticized by a figure from the same period and similar political ideologies.

The third chapter is about the main influences on the Turkish left which prompt to identify with Third Worldist Socialism. In other words, it explores the sources of the peculiarist tendency of the Turkish left. This chapter consists of two sub-headings which are theoretical and conjunctural sources. Despite the fact that it is not always easy to differentiate what is theoretical and what is conjunctural, here it was necessary to make a differentiation. Accordingly, the writings of Marx, Engels and Lenin on the national question and the debates over the Asiatic Mode of Production are taken as the theoretical sources while the Comintern decisions and the relationship of the Soviet Union and TKP are taken as the conjunctural sources. Here it should be stated that the list of the conjunctural sources can be extended so that it can include Kemalism as a very important factor. Similarly, the position of the socialist as well as Kemalist intellectuals can be included. What is meant by the position of the intellectuals is the tradition that they inherited from the Ottoman intellectuals which have the motivation of "saving the homeland."

The difficulties stemming from talking about socialism where Islam is the main source of legitimization and since its geographical position is very crucial in Cold War conditions, where anti-communism campaigns are supported profoundly can said to be another conjunctural source of using the concepts such as Kemalism, nationalism or anti-imperialism. As stated by Artun Ünsal, Turkey was a country where Islam has always stronger than socialism just like nationalism has stronger than internationalism (Ünsal, 2002: 32). In other words, the peculiarist tendency of the left can said to have tactical reasons. However, except from the Comintern decisions and relationship of the Soviet Union and TKP, Kemalism and effect of intellectuals is not explained in third chapter. The reason of this is that Kemalism or tactical reasons are emphasized in the previous chapters. In other words, since Kemalism is one of the main premises of peculiarism, it is not reasonable to explain it once more as the source of peculiarism.

In the conclusion, the groups analyzed in the previous chapters will be assessed on the basis of the influences and sources discussed in the third chapter. In that sense, it will be questioned to what extent those groups were shaped with the so-called sources. Moreover, it will be considered what extent common grounds provide an understanding of the peculiarism of those groups.

CHAPTER 2

THE YÖN JOURNAL AND THE MDD GROUP ON “TURKISH SOCIALISM”

In this chapter, the analyses of the Yön and MDD groups will be made on the bases of the concepts nationalism, Kemalism, developmentalism or non-capitalist path of development, anti-imperialism and on “popular national front.” As already stated the materials used for that analysis are the journal of Yön and the Türk Solu as well as the writings of Belli which was later on published as a book. Here, it is intended to find out to what extent those groups shared in common on the basis of the concepts stated above. Through here the peculiarisms of those groups are attempted to be understood.

2.1 A Brief History of the Yön Journal and the MDD Group

Yön:

The journal Yön began publication in 20 December 1961. It included many writers whose political tendencies varied from socialism to Kemalism and from social democracy to ex-members of the TKP. Leading contributors to the journal were Doğan Avcıoğlu, İlhan Selçuk, Mümtaz Soysal and Cemal Eyüboğlu. As the general ideology of the journal it is possible to use the term left-Kemalism in the broadest sense of the term. Here left-Kemalism corresponds to an attempt to combine the main principles of Kemalism with socialism or to present Kemalism in a way that it reaches socialism inherently. Yön started to be published with a declaration in which the main problems of Turkey were open to public discussion

about the problems of Turkey and ways to overcome them suggested. This declaration was signed by nearly a thousand intellectuals.⁷ It can be said that their common point was their dissatisfaction with the Democrat Party government and the search for solutions to make Turkey a developed country. The key points in the Yön declaration can be summarized in the following way:

- 1- To reach the “level of contemporary civilization” aimed for by the Atatürk revolution, economic development is the most important precondition. As the economy develops, the social structure will change and masses will be more conscious. For this economic development, “social justice” should be the main principle. Only in this way democracy can be realized.
- 2- The people such as teachers, writers, trade unionists, politicians and administrators who are able to direct the Turkish society, should come to terms about a development philosophy.
- 3- The new philosophy of development should be based on a new statist policy which favors a mixed economy and social justice.
- 4- In the new statism, the key sectors should be controlled by the state and it should be well-planned.

The cadre of Yön never formed a political party; nevertheless, together with the MDD and the TİP they were the most important leftist figures of the 1960s. Here the *Sosyalist Kültür Derneği* (Socialist Culture Association) and the attempt to found the “*Çalışanlar Partisi*” (The Worker’s Party) should be noted. The former was led by the Yön writers in 1962 and its aims were stated as follows:

“The Socialist Culture Association, which regards labor as the major value of the society, investigates the conditions to found a real democratic system which will abandon the exploitation, looks for the cultural basis of such a system and works for the expansion of those” (Yön, 1962).

⁷ For the full text of the declaration and the list of intellectuals who signed it, see Atılğan 2002, 331-337.

The attempt to form the *Çalışanlar Partisi* came to end when members of *Türk-İş* changed their minds about founding the party. It is important to note that for *Yön*, although there was *TİP*, its existence in the political arena was enough for Turkey. The main reason was that *TİP* was representing only the working classes and was not representative of the other groups. Here other groups refer to military-civil bureaucracy. As will be seen in the discourses of *Yön*, the most important group that has the power to change the Turkish society was this so-called group.

MDD Group:

The MDD movement was one of the most important constituents of the left which started to have the interest of the young masses after 1960. As stated before the leaders of the MDD movement were the part of the TKP. Most of them were labeled communists and as such were banned from the politics. In those terms, according to Mustafa Şener, MDD can be seen as the continuation of traditional leftist politics in Turkey (2006: 156). Indeed, the MDD was a product of the opposition that came out of the *TİP*. It was after the elections of 1965 and the *TİP*'s existence in government, a series of articles written in *Yön* called "Discussions over the *TİP*" (*TİP Tartışmaları*) prepared the ground for the emergence of that opposition. The article written by Mihri Belli, with the penname Ertuğrul Tüfekçi, titled "The Brochure of the National Democratic Revolution" in 1965 and published in *Yön* was the first text which placed the basis of this opposition to the front. The expulsion of some MDD supporters from the *TİP* in the Malatya Congress of 1966 prompted the MDD to continue as a separate movement. In November 1967, the publication of MDD titled *Türk Solu* started to be published. It can be said that since leftist groups are generally identified with their publications, the MDD movement was born with *Türk Solu*. However, after 1968, this group together with its publications divided into two groups. The other group started to publish *Aydınlık* which has further divided into PDA (Proletarian Revolutionary *Aydınlık*). However, for the purposes of this study, the MDD will be analyzed only through its very early period namely *Türk Solu*.

It can be said that the MDD thesis included many figures of Turkish left especially after 1968. Among those involved were Hikmet Kıvılcımlı, Mahir Çayan, Deniz Gezmiş, Doğu Perinçek, İbrahim Kaypakkaya. Of course, it is possible to include many other names, but those listed can be seen as the main figures of the divisions within MDD. As stated by Aydınöğlü, in the Turkish left, the MDD was the most important movement even for the figures who were against it. Every figure positioned himself/herself according to this movement even if s/he was against or in favor of it (1992).

As stated earlier, in this study, the MDD thesis will be explored on the basis of Mihri Belli's writings and the articles in *Türk Solu*. It can be said that these early years were the source of later understandings of the MDD as well as very basis of them. In this early period, the basic debates over the revolutionary strategy suitable for Turkey, the revolutionary forces and the method of the revolution were discussed. Below a more detailed analysis of the MDD thesis follows.

2.2 Main Premises of Turkish Socialism and Yön and the MDD Groups

2.2.1 Nationalism

It should be stated that nationalism within the content of this thesis has been used with reference to "Third World nationalism." The origins of the concept can be traced back to the 1960s when many underdeveloped countries gained independence and the general attitude of the "left" to these countries as the actors of anti-imperialist movements. In other words, with the immense effect of the ideas of the Second International⁸ on the "right to self-determination," "emphasis on economic and political independence" and "opposition to imperialism," the left attributed a positive and progressive character to the nationalist movements in the Third World. Marxist and Western scholars who studied the issue of nationalism were not exceptions in that sense.⁹ As a result, through the 1960s and 1970s,

⁸ See Chapter III

⁹ See Hobsbawm 1990.

nationalism came to be associated with anti-imperialism, and resulting in a direct association between socialism and nationalism.

Such an association of nationalism and socialism was led by the intellectuals of the Third World countries. Baskın Oran states that those intellectuals were the products of the colonialism that they had reacted against (Oran, 1997: 295). Thus, socialism and nationalism was developed as a “reaction ideology” and this reaction was against the West which is seen as the source of all evil. However, as rightly put by d’Encausse and Schram, this is inherently a contradictory situation, as since underdeveloped countries want development, they need Westernization. On the other hand, they want to protect their own “national identity.” As d’Encausse and Schram state “to get rid of being underdeveloped and at the same time to protect their national identities” was an important contradiction waiting to be solved (1966: 11). Below it will be explored how this contradiction had been addressed by the *Yön* journal and MDD groups in the Turkish context.

The emphases of both the *Yön* Journal and the MDD groups on nationalism claim to give the concept its *actual* meaning. For both the *Yön* and MDD-thesis, what was the prevalent discourse of the time was an imperialist theory of nationalism with its racist and chauvinist tone. One should be able to differentiate the scientific theory of nationalism from the imperialist one. For both of the groups the latter was justifying the domination relations between the nations by making the nation a biological category. Furthermore, for them one should not confuse the nationalism of the developed countries with the “backward” ones. In the pages of *Yön*, it was written that: “It is certain that the place of nationalism in underdeveloped countries would be under the rubric of socialism rather than the one of liberalism of imperialism”. (Selçuk quoted in Aytemur, 2000: 106). That is to say, beginning with *Yön*, it is frequently asserted that nationalism and socialism were not two opposite sides; on the contrary, to be a real nationalist, one had to be a socialist. In *Yön* and *Türk Solu*, this emphasis reached its zenith with the differentiation between “nationalism of oppressor nations” and “nationalism of oppressed countries.” According to this differentiation, the former was a

reactionary concept while the latter holds “revolutionary” and “progressive” meanings.

According to Aydın, such an association of nationalism with socialism was not specific to Turkey, but was a phenomenon of Third World Marxism. He states that:

The rise of Marxism in the Third World has created a Marxism that is different from the West. Marxism here, with the effect of a colonial past, turned out to be the project of ‘getting rid of Europanization.’ In this situation, in the Third World, Marxism became the ideological frame of ‘modernization by being loyal to one’s own self.’ The easiest way to define and emphasize ‘being yourself’ is to define an ‘other’ and the so called ‘other’ became the West which represents imperialism in this new international situation. In the theme of this ideological stand, the only chance of existence was through ‘the national.’ (Aydın, 1998: 59)

In this part of this study, there will be a brief analysis of each groups’ conception of nationalism. In that sense it can be determined to what extent the nationalism of the Yön Journal and the MDD groups are similar and can be put under the rubric of peculiarism.

Yön and Nationalism

For the Yön group, development was an issue of an honor group from the very beginning, with most of its members who were educated in the West and as a result started to think about the underdevelopment of Turkey. Avcıoğlu asks the question “Why did Turkey turn into an underdeveloped country?” and states that “we, as Turkish nationalists have to answer this question.” For him, the “misfortune of Turkey started with our loss of confidence in ourselves”, and adds that the reason of the loss of confidence was the technological and economic superiority of the West. According to Avcıoğlu since in the areas of education and development strategies, the Western powers make the decisions, such a loss of confidence was inevitable (Avcıoğlu, 1964b). In sum Avcıoğlu maintains that: “The first principle of development is to believe and trust ourselves and be proud

of our country. The countries that lack national honor, belief and pride are condemned to remain a colony.” (ibid.)

Yön, having its ideological roots in the Kadro movement, was the first group that associated nationalism with socialism. In that sense, Yön writers had tried to reconstruct the meaning of nationalism and give it its “real” meaning which they located in Kemalism.

As stated before, Yön writers were against a racist type of nationalism that employed biological categories. According to them, that kind of definition was used by imperialist ideologies to strengthen their own superiority. They often claimed that the way Yön defined nationalism was scientific. In Avcioğlu’s words:

Socialist theory of nationalism is a scientific synthesis of historical facts. The definition of nation that is based on the close investigation of social history, forces and relations of production is like following: ‘Nation is the permanent community of people who are born to a psychological type of behavior, economic life and a common language which emerge in a specific national culture and history. (Avcioğlu quoted in Atılgan, 2002: 109)

Thus, the most crucial point that was argued has the illusion created by imperialist nationalism. To prove that was an illusion, Yön writers defined how a “real” nationalism should be. It was argued that a real nationalism was possible only in a socialist society. This was a natural fact because a “real” nationalism would mean national unity and this was not possible in a society where some are oppressed by the others. The issue of oppression was far more expressed about the relations between imperial nations and the underdeveloped ones. That is to say, for the Yön group, a true nationalist was necessarily anti-imperialist.

The Yön group’s conception of the “War of Liberation” was attaining it an anti-imperialist and nationalist content. Furthermore, the national and independent economy, which meant “complete independence”, and the etatism of the early Republican years prompted them to glorify what they call “Atatürkist

nationalism.”¹⁰ This glorification of an independent economy and the association of it with nationalism indicated how Yön writers thought the economic base to be the most crucial element of nationalism. This also is obvious in Avcıoğlu’s definition of nationalism: “Socialism, in one word, is the method of rapid development in social justice, and rapid development in social justice is the only way to save our country from the dead-end it experiences today. That is why socialism is the absolute nationalism” (quoted in Atılgan, 2002: 101).

In the light of the quote above, it can be said that the central element of Yön’s nationalism is developmentalism. That is to say, for the Yön writers regardless of other features, if a political current claims for development, it can be called nationalist. Furthermore, if someone is against both internal and external capitalism we can call he/she is deemed a nationalist. For them, such developmentalism first of all requires economic independence. This point can be thought of as the one that differentiated Yön from the previous modernization theories and movements in Turkey (such as the Young Ottomans, the Young Turks, the Committee of Union and Progress, Kemalists and Kadro Group) giving it a leftist slant. For Atılgan, what differentiates Yön writers from these movements were their economically based analyses and locating answers to the underdevelopment of Turkey on that basis. In that sense, they also differentiated themselves from Kemalist nationalism, which they thought of as incomplete. Thus, their task was to complete the Kemalist revolution and the aim of this was gaining economic independence. Their way of doing this will be emphasized in the next sections, but for now it can be said that their means were etatism and a revolution launched by “national front” which mainly led by the “military-civil intellectual stratum”.

Another path to follow Yön groups’ nationalism is its attitude in foreign policy. As stated above, the main aim of the movement was to gain independence and

¹⁰ Later on Avcıoğlu criticized Kemalist statism’s tendency toward capitalism and losing its anti-imperialist content. However, as later will be emphasized this criticism of Avcıoğlu was putting forward the “change of mind” in the Kemalist cadres rather than structural reasons.

independence in foreign issues was one of the most important aspects of this. According to Yön, Turkey should not have been an ally of colonialist and imperialist Western countries but with the Soviet Union which supported national liberation and national development movements. In those terms, Turkey should have close relations with the USSR and the other third world countries with socialist tendencies (Atılgan, 2002: 121). Yet, as strongly emphasized by Yön writers, this did not mean to be a country that was dependant on the USSR. On the contrary, being a satellite of neither imperialist countries nor the Soviet Union has strongly emphasized by Yön writers, and in that way, the unique path of Turkey had been claimed.

Before starting to discuss the National Democratic Revolution thesis through the specific case of *Türk Solu*, it should be stated that starting with reconciliation of the conflict between internationalism and nationalism has become a significant issue. For instance, according to Avcıoğlu, there is not any tension between internationalism and nationalism in Marxism-Leninism. On the contrary, the nationalism that is supported by Yön writers is a result of a “deep internationalism” (Atılgan, 2002: 111).

The MDD Group and Nationalism

Similar to Yön, the MDD group also attempted to reconstruct the meaning of nationalism and to give it a socialist and anti-imperialist content. However, as different from Yön in the pages of *Türk Solu*, the aim of reconciling Marxism and nationalism is more noticeable. Indeed, for the MDD group, there is not a conflict between Marxism and nationalism or internationalism and nationalism. Yet, there had been many articles on this issue since Yön writers think that the TİP was creating confusion by putting internationalism and nationalism in opposition to each other.

The basic assumption behind the reconciliation of nationalism and internationalism is the so-called underdevelopment of Turkey and the historical reasons of this underdevelopment. Accordingly, unlike Western countries in

which nation-states and the working class had emerged much earlier, Turkey is still at the stage of nation stage formation and thus the first thing to be done is dispel of feudal elements inside. Apart from this internal dynamic, the international conjuncture, in which imperialism is the main rule, obliges underdeveloped countries such as Turkey to be anti-imperialist which means it should also eliminate the comprador bourgeoisie inside and should be independent in its foreign affairs. In that sense, being a Turk means or ought to mean being anti-feudal and anti-imperialist for *Türk Solu*. Actually, even before *Türk Solu*, one of Belli's articles in *Yön* claims that "Turkish socialism is a national movement in its deepest meaning" (Belli, 1966). As such, constructing the discourse through being a Turk is legitimized by the claim that it is the requisite of being anti-imperialist as well as anti-feudal:

For us, opening our pages to each writer who calls himself a Turk faithfully and who is against imperialism from the center to the most leftist wing is a responsibility. This is the requirement of our anti-imperialist and anti-feudal position. (*Türk Solu*, 1968)

The choice behind the discourse of nationalism can be understood through the idea of National Democratic Revolution. As stated above, the way the historical development of Turkey was analyzed by *Türk Solu* through its comparison with Western countries brought the writers to a conclusion that Turkey needed a national bourgeois revolution to reach the stage of socialism. This was thought to mean that nationalism was required for the stage of national democratic revolution as a means, not as an end in itself:

The main principles of Union of Revolutionary Forces (*Devrimci Güç Birliği*) are the principles of National Democratic Revolution. Certainly, a Turkey with complete independence will utilize the principle of nationalism in its deepest meaning. (Belli, 1968b)

As different from *Yön*, which was associated with Marxism through giving economy a determinant role and claiming economic development was necessary for progress, the MDD group attempted to argue for the principles of Marxism and the way they interpreted socialism (through nationalism, National Democratic

Revolution etc.) simultaneously. That was why reconciling nationalism and Marxism was something essential. In the pages of *Türk Solu*, it was very usual to see theoretical articles which explored the main sources of Marxism such as texts written by Marx, Engels or Lenin. Especially Lenin's "*Rights of Nations to Self-Determination*" was a very widespread source of reference.

M. Erdost, who can be considered as the one of the main theoreticians of the journal, wrote several articles regarding the arguments with the TİP and Aybar on the issue of nationalism. His article "Nationalism and Internationalism" (1968) provides a complete picture of the journal's view to the issue. In this article, Erdost criticizes Aybar with not comprehending the fact that the stages of nationalism and internationalism are two different stages. He states that the principle of "workers having no homeland" is not true for each country and also for each stage of historical development. For Erdost, in the imperialist period one cannot talk about "workers without homelands." For him "this is the principle of the future." (ibid: 4) However, in developed countries, one can talk of workers without homelands due to historical developments they have experienced. In his words:

This means that in 1848 in developed capitalist countries, namely in Western European countries, the unity of capital which is devoid of national base thus having no homeland, eliminated international conflicts, nevertheless in developed countries, the conflict between capital and labor along with bourgeoisie and proletariat gained a common characteristic which does not have a national base.

For Erdost, since all the nation states were not founded in the same time period, their conditions of birth are very different from each other. Thus, the imperialist period has its own conditions for the national movements. In this period, unlike Western societies that transformed from feudalism to capitalism through their own internal dynamics, Eastern societies experienced this transformation not through their own internal dynamics but through oppression from outside. Hence, their national movements developed under this oppression and for this reason these nation movements are intrinsically progressive (ibid: 5). For Erdost, because of

those facts in underdeveloped countries, it is not about “the victory of working class” but “to be freed from imperialism” or not the “proletariat of the underdeveloped country” but “the oppressed people of colonized and subordinated countries” (ibid: 6).

For Erdost, national liberation movements are progressive as long as they weaken imperialism. Yet, it is not possible to see the conditions of so-called progressiveness, for each national movement is seen as progressive by MDD group. It is stated that a national movement does not require the “existence of proletarian elements inside” or “any base of democracy” to be progressive.

The nationalism owned by the MDD group also refers to Kemalist nationalism and the War of Liberation. For them, “there are not impassable bridges between socialism and Kemalism” (Belli, 1969). Belli states that Kemalism intended to create a national honor and that is the main reason for the harmony of those two political thoughts. Referring to Kemalist ideals of “progress,” “love of nation” was used as a common denominator for all who wanted “progress”:

Today’s struggle is the continuation of the national rear up in new conditions. This rear up which had started on 19th May 1919 in the leadership of Atatürk had gone through a period of decline. Today’s struggle is the struggle of each who calls himself a Turk in a sincere manner. We cherish each patriot who joins this struggle. (Belli, 1968a)

The general examination of socialism by the MDD group consistently called for the existence of independent nations, asserting that it would be the same in the socialist order. In one of her editorials, Sevim Belli argues against the “accusations” of hanging a Soviet flag in a public meeting and says that “the flag of Turkish people is the flag of star and crescent” and none of the socialist countries had ever put up a Soviet flag. For her, flags “represent the revolutionary histories of nations” and they would also be “above the heads of nations in any socialist order” (Belli, S., 1969a).

2.2.2 Kemalism

The studies on the relationship of Kemalism and the Turkish left, generally state that the roots of this relationship are to be located in the modernization tradition of Turkey. Actually, within the intellectual as well as political traditions of Turkey, it is not possible to find many streams of thought that did not define themselves with reference to West. As will be explained in the next chapters, the debates over the Asiatic mode of production came out as the attempt to read the Eastern histories in terms of their difference from West and they can be seen as falling into the trap of orientalism and in some cases counter-orientalism. In the next chapters, it will be explained what those two different traditions, namely the Kemalist left and Küçükömer-Aybar traditions, share in common.

The reasons for the left's relation to Kemalism should be understood through the intellectual and political traditions' relation to modernization and the West. Kemalism is crucial at this point because it is seen as the representation of Turkish modernization. It can be correctly stated that the modernization project is generally taken for granted by the Turkish left. The main reason for that is the reconciliation of the main premises of Kemalism and left, especially regarding the transforming of the society. The main problem here is that transforming the society was equated with the "continuation of the state" for traditional intellectuals. For Atılgan, starting with Yön there was a break from the traditional intellectual, but still they cannot be described as organic intellectuals in Gramscian sense since they never had any organic relation with any classes.

It is possible to speak of many premises of Kemalism which had been acknowledged by left sometimes directly, sometimes with minor modifications. Among the most critical of them are anti-imperialism, nationalism, revolutionism and corporatism. Here corporatism is worth explaining since all others are explained in detail throughout the thesis.

For Taha Parla, corporatism was the dominant political philosophy behind the practices and discourses of the political arena of Turkey throughout the 20th

century. Parla takes Ziya Gökalp's corporatism to the base and states that the most crucial feature of Gökalp's corporatism is his emphasis on a classless society. Along with his acceptance of the existence of classes which are defined on the basis of occupation criteria, Gökalp rejects any possibility of class antagonism due to the undeveloped capitalist character of the state (Parla, 1993).

Starting from the Kadro movement and continuing with Yön, it is possible to see the reflections of that corporatism on the Turkish left. Although in the specific cases of the MDD and Aybar corporatism cannot be viewed in the same manner, there are some similar reflections especially in the Popular National Front of the MDD.

To provide a comprehensive understanding of the influence of Kemalism on the Turkish left each group will be analyzed in a more detailed way in the following section.

Yön and Kemalism

It can be said that, in the period of 1960-1970, no other group in the Turkish left associated socialism with Kemalism more than Yön. For Yön, these two concepts were inseparable:

Essentially we regard socialism as the continuation and spontaneous result of Atatürkism which is based on populism, etatism, revolutionism, laicism, republicanism and nationalism. We believe that, socialism is the means to develop and cultivate Atatürk revolutions (Avcıoğlu, 1962b).

Doğan Avcıoğlu can be viewed as one of the founding fathers of left-Kemalism. Although it is possible to trace its origins back to the Kadro movement, with Yön, for the first time, Kemalism had been used in association with the idea of national democratic revolution and socialism. As different from Kadro, which was regarded as using Marxism for Kemalism, Yön was thought to be using Kemalism for Marxism or socialism (Macar, 2001: 162). However, for Atılğan, it is not a proper stance to evaluate Yön through its adherence either to Kemalism or to Marxism. For him, to evaluate Yön by its adherence ignores the fact that

Kemalism has many interpretations and attaining the principles of Kemalism a stable meaning. For him, it should not be forgotten that Kemalist principles are open to different readings in different contexts (Atılgan, 2002: 51).

The relationship of Yön with Kemalism was in the direction of patching it or filling its gaps to give it its “real” character. For Yön writers, Kemalism had some missing points and the main task for them was to understand and correct those. Among the points mostly emphasized is that Kemalist reforms had stayed at the level of superstructure; however, they should be handled again in a way that the economic base will be included. This should be done because:

The Kemalist movement remained conservative in terms of changing the structure of the society. There were two reasons of this. The first one was the agrarian reform had not been realized. Kemalist government had not achieved this reform which would allow Turkish peasants to escape from the pressure of landowners, notables and usurers. Secondly, the current economic policy was wrong. (Özdemir, 1986: 121)

Furthermore, for Yön writers, Kemalism had been deviated from its origins in the multi-party period. Actually this deviation did not result from the features of Kemalism itself. Instead, it was a forced deviation. In other words, Kemalism had an internal inclination towards socialism, but the conditions for this had been changed intentionally. Atılgan states that the Yön group’s interpretation of the deviation of Kemalism shows their lack of historical analysis in terms of seeing history as a result of misunderstandings, misapplications rather than class antagonisms. For Atılgan, this stemmed from elevating intellectuals and the military to a place which was above classes. (Atılgan 2002: 264)

As stated above, for Yön writers, if Kemalism had not been forced to change its direction by “some” powers such as new bourgeoisie, the result should have been socialism. The main reason for this was Yön’s conception of socialism, which was in complete agreement with main premises of Kemalism namely populism, etatism, revolutionism, laicism and nationalism (Atılgan 2002: 262). Yet, for “some reasons”, Kemalism deviated from its “own” path. The reason of this deviation was deliberate misleading of the revolutionary and populist cadre by

Şişli bourgeoisie and Babiali cadre (ibid: 264). For Atılğan, these analyses made by Yön have been criticized from a materialist point of view and had been done so by both Korkut Boratav and Behice Boran.

For Yön, since the main motive force for the transformation of society was economic development, the most important aspect of Kemalism was etatism. Apart from this, Kemalism's etatism shares the basic notions of etatism. The idea of reconcilability of Kemalist etatism and socialism traces back to the Kadro movement. The main ideologist of Kadro movement, Şevket Süreyya Aydemir stated that:

Our Atatürkist etatism in nothing else than socialism in Western sense because it gave priority to the economic function of the state and espoused the harmony of classes (...) But was Atatürk a socialist? No. Because Atatürk did not openly gave place to mimicry. It is for this reason that there exists today an Atatürk doctrine. As a matter of fact, Turkish etatism was not an imitation in Atatürk doctrine; rather, it was a system peculiar to Turkey (...) A new Turkish etatism – or a Turkish socialism peculiar to us – which will embrace the economic, social and democratic life of the nation from all fronts is the way that will cause us to reach the speed of modern development. (Aydemir quoted in Aytemur 2000: 88)

Yön's main claim was the need for a "new etatism", which had three main bases: Kemalism, European style social democracy and "the underdeveloped countries' socialism" (Akdere and Karadeniz, 1996: 226). For Avcıoğlu, like nationalism, the etatism of the Turkish Republic until then had not been a complete and proper one. As stated above, it could have been a proper one if the agrarian reform had been realized.

As a final point, it can be said that for Yön, what have been was to remedy the mistakes of "old" Kemalism and find the reasons of the deviations from the "real" Kemalism. For Yön writers the main misstep of Kemalist cadres was choosing the capitalist way of development. They were claiming to turn Kemalism to the right way by choosing the socialist way because no other way was possible for underdeveloped countries such as Turkey. To realize this, main attempt of Yön had been to define main principles of Kemalism in a socialist tendency.

MDD Group and Kemalism

Before discussing about the relationship of the MDD tradition¹¹ with Kemalism, it should be noted that the roots of this relation can be found in the early TKP. Since the MDD tradition, especially with Belli, had a crucial intellectual and political TKP tradition behind it, this is an expected association. However, for the aims of this study this relationship will be the focus of another chapter. While analyzing the reasons of peculiarist tendency of the Turkish left, Kemalism and its relations with the TKP has been taken as a crucial one. In that sense, the legacy of the TKP on the MDD in terms of Kemalism will be touched upon as one of the most decisive source of peculiarism.

It is a debatable issue whether the affiliation of the MDD with Kemalism was an essential one or just a strategic tool. However, it can be said that whatever the actual intention behind affiliating Kemalism and socialism, the notions of Kemalism has adhered to the notions of socialism, with the starting point of the relationship between them being blurred.

In the pages of *Türk Solu* articles providing confirmation for both of the arguments above can be found. For instance, referring to the significance of the military-civil intellectual stratum for the revolution, Belli, who thinks that Kemalism is “petty-bourgeois radicalism,” says that:

It can be said that the ideology of the military-civil intellectual stratum is a version of Kemalism that has been adapted to the conditions of today. Those intellectual circles by large have the consciousness that the realization of Kemalist principles like nationalism and anti-imperialism are closely interrelated with the achievement of social justice and the realization of essential infrastructural transformations are the requirement of today’s Kemalist policy. (Belli, 1970: 42)

Similarly, Kemalism as an ideology has been seen as the precondition of a successful revolution: “The MDD movement cannot gain any success without

¹¹ As already stated, the analyses of the MDD tradition have been limited to the first period of the debate, namely *Türk Solu* and works of Belli before 1970. In that sense, the divisions within the MDD after 1970 have been taken into consideration for the content of this study.

making an intellectual synthesis with Mustafa Kemal's revolution and the ideas that gave strength to this revolution" (Kafaoğlu, 1968).

On the other hand, Belli also claims that the relation between Kemalism and socialism is not an indirect relationship, but since the matter of the day is the nation, the position of Kemalism is a prior one:

Today's question is whether you are in favor of national independence and complete independence or not. The question of believing in socialism or not, is a matter of the future. Moreover, there are not impenetrable walls between socialism and Kemalism. The greatest effort of Atatürk was to inspire Turkish national honor in the young generations. National honor is something virtuous. National honor leads people to socialism. (Belli, 1969)

Certainly, the positive attitude of Türk Solu or in general the MDD debate stems from its analysis of Turkish history. It is possible to differentiate the left of the 1960s just through its analysis of 1945, namely transition to the multi-party period. In that sense, the position of both Yön and the MDD group to the transition to multi-party system can be summarized as: "counter-revolution." Both Yön and the MDD group emphasized the incompleteness of the Kemalist revolution. However, in the case of the MDD, it was not possible to speak of a Kemalism that would inherently achieve socialism if it had not been "persuaded" by some forces. Nevertheless, both for Yön and the MDD, the War of Liberation was an anti-imperialist one and the gains of it had been distorted by the period starting with 1945. For Belli, the characteristics of the War of Liberation were similar to national democratic revolution, but it was a lacking one:

Our War of Liberation has been fought against a handful of comprador feudal reactionaries and against imperialism that was standing behind the former. It has been fought by the leadership of military-civil intellectual stratum and all the people like workers or peasants; who deserve the name "nation" took place in it. (ibid)

Along with finding "the Turkey of 1930s closer to socialism" (ibid), compared to Yön, the MDD group's inclination towards Kemalism still placed some distance between the two entities. In the case of Yön, Kemalism was an aim in itself; however, for the MDD, Kemalism had been something to make an alliance which

had to be legitimized. For Şener, the practical need for making an alliance with Kemalism brought about an exaggeration in the sphere of theory. This brought MDD supporters to the analysis not of Kemalism itself but reasons of its “defeat” (Şener, 2006). In other words, taking advantage of Kemalism in practice, Türk Solu had to identify the characteristics of post-1945 and why it was a counter-revolutionary one.

According to Belli, Kemalists’ failure on the abolishment of all feudal elements in the society stemmed from their immaturity in economics and politics. The “choice” of capitalism instead of socialism was explained by the relative success of capitalism against socialism in the world (Şener 2006: 162). The result of the Kemalist cadre’s lack of economic and political knowledge brought the counter-revolution of 1945. Although Belli does not claim that the counter-revolution occurred without any historical background, he insists on the revolutionary character of the period until 1942.

Finally, it should be stated that the influence of Kemalism on the Turkish left cannot be thought of as separated from the Soviet policy. Starting from the Second International, Soviet policy had decided to support all bourgeois democratic revolutions of the underdeveloped world; thus Kemalism was something supported by them from the very beginning. This issue will be further elaborated upon in the third chapter.

2.2.3 Anti-Imperialism and Independence

Starting from the 1960s anti-imperialism and independency became one of the most popular political discourses all around the world. Especially, the resistance of Vietnam against United States and the revolutions of Cuba and China which came after anti-imperialist struggles, strengthened the position of anti-imperialist discourse. However, in the Turkish case, it was not only the historical context that intensified those arguments because from the very beginning of its history the Turkish left had an inseparable relation with the discourse of anti-imperialism and independence. The primary reason behind this was the conceptualization of

Turkey as an underdeveloped country and the conceptualization of the experience of the War of Liberation as the earliest example of its kind. In that context, the main emphasis was always on the exploitative relationship between a superior country and an oppressed one. In this sense, the main reason of the underdevelopment of the oppressed country tended to be found in an outside enemy such as the imperialist country. The main problematic of Turkish left went around the question of imperialism and whether there would be national unity against it or if the fragments of imperialism inside the country would be taken into consideration.

The anti-imperialist emphases of the Turkish left sometimes went hand and hand with the discourses of anti-Westernism and the glorification of Islam. In other words, anti-imperialism had a close connection to the highlighting of “our culture” or “our religion.” Indeed, it is possible to read the history of the Turkish left just from its relation to anti-imperialism that all of its analyses and strategies were shaped by it. For instance, they were nationalists because the imperialist stage of history requires them to be or they were Kemalists because it was an anti-imperialist movement and the War of Liberation was the first anti-imperial war of history. Moreover, the relationship of leftist intellectuals to Marxism was decidedly determined by their anti-imperialist attitude and conception of their own country as an underdeveloped one. For them, Marxism was a Western theory which took its basic arguments from Western societies’ history. That is why their relation to Marxism was mainly stemming from Lenin’s imperialism theory. One other reference point, especially in the case of Yön, was Garaudy who argued that socialism in fact is the legacy of Eastern societies and Islam is compatible with socialism.

As already stated by many scholars (Atılğan 2007, Aydın 1998), for Turkish leftist intellectuals, anti-imperialism, nationalism and independency were not the result of being leftist. That is to say, for those intellectuals being leftist meant to be anti-imperialist, nationalist and being in favor of independency. It was not Marxism and being aware of class contradictions that made them leftist but it was

their anti-imperialist attitude that brought them close to left. In Atılgan's words: "Several of the leading figures of the Turkish left arrived at the socialist ideas by either nationalist or anti-imperialist reactions" (Atılgan, 2007: 663). What follows is a discussion of anti-imperialist discourses of Yön and the MDD group.

Yön and Anti-Imperialism

Between the period of 1960 and 1971, it was Yön that came up with the discourse of anti-imperialism and conceptualized the reasons of Turkey's underdevelopment in relation to it. Avcıođlu defines the journal as "Yön means anti-imperialism" (Avcıođlu quoted in Atılgan: 2007b: 682). As stated above, it was due to the nationalist discourse of the journal that the anti-imperialism came into being. The second pillar of anti-imperialism for Yön was Kemalism: "All nationalists who are against imperialism should look for the traces of the War of Liberation; there they will find the flush of Atatürkism" (Selçuk quoted in Atılgan, 2007b: 683).

As stated above, the spirit of the time, which declared the independence of underdeveloped countries, was a prominent argument for Yön is echoed by Avcıođlu in that:

Turkey today, like other underdeveloped countries, is at the threshold of a struggle for national liberation. Until the time that this struggle is successfully concluded, some advance along the road to democracy and socialism is necessary. The way to socialism leads through the struggle for national liberation. Therefore, today, the chief task on the road to socialist reconstruction is the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal struggle, which is the concern of all democratic and patriotic forces. (1962a)

Apart from considering imperialism as the main reason of underdevelopment, Yön's anti-imperialism has some cultural connotations. The main reason for the emphasis on Turkish culture and the nation was the conceptualization of the West. For Yön, Westernization was a two-sided reality; on the one hand, it was an aim to be realized; on the other, it should not be done in a way of imitation or importation of Western ideals. In those terms, they exalted Kemalist principles of

Westernism which saw it without excluding imperialism. That is to say, for Yön, Turkey should not imitate Western civilization but should find its own way. The main problem for this was to be against the West. In Berkes's words, who can be considered as the ideologue of Yön in terms of Westernization: "(...) Unless Turkish society remained independent from the West, the West would certainly appear suddenly in front of her as an imperialism. (...) Any backward society which is not independent of the West can not be Westernized, progress, or array itself in the form of reform or revolution." (Berkes, 1965)

This means that for Yön Westernization was defined in negative terms and the main reason for this was Yön's notion of nationalism that had been identified through anti-imperialism. For Berkes, Westernization means "reactionism." The main reason for this was the relationships that the domination of West brought into existence. For Berkes, the West deliberately creates "Westernized elites" in underdeveloped countries and through those elites it was spreading its "false nationalism." That is why all the concepts that were counted as the six principles of Kemalism should be defined in a new manner by new revolutionaries. To realize this end, intellectuals of the underdeveloped countries should see the artificial reality of the discourses of "westernization" or the concept of the West as the dominant ideology it represents.

Expectedly, the rejection of Western values as the ideal ones led Yön writers to a new source of legitimacy, namely the reconciliation of Eastern culture and socialism. Since socialism was seen as a Western ideology until then, it could not be owned as it has been perceived until then. In those terms, the book of Garaudy *Islam and Socialism* became a very important source of reference for Avciöglü and later on for Belli. Avciöglü in his preface written for Garaudy's book translated by Belli, says that: "We forgot ourselves and tore apart from our culture to such an extent that Ibn Khaldun who is the Montesquieu of the East is much more alien than to us compared to Western thinkers. We know the socialist utopia of Thomas Hobbes, but we do not know anything about the utopia of Sheih Bedrettin" (Avciöglü quoted in Atilgan 2002: 149) Here it is seen that for

Avcıođlu, socialism was searched for in the national or intellectual culture of this land. As put by Atılgan, the main reason behind Yn writers' tendency to reconcile East and socialism was to show that socialism was not incompatible with "national culture". This was a very necessary claim for the purposes of Yn writers because the next step in front of Turkey was the national democratic revolution.

When it comes to the relationship between Islam and socialism, the attitude of Yn can be seen as both similar and different from Arab socialists who put in a claim for Islamic socialism. It was similar because, as in the Arab world a positive relationship between Islam and socialism was attempted to be constructed. Atılgan gives the example of Cahit Tanyol's articles in Yn which claim that: "giving everyone what s/he deserves" is both the principle of socialism and the Koran (Atılgan 2002a: 154). However, the attempt of Yn should also be understood through the anti-communist propaganda which mainly works through the claim that socialism has no religion. To put it another way, the attempts of Yn can also be seen as an endeavor to gain some legitimacy on the eyes of people.

As a final point, it can be said that anti-imperialism as an essential part of nationalism was one of the founding concepts for Yn. In that sense, it was the first current in the 1960s that puts anti-imperialism to the core of their political discourses. Since then, having its climax with the MDD debate, anti-imperialism became one of the most central concepts for the Turkish left. The attitude of Yn and the MDD debate was almost the same in terms of anti-imperialism and that was the main reason why later on they made an alliance against the TİP which they labeled as opportunist. Avcıođlu criticizes the politics of the TİP in the following way: "On the one hand, the TİP regards anti-imperialist struggle as the most crucial one, but on the other hand, since it put forward the slogans of classical proletarian and bourgeoisie struggle it dissolves and weakens the forces of revolution (Avcıođlu, 1966a)."

Below there will be an explanation of anti-imperialism in which Avcıoğlu and Belli share several common points.

The MDD Group and Anti-Imperialism:

As stated above, the anti-imperialism of the MDD group was very much related to its nationalism. In other words, the anti-imperialism of the MDD group can best be observed through its discourses of nationalism. For it, what differentiates a democratic revolution from a national democratic one is the latter being anti-imperialist and thus necessarily nationalist (Belli, 1968a). Thus, for the MDD group anti-imperialism requires nationalism.

For the MDD group to be against the West was an unavoidable result of socialist ideology: “The people who are in favor of a revolutionary and nationalist development (...) for Turkey are the ones who are in the lines of the countries that have their war of independence and they should be against West and Westernism” (Belli, 1970: 281).

Thus, at the background of such anti-imperialism, it is possible to discern a specific analysis of Western and Eastern history. For the MDD group, in the imperial age, the main contradiction is not between labor and capital but between underdeveloped countries and imperialist ones and national movements carry a class dimension because of being anti-imperialist:

In the 19th century, which was the classical capitalist stage, there was one class which was impoverished, namely the working class. However, in today's imperialist stage of capitalism there are impoverished nations. These are the people of underdeveloped countries. Therefore, the conflict is between underdeveloped nations and imperialist nations. From here comes the nationalist character of the war. This war is at the same time against the reason of national impoverishment, that is to say imperialism or monopolistic state capitalism. That is why it carries a class element. (Konur, 1970)

The analyses of the economic system of the day also provided the bases for the MDD's anti-imperialism. For Belli, imperialism which he defines as "agonizing capitalism" leads to a specific kind of division of labor globally. In this division, underdeveloped countries had to produce the food and raw materials. Since the imperialist countries produce the expensive industrial products and exchange it with such cheap products, there always exists a foreign trade deficit in underdeveloped countries (Belli, 1970 quoted in Aydın, 1998).

Similarly, the roots of the MDD movement's Kemalism can be found in its historical conception of the War of Liberation as an anti-imperialist one. According to the MDD group, the War of Liberation was not launched in the name of the bourgeoisie but in the name of all classes and strata which had conflicting relationships with imperialism.

The anti-imperialism of the MDD resulted in a kind of praise of "our culture" and the attempt to find some inner features of "our culture" that is convenient for socialism.¹² Generally, the emphasis on culture is made through "being Eastern" and an opposition is constructed between West and East. In this understanding, the West cannot be understood without the concept of colonization. Belli embraces the critique of the concept of Westernism built by Berkes. He claims that "we should quit the concept of Westernism since it is not a clearly drawn and a universal or scientific concept" (Belli, 1970: 271). He again stated that what is called West have different peculiarities compared to Turkey:

The entity called West is the union of nations, most of them in the coastal line of the North Atlantic which had made their bourgeois democratic revolutions in 18th or 19th century, which had common economic and social structures and had reached their recent identity which is an imperialist one that exploits the world. (ibid: 273)

For Belli, Turkey is a part of the Eastern countries due to "its origins, geography, structure and stage of development" and because of this Turkey should be near

¹² Although there was such a glorification of our culture and history in terms of socialism, it can not be thought as the same with easternist tendencies in the analysis of Asiatic Mode of Production. The differences and reasons of those will be touched upon in the third chapter.

Eastern countries and against imperialism. He states that “it is the political conjuncture that puts Turkey among the Western countries” but “this should not change our Eastern identity” (ibid: 279).

As stated before, since socialism is generally considered a Western ideology, the MDD group made an attempt to demonstrate socialism’s universal character. In this endeavor their main reference was Garaudy’s book *Socialism and Islam* which was translated by Belli. Belli states that:

The main theses of the book are that Muslim-Arab civilization has created humanist values; the claim that West is the only creator of values is an imperialist lie; socialism is not a Western product which should take roots in the culture of all nations and ages, thus socialism should reach its universal cultural content and become the genuine product of all nations. (Belli, 1970)

Similarly, the compatibility of Islam with socialism has been stated many times in the pages of *Türk Solu*. For instance, Sevim Belli asserts that “Islam is the most progressive of all the religions” (Belli, S., 1969b).

According to Belli on the issue of religion, there is only one possible answer that a socialist gives: “A real revolutionary or a real leftist does not come against the religious beliefs of the people. Socialists are not enemies of religion”(Belli, 1970: 311).

The relationship of the leftists with religion was generally evaluated as a tactic for having the consent of the masses. However, for Belli to think in this way is not correct. For him, socialists do not reject religion because the basic principles of socialism say so (ibid: 313).

However, it should also be stated that the close relation of the MDD with Kemalism created a conflict between its Easternism and Westernism. Since the military-civil stratum was one of the main agents of the expected revolution, its Western ideology should not be ignored. That is why the thesis of İdris Küçükömer regarding the alienated nature of Kemalist elites in terms of their

relation with people and later discussions on the Asiatic Mode of Production was rejected by Türk Solu and labeled as opportunist. For instance, Belli interpreted the discussion on AMP as an attempt to legitimize the dominance of Western societies over the East.

Finally, it can be said that, as stated above, the most important struggle of the day was between imperialism and underdeveloped nations. For the sake of an anti-imperialist war, the MDD group supported placing the class contradiction inside the country aside in favor of unity against feudal elements inside as well as the external enemy. This approach of the MDD, together with its emphases on “cultural values” can be seen as an expression of its Third Worldist Marxism. In the next section, the idea of unity inside the nation under the name of the “popular front” will be examined further.

2.2.4 Class Alliances and the Idea of the Popular Front

Starting from the 1960s the idea of a popular front that would include all the classes which were against imperialism and feudality became one of the dominant features of the Turkish left. Generally, this front has been defined as “energetic forces” (*zinde güçler*) which have been seen as the agent of the revolution. Among those energetic forces, the most controversial ones were the roles of military and the national bourgeoisie. Before starting to examine how the discourses of the “national popular front” found its reflections in the 1960s, the terms class alliances and popular front are explained. According to Gündoğan, these are two different concepts and what the 1960s Turkish left spoke of was the popular front rather than a class alliance. Gündoğan claims that: “What is presented to us is actually a popular front against a common enemy which is perceived by each element in the front in the same direction and against a common threat which make all elements in the front forget at least for a while the differences among themselves.” (2005: 428)

The idea of the popular front stresses the solidarity inside the nation. To this end, class conflicts can be ignored to some extent. In the Turkish context, the idea of a

popular front came up with the historical analysis that the stage in front of Turkey was national democratic revolution rather than a socialist one, since for the supporters of the MDD, “the bourgeois democratic revolution is not the revolution of bourgeoisie but of bourgeois society. It is the revolution of all classes which contradict with the feudal relations of production”(Erdost quoted in Gündoğan 2005: 431). The MDD inherently had a popular character. In other words, it was not the revolution of a partial class but a society.¹³

Another important feature of the idea of the popular front is the positive role that is given to military. In national democratic revolution the military is supposed to have a revolutionary role as one of the most nationalist and progressive forces in Turkey. Similarly, the national bourgeoisie is thought to be a proponent of the national democratic revolution if it is aware of its “real interest.” Below, it will be clarified how different groups conceptualize “popular national front.”

Yön and the “National Front”

As stated above, the analysis that favored the idea for the need of a “popular front” was that in the world system, there are developed capitalist and imperialist countries on the one side and underdeveloped, third world countries on the other. The developed ones had already experienced their bourgeois revolutions and they had a developed working class that made a socialist revolution possible. However, for the underdeveloped countries, socialist revolution was not yet possible and the only way for their development was the non-capitalist way which would be made through national democratic revolutions. Thus, a socialist revolution was not a choice for undeveloped countries, both because they did not have a developed working class and because of the very fact that imperialism closes the way for them to develop in a capitalist direction. Avcıoğlu argues that the century was the

¹³ Here, Gündoğan makes a Marxist critique that although Erdost is right in the sense that, it would be a revolution in which all classes participate, this just one side of the coin. He continues by saying that: “But he forgets that this revolution is a class revolution, a “partial”, a “political” revolution as Marx defined it. It is not a “social revolution” as socialist one, as again defined by Marx. Mass support, mass mobilisation and massive participation in a revolution do not suffice for us to define it, for example, as “the revolution of bourgeois society.” (Gündoğan, 2005: 431)

century of “social and democratic revolutions”, especially for the undeveloped world (Atılgan, 2002a: 114)¹⁴.

For Avcıoğlu, the main criterion for being a part of the front was merely being anti-imperialist. In other words, anyone whose interest was against imperialism could be a part of the front. He considers the elements of the front which would realize the national revolution in the following way:

Workers and peasants; intellectuals of the middle class such as teachers, army officers and civil servants; youth; the military which is the ‘guarantee of national forces even more than constitution’; artisans and bourgeoisie whose interests lies in a national economy (Avcıoğlu, 1966b).

According to Avcıoğlu, the role of the Turkish army cannot be understood by comparing it to Western armies. He states that, unlike the Western armies, the Turkish army has always been revolutionary. He also says that this is a valid proposition for some of the underdeveloped countries and gives the example of Nasır in Egypt. For him, the difference between the Turkish and Western armies has various sociological and historical reasons. The sociological reason was that in underdeveloped countries, the sociological background of the military members was much likely to be of a lower class, thus the military members could easily be manipulated against hegemonic classes for the interests of their own classes (ibid: 167). Avcıoğlu defines the reasons of that in the following way:

The army, whose ranks are made up of troops from impoverished poor families, is one of the most promising elements in the struggle for progressive development of our Turkey. Some of our progressive activists choose not to recognize this major difference between our army and the

¹⁴ It should also be stated that the idea of the need for a “national front” was strengthened after the 1965 elections in which the TİP gained 15 seats in the parliament. Yön writers interpreted the “satisfaction of Washington” from the results of the election as an urgent need for the “national front.” For them, the votes of the TİP was not given by workers or peasants but by the intellectuals and other petty bourgeoisie, while AP took most of its votes from the lower classes. For Avcıoğlu this shows the impossibility of “enlightening” the masses in a short time and that is why what was needed was a national revolution coming from above rather than parliamentary means. As stated before, the historical analysis in the background was the economic development of the West including the development of its working class, thus having the appropriate conditions for a parliamentary democracy while the underdeveloped countries lacking such development not ready for a parliamentary democracy yet. For Avcıoğlu, what comes with parliamentary democracy to underdeveloped countries was nothing more than the strengthening of reactionary forces.

armed forces of the West. There the armies have been made into a tool of the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie of the West have filled up the army with their children, whom they have trained to protect bourgeois interests; they have blocked the way to an army career before the children of workers and peasants...It is the same in South America too. But in Turkey it is a Kemalist army, which has arisen from within the people. It would be a great mistake to suggest that this army is the obedient tool of the ruling classes. (Avcioğlu quoted in Lipovsky, 1992: 99)

Another reason for the difference of the Turkish army from the Western ones was its history. Avcioğlu states that the main power against the “reactionary movements” in Turkey is the army with its “hundred years old revolutionary history” (Avcioğlu, 1970a). He states that it is the “revolutionary army of Mustafa Kemal” that “overthrew the six hundred year old sultanate and constructed a modern Turkey” by revolutionary means (ibid).

Avcioğlu also welcomes a national bourgeoisie against foreign capital, stating that this is something necessary for the national democratic revolution. He claims that, although it may be surprising for some people, it is the socialists who appreciate a national bourgeoisie that “says no to the Common Market, montage and packing industry and to the feudal lords.” However, he also states that it is not the condition today and on the contrary, bourgeoisie is making an alliance with foreign capital and in doing so denying its own national features (Avcioğlu, 1964a).

Finally, it should be stated that the understanding of the national front in Yön is not a corporatist one like the understanding of the Kadro and it claims to be carrying a class element inside. The need for the national front is explained in terms of underdevelopment and the impossibility of being a developed capitalist country in an imperialist world system. Although it can surely be said that this approach overestimates the class dimension inside the country for the sake of fighting with the “common enemy,” there is still the understanding that there will be a day when class conflict inside the country will be on the agenda. Moreover, it is claimed that the national democratic revolution approach carries a class element here. Avcioğlu states that the “struggle of the forces that are on the side of labor”

against “the alliance of comprador-feudal” is without any doubt a class struggle. He adds that since it is also a struggle against foreign powers, it has a national element inside the country. He continues: “At this point, a nationalist movement wholly unites with the social struggle. Indeed, the anti-imperialist movement is a national struggle that is made by workers, peasantry, intellectuals, youth and national bourgeoisie, namely, the entire nation” (Avcıoğlu, 1966b).

The MDD Group and “National Front”

Similar to the historical analysis of Yön, the supporters of the MDD considered Turkey as an underdeveloped country which was dependant upon and surrounded by external imperialist relations as well as dominated by feudal elements internally. This perspective was the main reason for the emphasis on the need for a nationalist front. In the first issues of *Türk Solu* the front was labeled as a “union of revolutionary forces” but later on, different names such as “national front” or “popular front” were used interchangeably by the authors. In the editorial, which was written in the name of *Türk Solu*, the front was defined in the following way: “The front is the union of different classes and strata in a specific phase of social development to reach certain aims” (*Türk Solu*, 1969b).

Both for Yön and the MDD, the phase in front of Turkey was a national democratic revolution rather than a socialist one. In that sense, both shared a common understanding which can be termed as “stages strategy,” with the first task to be completed being the dissolution of the feudal and imperialist elements inside the country. For both Yön and the MDD, the means to realize this end was national democratic revolution and in this revolution there was to be the alliance of all¹⁵, except for “imperialists, compradors and feudal elements.” For Küçük, this means that what was at stage was the anti-imperialist struggle with anti-

¹⁵ It should be stated that later on, as the MDD debate matured, this understanding of “including all” except for “imperialists, compradors and feudal elements” changed and new forms of alliance started to be searched for. However, the period being analyzed corresponds to a phase where those bifurcations were not mature. In the next section on “power strategies” this issue will be touched upon in more detail.

capitalism delayed to an unknown future. (1998: 141) However, in the articles of *Türk Solu*, it was often emphasized that the national front was a “minimum end” and its objective aim was not socialism in the first step (Erdoğan, 1969). The realization of this aim was thought to require a national struggle and that is why for the MDD group what was at stake was not the division between left and right (Baraner, 1968).

For the MDD group, until the working class took the leadership, the national democratic revolution would be made on the leadership of the military-civil intellectual stratum, thus the nucleus of the revolution would be the military-civil intellectual stratum together with the youth movement. As could be seen Kemalist cadres, which was an important element of the MDD discourses, the cadres were seen as one of the important elements of the revolution.¹⁶ Belli defines the revolutionary forces on the following way:

All of the members of Turkish people except for comprador capital and feudal despots; the Turkish proletariat, which corresponds to the urban and rural proletariat who do not have the control over means of production and land and live through selling his/her labor in modern industry, petty industry, in the branches of craft, in trade and in land. Lastly, the urban and rural bourgeoisie who have a little means of production or land, but nevertheless is exploited. That is to say, except for a few parasites, all of the laboring masses in Turkey are the part of the front. (1968a)

The role of the national bourgeoisie as well as the petty bourgeoisie is a debatable issue in terms of being a part of the national front. For Belli, the national bourgeoisie should not be treated equally with the comprador bourgeoisie. He states that the national bourgeoisie should be considered as a “part of our national society” having a place in “our national economy” but “up to a point.” That is to say, for Belli, the role of national bourgeoisie cannot be overlooked and cannot be defined in terms of the war against imperialism in the monopoly of the working class. Nevertheless, after the national democratic revolution is realized, that is, after war with imperialism and feudalism came to an end and anti-capitalist war

¹⁶ Another concept used by Belli instead of national front or revolutionary classes is “national community.” In the same sense, it represents all except for the comprador bourgeoisie and feudal elements.

starts, then there is no place for the national bourgeoisie. Similar to Avcioğlu, Belli also states that the very condition of the support of national bourgeoisie is to show it that the real class interest of it lies in the realization of a national democratic revolution. The following sentence summarizes the view of the MDD group on the national bourgeoisie: “Our opinion is so clear. The national bourgeoisie can participate among the revolutionary forces only when a strong popular movement marks the historical development.” (ibid)

In terms of the petty bourgeoisie, Belli claims that the “proletarian revolutionaries” should form alliances with “petty bourgeois reformists” but should keep in mind that they are “incoherent and hesitant.” For Belli, the interests of the petty bourgeoisie never intersect with “dependent capitalism” and they would be in favor of a national democratic revolution as they became more conscious. However, he also asserts that the petty bourgeoisie is a two-sided class that on the one side, it has the ownership of means of production and, on the other it is a laborer. Because of this two-sidedness, the petty bourgeoisie never had a coherent ideology for itself thus it sometimes going to left and sometimes to right. Belli continues: “The military-civil stratum is unreliable and incoherent but when imperialism came to our country, it is always against it. And this is the aspect which makes it a revolutionary force” (Belli, 1969) As stated above, for Belli, the most important section of the petty bourgeoisie is the military-civil stratum and for the national democratic revolution, they are the most conscious class due to their Kemalist background (Şener, 2006: 170). Similarly, Alpay in *Türk Solu* states that Turkey is a country of petty bourgeoisie in terms of population and the struggle of petty bourgeoisie against imperialism made it a very crucial and indispensable part of the revolutionary forces. (Alpay, 1969)

The ideas of the MDD about the role of military were somehow similar to Yön although it did not give the military a central role. It is stated that unlike the West, the army is revolutionary in Turkey, and the relation between anti-militarism and socialism cannot be considered as identical as in Western countries. It has been stated that parliamentarianism is a reactionary entity in Turkey while the army has

progressive connotations. In *Türk Solu* it has been declared that: “This reality of Turkey is a result of a unique balance of power which can not be seen in West and hardly been observed in the East” (*Türk Solu*, 1969a).

Finally, it should be stated that the thought which brings Yön and the MDD to the same strategy of revolution namely a need for a popular front, is that both requires a national democratic revolution preconditioning a socialist one. However, it should be stated that there are considerable differences between Yön and the MDD in terms of the leadership of the revolution. Although Belli discussed about the importance of the petty bourgeoisie, he never calls for a military coup as suggested by Avcıoğlu, especially after the 1965 elections. Particularly, as the MDD debate found supporters primarily among the youth, the military-based movements lost prominence inside the MDD¹⁷ and more emphasis was placed on the leadership of the proletariat, although to some extent, it renounced symbolic meanings. Nevertheless, the alliance of Yön and *Türk Solu* in terms of the need for a national democratic revolution later on had been ground against the TİP which was calling to have a sectarian socialism by claiming for socialism without a national democratic revolution. For Belli and Avcıoğlu, the TİP was “playing the game of parliamentary democracy,” and this was considered opportunism. This well-known THE MDD-SD debate will be the issue of next chapter.

2.2.5 Non-Capitalist Path of Development and “Developmentalist Socialism”

It can be said that starting with the 1960s, the idea of development has been one of the central concerns of the Turkish left. The conceptualization of development within the Turkish left was based on the idea that the capitalist way of development was impossible for underdeveloped countries, thus a non-capitalist path of development was offered as an alternative. However, as Ünsal claims with

¹⁷ Although a military coup was not favored by the supporters of the MDD, the military had been ascribed a national status and seen as an important revolutionary force. Apart from its anti-imperialist stand, it was also seen as a supporting the independence of Turkey. For instance, in *Türk Solu* it is stated that the “Turkish army is in favor of a national armes industry” (Bulut, 1969).

this view, “socialism was no more a different vision or a social project but just seen as an operational method of development” (Ünsal, 2002: 125). This was mainly the reflection of the international approaches to the question of development during this period. As stated by Ünsal, “economic development became an ideology on its own in all of the Third World countries.” (ibid: 124) The reason for that was mainly the search for an answer to the question of the reasons for the underdevelopment of the Third World and the answers presented here were mainly the Marxist ones. The answers to the question of development presented by the intellectuals of the Third World countries have been summarized by Oran in the following way: 1) the specific conditions of these countries which necessitate the active involvement of the state in the economy, 2) the effort to avoid the penetration of capitalism into the country, 3) the rejection of basic tenets of Marxism thought on the ground that they were incompatible with the social conditions of these countries (1997: 213).

The main argument behind those studies was the “national independence” of the underdeveloped countries, since in the present stage of capitalism, which was imperialism, it was not possible for these countries to develop in a capitalist way. This idea was supported by the international conjuncture of the 1960s which was seen as the rise of the Third World. As noted by Şimşek, “The radical reforms put into practice in the newly independent states in order to cope with the underdevelopment issue did not pass unnoticed in the Turkish left” (2004: 2). However, the issue of underdevelopment as a Third World approach which claims to be peculiar to it, ironically has some connotations in the carrying of modernism and “reaching the level of contemporary civilization” by excluding, for example class struggle from Marxism. In other words, the main motive was to achieve rapid development which was once achieved by Western countries, but since they had their peculiar conditions they had to claim their own ways. In that sense, they tried to avoid the “political and cultural stereotypes” of the West and wanted to “protect their national identities” by asserting their unique models of development (d’Encausse and Schram, 1966: 9). This issue will be elaborated upon further in

the third chapter by looking at the writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and to the conjectural causes of such a conceptualization.

Before the elaboration of the concepts of development in the Yön and MDD groups, it should be stated why this was the strategy of Turkish left in the 1960s.¹⁸ Keeping the immensity of the question in mind, it can be said that there can be some general answers. For instance, according to Dinler, the basis of the preference of a non-capitalist path strategy were the practical reasons that “socialism” in the Third World countries was taken as a means providing the government with a leading role in the economy (Dinler in Şimşek, 2004: 41). For Yurtsever, this ended up with the “vulgarization” of socialism in Third World countries (1992: 27).

Another important source for the perception of developmentalism as socialism was the international developments that were taking place during the 1960s whereby underdevelopment started to be conceived as a global problem.

As stated above, the discourse of development has been one of the main tenets of almost all of the groups of the Turkish left in the 1960s. However, there are some differentiations among their conceptualization of development. In the following sections, different conceptions of development held by the Yön and MDD group will be elaborated upon further.

Yön and Developmentalism

As stated above, it was Yön that came up with the premise that the most crucial problem facing Turkey was economic development, and to overcome social problems, this had to be solved. To this end, the attainment of political and economic independence was the precondition. It can be stated that Kadro¹⁹ had

¹⁸ Here development has been used a general heading. However, in the upcoming paragraphs, it will be made clear that there are differences about the strategies of development in different groups of the Turkish left.

¹⁹ It can be said that the developmentalism was purely seen in the “socialism” of Kadro. Moreover, this developmentalism was carrying highly corporatist tendencies. Here Aydemir’s definition of Kadro’s socialism is worth quoting: “This reformist socialism is not based on the antagonism of

similar statements but the arguments of Yön in terms of etatism was much more comprehensive when compared to Kadro. Secondly, Yön accepted the existence of classes in Turkish society although it did not give class a main role as the actor of the change. However, it can still be said that the Atatürkist etatism of Kadro and etatist measures of the 1930s which was formulated as Turkish socialism found its expressions in Yön, especially in terms of the positive relation between etatism, national economy and socialism.

The way of development asserted by Yön was used identical to the concept of “national-revolutionary path,” and this path was neither capitalist nor communist. Instead it was based on the coalition of many classes in which intellectuals played a critical role. As claimed by Şimşek: “Yön’s understanding of socialism is not concerned with who possesses the ownership of the means of production, and it rests on the redistribution of economic surplus in accordance with the principle of social justice” (Şimşek, 2004: 50). To reach this aim, what was needed was “rapid economic development.” Thus, it should be asked: What were the methods to realize “rapid economic development” according to Yön? The answer rests on the examination of the following concepts: national economy (national revolutionary path), a non-capitalist path and etatism. It can be said that those three concepts have been used interchangeably in the pages of Yön. Nevertheless, the meaning of each should be examined separately.

the classes. Its aim is not to have a revolution by encouraging class antagonisms. Instead, it aims to prevent class differentiation by means of the intervention of the state to economic and social life and create a social order that distribute income in accordance with the principles of social justice. Our Atatürkist etatism is not something other than socialism in the Western (European) sense. Because it also highlights the economic function of the state and claims for the harmony of the classes. But was Atatürk a socialist? No, because he never gave way to mimicry. That is why we still have Atatürk doctrine today. As a matter of fact, Turkish etatism is not an imitation in Atatürk doctrine but a system peculiar to Turkey. (...) When it comes to the stream of new etatism which we characterize as “Turkish socialism”, I believe that this a strong system which would help the development of method unique to our country. The basis of this system is not something other than organizing not only industry and economy but also every corner of national life in accordance with the principles that found place in various declarations of Atatürk. This is a complete ideology with plan, dynamism and all other features. (...) As the topics of development and system issues are made clear by Turkish intellectuals it will be clear that there is something such as Turkish socialism and there is no need to afraid from the ghosts (communism) that are wandering around. (Aydemir 1962, quoted in Aydın)

First of all, since the main conflict was between imperialism and underdeveloped countries according to Yön, to realize development, the first thing to be done was to remove imperialism from the power in Turkey. For Avcıoğlu, the imperialists were in coalition with the conservative powers in Turkey. To rally against them, the national-revolutionary path was the only solution. Another thing to be done was to limit the activity of the private sector so that foreign capital could not enter into the country. That is to say, Avcıoğlu rejected the development in a capitalist way. He states that:

In today's circumstances, especially in Turkey, a national independence revolution, cannot be realized in a capitalist frame. Capitalism means dependency, backward agriculture, *gecekondu* industry and an increasing social turbulence. Capitalism means the social formation of most conservative and dependant powers that range from big land owners to comprador bourgeoisie and its extended branches in Anatolia. To realize the main principles of Atatürk like gaining independence and reaching contemporary civilization, capitalist structures should be destroyed. (Avcıoğlu, 1970a)

Therefore, what is the method for development offered by Avcıoğlu? For him, there were three paths of development for underdeveloped countries which were; the communist path, the American path and the etatist path (which corresponds to the national revolutionary or non-capitalist path). Here, the American path which means a strong private sector and foreign capital was not appropriate for Turkey because it was too late. The communist path, which Avcıoğlu refers to as the “hegemony of the proletariat,” was also not suitable because of the insufficiency of the working class in Turkey (Lipovsky, 1992: 91). Subsequently, what he offered for Turkey was the non-capitalist path or etatism which was based on a national economy. For Atılgan, the conception of national economy in Yön can be seen as similar to the “national economy that would open the way to socialism” approach of the “dependency school.” The main features of the national economy or etatism were summarized in the following by Avcıoğlu: “the primary development of the state sector and its dominant role in economy; the key branches of the economy to be under state control; reduction of the scope of operation of foreign and local monopoly capital; the eradication of the vestiges of

feudalism and the institution of radical agrarian reform; industrialization, primarily within the state sector; central and compulsory planning of the economy. (Avcioğlu quoted in Lipovsky 1992: 92)

Finally, it can be said that for Avcioğlu, what was meant with a non-capitalist path of development was socialism and what has understood by it very much similar to the etatism of the 1930's. The main bases of Yön's analysis were the comparison of Turkey with West and the different methods that the "conditions of Turkey" necessitated. For instance, Avcioğlu states that "etatism and populism are the natural results of differences from the Western countries" (1962a). Moreover, Avcioğlu claims that being a "rightist" was possible in Western countries since capitalism was "working" on those countries, for they experienced the "necessary stages" at the right time and due to this "right" which means the success of capitalism, it could have an existence in the West. However, for underdeveloped countries such as Turkey, a choice between left and right was not possible since capitalism could not be successful in Turkey and the only way was left which meant a non-capitalist path or national economy. (Avcioğlu, 1965) As such, being a leftist has been associated with "having the desire to develop the country" by Yön writers.

The MDD Group and Developmentalism

Although the socialism of the MDD carried developmentalist elements, its stress the "ideological leadership of the working class" differentiated it from Yön. In other words, despite the rhetorical character of the emphasis on "working class," the MDD is different from Yön in the sense that it did not merely offer a program of economic development. Nevertheless, it can be said that the developmentalist tone that prevailed in the period of 1960-70 found its reflections in the MDD, too. The demands of nationalization of foreign capital, foreign trade, the banks and insurance, the need for the agrarian reform and priority to the development of the state sector were common for Yön, the MDD and the TİP (Lipovsky, 1992: 112). It can be said that although the demands and the aim of fully independent and

democratic Turkey was similar, the names given to the method of development were diverse. For instance, the proponents of the MDD rejected the “non-capitalist path” of development and argued that such a path was possible only for the countries less developed than Turkey. Belli explains why the “non-capitalist” path was not suitable for Turkey in the following way:

In the era of imperialism, since any of the underdeveloped countries cannot be developed without breaking from the imperialist system and since the capitalist path of development is a dead end, there is only one path of development: the path going to socialism. However, socialism is still the matter of the working class and its social order. In a country, where the remains of the primitive tribal system are still alive, where there is no significant industry which means no working class, (...) we can not talk about a socialist foundation. In this case, the most convenient path of development that the patriots of this country would have hold should be the non-capitalist path that would have lead to socialism. But we cannot talk about non-capitalist path for Turkey, which made some progress in capitalist development. In this moment of history, the basic revolutionary principle for Turkey is the principle of democratic revolution as an essential stage of the way going to socialism. (1967)

Indeed, this quotation from Belli reflects the in-between position of the MDD that they were neither purely in favor of solely developmentalist or etatist principles of Yön, due to their Marxist orientations and origins.²⁰ When it comes to the MDD-SD debate, Belli strongly asserted that Turkey had not experienced the “national democratic revolution” and is a country where feudal relations were dominant for the most part. Thus, it can be said that the analyses of the supporters of the MDD had changed conditionally. The reason of this can be said to position Turkey neither to the status of a capitalist country nor to a status of an underdeveloped Eastern country. In other words, assigning Turkey a peculiar position was the main reason of varying analyses of the MDD.

2.3 Class Conceptions and Revolutionary Strategies of Yön and the MDD

²⁰ As stated before, the supporters of the MDD were former TKP members.

Thus far, the basic premises of Yön and the MDD group have been explained. Although their conceptions of class have been examined on the surface, a more detailed analysis is needed for further understanding. It should be stated that to a great extent, the revolutionary strategies were determined by how social classes in Turkey were comprehended. Under the heading of “class alliances” above, the strategies of Yön and the MDD have been investigated. Accordingly, here a closer study of the class conceptions of each will be of use. This part of the study addresses the questions such as: How did Yön and the MDD define proletariat/peasantry, petty bourgeoisie, bourgeoisie and middle stratum?, “What is the main contradiction in the society for Yön and the MDD?”, “How was the revolutionary strategy constructed on the basis of the class analysis?”²¹ and Who would take the leadership?

However, before offering a detailed analysis of specific cases in Turkey, drawing a broader picture would be useful. It can be said that one of the most crucial problems that plagues class analysis is the problem of uniqueness. As stated before, here the problem stems from evaluating the historical trajectory of the East only with reference to West. In other words, the East is defined with what it lacks with reference to the West. The class conceptions of the Turkish West to a great extent stemmed from such an idea. As a consequence of those considerations, socialism peculiar to Turkey and the need of a “national democratic revolution” before making the socialist revolution became the popular issues of concern. Below, there will be discussions about Yön and the MDD on the issue of class structure in Turkey.

Yön and Classes in Turkey

The class analysis of Yön rested upon the analysis of revolutionary forces. In other words, the definition of the class structure of Turkey had not been thought as separate from the revolutionary strategy; thus, sometimes, the force of some

²¹ It should be stated that most of the time it was not the way that the class analysis is conducted that determines revolutionary strategy but vice versa.

classes were exaggerated or underestimated deliberately. As Atılgan states referring to his interview with Ertuğrul Kürkçü who shared his speech with Ahmet Yıldız who used to be a colonel, for Yön to have the support of the army, it had to “leave the story of the leadership of the proletariat” since “it is not possible for a colonel to walk after a worker.” (Atılgan, 2002: 147)

Indeed, both for Yön and the MDD it can be said that the way class analysis was done was highly associated with the revolutionary strategy that it was even not possible to talk of a separate class analysis. For the Turkish left the debates over class were restricted to the issues of leadership and the alliances for the revolution. Especially after the beginning of the MDD-SD debate, both sides exaggerated the importance of classes which was suitable for their strategies.

The relation between class conception and revolutionary strategy of Yön can be understood through its differentiation of people (*halk*) and nation. This differentiation was largely a result of Yön’s nationalism and was in accordance with its national democratic program. According to Yön, the nation has an ethnic content while people had class content (Atılgan, 2002: 124). Avcıoğlu states that the “nation was a group that consisted of different interests” and “in capitalist societies nations gather conflicting classes within itself” (Avcıoğlu 1967). On the other hand, the people consisted of workers, peasants and all laborers since they were exploited by the bourgeoisie and feudal forces. Accordingly, compradors had the national identity of Turk, but they did not carry a national character. It can be said that this schema of classes fits well with Yön’s claim for the need of class alliances or a popular front for the national democratic revolution. Moreover, for Avcıoğlu, national democratic revolution itself has class content:

The struggle that is made by forces defender of labor against the brutal war of the comprador-landlord alliance is without doubt a class struggle. The attempts are for giving an end to the domination of comprador-landlord alliance. But, this is at the same time a national struggle that is fought against non-national elements whose origins are out of Turkey. (1966b)

Upon closer examination of how the Yön group conceptualized the motive forces of the revolutionary process, the general attitude of conceptualizing Turkey with regards to what is lacking compared to West is key. In the declaration of Yön, the agent who was referred as the actor of the struggle was not the working class or any other class in society. Rather, the call was for who held the opportunity to dominate the faith of the nation. Here, the “union of the working class and peasants” was vital, but since they had a “traditional conservative ideology,” the intellectuals and military-civil stratum had an important role. As stated above, the leading role in the national democratic revolution was given to the middle strata. At that point, it can be said that the Marxism of Yön was limited to comprehending “progress” as something that only could be realized by economic change. Thus, the idea of class struggle as the determining element did not take place in the analyses of Yön. The main reason for this was surely the perception of the main contradiction between imperialism and the underdeveloped country as a whole, which meant ignoring the differences within the country or giving it a secondary role.

For Avcıoğlu, the six social forces in Turkey were the workers, peasants, intellectuals, youth, army and bourgeoisie. As rightly put by Mura, “there is no necessary link between the mode of production and the class relations” in the analysis of Avcıoğlu (2003: 87).

The ideas of the Yön group on the petty bourgeoisie were somewhat different from the other groups of the Turkish left. Avcıoğlu states that to imitate the analyses of Western socialists results in misjudging the middle strata. For him, the peculiar conditions of Turkey require the middle stratum to be taken into consideration because “in the societies where dominant classes are relatively weak, the middle stratum distinguishes itself from its original class position” (Avcıoğlu quoted in Yetkin: 1998: 76).

Another crucial issue about Yön’s analysis of class was the position of the bourgeoisie. For the Yön group, the national bourgeoisie should not be excluded

completely. However, Avcioğlu was skeptical about the role that could be played by the national bourgeoisie in a national democratic revolution. In 1966 he asserted that: the “national bourgeoisie is dependent to a great extent and its role in the democratic revolution phase is limited” (1966c).

According to the Yön group, the issue of leadership had two sides in the Turkish left that:

One group holds the view that socialism can be realized by all laborers and intellectuals come together and under the leadership of working class. Thus, a secondary role is given to the laborers which stay out of the working class and intellectuals who behave in favor of the society (*toplumcu*). Another group together with agreeing on the importance of the working class to realize socialism claims that in an underdeveloped country that is at the stage of national liberation, socialism should lie on a broader base. It wants to come out with formulas that would be favorable for all laborers. (Avcioğlu 1962c)

The Yön group rejected parliamentary democracy as a means to reach socialism from the very beginning.²² It is stated that in underdeveloped countries such as Turkey, parliamentarianism is a tool for imperialism. On that issue, he criticizes TİP: “Twenty three years of the old multi-party regime showed that, in Turkey, parliamentarianism is the regime of messy order. The powers which exalt parliamentarianism inevitably become the tool of messy order” (Avcioğlu quoted in Yetkin, 1998: 149).

For Avcioğlu, parliamentarianism could have been a convenient way for Western countries to reach socialism, but in countries such as Turkey before socialism, there is the stage of national democratic revolution and this was making another way of taking the power necessary. In this “other way”, the leadership of the middle stratum was inevitable. That is to say, for the Yön group the conception of

²² Atılğan and Şener state that until the period after 1965, the Yön group was skeptical of parliamentarianism, but still some hope was preserved about parliamentary ways. The second period was between 1965 and 1969 or the beginning of the journal Devrim. In the second period, parliamentary ways started to be underestimated and the idea of the “national front” became dominant. The third period that corresponds to the publishing of Devrim is a certain rejection of parliamentarianism and a military coup is strongly supported (Atılğan, 2002; Şener, 2006).

middle stratum as the revolutionary force and the necessity of national front was backed by a revolutionary model based on stages.

As stated, middle stratum was a central element for Yön group. Since middle stratum is very important regarding the debate over the nature of bureaucracy in Turkey and the claim of the “autocratic state” (*ceberrut devlet*) by Aybar and Küçükömer, the ideas of Avcıoğlu should be emphasized. Avcıoğlu claims that to reject the petty bourgeoisie (including bureaucracy, intellectuals etc.) in the name of the leadership of the proletariat is something advantageous for imperialism. He asserts that “one part of the petty bourgeoisie is revolutionary, while the other is conservative,” thus a rejection of it all as if it is a homogenous group is not plausible. (Yetkin, 1998: 105)

Finally, it can be said that the class conception and revolutionary strategy of the Yön group was to a great extent dependant on a stages strategy which claimed a national democratic revolution preconditions a socialist one. In the stage of national democratic revolution, the working class was a trivial force due to its conservatism and insufficiency in number. Thus, the next step in front of Turkey should be carried by the middle stratum, which holds a revolutionary tradition thanks to its history.

The MDD Group and Classes in Turkey

As stated above, the class analysis of the MDD group was to a great extent determined by the revolutionary strategy offered by them. To this end, feudalism, thus peasantry, was exaggerated while the position of working class was underestimated (Yurtsever, 1992: 190). As in the case of Yön this stems from the interrelatedness of class analysis and strategy. Below there will be emphasis on class conception, the answer to the question of leadership and the revolutionary strategy of the MDD group.

In the “The Brochure of National Democratic Revolution,” Belli discusses revolutionary forces under six headings which are the Turkish proletariat, semi-

proletarians, impoverished peasantry, petty-bourgeoisie, military-civil intellectual stratum, national bourgeoisie (1970). The analysis of each reveals about how the MDD group conceptualized the class structure of Turkey. Except for the groups stated above, there is one more group for the MDD which is the comprador bourgeoisie. That is to say, for the MDD group, each class inside the country was an element of “union of revolutionary forces” and here the limits of “inside” were determined in no relation with foreign capital. The groups having the share from it were called comprador classes.

According to Belli, determine the classes the main criterion is “its position in the property relations,” however, “one should also take the concepts like exploitation, oppression or poverty into consideration” (Belli, 1970: 245). This statement is in line with the MDD group’s emphasis on the importance of the peasantry in Turkey that “for the impoverished peasantry, proletarianization is perceived as liberation” (Belli, 1970: 245) because compared to the very bad conditions of the village life, the city whatever bad conditions it has, looks like “heaven” for the peasant. For Belli, because of this, one should keep in mind the peculiar conditions of Turkey while analyzing the “the petty bourgeois of the village” and the impoverished peasantry. That is to say, the position of peasantry should be assessed within the peculiar conditions of Turkey. From here, it can be understood how and why a revolutionary role was given to the peasantry in the MDD strategy.²³

According to Belli, “the Turkish proletariat is the most revolutionary class due to its economic position” but “to a great extent the Turkish proletariat still is in the status of a ‘class in itself’ and it should fight more for becoming conscious and being a ‘class for itself’”. For Belli, the historical task of the proletariat is to be a class for itself, but in Turkey, there are some peculiar conditions which slow down this task to be realized. These conditions are: lack of a real capitalist development, the impermanent position of the proletarian (due to the army of the

²³ Nevertheless, it should be stated that this role to the peasantry was given mainly after the splits inside the MDD and mainly by the PDA group.

unemployed) in an infertile capitalist economy that is dependant and reconciled with feudal relations, industrial workers having relations with their villages and an important part of the working class being in the status of semi-peasant, and the intensity of the disparity between urban and rural (Belli, 1970: 233). Thus, because of these constraints, the role of the working class was limited to ideological leadership. As stated by Akkaya, the national democratic revolutionaries agree on the leadership of the working class but the role given to it differs from its role in a socialist revolution (Akkaya, 2007: 798).

The second group emphasized by Belli in the “The Brochure of National Democratic Revolution” is the semi-proletarians. The term peasants, who work as the seasonal-workers, was defined. For Belli, this group “as the most oppressed laborers” is a great revolutionary potential, although “their continuing relation with the village is a difficulty over their becoming conscious since they gain some material advantages from this.”

The third group defined by Belli is the impoverished peasantry which “constitutes the majority of the population of Turkey.” In the conditions of Turkey the position of the peasantry should be analyzed carefully for Belli because:

Although Marxism started from the struggle of the proletariat against the poverty created by capitalism, which rises through the exploitation of the working class, (...) we cannot think of it [Marxism] as something in the monopoly of the workers. It is the ideological weapon of all of the oppressed. (1970: 247)

For Belli, the impoverished peasantry is much more oppressed when compared to the working class, and it has a great revolutionary potential. That is why “we cannot put inaccessible walls between the peasantry and proletariat” (ibid: 246).

When it comes to the petty-bourgeoisie, it is stated that it includes: “the middle-peasantry, urban petty-bourgeoisie (tradesman and artisans) and military-civil intellectual stratum” (ibid: 248). The position of the petty-bourgeoisie was considered to be between the big bourgeoisie and proletariat. In Şahin Alpay’s words: “Its positioning between proletariat and bourgeois and being under

pressure from both sides is the most significant property of the middle class” (Alpay quoted in Yetkin: 1998: 75).

In “The Brochure of National Democratic Revolution,” the “military-civil intellectual stratum” is defined under a separate heading. The main reason for this was, of course, the important role assigned to them in the revolution. Belli states that this stratum should be defined separately because of “the very different position of bureaucracy in Turkey compared to Western countries.” In the West, bureaucracy is “in the service of dominant classes.” On the contrary, in Turkey, this stratum has a “revolutionary tradition” that its ideology does not reconcile with the ideology of the compradors (ibid: 254). Moreover, for Belli, in Turkey, there is not a base which would allow such reconciliation.

According to Akdere and Karadeniz, the proposal that “the national democratic revolution will be realized by the collective struggle of all national classes and the leadership will be determined through the struggle” has a problematic side. For Akdere and Karadeniz, the “theoreticians of the MDD were rejecting the idea of the leadership of the proletariat in a demagogical style” and “they were hoping to hide their acceptance of the thesis of the leadership of the army” (1994: 246). Moreover, since the definition of the dominant classes was limited to the “comprador bourgeoisie”, thus national the bourgeoisie was accepted as an “internal dynamic,” the struggle of the proletariat was reduced to an economic one. Furthermore, in this political schema, the “proletariat was seen as an ally of national bourgeoisie in its war against foreign capital” (ibid: 247).

The issue of the leadership of proletariat in national democratic revolution is also a controversial one. In a conference held at Ankara University, Faculty of Political Sciences in 1968, Belli was asked, “Should not the hegemony be in the proletariat and peasantry in national democratic revolution? Otherwise, would not it deviate?” The answer from Belli to this question summarizes the position of the MDD group. Belli states that “hegemony in the revolution stems from the balances of power in a society” and “since the working class in under the

influence of compradors, it cannot have the hegemony in the revolution.” He adds that “on the day they have reached the conclusion that they should have the hegemony as the most revolutionary class they will have it” (Belli, 1969). Belli’s reply demonstrates that for the MDD group the leadership of the revolution “should be” in the working class; however, the conditions of the country were not ready for this yet. Instead of the real hegemony of the working class, the MDD put forward the idea of the “national front”: “If the proletariat would have been the leader in the revolution, we would not have an issue of establishing a national front and provide the proletariat with its own leadership” (Belli quoted in Yetkin, 1998: 181).

Similarly, Alpay states that if the working class is not yet able to have the leadership, the intellectuals from a petty bourgeois background can take this role instead of them. He says that “the objective existence of a class (working class) does not mean that it spontaneously has a class consciousness”(Alpay quoted in Yetkin, 1998: 180).

As a result of the leadership issue, the revolutionary strategy of the MDD group was against the parliamentary means. For Akkara and Karadeniz, the line of the MDD never had the aim of a proletarian party organization; moreover, the theory of a non-party had been made. After breaking away from the TİP, the MDD remained as a movement under the name of DEV-GENÇ (Akdere and Karadeniz, 1994: 250).

Similar to the Yön group, the ideas of the MDD group about parliamentarianism were negative. While for the Yön group parliamentary democracy was “pretty democracy” (*cici demokrasi*) in the conditions of Turkey, for the MDD group it was the “Philippine type of democracy”. For MDD group it was impossible for the socialist parties to gain victory in the elections: “...In the conditions of the Philippine type of democracy, a revolutionary power can not be taken by elections” (Belli quoted in Yetkin, 1998: 141).

Finally, it can be said that both the Yön and MDD groups were the leadership of the proletariat was not the most crucial issue in front of Turkey. Although it can be said that there was more emphasis on the issue of leadership of the proletariat in the MDD group, it was only an ideological leadership. For Akdere and Karadeniz, in the program of the Yön group there was no place for any class specifically. For them, what was needed was a “development strategy” in which all classes unite. For the MDD group, since the “national democratic revolution” is a bourgeois revolution there can not be class antagonism between the groups that join it. For Akdere and Karadeniz, the only difference between Yön and the MDD group was that in the former, the dominant ideology was Kemalism; in the latter it was Mao’s theses on “the relations between classes of people (*halk sınıfları*)” (Akdere and Karadeniz, 1994: 249).

2.4 Assessment of the Yön and MDD groups on “Peculiarism”

In the introduction of this study, it is stated that the main source of the search for a “peculiar way to Turkey” stemmed from its conceptualization as an underdeveloped country. It is also noted that although there were differences in the political and ideological tendencies of those three groups in the way they present their discourses, they were similar on the basis of the need for a peculiar way. Here it will be analyzed to what extent their presentation of that uniqueness were similar and were different in viewing what causes that variation. As such, the differences and similarities of the Yön and MDD groups on the basis of their views on “Turkish socialism” will be explored.

According to Yetkin, it is generally stated that the concept of “socialism peculiar to Turkey” was first proposed by Aybar; however, it should be noted that it was Yön that proposed this idea. Thus, the idea of socialism peculiar to Turkey can be traced back to 1962 (Yetkin, 1998: 37). He states the influences upon this idea

vary from Islam to the experiences of the other underdeveloped countries.²⁴ In those terms, the discourses of Yön and the TİP were similar.

Returning to the comparison of Yön and the MDD, what is common to them is the concept of national democratic revolution. For both of them, the stage to be passed in front of Turkey was the stage of democratic revolution because Turkey was an underdeveloped country mainly due to imperialism. The second reason for that was the condition of the working class in Turkey. For both of these groups, in Turkey the working class was both few in number and thus did not have a political consciousness. It can be said that the determining question in the position of Yön and the MDD was their analysis of the position of the working class in Turkey. However, as stated by Ünsal (2002), their analyses were always subordinated by their positions about the revolutionary strategy.

At this point, it should be questioned to what extent the concept of “national democratic revolution” is specific to Turkey. It is not possible to answer this question in a positive manner. Despite, in particular for Yön, its presentation as something specific to Turkey, that it was the dominant trend in all socialist parties and groups of the underdeveloped world. As will be emphasized in the third chapter, it was also the “official” policy of the Comintern on underdeveloped countries. In the MDD group, it is possible to see that Turkey, along with other underdeveloped countries should have the stage of the national democratic revolution. Moreover, Belli accepts that stages strategy was a policy developed in the 1920s but developed further in the 1960s: “The thesis of national democratic revolutions, along with supported in the 1960s in this name, is nothing more than a developed version of the program supported by the Marxist movement since the 1920s. In the 1960s, this program was developed further according to the conditions of the day.” (1988)

²⁴ Here it should be stated that the book of Yıldız Sertel titled *Türkiye’de İlerici Akımlar* is a common reference in terms of the characteristics of Turkish socialism. Like Yetkin, Ünsal (2002: 318) and Lipovsky (1992) make reference to this book. Here Sertel states that the idea of Turkish socialism is based on three elements, namely Kemalism; Laborism and Socialism of underdeveloped countries.

However, in Yön, stemming from its strong links with Kemalism, a national democratic revolution was presented rather as something specific to Turkey. Here it can be said that the Kemalist saying “we are unique on our own” (*biz bize benzeriz*) was more a part of the discourses of the Yön group.

As stated in the first part of this study, no claim is made for an organic link between the so-called groups of the Turkish left. However, it is possible to comment upon the ideological links or influences between them. In the case of Yön and the MDD, this influence is a debatable one. There are at least two remarkable differences between them. The first of them is related to the role given to the military. For Yön and later on with Devrim, the role given to the military was so obvious. However, for the MDD movement, along with giving a role to the military for the revolution, this role was not the key element. It is possible to follow the traces of this through the discourse of “ideological leadership of the proletariat.” In other words, while for the Yön group, the military coup was the aim and the only way of “revolution,” for the MDD group, the military was an institution with whom the revolutionaries formed an alliance. Especially with the period of the Devrim, journal the position of Belli and Aybar differentiated obviously. Belli states that the pages of Devrim were not open to him because the important military officials warned Avcıoğlu not to have alliances with a communist. (Belli, 2000)

At this point, the second difference between the Yön and MDD groups becomes apparent. For the Yön group, communism was not something desired. Moreover, from the very beginning the term was used in a pejorative manner. For Avcıoğlu, the socialism which would be found on the basis of nationalism and Kemalism was the only way to prevent the “evil of communism” (Avcıoğlu quoted in Yurtsever, 2002: 165). On the other hand, for the MDD group, communism was an end to reach after the stages of national democratic revolution and socialism.

Coming back to their common points, the way of Kemalism, nationalism and the notion of development should be stated once more. For both groups, the War of

Liberation and Kemalism differentiate Turkey from the other underdeveloped countries and create specific conditions for the revolutionary struggle. The tradition of the War of Independence with its anti-imperialist content was something favorable and was creating suitable conditions for the socialist revolution. It is possible to say that, the progressive (*ilerlemeci*) and enlightenment (*aydınlanmacı*) character of Kemalism differentiated those groups from the other socialist movements of the underdeveloped world. It can be said that unlike the national liberation movements in Egypt or India, Kemalism adopted the mission of reaching the level of Western civilization. Thus, unlike those whose struggle has to have equal rights extended to the oppressed nations, Kemalism was attaining for itself a “higher” mission. In the case of Yön and Türk Solu, the effects of that understanding are clear. However, it is also possible to observe some conflicting aspects with the Kemalist ideals, especially in the MDD. Yet, it should be stated that the discourse and the ideals of Kemalism always “wins” in those kinds of conflicting situations. For instance, with MDD’s position close to Third World socialism/nationalism or the references to the Garaudy’s book which includes concepts like “Eastern Socialism” brings them close to a Third worldist stand. However, the influences of Kemalism dominated and oppressed those kinds of tendencies in the MDD.

The issue of development was another common element in the discourses of Yön and the MDD. Since for both of them, in the first instance, socialism was the term given to economic development, it was a necessary step. In other words, the understanding of socialism as a development strategy brought both of them to the point of presenting it as the only way of economic development for Turkey. That kind of comprehension of socialism was also helpful to legitimize socialism in front of the masses. Thus, the presentation of socialism as the method to save Turkey from backwardness brought the presentation of it as the specific way for Turkey.

The reason for Yön's choice of developing a special mode of socialism which must be different from Western socialism is summarized in Avcıoğlu's following words:

The conditions that made the development of the West easier did not exist in Turkey (...) backward agriculture, rapid increase in population, hidden (concealed) unemployment, low level of income, psychological and social conditions that did not make the development easier, an international environment that makes development difficult all necessitates different views and methods from the West (1962a).

As a result of those historical differences, each country was thought to develop its own specific conditions of realizing socialism. Avcıoğlu discusses three kinds of socialism and emphasizes that although "socialism is an integral whole," there can be different methods to realize this due to practical differences. The three kinds which he categorizes according to the methods and different historical realities are Eastern socialism, Western socialism and Socialism of the developing countries, and accordingly, Turkey should follow the third way. (Avcıoğlu, 1962b) According to Lipovsky, what is termed as "Turkish socialism" is a combination of "positive aspects of capitalism" such as parliamentarianism and socialism. He states that Turkish socialism can be used identically with the new statism, national socialism, local socialism and socialism of the developing countries (Lipovsky, 1992: 101). Referring to Cemil Said Barlas as one of the main proponents of Turkish socialism, Lipovsky refers to his main arguments about the aspects of Turkish socialism as written in his book *The Ways of Socialism and the Turkish Reality*:

1. socialism should not be confused with communism and bolshevism;
2. socialism was not a threat to private ownership;
3. socialism has various forms but a single goal: liberty, equality and social well-being;
4. statism was one of the principles of socialism;
5. the West-European socialist parties were by now parties of the entire people, not of the working class alone;

6. the position of the contemporary working class differed in no way from the position of other strata of the laboring people;
7. socialism and socialist parties were the most active opponents of bolshevist communism;
8. Turkey must strive for this kind of socialism. (Lipovsky 1992: 102)

Finally, it should be stated that by the Yön group, “Turkish socialism” has been claimed to be something not alien to Turkey. On the contrary, since socialism was viewed as a system that can be reached only through a real Kemalism, it should have been something quite familiar to the country. In Avcıoğlu’s words:

In fact, we view socialism as the most natural outcome and continuation of Atatürkism, which is based on the principles of populism, etatism, revolutionism, laicism, republicanism, and nationalism. We believe that socialism is the way of developing and advancing Atatürk revolutions. (1962b)

The same tone can be discerned in the pages of *Türk Solu*. The emphasis on having no relationship with any other country (i.e the Soviets, Cuba, China) in ideological and political terms is a very frequent one. Having no ideological or organic link with another country has been demonstrated as the confirmation of being real nationalists and thinking merely about the benefits for Turkey. For *Türk Solu*, the supporters of the MDD were “*Türkiyecî*” and it was not even thinkable to imitate the “way of either Mao or Castro” since what was to be done was to “look for a unique way for Turkey” (*Türk Solu*, 1968).

Moreover, Belli states that only Turkish people can find the way peculiar to Turkey. For him, a good socialist should be able to adapt the science of socialism to the realities of his own country and “to adapt the science of socialism to the realities of Turkey and to determine the peculiar path of Turkey is nobody’s work but the Turkish people” (*Türk Solu*, 1968).

To conclude, it can be said that for both the Yön and MDD groups, the emphasis on a socialism peculiar to Turkey was a tool to present socialism as something

native. This strategy can be said to have determined their discourses to a great extent.

CHAPTER 3

THE TİP AND AYBAR ON “SOCIALISM PECULIAR TO TURKEY”

In this chapter, the case of the TİP will be analyzed on the basis of the concepts of nationalism, Kemalism, developmentalism or non-capitalist path of development, anti-imperialism and on “popular national front. As already stated, the second part of this chapter is devoted to the discourses of Aybar on “socialism peculiar to Turkey.” The concepts written above are also used to analyze the Yön and MDD groups. However, it thought to analyze the TİP in a separate chapter due to the common idea that while what the Yön and the MDD group share in common are more compared to the TİP. In other words, it is generally expressed that Yön and the MDD constituted one side of the left in the 1960s, while the TİP is on the other side. In this chapter, it will be explored what those three groups share in common under the rubric of the term peculiarism.

3.1 A Brief History of the TİP

It is not possible to talk about “one TİP” with the same principles and a program in the period of 1960-70. As such, the history of the TİP can be said to have three sub-periods. The first of these is the period of 1960-65 which ended with the elections of 1965. Second period started with the elections of 1965 and ended up in 1968 when the youth movement rose up together with the first crucial dispute in the TİP, namely between the TİP and MDD groups. The last period includes the dispute between Aybar and the Group of Five consisting of Aren, Boran, Erik, Haydaroğlu and Sargın on the issues of “socialism peculiar to Turkey” and “libertarian socialism” proposed by Aybar. The reason for that dispute was that

from 1968 onward, Aybar expressed his opinions on “socialism peculiar to Turkey” and “libertarian socialism” in a different manner than before as will be explained in the next pages.

The first period of the TİP starts with the foundation of the party with the initiative of twelve trade unionists. However, the “real” history of the TİP is generally considered to have started with Aybar being the chairman of the party in 1962. In this period of the TİP, it is possible to speak of a relative similarity with the views of Yön especially on the issues of the non-capitalist path, anti-imperialism and Kemalist nationalism as well as the idea of the need for a popular national front. In other words, the struggles of the Yön group and the TİP were interconnected. It can be said that in the first period, the discourses of both of the groups were not radicalized due to the issue of legitimization.

The second period of the TİP was marked with its “success” in the elections that resulted in 15 seats in the Turkish National Assembly. In 1966, the split between the Yön group and the TİP became apparent for the first time with the “Discussions over the TİP” in the pages of Yön. It was the first time that the debate over the “national democratic revolution” versus a “socialist revolution” became visible. Moreover, it was Belli who was writing with the pen name Ertuğrul Tüfekçi on the pages of Yön about the issue. Later on, at the Second Regular Congress of the TİP, the split of the TİP and the MDD group showed its first signs. In this period, Aybar, Aren and Boran were together against the MDD group and were calling for the indivisibility of the socialist and national democratic revolutions.

The third period of the TİP witnessed the major splits of the Turkish left. The issues of debate were diverse and diverged from the main contradictions of Turkey to forces of revolution and from the structure of Ottoman feudalism to strategy of revolution. Furthermore, the unity of the TİP was also under threat. As stated above, in those years, Aybar’s ideas on the peculiarity of Turkey developed and the opposition of Boran and Aren widened. The other controversy in the TİP

was about the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. After those ideological splits within the party, Aybar resigned in 1969 and with the military coup, the party was closed.

3.2 The TİP: A Different Case?

In this part of the study, a discussion on the nationalism, Kemalism, anti-imperialism, developmentalism of the TİP will be focus mainly the specific figure of Aybar. The main purpose of this discussion is to make clear to what extent the TİP was a different case in the Turkish left. In order to this, the concepts above which have been used to clarify the peculiarism of the Yön and MDD groups will be used. Thus, in the next chapter, the questions: Is it possible to talk of a general peculiarism between the period 1960 and 1970? and What are the common points and sources of their peculiarism? will be answered.

As stated before, the TİP was the only party founded by labor unionists. For some scholars, this feature of the TİP made it different from the other groups of the Turkish left. For instance, Aydınöglu states that unlike the MDD group, the TİP was founded by the people that had no organic or ideological link with the TKP. (2007: 93) Similarly, Şener states that the TİP's position was truly unique since it did not have the legacy of the Comintern or the TKP line (2006: 231). He also adds that this unique line of the TİP which advocated for the leadership of the proletariat, against national front, etc. was not the general line of the TİP through its history; rather, it was only in the last years of the party (ibid).

The TİP defined itself as “the political organization of the Turkish working class and of the toiling classes and groups (farm hands, small farmers, salary and wage earners, artisans, low income professionals, the Atatürkist youth and social minded intellectuals) gathered around the working class and following its democratic leadership for the attainment of power through legal means.”

Through this definition it can be said that the TİP supported the active participation of the toiling masses in the socialist struggle initiated from below, along with not giving them a privileged position.

Below, the TİP will be analyzed in detail through the concepts of nationalism, Kemalism, anti-imperialism, developmentalism and its reflections on the “non-capitalist path of development.”

3.2.1 Nationalism

As stated in the previous chapter, nationalism in the Third World has been experienced rather as a “progressive” movement in terms of its anti-imperialist content. The insight of the TİP on the issue was not different from MDD and Yön groups at least until the end of its first period. As stated by Kemal Karpat, in the program of the party, nationalism was defined as opposition to foreign domination (1966: 164). For the TİP, what was vital for Turkey was the achievement of national independence. In other words, the concept of national independence was the main element of the TİP’s political struggle. Similar to the nationalism of Yön and MDD groups, the TİP’s nationalism claimed to be the “real” one due to the economic and political connotations it carried inside. Moreover, for Aybar “we should be able to differentiate the nationalism of the West from the East” since the former was seen as serving the needs of imperialism. Aybar defines Turkish nationalism in the following way:

Turkish nationalism is the ideological expression of the reaction of our people against foreign yoke, against imperialism and capitalism. It is resolutely attached to the idea of independence (...) Turkish nationalism undertakes the task of extolling our nation in science, technology, culture, economy and in all areas of social life as a dignified member of the community of the nations of the world (...) It is essential that we distinguish between Turkish nationalism and the concept of nationalism as it is practiced in the West. Turkish nationalism is not a racist, chauvinist, irredentist and regressive ideology, which despises other nations. (...) Nationalism in the West is a belligerent tool in the hands of imperialism, which destroys other nations. In our Turkey, Atatürkist nationalism, apart from serving the protection of the being of Turkish nation and its finding

of the path of survival, has shed light on the awakening and liberation of all oppressed nations of the world. (Aybar quoted in Şimşek, 2004: 82)

For Aybar, there is an essential relationship between nationalism and socialism and the claim that socialism is not nationalism “is a claim put forward in the nineteenth century by capitalists and imperialists” and the aim behind this “is to avoid the awakening of the nations” (Aybar, 1968: 563). Furthermore, the claim that “workers do not have motherlands” is not right for Aybar; in the conditions of the twentieth century, workers should have countries and socialism should be built into the motherland (ibid). In accordance with those views, Aybar states that “national consciousness precedes class consciousness” (Aybar quoted in Erdost 1968). In the second and third periods of the TİP the ideas of Aybar on nationalism gained a more anti-imperialist content; however, Aybar never rejected his previous ideas on the issue. As late as 1986, Aybar claimed that “we will build socialism on the basis of our national independence” and “today internationalism lost its naiveté to a great extent” (Mumcu, 1993: 175).

The anti-imperialist content of Aybar’s nationalism expresses itself mostly on the issue of Cyprus. According to Aybar, “beneath the Cyprus issue lays the interests of imperialism” and Turkey “is not able to pursue an independent foreign policy” (1968: 322). For Aybar, Turkey should stop all of the international agreements, “which give harm to the national independence” (ibid: 323). It can be said that starting from 1964 the rising nationalism of the TİP’s discourses could be understood only in relation to the Cyprus issue.

Similar to Yön, for Aybar, “socialism and nationalism mean the same thing especially in underdeveloped countries” (1968: 563). For him, “being a nationalist” requires “fighting with the landlords, compradors and imperialism” (ibid: 563). For Aybar, fighting with those forces of the “Second War of Liberation” is required. However, he states that the concept of nationalism as the way he uses it should not be confused with the “imperialist nationalism.” The following quotation from Aybar summarizes his ideas on nationalism:

Independence and nationalism are the foundation stones of socialism. Without doubt, the nationalism in question has nothing to do with fascist nationalism which commands the other nations to be enslaved and oppressed and look down on them. All of the oppressed nations which walk through socialism and fight with imperialism take their power from a humanist sense of nationalism. They all want to be freed from foreign domination and develop their own cultures and economies. (...) They fight to have an honorable place within the family of humanity with their own sciences, cultures and arts. (ibid: 621)

3.2.2 Kemalism

The positive attitude of the TİP on Kemalism can easily be understood from Aybar's offer to the trade unionists about putting the words of Mustafa Kemal on imperialism at the beginning of the party program, which were: "Gentlemen! We, as the national committee, are people who fight against the imperialism which craves to blast us and against capitalism which wants to absorb us" (Aybar, 1968: 327).

For Aybar, in Turkey, a party should derive its inspirations from Kemalism to be a "national doctrine party": "TİP is a hundred percent national party of doctrine, which sets Atatürkism free from rigid dogmatism on the sole ground that it departs from Atatürkism and derives its inspiration from the realities of the contemporary world" (Aybar quoted in Yurtsever, 1992: 176).

The reflections of Kemalism can also be seen in the content of the party program. According to Şener, the first program was like a summary of the six principles of Kemalism in a rather socialist tone. In those terms, the TİP also had the claim to advance those principles to give them their actual meanings. This attitude is similar to Yön on Kemalism. According to the TİP party program, the main principles of the TİP were: "politics based on science in every sphere; democracy realized in the everyday life of the people; planned etatism in favor of labor; populism and republicanism, revolutionism, nationalism; being against each sort of exploitation; peacefulness; freedoms of religion, sect and thought; and laicism" (Şener, 2006: 256).

Moreover, even Boran, who can be seen as the representative of a more orthodox Marxism particularly after the dispute with Aybar, sees Kemalism as a necessary ideology for Turkey and to reach socialism: “A reinterpretation of the principles of Atatürk in accordance with the realities of social life and structure, naturally gives way to a socialist system. Socialism appears as the requisite and logical outcome of the principles of Atatürk” (Boran quoted in Şimşek, 2004: 85).

The assessment of the War of Liberation by the TİP also shows its attitude on Kemalism.

The analysis of the TİP leaders that stresses the bourgeois character of Kemalist revolution certainly creates a contradiction at this point. Since what the TİP leaders aimed for was a socialist revolution, holding a positive attitude towards a national democratic revolution and furthermore showing its ideology (i.e. Kemalism) as the ideals of the desired system were the sources of this conflict. This conflict was resolved by the TİP leaders’ notion of the “historical rupture” which was similar to the Yön group’s analysis of the erosion of the Kemalist cadres. The notion of historical rupture includes the period before and after Atatürk’s death. According to Boran:

Until the death of Atatürk, the administrative cadres, in their struggle against imperialism -and hence capitalism- and the traditional social structure inherited from the Ottoman Empire, had ascended to the highest ideological phase they could reach and formulated the principles of revolutionism, populism, and then secularism and statism. Had these principles been analyzed to their genuine meaning and transferred into a systematic whole, an ideological framework leading to socialism would have risen. (Boran quoted in Şimşek, 2004: 84)

Finally the question remains: What was the character of the relationship between the TİP leaders and Kemalism? According to Akdere and Karadeniz, the relationship of the TİP with Kemalism was more than an endeavor for legitimization; rather it was in accordance with the essential characteristics of the TİP that is highly determined by eclecticism (1994: 261). On the contrary, for Barış Ünlü, the reason of the emphasis on Atatürk was “Aybar’s romanticism on

the issue of War of liberation” or “breasting difficulties by putting Atatürk to the front.” In other words, for Ünlü, Atatürk was used to be in the “legal arena” but on the other hand Aybar was sincere in his thoughts on Atatürk (Ünlü, 2002: 205).

3.2.3 Anti-Imperialism

It can be said that anti-imperialism was one of the most prominent claims of the Turkish left in general. The TİP and its leaders were not an exception about that. Moreover, both Aybar and Boran were well-known with their anti-imperialist position from the 1950s onward.

However, the anti-imperialism of the TİP can be said to have two differences when compared to the Yön and MDD groups. Firstly, the idea of “neither being a Soviet satellite, nor accepting American imperialism” gives the TİP a unique character (Aybar, 1968: 97). Secondly, the emphasis on the indivisibility of anti-imperialist struggle with an anti-capitalist one can be said to be one of the peculiar attributes of the TİP. Nevertheless, it should be stated that both of the above points were not the representative of the TİP in the first half of the 1960s, which corresponds to a relative similar position of the TİP to the Yön and MDD groups in the same period.

As stated above, one of the features of the TİP’s anti-imperialism, in particular in Aybar, was its stance against both America and the Soviet Union. Although both Boran and Aybar were former members of the illegal TKP, their ideological position revealed some differences from the Comintern line (Atılgan, 2007). However, it cannot be said that this was valid from the very beginning until the end. Along with the Comintern line, the idea of a “national front against imperialism” was also the approach of the TİP, particularly before 1965 and the famous SD-MDD distinction. Moreover, according to Atılgan, the position of Aybar opposing the Soviet Union was no longer valid between 1945 and 1950. For Atılgan, the reason for this was his TKP membership (2007b: 679). However, after 1965 and with the ideas of “libertarian socialism”, the emphasis on Soviet opposition became visible again.

As stated above, at the first half of the 1960s, the stand of the TİP was similar with the Yön and MDD groups on the issue of anti-imperialism and independence. Before the elections of 1965, Aybar was asked about the “most central problem of Turkey today” by the Yön writers. He responded this question in the following manner: “Today all of the problems of Turkey get tangled on the issue of independence” (Aybar quoted in Atılğan, 2007b: 686).

The second feature of the TİP’s anti-imperialism was its emphasis on the unity of the struggle for independence and socialism. Here, it should be emphasized that this feature mainly corresponded to the period after the beginning of the MDD-SD debate. Since for the TİP leaders, the War of Liberation was the national democratic revolution of Turkey, an anti-imperialist struggle alone was not needed; moreover, it was pointless. Aybar states the following against the MDD theory:

...The fight only against imperialism and only against feudalism is a slogan that does not stand up to scientific criticism. We, in Turkey, who are in conflict with American imperialism, will simultaneously engage its accomplices... It is necessary to separate them from each other. Imperialism is a single whole. External and internal exploitation are closely bound up with each other, into what forms a single system. (Aybar, 1968)

Another path to follow, the TİP leaders’ emphasis on anti-imperialism and independence was the issue of foreign policy. As stated above on the issue of Cyprus, Aybar maintained that Turkey should have an anti-imperialist position. For Aybar, this was possible “by returning to the foreign policy of the Atatürk period” (ibid: 396) He also claims that the foreign issues should be considered “through the philosophy of *Misak-ı Milli*” and that this would also allow Turkey to “give an end to the relations with NATO” (ibid: 339). He responds to the comments regarding “Turkey being alone in international relations” by offering “an independent Turkey having good relations with Third World countries” (ibid: 399).

Finally, Aybar's "passive resistance campaign" against the Americans should be mentioned in the context of his anti-imperialism. Aybar offers that, "Turkish people should stop all their relations with the Americans and should create a circle of hate which gradually widens." Aybar's position had been criticized by the supporters of the MDD on the grounds that it did not offer a structural solution; rather, it was deemed an opportunist stand.

3.2.4 Class Alliances and the "National Front"

As stated above, there was not a remarkable divergence with the Yön and MDD groups, in the discourses of the TİP leaders on nationalism and anti-imperialism. In that sense, the views on class alliances, or namely the "national popular front", were not an exception. However, the issue of alliance with "national bourgeoisie" had been rejected by the TİP leaders on the grounds that it did not exist.

Along with rejecting the existence of a national bourgeoisie, Aybar was in favor of a national front just before the elections of 1965.

Today Turkey becoming economically and politically completely independent and survive, is a matter of life and death for the Turkish nation. As been done in the years of the War of Liberation, all the honest, courageous and patriot forces of our country should make alliances and have to act with solidarity. This is a sacred duty. (Aybar quoted in Aydın, 2003: 466)

Moreover, for Aybar the unification of the leftist forces was the first task to be realized. The reasons for this were: "The unification of all progressive forces into a single front, as today the fundamental contradiction is between the forces of progress and reaction. Thus, the main contradiction of our society, namely between worker and the employer, can be postponed" (1968: 199).

As in the case of the Yön and MDD groups, the front would be against imperialism outside and reactionary forces inside. The common platform had to be founded upon the principles of Kemalism, mainly on the anti-imperialism of Kemalism.

However, after the 1965 elections and with the MDD-SD debate, the attitude of the TİP leaders on the national front started to differ from that of the Yön and MDD groups. Indeed, it can be said that, particularly on the issue of national bourgeoisie, the TİP never shared the same ground. Moreover, their attitude against the class character of the front was hesitant. For the TİP, there was an emphasis on the “toiling people” and their vital role in the national front:

The struggle both for both national liberation and for socialism in no way means that it must be conducted only by socialists. The national liberation struggle must be carried on by a national front, which should unify all anti-imperialist strata. But the laboring people will know that they are fighting for socialism too. The national liberation war will be democratic leadership of a socialist party. (Aybar 1968: 506)

In the following paragraphs of the same page, Aybar claims that “if a socialist character is not attributed to the national liberation struggle,” it would end in a failure which is similar to the “First War of Liberation” (ibid). For Aybar, the struggle should not be limited to political ground, and the class character of the front should never be forgotten:

If the national liberation front carried on by the leadership of national bourgeoisie- which does not exist in Turkey- and the middle strata, those classes possibly will expel laboring masses from the government, most likely create an order that is not in favor of laboring classes and stratum and gradually enter into relations with imperialism again. (ibid.)

For Boran, the issue of leadership in the national front was a problematic one in the discourses of the Yön and MDD groups. For her, claiming that “the working class is weak, the party is weak, therefore let the middle strata take the lead” is not an argument in line with socialism (Boran quoted in Lipovsky, 1992: 38). In view of Boran’s disagreement with the Yön and MDD groups on the issue bases on her ideas on the intellectuals. For her, “intellectuals do not constitute a social class, thus they do not have economic and political forces” and “they can play a role in the social life just by representing a social class intentionally or unintentionally” (Boran quoted in Atılgan, 2007: 319).

Another reason for the opposition of the TİP leaders against the MDD and Yön groups was related to the differences between the revolution strategies. For Yön and to some extent for the MDD group, a military coup was something that was favored. However, Aybar states that “socialism cannot found from above” and insisted on the parliamentary ways of founding socialism. However, the idea of a national front relied on the military to a great extent. Due to those who opposed ideas on the very basic issues the idea of front had been something the TİP leaders gradually retreated from: “At present, in Turkish conditions, it is not possible to found a single front of all democratic and anti-imperialist forces and organizations on the basis of a common program, although, in principle the TİP is not against the establishment of such a front” (Boran quoted in Lipovsky, 1992: 40).

Similarly, Aybar states that “the class character of the national independence should not be forgotten” because “if the struggle is led by the national bourgeoisie or middle strata, in the future they will reconstruct their relations with imperialism” (Aybar quoted in Aydın, 1998: 73).

3.2.5 “Non-Capitalist Path of Development and “Developmentalist Socialism”

Similar to the Yön and MDD groups, for the TİP leaders, Turkey’s main problem was development. However, the conceptualization of the development strategy had changed through the debate on revolutionary strategy. Thus, in its first period, the non-capitalist path was of interest while starting with the second period, the socialist path was presented in combination with the non-capitalist path. Nevertheless, it should be stated that in the early years, the discourse of the TİP was decidedly concentrated on the “non-capitalist path of development” rather than socialism. That is to say, adoption of a “national-development” discourse which “equates socialism with development” was also valid for the TİP, particularly in the first years of the party. As stated by Ünsal, the TİP’s ideology can be summarized as “nationalism=anti-imperialism=development=socialism” and as a result its ideology easily shifted from socialism to developmentalism (2002: 384).

For Aybar, development requires change in the basic structure of the society. In other words, he rejects the view that economic and social structure changes as a result of development. He claims that: “Without doubt, if there is development, there will be some changes in the economic and social structure. However, in underdeveloped countries, unless some changes are realized beforehand, the expected development will not take place” (1968: 249).

For Aybar “the changes that should be realized beforehand” were agrarian reform, planning and a statist economic policy which would bring nationalization of foreign trade, banks and foreign capital. In the period before 1965, the general name given to those policies was a non-capitalist path of development.

Statism was one of the central elements of the TİP’s economic program. Aybar states that, “the state sector will play the chief, leading role in the development of the national economy” (1968: 391). In the statism of the TİP, there was space for private entrepreneurship, but in this mixed economy, the dominant role was given to the state sector. Aybar says that “only the branches of the economy that are not advantageous to nationalize” will be left to the private sector (ibid: 206). The aim of the permission of the private sector was “being a helpful sector of the national economy” (ibid: 250). According to the TİP leaders, the most crucial feature of statism was that “it should be in favor of labor” (TİP program quoted in Ünsal, 2002: 125).

One of the main tasks of the statist policy was to provide rapid industrialization. For Aybar, industrialization should be realized by the state sector; otherwise, it would be in favor of comprador bourgeoisie, thus imperialism.

As stated above, statism, mixed economy, planning can be examined under the label of non-capitalist path of development. The expression “non-capitalist path” emerged in the 1964 program of the TİP as the development strategy of the party. In other words, the economic policy of the TİP to build socialism was termed non-capitalist path (Aybar, 1968: 516). As in the case of the Yön and MDD groups, non-capitalist path referred to a transitional period to socialism. The main reason

behind the TIP's preference for a non-capitalist path resided in the claim that capitalist development was impossible for underdeveloped countries. On the other hand, the conditions for the establishment of socialism were lacking in underdeveloped countries. Thus, in underdeveloped societies a new method, namely non-capitalist path, was deemed necessary to catch up with the history of capitalism in the West mainly by eliminating the remnants of feudalism and providing rapid industrialization. Yet, as stated above, for the TIP leaders, in all those developments laboring masses was to be protected.

For Aybar, the non-capitalist path of development was in decidedly compatible with the Constitution of 1961. He explains the non-capitalist development model of the TIP in the following way:

- a) Distributing land to landless peasant families or peasant families who are short of land.
- b) The nationalization of foreign trade, banks and insurance business, thus, bringing them to the service of the whole nation.
- c) To found heavy industry enterprises by the state sector and supply the modern needs of the country internally.
- d) Founding heavy industries also to find a cure for the unemployment which became a social disaster.
- e) Building a fair taxing system.
- f) Fair distribution of national income in accordance with the labor. (Aybar, 1968: 391)

For Aybar, to achieve the non-capitalist path of development, change in the power structure was necessary. That is to say, the solution primarily was political. Moreover, according to Aybar, the constitution provided the necessary tools to realize that political change. The conceptualization of the Constitution of 1961 as

the grounds for providing the necessary conditions was consistent with the TİP leaders' Kemalism and the positive meanings they had attached to 27 May. As stated by Şimşek, for the TİP leaders “the non-capitalist path constitutes the backbone of a strategy formulated so as to realize the ideals of modernization development and reaching the level of contemporary civilization originating from Kemalism” (2004: 90)

However, although both Yön and CHP claim to have statist policies on the basis of Kemalist principles such as populism, the TİP leaders differentiate their form of statism from those two groups. As stated above, for Aybar, the TİP's statist program holds that “only the sectors that there is no good in their nationalization will be left to private sector” (Aybar, 1968: 206). However, according to Aybar, the statism of the CHP was like a support for the development of the private sector. Thus, the statism of the CHP “was used to make capital and land owners richer” (Aybar, *ibid*: 394). In other words, for the TİP leaders, the statism of the TİP favors labor while the CHP statism favors the rich and also creates a “bureaucratic bourgeoisie” (Boran quoted in Şimşek, 2004: 93). The TİP leaders made similar criticisms of the Yön group along with their criticisms over the revolutionary strategy. However, for Akdere and Karadeniz, apart from the revolutionary strategy, there was no significant difference between the contents of the Yön program and the TİP program, particularly in the pre-1965 period (1996: 263).

However, after the 1965 elections, the attitude of the TİP leaders on the non-capitalist path began to change. It can be said that discourse of “non-capitalist path” was replaced by “building socialism.” From 1965 onwards, the national democratic revolution was conceptualized as combined with a socialist revolution. According to Lipovsky, the main reason for that change in the discourse was led by the attempt to draw the distinction between the Yön group and the TİP which used the expression of “non-capitalist path.” Lipovsky also states that this attempt was to a great extent followed by the TİP's success in the elections (1992: 20). Moreover, noted by Şener, according to the TİP program, the non-capitalist path

was only possible through the leadership of the laboring classes and the national front was not a solution in itself. For Şener, the reason for choosing the phrase of the non-capitalist program had to do with the legitimization of the aims of the TİP. (Şener, 2007: 389) Similarly, for Dinler, the reason why the “non-capitalist path” took place in the TİP program was “its popularity among the ‘progressive intellectuals’ who are not fond of class antagonism in Turkey” (Dinler quoted in Ünsal, 2002: 125). Thus, from 1965 onwards, especially intensified after the famous Congress of 1966 in which the division between the sides became apparent, the famous SD-MDD debate had been one of the most decisive concerns of the Turkish left. The following part will explore the reasons for the debate by looking at how the class conceptions of the TİP differed from the Yön and MDD groups.

3.3 Class Analysis and Revolutionary Strategy

The source of the interpretations which distinguished the TİP as different from the other leftist groups of the same period, to a great extent, was the idea that the TİP had class oriented-analyses and strategy. Accordingly, the TİP highlighted the contradiction between labor and capital as the main contradiction, not the contradiction between imperialism and underdeveloped countries.

In this section, the question whether the TİP had a different class conception or not will be answered on the basis of the TİP’s conceptualization of different classes, especially the national bourgeoisie and working class; the controversial Article 53, which pertains to the different statuses of the party members; the ideas of the party leaders over the leadership of the working class; and the role of the intellectuals and the revolutionary strategy of the TİP which was one side of the SD-MDD debate. Although Aybar’s analyses of the bureaucracy as a specific class in Turkey is a very decisive element of the class conception of the TİP, it will not be dealt with in this section since it will be the subject of the next section, which is about Aybar’s ideas on the socialism peculiar to Turkey.

In the 1964 program of the TİP, classes in Turkey were grouped under three main headings. Those were the dominant classes, middle classes and working class and the landless peasants. Accordingly, the dominant classes were big landowners, tradesmen, industrialists and financial capital; the middle classes composed of petty tradesmen, artisans and craftsmen, petty landowners, civil servants, salaried and self-employed persons; and the working class and the landless peasants consisted of industrial workers and agricultural workers, landless or small landed peasants. As stated by many authors, the 1964 program of the TİP had had a very detailed analysis of the class structure of Turkey. Although the general analysis of the TİP's class analyses is a very important source since it was the only example of the day, within the limits of this thesis, only the sections related to the national bourgeoisie, working class and civil military stratum of the middle strata will be examined in particular.

In a general sense, it can be said that, at first glance, the class analyses of the TİP were different from the Yön and MDD groups on the basis of their position on the national bourgeoisie and working class. In terms of the national bourgeoisie, the attitude of the TİP was unambiguous:

What is the meaning of the term 'national'? Is it a bourgeois class that guards, protects the collective interests of the Turkish society, at least up to point, and resists against imperialism when necessary? It is impossible to give an affirmative answer to this question. The reality is like the following: Today, in Turkey, there is a national bourgeoisie which came to terms with imperialism and comprador capital and became a mediator between them. The object of this class is not to come against imperialism. On the contrary, the class aims to strengthen its ties with it and gradually increase its share from the imperialist and capitalist exploitation. (*TİP'linin El Kitabı* quoted in Yetkin, 1998: 78)

As rightly put by Lipovsky, the party leaders not only negated the revolutionary potential of the national bourgeoisie but also rejected its existence. In her book, *Turkey and Problems of Socialism*, Boran stated that even if there would have been any national bourgeois in Turkey, its fear of the working classes would have prevented its revolutionary potential (Lipovsky, 1992: 30). Furthermore, as stated above for the TİP leaders, apart from the fear of the working class, the alliances

with foreign capitalists made the national bourgeoisie a reactionary force. Aybar asserts that “external and internal exploitation are closely bound up with each other, into what forms a single system” (1968: 607). Nevertheless, it should be stated that in the 1964 program of the TİP, the issue of the national bourgeoisie together with the bureaucracy remained untouched. For Şener, the reason for this was the precautionary attitude of the TİP about coming against the attempts of the national front. For example, the role of the bureaucracy in the revolutionary process was viewed as positive while the later analyses of Aybar were just the opposite (Şener, 2007: 280).

As stated above, the position of the TİP on the working class has been considered a unique one. As different from the Third Worldist views of the Yön and MDD groups, its emphasis was both on class struggle and the struggle against imperialism at the same time. From the early years of the party, there was an emphasis that it was the party of the laboring masses. This claim was guaranteed by the Article 53, which later on caused the first dispute within the party (Gökmen, 2002). The Article 53 states:

It is observed that half of those holding posts in all bodies of the party be elected from among those members, who earn their living by selling their labor power to the owners of the means of production since they do not own their own means of production or those who are holding posts in the administrative bodies of labor unions. Slates to be presented to the congresses by the administrative bodies are prepared in line with this principle. The congresses elect the delegates and the bodies inspired by this guideline. (*Tüzük* quoted in Gökmen, 2002: 4)

With this article, the existence of the laboring classes was guaranteed and the main reason for the existence of the party was also clarified. For Aybar, the reason for Article 53 was to “prevent the hegemony of the leftist intellectuals in the party” (Aybar quoted in Akdere and Karadeniz, 1996: 259). For Akdere and Karadeniz, the debates over the Article 53 reflected the eclectic character of the TİP in that it was on the one hand trade-unionist and ouvriérist and on the other it was the reflection of the populism of the reformist intellectuals (ibid: 260).

The reasons for the claims of the TİP leaders made about the working class should be investigated through their analyses of the working class and capitalism in Turkey. As stated by Yetkin, during the 1960s, there was a general agreement amongst the left that the working class was increasing in size and importance rapidly (1998: 72-73). For the TİP leaders, the working class was adequate in number for gaining its political consciousness.

All these events clearly reveal that the working class has reached the level of political consciousness. Those who doubt the existence of our working class have found the opportunity to see, through their own eyes, both the existence and power of the Turkish working class at Saraçhanebaşı. (TİP, 2003: 90)

Although there were some negative factors such as the continuance of the rural ties, which caused conservatism, and most of the members of the working class were working in small-scale enterprises, which caused them to be dispersed, the working class can still be considered as the “agent” of the progressive change (Aybar, 1968; Boran, 1970).

For the TİP leaders the importance of the peasantry was not to be forgotten. For Aybar, the peasantry was the most oppressed and numerous stratum of Turkish society. Nevertheless, according to Aybar, the leading force was the working class:

The working class must become the leading force in the social and political transformation of Turkey. Although the peasants constitute the 74.6 percent of the gainfully employed population, the working class is a more organized, more coherent and more class conscious force. (Aybar quoted in Lipovsky, 1992: 26)

The position of the TİP leaders on the conditions of the working class had been better formulated after the elections of the 1965 and 1966 TİP Congress. As stated by Küçük, with the MDD-SD dispute, both sides went to extremes with their own theses. The MDD side exaggerated feudalism in Turkey, while the SD side exaggerated the amount of and the political consciousness of the working class and the development of capitalism. (Küçük, 1990: 307)

In her book, *Turkey and Problems of Socialism*, Boran was against almost all the historical and political analyses of the MDD group, particularly on the issue of the revolutionary potential of the working class. She claims that the foundation of the TİP within the working class is the strongest evidence of the spontaneous consciousness of the Turkish working class (1970: 147). However, on the issue of the leadership she states that, “leadership is not a privilege given to the working class by the parties or the socialist theory” but the “working class becomes the leader of the other laboring classes as it realize this historical mission” (ibid).

Nevertheless, Boran enumerates the weaknesses of the Turkish working class in the same chapter of the book.²⁵ For Boran, the industrialization level of Turkey was not enough for an organized movement. Secondly, the Turkish working class was at the very beginning of its emergence as a class. The main reasons for this were its continuing relations with the village and when compared to the village conditions, the conditions of the urban areas were still better. Thirdly, the stratification within the working class was an obstacle in its organization in that some were better off compared to the others. Finally, the “governed trade unionism”, which was controlled by the government, was a difficulty for the struggle of the Turkish working class (Atılğan, 2007: 380-381).

When it comes to the middle classes, which include petty tradesmen, artisans and craftsmen, petty landowners, civil servants, salaried and self-employed persons, the civil servants are the most important category for the aims of this study. The military-civil stratum, which was a central force of revolution for the Yön and MDD groups, was termed as “progressive intellectuals” by the TİP leaders. Aybar states that:

Great responsibility is conferred upon the intellectuals in the building of socialism. They have at their possession the knowledge of the theory of

²⁵ The weaknesses asserted by Boran were not reached by a comparison with developed Western countries’ working classes; rather, as claimed by Atılğan, they were reached through an analysis of Turkey’s unique historical development. This point is considered to be an important since it provides clues about the later discussions of Boran and Aybar on the issue of peculiarism. For Boran, to see the peculiarities, one should look at the inner dynamics of the social structure while for Aybar, comparison with the other countries was valid (Atılğan, 2007: 380).

socialism without which the development of the socialist movement is impossible. However, socialism is the ideology of the working class and all laboring masses. Therefore, the intellectuals should cooperate with the masses and work within the political organization of the masses. (Aybar, 1968: 501)

Thus, for the TİP leaders, the role of the intellectuals or the civil stratum was a limited one. Aybar states that a top to down power cannot be accepted by the Turkish society. In other words, for Aybar, a bureaucratic system “in the name of socialism” should be rejected (Yetkin, 1998: 127). That is to say, unlike Avcıoğlu who ascribes a progressive role to the military and intellectuals even if they are disconnected from the masses, the TİP leaders were skeptical of the role of the middle strata. With the debate over the character of the bureaucracy in Turkey, this issue will be further addressed in the next section.

However, before Aybar’s opinions on the bureaucracy in Turkey, the revolutionary strategy of the TİP should briefly be investigated. As stated above, for the TİP the leadership of the revolution should be reside with the working class. With the MDD-SD debate, the TİP leaders started to emphasize the indivisibility of the national democratic and socialist revolutions. The idea behind this was the integrity of anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist struggles. For the TİP leaders this was a natural outcome because for them the major contradiction in Turkey was “between American imperialism with its allies lords-compradors-Americanist bureaucrats trio and all laboring classes and layers” (Aybar, 1968: 640).

In a similar manner Boran states that: “The phase proposed by the TİP is not the phase of national democratic revolution which was offered for the new independent countries after World War II. This formula was offered for the countries that do not have a working class or with very little of one” (Boran, 1970: 253).

For Boran, Turkey was not a country without a working class or with a small working class. She states that the reason why Turkey did not need a national

democratic revolution is that the “War of Liberation and the revolutions following it, which correspond to the national democratic revolution, were realized by the military civil strata and within the bourgeois ideology” (ibid: 254).

However, according to the TİP leaders the gains of the national liberation struggle had been lost and that was why what needed to be done was to have both anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist struggles. In Aybar’s words:

The struggle against American dominance in the country is at one and the same time a struggle for the displacement of the regime of exploitation, a struggle for socialism; we have lost the gains of the national liberation war that we won. And we are determined not to repeat this error. The class that leads in the national-liberation struggle will give it its class character. (Aybar quoted in Lipovsky, 1992: 33)

Finally, one of the most central disagreements between the TİP and the other leftist groups of the same period was the revolutionary means. The TİP leaders were very keen on parliamentary democracy, often emphasizing trust in the 1961 Constitution and democracy. Because of this, the TİP was accused of opportunism by the MDD supporters, and this stance had been a very important reason for the youth to rally against the TİP.

3.4 Aybar and “Socialism Peculiar to Turkey”

The term “Turkish Socialism” started to be used by Aybar from the very early years of the TİP. However, after 1968 and the separation of Boran and Aybar, the position of Aybar on the peculiarities of Turkey and Turkish socialism became better articulated. Before explaining Turkish socialism or socialism peculiar to Turkey as Aybar used it, it should be asked what the historical analyses behind those concepts were. Here, the bureaucracy analysis of Aybar, together with the concepts of autocratic state (*ceberrut devlet*) and the Asiatic mode of production, is the most important point. The bureaucracy analysis of Aybar is very crucial both because it is the very source of conflict with the MDD and Yön theses on national democratic revolution and the leadership of the military-civil stratum and the source of the peculiarism thesis. That is to say, with his bureaucracy analysis,

Aybar, on the one hand came up against the Yön and MDD groups, but on the other hand started to emphasize the peculiarities of Turkey and thus shared similar grounds with them.

For Aybar, bureaucracy in Turkey exhibits the characteristics of a social class in Turkey, with this position being inherited from the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, for Aybar, bureaucracy was the most powerful of the dominant classes. Unlike the Western countries, in the Ottoman Empire, the civilian and military groups had their dominant position from their ability to retain a hold on the surplus value through de facto ownership of the means of production. This was increased by controlling and regulating the production process and authority in political decisions (Şimşek, 2004: 70). According to Aybar, this historical peculiarity in the nature of the major contradiction became different in Turkey when compared to Western countries. Thus, the historical heritage of the Ottoman Empire was still an important fact in the Republican history. According to the TİP program, “as the intervention of state to economic life increased, close connections between the power holding bureaucratic strata and the upper strata of the private sector were formed” (Mura, 2003: 102).

As stated before, the position of the 1964 program of the TİP on bureaucracy was positive. However, later analyses of Aybar developed in a different direction. From 1966 onwards, Aybar began to pronounce his ideas on the bureaucracy together with the concepts of an Ottoman type of state, *ceberrut devlet*, group of notables (*bey takımı*) and bureaucrat bourgeoisie (Şener, 2007: 282).

Aybar provides a detailed historical analysis of bureaucracy in his book “*Turkish Socialism*”, which was published in 1968. In this book, he states that to comprehend the peculiar conditions and contradictions of Turkey, “we should start with the investigation of the social classes” (1968: 645). Aybar states that bureaucrats are in an alliance with landlords and compradors and they still play an important role in the state administration. In the Ottoman Empire, “the land was possessed by the state” and “administrative class which has the political power

governs the working activity” (ibid: 639). He calls this system an “Ottoman type of state” (ibid). This type of state was characterized by “a group of administrators who became a class” and it was “above and external to the masses” (ibid: 645). This administrative cadre became a *sui generis* dominant class which was identified with the state. Aybar states that to use the term “class” for this administrative cadre is not improper since it has all the legal authority to organize the working conditions in a way that it can obtain the surplus (ibid. 646). In the following sections, Aybar explains how this administrative cadre became the administrative body of the Turkish republic and states that bureaucrats are the oldest of the dominant classes in Turkey. He also adds that on 27 May, the progressive wing of the bureaucratic class won against the landlord-comprador alliance and protected its own power (ibid).

After the analysis of Turkish bureaucracy and the concept of the “Ottoman type of state,” Aybar also comments on the bourgeoisie of Turkey and its differences from the Western world and the differences of the major contradictions of West and Turkey. In his book, *Turkish Socialism*, he states that in the Ottoman Empire, there were two classes which were “an exploitative administrative class almost consolidated with the state” and “the exploited class which includes peasantry as well as urban population” (1968: 656). He says that in the Republican period, the system of comprador capitalism did not change this situation and that because of the distorted development of capitalism; the country has increasingly divided the society into two classes as the exploiters and the exploited just as in the case of the Ottoman Empire. After the penetration of American imperialism into the country, the exploiter and exploited classes are respectively like: “landlords, compradors and Americanist bureaucrats” and “laboring classes and stratum.” Thus, for Aybar, the major contradiction of Turkey was between “imperialism and its allies and laboring classes” just like the other countries subject to imperialism (ibid: 657).

In other words, Aybar differentiates the capitalist Western countries from the dependant underdeveloped countries and states that “in advanced capitalist

countries the major contradiction is between the bourgeoisie and industrial worker,” whereas in dependant countries, the major contradiction is determined by the conditions of imperialism (ibid: 658).

It is important to note that for Aybar, just like the MDD and Yön groups, being a progressive was equated to being anti-imperialist and nationalist. This was also a difference when compared to the Western societies:

The most important contradiction of our society today is the contradiction between progressivism and reactionism. Certainly in societies, where the means of production are subject to private property, the fundamental contradiction is the contradiction between the employer and the worker. But in some cases, a second or third degree contradiction may achieve the same importance with a contradiction of the first degree. (Aybar 2002: 209)

It should be noted that although the ideas of Boran and Aybar began to differ after 1966, particularly with regard to “socialism peculiar to Turkey” and “bureaucracy,” they were on the same grounds in terms of the differences of Turkey from an industrialized Western country.

After a brief explanation of Aybar’s historical analysis of the Ottoman Empire, particularly the relationship between the “Ottoman type of state” and the bureaucracy, his ideas on the “socialism peculiar to Turkey” can be investigated.

As stated above, Aybar’s use of the concept of the peculiarism depends on the analysis of the specific conditions of Turkey. He summarizes the features of Turkey under five headings that firstly Turkey has the legacy of the “Ottoman type of state”; secondly, the capitalism in Turkey developed in a comprador manner; thirdly, there are remnants of feudalism in some parts of Turkey; fourthly, “Turkey won the first national independence war of the history” and finally, Turkey has a constitution which is “in favor of the people, open to socialism and democratic” (1968: 639-640). Aybar states that those five features “determine the essence and form of our struggle for socialism and lead to the

concept of Turkish socialism” (ibid). For Aybar, those features of Turkey are peculiar to it and it is not probable to find a similar example.

Later on, Aybar developed his list of peculiar conditions of Turkey and again stated that Turkish socialism will be built upon those preconditions. Accordingly, in Turkey, bureaucracy is a *sui generis* dominant class; Turkey is a semi-colony which used to be an empire that exploited other countries; Turkey has been subjected to imperialism over again after winning the national War of Liberation; the bonds of the working class with the village still continue due to the experience of comprador capitalist development; the laboring classes of Turkey have a strong solidarity culture due to the old institutions such as “*fittivvet* and *ahilik*”; Turkey is a country which experiences sect differences; Turkey is a country where several languages are spoken and finally the people of Turkey are more sensitive about their honors, repression and to be despised rather than exploitation and hunger (Aybar quoted in Atılgan, 2007: 517).

Aybar explains what he means by “peculiar.” He states that “contradiction is universal and absolute,” but “universality is embedded in actual and peculiar”. For him, since “all events and beings are concrete, all of them have their own inner contradictions, own major contradictions and secondary contradictions.” Due to those facts, each society should analyze its own peculiarities and develop its methods of struggles for socialism accordingly. (ibid: 644-645)

Aybar defines the qualities of Turkish socialism in the following way:

We define Turkish Socialism as that system of theory and practice which arises out of the theoretical elaboration of the historical conditions peculiar to Turkey and out of the application of socialism in harmony with these conditions (...) the socialism of TİP, Turkish socialism, is not an imported item. It does not resemble the Eastern or Western forms of socialism, since Turkey is neither East nor West. Turkey has unique conditions of its own (...) Well, Turkey is such society. There is probably no society akin to it. The struggle for socialism is being conducted in the conditions of this society. The conditions peculiar to Turkey exhibit a different scene on the level of contradictions in society (...) the struggle for socialism is peculiar to Turkey and so is the socialism to be established under the guidance of

the general features of the socialist mode of production (Aybar quoted in Yetkin, 1998: 41).

He claims that for the construction of socialism, it is not possible through the “exact application of the prescriptions in books” because “each society has unique historical qualities of its own and the construction of socialism requires the separate assessment of each of these conditions.” For Aybar “this is a task, which leaves no place for imitation and dogmatism” and “the members of the TİP shall write the BOOK of Turkish socialism from A to Z” (1968: 479).

As stated before, Aybar’s use of the concept of Turkish socialism became an issue of controversy inside the TİP. Below this will be further elaborated upon. However, before that, another issue of controversy should be explored, namely Aybar’s employment of the terms “humanitarian” and “free” socialism and “socialism with a smiling face.” Aybar started to use those terms after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and as a means of his protest against the invasion. Another reason of his use of the term can be seen as a protest against the “bureaucratic dominant class” in Turkey.

Finally, it can be said that Aybar’s appropriation of the terms Turkish socialism and free or humanitarian socialism has something to do with deciding on using populist discourses (Şener, 2006: 246). On the other hand, according to Atılgan, there are four factors of Aybar’s use of the terms. First of all, Aybar intended to fill the gap that prevented the socialist ideas from being popularized. For him, the reason for that gap was the impact of Communist Party of Soviet Union on Turkey. For Aybar, since no original ideas were produced on the topic of socialism, masses could not internalize it. Secondly, Aybar was against the idea that the Soviet model was the only one and the other countries should imitate it. For Atılgan, the third reason was the attempt to avoid the mistakes which made the Soviet Union a bureaucratized entity. Thus, to avoid this, Turkish socialists should stay away from the Comintern line. Finally, for Aybar, since there was a general impression that socialism was an ideology “whose roots are foreign,” to

defeat this image, one should claim socialism as a native ideology (Atılgan, 2007: 513-514).

In conclusion, the dispute with Boran and the other TIP members is worth explaining to understand how Aybar diverged from the party and how the theoretical view-point of Boran was different from Aybar. It can be said that the position of Aybar was an ambiguous one because on the one hand, he was against the MDD thesis and claimed that conditions of the working class and capitalism were mature enough for socialism in Turkey, while on the other hand he was calling for the uniqueness of Turkey and the need to find a unique way for socialism. The position of Aybar changed in relation with the MDD opposition started after 1966. However, it is important to note that while criticizing the MDD and Yön groups, Aybar came to a similar point where all argued for the peculiarities of Turkey. The views of Aybar, particularly on the role of the intellectuals and bureaucracy and national front, can be said to be changed after 1966. However, Aybar himself claimed that there was no inconsistency between these views. Yet, Boran with whom Aybar shared ideas from the very beginning of the party, claims that his ideas on the socialism peculiar to Turkey, which they shared before, were not meaning the same to Aybar anymore (Mura, 2003). Boran states that for Aybar, “[in time] Socialism peculiar to Turkey became a socialism that is odd, as if it was happening in the world for the first time,...a *sui generis* socialism” (ibid: 62).

The differences between Boran’s and Aybar’s views are manifold. For instance, from the very beginning, Boran was against Aybar’s analysis of bureaucracy in Turkey. According to Boran, it was true that the administrative cadre was the dominant class in the Ottoman Empire. However, for Boran, the same was valid for European feudalism that in both cases since the surplus extraction mechanism created a class antagonism in which the administrative class became both a class and a state. Although there are important differences between the history of Europe and Ottoman Empire, the main point of surplus extraction was the same. Similarly, for Boran, Aybar’s claim of bureaucracy being a *sui generis* class was

not proper (Atilgan, 2007: 507-508). This was due to two reasons that first, bureaucracy was not the dominant class only in the Ottoman Empire, and second, “each type of society is defined through the determination of **basic** and general features. In each type, concrete situations differ according to the society but we cannot say that it is a *sui generis* order. (Boran quoted in Atilgan, 2007: 508, emphasis in original)

In addition to that, according to Boran, Aybar’s view on bureaucracy is an ahistorical one, that for her, although Aybar stated that bureaucracy transformed into a stratum from a class in the republican period, his analysis did not take the transformations that came out with Republican period into consideration (ibid).

As stated above, for Boran, emphasizing the differences, more than generalities is a deviation from Marxism. Moreover, according to her making comparisons with other countries and, accordingly, reaching some results is not a correct way of analysis. She states that “in the stage of capitalism, underdeveloped countries can be defined according to their own class relations not by comparing with the example of classical England” and “the character of class relations and balances of a country can only be assigned by comparing the antagonistic classes within the country” (ibid: 331).

3.5 Assessment of the TİP and Aybar on “Peculiarism”

As stated in the first part of this study, the TİP was considered as a different example compared to the Yön and MDD groups. For example, Aydın uses the term of peculiarism only for Yön and the MDD but differentiates the TİP along with emphasizing the similarities of their discourses on Kemalism, nationalism and anti-imperialism in the pre-1965 period. Similarly, according to Belge, the TİP was a party “which does not have so many comparable examples in the world.” He states that it was not a party organized around Leninist principles and it was talking about class. In those terms, it was similar to social democrat parties with its organization style and similar to communists with its ideology (Belge, 2000: 41).

The differences between the TİP and the Yön and MDD groups can be discerned through the MDD-SD debate. The most remarkable difference was the TİP's analyses of Turkey as a capitalist country. However, when it comes to the basic notions of what has been called "Turkish socialism", the distance between TİP and other groups of the same period blurs. Moreover, especially in the position of Aybar, some notions bring inconsistencies. For instance, Aybar's position on Kemalism was an affirmative one in which he claims that for example the foreign policy of the early Turkish Republic was the ideal condition and he stated that the TİP's point of departure is Atatürkism. Similarly, he stated that the War of Liberation or 27 May were progressive movements. However, on the other hand, he criticized the bureaucracy as the "eternal dominant class" in Turkey and in a sense criticized the Kemalist state tradition. The latter ideas of Aybar were in line with theories stemming from the AMP or Küçükömer's political theses derived from that analysis. Aybar continued to support those ideas in 1982 and stated that the principles of the War of Liberation and socialism which were founded by the masses or from the bottom were not incompatible (2002: 224). These points will be further elaborated upon in the next chapter.

As stated before, especially until the post-1965 period, it is not possible to differentiate the discourses of the TİP from those Yön with both of their emphases on Kemalism, nationalism, development and anti-imperialism. The differentiation started with the dispute with the MDD group inside the TİP and gradually the discourses of the party changed. It can be said that the reason for differentiation or emphasis being placed on socialism rather than nationalism was a result of drawing clear lines with the MDD group rather than a theoretical debate.

However, on their presentation of Turkish socialism, there were certain differences between the Yön group and Aybar. First of all, the position of the Yön group did not have an anti-capitalist content. However, there is an anti-capitalist stand with the TİP and Aybar, although it stays at the level of discourse. Secondly, the agent of the revolution was presented differently. For the Yön group it was the middle strata while for the TİP the leadership of the proletariat was

obligatory. The method of taking power was also different in that for Yön group, a military coup was desirable, while the TİP insisted on parliamentary transition to socialism. Finally, for the Yön group, the non-capitalist path of development was an end in itself; for the TİP it was a transitory period to socialism.

Nevertheless, although there were remarkable differences between the positions of Aybar and Yön group, they can still be placed under the same rubric. Be it an idea of socialism in the leadership of the middle strata or the socialism in the leadership of the proletariat, those theories intersected at a point, which was to emphasize the peculiarities of Turkey. As such, Marxism was not enough to understand a country such as Turkey that had unique characteristics where socialism would be experienced in a very different manner than in any other country of the world.

According to Ünsal, as similar to Aydın, the left in Turkey at the time could be positioned within two main trends, namely internationalist and nationalist. The first was in the line of Soviet Union, whereas second emphasized nationalism. He states that within the TİP, it was possible to follow the traces of both streams. Since Turkey was “caught” in the West, the Soviet Union and Third World countries, thus in the TİP, the influences of Kemalism, the Comintern line and peculiarism that represented itself as nationalism could be seen. For Ünsal, this eclectic approach was the reason of all disputes inside the TİP (Ünsal, 2002: 316-317).

Before concluding it should be stated that the position of Behice Boran can said to be a unique one. If defining the Turkish left on the basis of being either universalist or peculiarist, Boran is among the few figures who can counted under the former.²⁶ Her position is different from both the understanding which imitates the Soviet line or which adapts to the experiences of other Third World countries. Her stand is trying to understand peculiarities of Turkey without attaining a *sui generis* position.

²⁶ With his emphasis on class, Hikmet Kıvılcımlı can said to have been one of the other figures.

The so-called eclectic position of the TİP was also used by the TİP leaders to gain support. This position became obvious in the later stance of Aybar. In other words, all of those trends were representing a different sector of the Turkish society, and to gain the support of the mixture of the diverse groups, they were to be represented in the peculiar way as advocated for by Aybar. It can be said that the differences in the presentation of the Turkish Socialism stems from pragmatic concerns of the party. This can said to be natural because it was the only group formed under a party and thus needed public support in a different manner.

CHAPTER 4

THEORETICAL AND CONJUNCTURAL SOURCES OF “SOCIALISM PECULIAR TO TURKEY”

In the previous two chapters, the debates on the “Socialism Peculiar to Turkey” have been examined in the specific cases of Yön, the MDD and Mehmet Ali Aybar. To understand the peculiarism within the Turkish left, some concepts are taken for granted as are the basic premises of it. These concepts are nationalism, anti-imperialism, developmentalism, Kemalism and “national front.” This chapter aims to analyze the theoretical and conjunctural sources of the employment of these concepts in the Turkish left. However, it should be stated that it is not always possible to differentiate between the theoretical and conjunctural sources. This difficulty reveals itself mostly in the case of the “national question” and the inseparability of the theories of Lenin and Stalin and the foreign policy of the Soviet Union, which can be followed from the decisions taken by the Comintern. That is why, despite the theoretical and conjunctural sources being examined separately, in some cases, they are interconnected.

Secondly, the sources mentioned above are not always a common denominator for all the groups of the Turkish left. For instance, Aybar with his anti-Leninist stand cannot be said to have been influenced from the writings of Lenin. Moreover, in some cases, it is possible to see that there are evident differences between those groups over the so-called sources. For instance, while Aybar was heavily influenced by the Asiatic Mode of Production debates, Avcıoğlu and Belli were opponents of that thesis. Nevertheless, if the sources below are considered as determining (and determined by) the conjuncture, thus having indirect influences

over people, this confusion can be solved. As stated before, in this thesis, it is not claimed that all those sources and the figures of the Turkish left have organic links. Rather, it can be said that there are some similarities which can be intuitively comprehended. Yet, there are also some obvious influences which can be seen in the direct references of the figures of the Turkish left.

The influences are more likely to be obvious in the case of conjunctural sources compared to the theoretical ones. For example, the effect of Kemalist ideology on the Turkish left undeniably embraced all of the different groups of the period.

Thirdly, most of the influences mentioned below belong to a period prior to the 1960s. Since there was only the TKP in this period, those influences are indirect and complicated. That is to say that the ideological influence of the TKP on the Turkish left has been taken for granted in some cases.

4.1 Theoretical Sources

It is not easy to uncover the theoretical influences on the Turkish left. The main reason for this is that, it is not so apparent who was influenced by whom, unless s/he gives references. Certainly, it can be said that there are parallel thoughts, but this may not provide necessary verification.

Moreover, the lacking relationship of the Turkish left with theory is a statement which is agreed upon. For instance, according to Aydınoglu, the “fear of theory” in the Turkish left started with the TKP. For Aydınoglu, the main reasons for this were the prohibitions against the party and, as a result, the lack of interest from the intellectuals. Secondly, the development of the TKP just along with the Comintern which corresponded to a harsh Stalinism was an important reason. For Aydınoglu, the TIP was equally guilty on the issue of the fear of theory. He states that, “in the second half of the 1960s, the only theoretical text of the party was the 1964 program which was theoretically limited.” He adds that the 1964 program was an eclectic one which claimed to address all the problems of Turkey. However, starting with the first dispute in the party between the MDD thesis and

the party line, the issue of theory became an apparent problem. Indeed, the need for theory started to be discussed with the “Debates on the TİP” which took place in Yön. However, the party leaders’ attitudes against the demands were negative (Aydınöğlü, 2007: 128-131). For instance, Aybar states that:

While on the one hand the attacks against continue, on the other hand another indirect method was used. The publication of the Marxist texts was allowed (...) The aim behind this was not so obvious. I guess it was creating opposition groups within the leftist youth against the TİP’s socialism and providing the theoretical discussions to get inside the TİP. (...) The plan of America was perfect. (Aybar quoted in Aydınöğlü, 2007: 132)

As can be seen from the quotation, Aybar’s position against theory was full of conspiracy theories. The opposition from the MDD side was regarded as a “theoretical revolution” by Aydınöğlü (ibid: 170). It is a very well known fact that the main texts of Marxism had been translated by the main figures of MDD group such as Mihri Belli. That is to say, while the translations were the objects of a conspiracy for Aybar, for some scholars they created a theoretical revolution.

Similarly, Çulhaoğlu states that in many other countries the history of Marxism cannot be thought of as independent from working class movements. However, in Turkey there is not a significant relation between Marxism and the political movements or class movements. He states that in 19th century Europe, Marxism influenced intellectuals and it went hand and hand with the growing working class movement. However, in Turkey, since the main motive behind the Ottoman intellectuals was “saving the country,” Marxism was alien not only because of the undeveloped character of capitalism and the working class but also because of its very content concentrated in the liberation of humanity. The second important reason for the lack of interest in the Marxist theory was its conditions of birth in Turkey. He states that in Europe, until 1917, there was a Marxist tradition with its own debates. However, in Turkey, Marxism was born into the debates that arose with Bolshevism and Comintern. Due to this, Turkish leftist intellectuals were locked into “politics, pragmatism and conjuncture” (Çulhaoğlu, 2007: 68-69). Yurtsever has similar notions about the pragmatism of the Turkish left which

limits it with Kemalism throughout its history. For him, the reasons for this exceed the limits of Turkish intellectuals and politicians. According to Yurtsever, the interests of the Soviet Union, which were restricted by the very fact of socialism in one country, were theorized, resulting in the abstract principles such as supporting the national bourgeois. He states that since Turkish leftists were already lacking necessary theoretical tools, they imitated Soviet theses (2002: 26, 141).

After stating this, it becomes more difficult to differentiate the theoretical influences from the conjunctural forces. Nevertheless, there are some ideological links between the main theoretical currents and the leftist groups. Within the scope of this study, theoretical influences over the Turkish left has been limited to Third Worldism, Marx, Engels and Lenin on the national question and debates over the Asiatic mode of production and Maoism. Here, it should be stated that Third Worldism is more of a general term that includes the following.

4.1.1 Third Worldism

The concept of Third Worldism is generally used in association with the resistance of colonies against colonizers. In that context, the position of Turkey can be said to be different. Turkey has never been a colony and, for some, it experienced the War of Independence at a relatively early date when compared to other Third World countries.²⁷ Nevertheless, there are some similar features of Third Worldism, particularly the combination of it with Marxism, in the Turkish context. Among the most noticeable common features are nationalism, the idea of a popular national front, developmentalism and anti-imperialism.

According to Molyneux and Halliday, the journey of Marxism in the Third World has two equally dimensions. The first of those is the “response of the Western

²⁷ Within the scope of Third Worldism, generally the following countries are considered: Angola, Mozambique, Tanzania, Madagascar, the Seychelles, Zimbabwe, Algeria, Benin, Congo-Brazzaville, Cape Verde, Guinea, Nicaragua, Burkina Faso, Ghana, South Yemen, Somalia, Ethiopia, Libya, Iraq, Syria, Grenada, Jamaica, Chile, Cambodia, Cuba, Laos and Vietnam. (Malley, 1996: 111)

Marxists to the Third World” and the second is the “the development of Marxism itself in the countries of the South” (1984: 19). Some scholars argue that it is not possible to make a differentiation between those two dimensions because there is an interdependent relation between them. For instance, for d’Encausse and Schram, “Marxism itself could not escape unchanged from the encounter with the Third World” (1969: 4). Similarly, Malley states that the term Third Worldism carries an ambiguity inside in that it refers both to “Third World as an ideology *about* and as an ideology *of* the Third World” (1996: 3). Moreover, he states that “...the birth of Third Worldism, as an anti-imperialist ideology of national self-determination, came about (for the most part) via contact with the metropolitan capitals of colonial Europe” (ibid: 18).

The first dimension stated by Molyneux and Halliday, namely response of the Western Marxists to the Third World,²⁸ will be elaborated upon further in the next section of this chapter, but the second dimension should be explained here. The second dimension is the development of Marxism in the Third World countries. According to Malley, who has written on the experience of Algeria as a Third World country, the Soviet Union’s “Congress of the People of the Orient” and the “First Congress of the Anti-Imperialist League” in 1927 were the events where Third Worldism was born (1996: 22). For him, there are some basic features of Third Worldist ideology in those countries and intellectuals of those countries:

At the root of Third Worldism, (...) one finds the encounter between three seemingly incompatible attitudes —assimilationist, traditionalist, and socialist. In their unadulterated version, the first strived for equalization between the colony (or dependency) and the metropolis via cooptation; the second called for separation between the two through an affirmation of the former’s identity (e.g., by taking refuge in religion or custom); and the third aimed at transcending the dichotomy by engineering a universal working-class revolution. (ibid: 23)

He also states that the role of nationalism is very crucial in Third Worldism. It was only through nationalism that the “Third World emerges from backwardness

²⁸ Within the scope of this study, the response from the West is limited to Marx and Engels. Lenin, who was cultivated with European Marxism, can be said to have a mediatory position with his theory of imperialism (d’Encausse and Schram, 1969: 4).

and realizes its full destiny” (ibid: 31). Among the other features of Third World ideologies, he counts the reaction against modernization theory on the grounds that non-development of the Third World was not caused by internal reasons, but it was “Europe [that] underdeveloped it” (ibid: 83). This resulted in an anti-imperialist ideology. He states that what came with this anti-imperialist and anti-westernist ideology was a reaction against democratization receipts of Europe be it constitutionalism or parliamentarianism. In his words: “...more important than electoral fairness was the leader’s representativity as measured in terms of his or her position on issues of social justice and foreign domination” (ibid: 85).

Considering the Turkish left in the light of the principles offered by Malley on Third Worldism, it is possible to see similarities as well as dissimilarities resulting from historical differences of Turkey from the colonial countries. Firstly, the first of the three principles, namely assimilationism, can said to be relevant for Turkey to some extent. The intellectuals, particularly of the Yön group, were educated in Europe and their main motive for Turkey was to have it reach the level of contemporary civilization. When it comes to traditionalism, the affirmation of religious identities not being valid may be due to the effect of Kemalist tradition with its Enlightenment ideals. The ideologies of nationalism and anti-imperialism can said to be the determining factors of the Turkish left, especially between 1960 and 1970. When it comes to the reactions against constitutionalism and parliamentarianism, there are some differences due to the historical differences of Turkey. Nevertheless, except for the TİP with its emphasis on parliamentary democracy, the Yön and MDD groups’ relations with the military and the criticism of parliamentarianism as being the tool of imperialism can be evaluated under this heading.

4.1.2 Marxism on/in the Third World

Marxism is generally thought as a European ideology. However, history has demonstrated that the expected revolution did not take place in Europe but in the “underdeveloped” parts of the world. According to some scholars, the position of

Marxism against the Third World is dominated by its Eurocentric view and claim for the progressive role of the West. Thus, colonization was given a positive role by Marxism. However, the literature on the relation between Marxism and the Third World shows that the reality is not that simple. Actually, the question of Marxism's relation with the underdeveloped world has two dimensions. The first of those is related to the question of historical development and stages. On that issue the debates over the Asiatic Mode of Production and Marx's writings over India provide the answers; this is the question of the next section of this chapter. The second dimension is about Marx's interpretations on the Third World and as stated by d'Encausse and Schram, "the encounter between Marxism and the non-European world required a mediation, which was carried out by Lenin." Accordingly, the questions over right of self-determination, imperialism and the national question are products of Marx's legacies. Nevertheless, in this section, Marx's own evaluations of the "national question" will be taken into consideration with the examples of Poland and Ireland. The aim behind this investigation is to understand to what extent the concepts assigned to Third World Marxism was inherent to it and to what extent Turkish leftists were influenced by them.

As stated above, the position of Marx and Engels on the national question is discussed through the specific cases of Poland and Ireland. However, there is also a very accepted idea on the relationship of Marxism with nationalism. According to the differentiation that Avineri made between two Marx, it is the first one, namely the Marx in the *Communist Manifesto* stating that:

National differences and antagonisms between peoples are daily more and more vanishing, owing to the development of the bourgeoisie, to freedom of commerce, to the world market, to uniformity in the mode of production and in the conditions of life corresponding to them. (Marx quoted in Avineri, 1991: 639)

For Avineri, this is the Marx with the principle, "workingmen have no country" (ibid). This stance of Marx is interpreted by Löwy to be determined by the economism that Marx considered national differences as if they were merely the

result of differences in the production processes (1977: 65). However, he states that later on, Marx's ideas on nationalism matured and he started to offer an "explanation of nationalism as a modern superstructural expression of the bourgeois need for larger markets and territorial consolidation" (ibid: 640). For Avineri, since then, Marx started to support nationalist movements for instrumentalist reasons that "whatever helped develop capitalism was, ultimately, hastening its demise" (ibid). On the other hand, Marx was in favor of the national independence of Poland. For Avineri, this attitude of Marx was "wholly instrumental". The support for the Polish case was about its being a "severe setback to Russia (...) and set up a buffer state between a weakened Russia and the West, thus making Russian counter-revolutionary intervention more difficult and less likely" (ibid: 642).

Similarly, Woods and Grant state that Marx had a very flexible position on the national question, which means he interpreted questions related to the nation from the "standpoint of the general interests of the proletariat and the international revolution" (2000: 1). In other words, for Marx and Engels, self-determination was not an abstract principle and there is not an obligation such as supporting every moment of self-determination. Moreover, even if the national movement has a progressive content, if the proletariat does not maintain its "class independence from the bourgeoisie", it may not be supported (ibid: 2). Woods and Grant give the example of the Franco-Prussian War and Marx's position here.

Marx's and Engels's position on the case of Ireland is also used to understand their stance on the national question and the colonies. As stated by Woods and Grant, Marx's position on Ireland was linked to the question of "social emancipation" from the very beginning. Engels's letter to Bernstein dated 1882 is a classic example of their standpoint: "I think that two nations in Europe have the national rights before being international, which are Poland and Ireland. This is the responsibility of those two nations. As they become nations, they become more international" (Engels quoted in Aydın, 2007: 544).

However, Marx and Engels were also in favor of the “struggle against the Irish middle-class nationalist liberals” (Woods and Grant, 2000: 4). Woods and Grant state that they always kept their independent class position even if they have supported petty-bourgeois movements in Ireland. Their ideas on the relationship between England and Ireland are very crucial in order to understand the relationship between the colonies and colonizers. At the beginning, they thought that the independence of Ireland depended on the victory of English working class. However, they later stated that a revolution in Ireland “could be the spark that ignited the revolution in England” (ibid: 5). This emphasis is key because later on, the success of Third World revolutions considered to be the catalyst of European revolutions by referring to those words of Marx. As stated by d’Encausse and Schram:

It is in Ireland,’ he wrote, ‘that the lever must be applied.’ By thus giving priority to action in the colony over action in the mother country, Marx opened the door to all Asiocentric visions of the world revolution which were propagated once Asia had ceased to be a simple object of analysis and become an actor in its own right. (1969: 15)

As stated above, most of Marx and Engels’s writings on the national question are written as the analysis of concrete situations rather than theoretical texts and principles. Then again, with Lenin and theory of imperialism, those concrete situations turned into theoretical concerns. However, according to Aydin, while the line represented by Marx on colonies was “evolutionist and civilizationist,” Lenin’s line of thought was “revolutionist.” With those terms, he refers to the pre-modern Marx claimed by Avineri that “whatever helped develop capitalism was, ultimately hastening its demise.” Thus, the existence of colonialism can be seen as a progressive element. For Aydin, the division between the revolutionist line of Lenin and civilizationist line of Marx became obvious with the Second International²⁹ (Aydin, 2007: 546).

²⁹ The debates of the Second International will be elaborated upon further in the next section of this chapter.

Lenin's approach is generally explained with the distinction that he made between "the nationalism of the oppressed countries" and "the nationalism of the oppressor countries." Lenin uses the concept of the right of nations to self-determination and in his book with the same title, he further explains this concept:

...the national state is the rule and the "norm" of capitalism; the multi-national state represents backwardness, or is an exception. From the standpoint of national relations, the best conditions for the development of capitalism are undoubtedly provided by the national state. This does not mean, of course, that such a state, which is based on bourgeois relations, can eliminate the exploitation and oppression of nations. It only means that Marxists cannot lose sight of the powerful economic factors that give rise to the urge to create national states. It means that "self-determination of nations" in the Marxists' Program cannot, from a historico-economic point of view, have any other meaning than political self-determination, state independence, and the formation of a national state. (Lenin, 1989: 52)

However, for Lenin, there are certain conditions to support this right. First of all the specific features of the so-called nation should be taken into consideration. He states that:

A comparison of the political and economic development of various countries, as well as of their Marxist programs, is of tremendous importance from the standpoint of Marxism, for there can be no doubt that all modern states are of a common capitalist nature and are therefore subject to a common law of development. But such a comparison must be drawn in a sensible way. The elementary condition for comparison is to find out whether the historical periods of development of the countries concerned are at all comparable. For instance, only absolute ignoramuses (such as Prince Y. Trubetskoi in *Russkaya Mysl*) are capable of "comparing" the Russian Marxists' agrarian program with the programs of Western Europe, since our program replies to questions that concern the bourgeois-democratic agrarian reform, whereas in the Western countries no such question arises. (ibid: 57)

Secondly, in the support of the national independence, the position of the national bourgeoisie should be well analyzed from the side of the proletariat. He states that, at the beginning of the national struggle, the bourgeoisie supports the proletariat but only up to a point. The proletariat also supports the bourgeoisie "in order to secure equal rights and to create the best conditions for the class struggle." In other words, the support of the bourgeoisie stems from its pragmatic

concerns while the support of the proletariat should stem from principal reasons (ibid: 62).

Finally, Lenin answers the questions about how to differentiate “the right to secession from supporting the bourgeois nationalism of the oppressed nations” (ibid: 63). Against this he states that:

Our reply to this is: No, it is to the bourgeoisie that a “practical” solution of this question is important. To the workers the important thing is to distinguish the principles of the two trends. Insofar as the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation fights the oppressor, we are always, in every case, and more strongly than anyone else, in favor, for we are the staunchest and the most consistent enemies of oppression. But insofar as the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation stands for its own bourgeois nationalism, we stand against. We fight against the privileges and violence of the oppressor nation, and do not in any way condone strivings for privileges on the part of the oppressed nation. (ibid. 64)

According to Alex Callinicos, Lenin’s approach of the national question did not imply an endorsement of any form of nationalism (1999: 4). On the other hand, he does not have an abstract notion of internationalism which he criticized Rosa Luxemburg. His strategic endorsement of nationalism is different from emphasis on national culture: “Fight against all national oppression? Yes, certainly. Fight *for* any kind of national development, for national culture in general? Certainly not” (Lenin quoted in Woods and Grant, 2000: 5).

As stated by Woods and Grant, the support for national self-determination has never been a categorical imperative either for Marx or for Lenin (ibid: 10).

For Callinicos, Lenin’s position was against imperialism and for oppressed nations. He claims this with the long quotation which is worth noting here:

To imagine that social revolution is conceivable without revolts by small nations in the colonies and in Europe, without revolutionary outbursts in the colonies and in Europe, without revolutionary outbursts by a section of the petty bourgeoisie with all its prejudices, without a movement of the politically non-conscious proletarian and semi-proletarian masses against oppression by the landowners, the church, and the monarchy, against national oppression, etc. – to imagine all this is to repudiate social

revolution ... So one army lines up in one place and says, “We are for socialism,” and another, somewhere else, says, “We are for imperialism,” and that will be a social revolution! ... Whoever expects a “pure” social revolution will never live to see it. (Lenin quoted in Callinicos, 1999: 5)

That is to say, according to Lenin, in the imperialist stage of capitalism, it is not possible to find a pure conflict between labor and capital. Accordingly, politics was an important element to observe the different forms of conflict for Lenin. Until Lenin, for a socialist revolution the stage of capitalism was considered as a stage to pass. Yet with Lenin, the idea that a class which is not dominant in the economy (like the peasantry or proletariat) can have the political power became noteworthy. In other words, with Lenin, the relationship between economics and politics has been considered in a different manner (d’Encausse and Schram, 1969: 20). He states that: “Politics is the concentrated expression of economics. Politics cannot fail to take priority over economics. Not to understand this is to forget the ABC of Marxism” (Lenin quoted in d’Encausse and Schram, 1969: 20).

Similarly for Löwy, the distinctiveness of Lenin comes from his understanding of national question by giving relative autonomy to politics:

From the methodological point of view, Lenin’s principal superiority over his contemporaries was his capacity to ‘put politics in command,’ that is, his obstinate, inflexible, constant, and unflinching tendency to grasp the political aspect of every problem and every contradiction ... On the national question, while most other Marxist writers saw only the economic, cultural or ‘psychological’ dimension of the problem, Lenin stated clearly that the question of self determination ‘belongs wholly and exclusively to the sphere of political democracy,’ that is, to the realm of the right of political secession and the establishment of an independent nation state... His aim was democracy and the international unity of the proletariat, which both require the recognition of the right of nations to self determination. What is more, precisely because it concentrates on the political aspect, his theory of self determination makes absolutely no concession to nationalism. (Löwy, 1977: 79)

Although it is not in direct relation to the issue of national independence, Lenin’s ideas on the intellectuals are worth quoting since they are very important for the Turkish case. For Lenin, intellectuals are the impetus for nationalist movements in underdeveloped countries. Yet, their position is an ambiguous one since on the

one hand they are a social layer created by imperialism itself with its need for bureaucrats, etc. in those countries; however, on the other hand they can support the national bourgeoisie of their native country, which imperialism does not like to happen. For Lenin, those intellectuals generally have the “idea of a political movement that can create a new nation state with the power to promote a capitalism under their own control” (Callinicos, 1999: 7). Particularly, in the case of Yön, it is possible to observe the traces of that kind of intellectual typology with their vanguardism.

Finally, it can be said that Lenin’s understanding of national independence was closely related with his theory of imperialism. In the underdeveloped world, nationalism was against imperialism or together with the effects of imperialism nationalist tendencies develop there.

It can be said that Lenin’s theory of imperialism as well as his text *Right of Nations to Self-Determination* had a great impact on the Turkish left. It is possible to locate these theories in the TKP as well as the MDD tradition. However, upon closer examination, the reading of Lenin was used in a selective manner. That is to say that Lenin’s tactical choices were identified as principles by the Turkish left. For instance, the emphasis on going against national culture or the tactical alliance with the bourgeoisie seemed to be overlooked by the Yön and MDD groups. Aydın states that “this should be noted as a mistake of the TKP in reading of the history” (2007: 547). That is to say, it was a “mistake” starting with the TKP and further influencing the entire history of the Turkish left. According to Oktay, it was the Kadro journal that embraced the theses of Lenin in the alliance with the national bourgeoisie in the process of permanent revolution, and it was the TKP after 1936 that accepted the changed version of those theses by Stalin in terms of stages strategy. For Oktay, the Kadro movement further developed the ideas of Lenin and articulates them with Kemalism. In that sense, for Oktay, Kadro is the very early version of Maoist Third Worldism (1998: 44).

As stated above, together with Stalin, Lenin's theories on nationalism started to change its form. As stated by Callinicos, Lenin's thesis was related to linking the working class struggle to national struggle. However, with Stalin, this thesis turned to a "stages strategy" in which "revolution in the revolution in the colonies had to go through two stages – first the bourgeois democratic struggle for national independence and then the working class struggle for socialism. The first stage required a broad alliance of all the classes with an interest in achieving national liberation – "national" capitalists as well as workers, peasants and intellectuals" (ibid: 8). The reflection of Stalin's abstraction on the form of "stages strategy" on the Turkish left will be elaborated upon further in the next pages. However, here another important figure who theorizes the "national democratic revolution" together with stages strategy, namely Mao, should be mentioned. Although the actual effect of Mao was seen after 1970 in Turkey, some traces can be detected in the early MDD thesis³⁰ (Aydın, 1998; Akın, 2007).

The most peculiar dimension of Mao's thesis was its emphasis on the national bourgeoisie and alliances with it. He states that:

The national bourgeoisie at the present stage is of great importance...To counter imperialist oppression and to raise her backward economy to a higher level, China must utilize all the factors of urban and rural capitalism that are beneficial and not harmful to the national economy and the people's livelihood; and we must unite with the national bourgeoisie in common struggle. (Mao quoted in Munck, 1986: 118)

As stated by Çubukçu, the theory of Mao, with his emphasis on "people's war" "semi-feudal countries dependent on imperialism," "unity of all classes and stratum against feudalism and imperialism" and "different contradictions",³¹ was considered to be valid for Turkey. In his article, in which he criticizes the Maoist tendencies of the youth, of which he was also a member, he states that:

³⁰ According to Aydın, Maoism is the most important source of the "national democratic revolution" line in Turkey (Aydın, 1998: 67).

³¹ The *PDA* movement, stemming from the theses of Mao, determined four main contradictions in Turkey: the contradiction between imperialism and the people of Turkey, the contradiction between bourgeoisie and proletariat, the contradiction between wide masses of people and semi-feudal elements and the contradictions between the dominant classes (Atılğan, 2007b: 699).

The principle of ‘the unity of all classes and stratum against feudalism and imperialism, which Mao emphasized in his article “New Democracy,” seemed as if it is in direct correspondence with the conditions of Turkey. Just like the Chinese Revolution, the Kemalist Revolution was a revolution against imperialism and feudalism despite all of its weaknesses. In the Chinese revolution, whose first task was to overcome the obstacles in front of socialism, the national bourgeoisie, together with the peasantry and the proletariat, played its role as “the force that will determine future.” This would not be different in Turkey. Moreover, as consistent with the schema, there is a strong “left Kemalism,” which will realize the “national democratic front” (Çubukçu, 2002: 59).

Similarly, Akın states that for the young masses that preferred the movement and stayed in the line of anti-imperialism, Maoism was the most convenient theory (2007: 100). Likewise, for Aydınöglü, who notes that it was the supporters of the MDD thesis who translated the texts by the Chinese Communist Party, the relatively radical position of the Chinese theses were more attractive for the Turkish youth (Aydınöglü, 2007: 238).

According to Aydın, starting with Yön the nationalist left was very much influenced by Mao, with minor modifications of his theories. He states what the Chinese thesis formulized as “first democratic then socialist revolution” found its reflections as “Ataturkism before socialism” in the case of Yön (1998: 67).

Lastly, another figure who can said to be one of the founding fathers of Third World Marxism is worth noting, namely Sultan Galiyev. According to Aydın, it is not possible to know if Galiyev’s ideas had a direct impact on the Turkish left, but he states that Mustafa Suphi who was the leader of the TKP and Galiyev were close friends (Aydın, 1998: 63).

Galiyev was a Tatar Marxist who was active in the beginnings of the October Revolution. However, his idea on the revolution was claiming that it was in a sense the continuation of the existing international relations. He states that: “We think that the solution offered by the Western communists will not bring any change to the social life of the oppressed part of the humanity. Because what it offers is the dictatorship of proletariat instead of bourgeoisie. In any case, if there

would be an objective change, this will not be in a good direction but vice versa.”
(ibid: 65)

According to Galiyev, against the dictatorship of the metropolises on the colonies, the dictatorship of the colonies and semi-colony countries on the metropolises is a solution for the liberation of humanity. Aydın states that here the agent of historical change is not class but nation (ibid).

It is possible to see the influences of Marx, Lenin, Mao and Galiyev in the Turkish left. However, except from direct references, these influences can only be said to be indirect. Below, will be analyzed the influences of debates related to the AMP, in particular to Aybar.

4.1.3 Debates on Asiatic Mode of Production and the Legacy of the Ottoman Empire

The debates on the Asiatic Mode of Production started in France in early 1960s. The rediscovery of the concept was led by Wittfogel's book *Oriental Despotism* written in 1957³², who was not a Marxist scholar. The main questions of the early period of the debate were around the issues of whether Eastern societies experienced a feudal period like that of Europe, the autonomy of the state in Eastern societies, the peculiarities of Eastern societies in transition from feudalism to capitalism, the unilinearity and the multilinearity of the Marxist understanding of history and the issue of bourgeois revolutions. Within the context of this study, it is not possible to study all those different matters. However, the questions of how the issue was problematized in the writings of Marx and Engels and what were the reflections of the debate in Turkey will be explored below.

To begin with, it can be said that Marx's and Engel's writings on the issue revolved around some basic premises. According to them, there were some common points in the socio-economic structures of Eastern societies. These were mainly the; absence of private property in land, rather the common ownership of

³² It should be stated that for Wittfogel, the Soviet Union was a contemporary version of oriental despotism.

the land; system of village communes that is marked by its isolated structure and each having a self-sufficient economy; presence of a central authority required by the environmental and climatic factors to regulate great public works (like irrigation) and as a result existence of a sovereign, in other words Oriental despot.

In the early writings of Marx, the concept of the Asiatic mode of production (hereafter AMP) is not likely to be encountered. It can be said that within the classical schema of Marxist historical development, the AMP does not take place. In the early period of writings, this schema included primitive communal, slave, ancient, feudal, capitalist and communist. The first writings of Marx, in which he talks about the AMP, is one of the sections of *Grundrisse* named Formen. Apart from Formen, Marx's writings on the issue include "British Rule in India," some letters to Engels and Vera Zasulich and some parts of the *Capital* especially in Volume 3.

However, within the limits of this study, the concept of the AMP will be discussed on the basis of what Marx had written in Formen.

In Formen, Marx states that the main element lies under the realization of each kind of property relation on land through a communal community in that the individual is to produce for and in the community. By that way, the individual on the one hand contributes to the continuity of the community and on the other becomes a member of that community.

Hence the tribal community, the natural common body, appears not as the consequence, but as the precondition of the joint (temporary) appropriation and use of the soil. (...) Men's relation to it is naive; they regard themselves as its communal proprietors, and as those of the community which produces and reproduces itself by living labor. Only in so far as the individual is a member — in the literal and figurative sense — of such a community, does he regard himself as an owner (*Eigentümer*) or possessor (*Besitzer*). (Marx, 1980: 67)

In that kind of a system, the Asiatic state is above that of small communities. For Marx, this state is the "all-embracing unity which stands above all these small common bodies" and "appears as the higher or sole proprietor" (ibid: 69). He

states that in those conditions, “the individual is then, in fact, propertyless, or property — i.e., the relationship of the individual to the natural conditions of labor and reproduction, the inorganic nature which he finds and makes his own, the objective body of his subjectivity — appears to be mediated by means of a grant [Ablassen] from the total unity to the individual through the intermediary of the particular community. (ibid)

From here, it can be said that for Marx, that kind of society does not allow private property legally to protest its conditions of existence. The peasants are not the owners of the land but they are just its possessors (*zilyetlik*). Here, the surplus extraction mechanism works through the despot:

The despot here appears as the father of all the numerous lesser communities, thus realizing the common unity of all. It therefore follows that the surplus product (which, incidentally, is legally determined in terms of [infolge] the real appropriation through labor) belongs to this highest unity. Oriental despotism therefore appears to lead to a legal absence of property, in most cases created through a combination of manufacture and agriculture within the small community which thus becomes entirely self-sustaining and contains within itself all conditions of production and surplus production. (ibid)

Since there is surplus from the land and extraction of it by the despot, the so-called society is a class society. Here, it is possible to talk about two classes, namely, the farmers/peasantry who did the production (in other words, the toiling classes) and above them the upper class who consist of the political, military and religious elites (who appropriates the surplus).

As stated above, the main reason behind such kind of a surplus extraction mechanism is the need for a massive mechanism to provide great public works. In other words, the state apparatus concretize in the despot who should protect the safety of the community by means of military force and should provide public works such as irrigation (ibid: 71). Thus, as different from private property, land becomes a public community (*ager-publicus*).

Another feature of the Asiatic society as stated by Marx is the self-sustaining character of the production. In the AMP, the producers always produce at self-sustaining levels. This demonstrates that producers take the surplus at a minimum level and use it for exchange. According to Marx, this is the “precondition for the continued existence of the community” (ibid). Moreover, Marx states that it is not only the agriculture that is self-sustaining but also the manufacture in the urban areas. He also talks about the unity of agriculture and manufacture. That is why although there is division of labor in the AMP, there is not a crucial division between rural and urban.

The answer to the question “why did not capitalism develop in Asiatic societies” finds its answer at this point. The self-sufficient structure of those societies is an obstacle to their interest on trade. In other words, the appropriation of the surplus by the state prevents the individuals from conducting trade, thus, the accumulation of the capital is hindered. For Marx, the reason why Asiatic societies did not experience the capitalist transformation as did Europe, is the self-sufficient production and the appropriation of the surplus by the despot.

Here, it is possible to talk about another feature of the Asiatic society which is being stagnant. According to Marx, those societies are stagnant because of the self-sufficient production and the appropriation of the surplus by the despot. There are classes in those societies but class antagonism is in the minimum level.³³

³³ The issue of the stagnancy of the Eastern societies is a controversial issue for Marxism. Marx states that capitalist expansion around the globe “is brutal but progressive in the sense of advancing capitalism toward its socialist future” and by this it helps to overcome that stagnancy (Griffin and Gurley, 1985: 1094). Because of that, Marx was accused of being Eurocentric and orientalist. This debate brings the questions whether historical materialism calls for a unilinear model or a multilinear one. In other words, whether there are universal schema in Marx or not has been a issue of concern. Against the accusations of Eurocentrism and Orientalism, some Marxists claimed that there are writings of Marx that offer the opposite. The general example given against it is his writings on Russia and possibility of a non-capitalist path to socialism. About a revolution in Russia Marx states that:

“Can the Russian *obshchina* (village commune) ... be transformed directly into the higher form of communist property in land, or must it go through the same process of decomposition displayed in the historical development of the West? Today, only one reply to this question is possible. If the Russian revolution gives the signal for a proletarian revolution in the West, so that the two complete one another, the form of communal property in the land which now exists in Russia can

After a brief summary of Marx's and Engels's ideas on the AMP as stated in Formen, in relating this to Turkey, it can be stated that in the lively political atmosphere of the 1960s, the debates over the AMP had been an issue of controversy in the political arena more than an academic debate. Generally, the debate was considered to be a part of the debates over the revolutionary strategy and the question of the agent of the revolution in particular. However, the book written by Divitçioğlu, who was also a member of the TİP, as the earliest text on the issue carries an academic content when compared to the later discussions. Before further explanation, it should be stated that, despite their differences, what is common in all debates over the issue was the emphasis on the peculiarity of Turkey. For instance, Tanyol and Avcioglu rejected the use of the concept of the AMP; however, their analysis has very similar elements with the others. Apart from them, the following figures are associated³⁴ with the AMP by Berkday: Hilav, Küçükömer, Sencer, Berkes, Cem, Keyder and Akşin. Berkday states that Baykan Sezer within this frame is not associated with the AMP but is a very good example of the position supporting Turkey as a *sui generis* case (Berkday, 1989: 291-292).

As stated above, it was Divitçioğlu who formulated the theoretical frame with his book *Asya Tipi Üretim Tarzı ve Osmanlı Toplumunu* which was published in 1967. In this book, he states that the Ottoman state in the 14th and 15th centuries can be explained with the concept of the AMP. According to Divitçioğlu, only those centuries “give the economic system of the Ottoman society purely” (Divitçioğlu, 2003: 29).

Divitçioğlu states that even the following two criteria are enough to differentiate the AMP from feudal mode of production:

constitute the starting-point for a communist development. (Marx quoted in d'Encausse and Schram, 1969: 11)

³⁴ He states that although not all of those figures think that Ottoman society is an example of the AMP, they share something in common with the AMP tradition that the Ottoman system is the reason for the lack of civil society and democracy in Turkey.

“1-While in feudal mode of production there are three classes, namely [(the king+the clergy)+military+peasantry], in the AMP there is a dual structure consisting of, [(Sultan+clergy+military)+people]; 2-In the feudal mode of production at the state and local administration, there is “the council of the selected representative of the class,” while in the AMP there is “the council of the assigned representative of the Sultan”. (ibid: 20)

According to Divitçioğlu, the most crucial difference between the feudal mode of production and the AMP is that the state is the owner of the land while its possession belongs to the people or groups. The difference between property rights and possession rights results in the difference between serf and the *reaya* (*reaya*). Divitçioğlu defines *reaya* as the “generalized slavery” and states that: “Since individual does not have the property right, h/she is the slave of the representative of the community. So, in Asiatic society, the individual who is from both the slave and the serf is a generalized servant along with being free” (ibid: 52).

Some scholars claim that the “lack” of a resistance tradition can be explained with this structure of the *reaya* and the character of alienation it created. Another feature determines this is the lack of commodity production. Since there was only “use value” of the product, the “individual is not separated from the other individuals” (ibid: 43). In the case of the Ottoman state, since the *timar* owner does not have rights over the *reaya* as different from the seigneur, the *reaya* is free. However, the *reaya* is not free in his/her relationship with the state. According to Divitçioğlu, this is the peculiarity of the AMP, because the individual, who is free in his /her relationship with the land, is the exploited in his/her relationship with the state. Thus, h/she cannot see exploitation as an inherent category. In other words, exploitation is something external to the individual.

In his analysis of the Ottoman system, Divitçioğlu talks about the *tımar* system. For him, the important question is who and how can get the *tımar*. He answers this question in the following manner:

“i) *Tımar* is given to the people who govern the state with the charter (*berat*) of the Sultan; ii) *Tımar* is given to the former owners of the land in the conquered lands; iii) *Tımar* is given to the state dignitaries (*devlet ricali*), who support the shahzadas in the struggles to get the throne.” (ibid: 59)

According to Divitçioğlu, the principles of the *tımar* system such as the rule of giving military service to the state in return for tax-taking prevents a direct subjection relationship with the *tımar* owner and the *reaya*. Another important difference from the feudal system is the lack of patrimonial relations in terms of the *tımar* rights.

After a brief summary of the main book on the issue of the AMP, debates within the left on the AMP can be addressed.

As stated by Atılgan, interestingly, the debate seemed to start before the book of Divitçioğlu. However, the debate was not directly between the AMP and feudal mode of production. Nevertheless, the path that the debate followed is very similar in terms of the debates on revolutionary strategy and the situation of the working class in Turkey. What was vital about this debate is that for the first time the strategy had been discussed by looking at history. In other words, the Ottoman legacy was examined. In his book, Atılgan talks about the debate between Boran and Tanyol that took place as early as 1962 (2007a: 335).

Tanyol, in his article published in *Yön*, states that in the Ottoman state and in the Turkish Republic, the social struggle is not between classes but between the “rulers and the ruled (*idare edenler and idare edilenler*).” He explains the reason of this in the following sentences:

In Turkish society, more openly in Ottoman society, property is not an individual and juridical possession but an administrative one. That is why

the mechanism that works here is ordered according to the administrative cadre; thus, the contradiction is not a class contradiction but is between the rulers and the ruled. (Tanyol quoted in Atılgan, 2007a: 335)

Here, it should be noted that although Avcıođlu held a view opposite to Divitçiođlu, he gave a place to Tanyol's articles against Boran in *Yön*. For Atılgan, the main reason behind this was the commonality of their analysis in terms of the characteristics of the bourgeoisie. For both, the bourgeoisie in Turkey could not develop as it had developed in the West. For the *Yön* group, the main reason for this was the hegemony of the Western bourgeoisie and their deliberate attempts to prevent the bourgeoisie from emerging in underdeveloped countries (ibid: 336).

According to Tanyol, since the Ottoman social structure was not feudalism in the Western sense, the transition to capitalism had not been the same. Moreover, he claims that the Ottoman system was a unique one. For Tanyol, that is why it was not possible to consider the conflict between the working class and the bourgeoisie in these terms and why socialism could not be defined through a class politics (ibid: 344).

Returning to the reflections of the AMP on the Turkish left, it is necessary to explicate the debate between Avcıođlu and Divitçiođlu and Mehmet Ali Aybar's use of the term AMP.

The foremost criticism of Avcıođlu against Divitçiođlu stems from the issue of stagnation. As stated above, according to the AMP analysis the Asiatic societies were inherently stagnant due to lack of trade. Avcıođlu associates the issue of stagnation with underdevelopment and states that the AMP analysis overlooks the external reason of underdevelopment by emphasizing the internal factor. As stated above with Tanyol's analysis, what the *Yön* group claimed was that it was imperialism that causes underdevelopment. Avcıođlu claims that the supporters of the AMP tended to see a different mode of production that causes underdevelopment within the capitalist system. The second objection of Avcıođlu was about the way the CHP was analyzed by the supporters of the AMP. For him,

the criticism of Küçükömer, as will be emphasized later, against the CHP was not proper. He states that the CHP was not mistaken because of its historical legacy as claimed by the AMP supporters but because it had been a tool of imperialism and the reactionary forces (Yön, 1966b). Thus, here again he emphasizes the external factor and states that the area of the struggle should be limited to the struggle against external forces. Once more, it is seen that the emphasis of Avcıoğlu is not on class conflict inside but on the conflict between nation and imperialism.

Aybar on the other hand makes use of the term AMP which was reflected in his analysis on bureaucracy. As stated before, for Aybar, the state tradition of the Turkish republic was inherited from the Ottoman Empire and it is composed of a *sui generis* bureaucratic class. Moreover, he claims that in this state tradition, the dominant class is the administrative cadres (1968).

It should be noted that the eclectic character of the TİP becomes so obvious with Aybar's ideas on the AMP. Aybar on the basis of the AMP, talks about "*ceberrut devlet*", "*kapıkulu* tradition" and somehow criticizes the Kemalist state tradition on the one hand, while on the other hand he owns the Kemalist principles, i.e. on foreign policy.

When it comes to the ideas of Belli on the AMP, it can be said that similar to Avcıoğlu, he rejected the notion on the basis of its political connotations. In his article, he states that although he finds the attempts on the AMP analysis positive, he says that "if the results of a scientific study are not revolutionary, we cannot consider it as scientific." Thus, for Belli since the AMP analysis is used against USSR by authors such as Wittfogel, the supporters of it should be careful (1968a). Another criticism by Belli was about the AMP's connotations of Eurocentrism. He rejects Marx's use of the term and says that:

"To claim that Eastern societies should be considered not within Marxist methodology or historical materialism is to misuse Marx's name and asserting the superiority of Western societies thus Westerners. When it comes to the AMP

debates in Turkey, it can be said that it looks like an attempt to put the Ottoman society to a model that is drawn.” (ibid)

Until here, discussion is centered upon the debates which were directly on the AMP. However, as stated before, there were scholars who were interested in the political dimensions of the debate. İdris Küçükömer turned the focus of the debate from the history dimension to address modern Turkey. Küçükömer, because of his criticism against the founding cadres of the republic and his analysis of them, is very much criticized. It can be said that similar to Divitçioğlu, Küçükömer explains the difference between East and West through the AMP and the cultural forms that it created. For instance, he talks about collective memory of the Turkish society and states that although Turkey has a developed capitalism as a result of the external constraints; people cannot expunge the effects of the bureaucratic type of organization.

The main questions of Küçükömer are why Turkey has not been able to Westernize?, What are the reasons for the lack of civil society in Turkey?, What are reasons of Turkey’s underdevelopment? According to him, the modernization process in Turkey is problematic. In his book “*Düzenin Yabancılaşması*,” he tells the story of the alienation of the bureaucracy from the people, in the name of the people. He states that in Ottoman society, which accepts the superiority of the West and imitates its institutions in order to come against it, the modernization movements were also desired by the Sultans. However, since it does not have a class background, the modernization remained as rootless movements which attempt to revive the state. For him, this rootlessness is the reason for the tension between the society and the state in Ottoman and Turkish societies. In other words, since the modernization movements do not have a social base, “it was the bureaucrats who get more and more power” (Küçükömer, 2007: 14). According to Küçükömer, the main reason for the lack of civil society in Turkey is that the state emerged by the AMP and the bureaucracy as its representative today. He states that: “Although the bureaucrats seem like representing the intellectuals, they

never had any organic relations with the people or with some classes. And thus, in reality they are just against the people” (ibid: 85).

According to him, “Westernization is not possible without capitalist development” and “if this reality is forgotten as in Turkey, the result is more an equilibrium that protects the Asiatic despotism rather than economic development” (ibid: 11). It should be stated that according to Küçükömer, capitalist development is not possible for Turkey anymore due to structural reasons created by developed countries. Those structural reasons make the modernization attempts in Turkey result in the opposite direction and create despotism. Another reason for despotism is the military civil stratum “which is the real remnant of pre-capitalist period” (ibid). Accordingly, for Küçükömer, the national front offered by the Yön group is not a progressive but a reactionary force. The claims of Küçükömer are in accordance with Aybar’s ideas on bureaucracy and its existence as a *sui generis* class in Turkey.

4.2 Conjunctural Sources

To begin with, what is referred to as “conjuncture” should be explained. Since the main reference of the thesis on the impact on conjuncture is Çulhaoğlu, his definition is worth quoting:

What I mean with conjuncture is the political thoughts and perspectives on the given state of the country and the place and future of it in the international relations. Here what is dominant is not the class struggle but the struggle of a nation with other forces. In other words, freedom is perceived not as class emancipation but as the freedom of a nation. The prerequisites here are not philosophical or theoretical but ideological and political. (2002a: 12)

As stated above, the conjunctural sources both on peculiarism and on the entire history of the left is more decisive. One of the main reasons for this was the problem of legitimization. In Turkey, where Islam is a very important source of legitimization, it was not easy to talk about socialism. As stated by Ünsal, in Turkey, Islam is always more effectual compared to socialism as is nationalism when compared to internationalism (2002). According to many scholars, the

attempt to combine Kemalism and socialism creates the concerns about legitimization.

However, there are also reasons stemming from the world conjuncture such as the existence of the Soviet Union and its impact on the world socialist movement. The impact of the CPSU and in particular the Comintern decisions can be followed in the early years of the TKP and later in the MDD movement.³⁵ Here it should be stated that the effects of Comintern on the MDD can be accepted only through the pre-condition that it is the ideological heir of the TKP.³⁶ Moreover, until the 1960s, the TKP was almost the only socialist movement in Turkey. All the groups after it can be said to have the legacy of it to some extent.

When it comes to the Comintern decisions, it can be said that it does not constitute a homogenous whole. The changes in its decisions and its reflections on Turkey will be explored below. However, it should be stated that especially after the Second World War and the independence movements in the colonies, the model of revolution in stages has been one of the main tenets of all the movements. The experiences of China and Vietnam have been another dimension as a model. Those countries on the one hand accepted the Stalinist model for revolution and on the other hand developed a model for the Third World in which the role of the national bourgeoisie and national fronts are overemphasized.

According to Çulhaoğlu, from the very beginnings of the socialist thought in Turkey, conjuncture became the dominant factor. He states that the first period of the Turkish left, which he calls as the “first period of acquisition” corresponds to

³⁵ It should be stated that Mihri Belli, who was the leader of the MDD movement, had been a member of illegal TKP in 1940 and after 1942, he had played an active role in the party. Belge states that:

“(In the early 1950s), a fierce competition for the future leadership of the TKP ensued inside the country between Mihri Belli and Zeki Baştımar. The latter left the country after imprisonment and became General Secretary after the death of Hüsnü. Meanwhile, Belli remained behind, outside the party, biding his time and making his influence felt after his own fashion” (Belge, 1987: 164). Moreover, in *Özeleştiri*, Belli states that he developed the MDD theses “to a great extent inspired by the words and behaviours of Şefik Hüsnü” (Belli, 1976: 926)

³⁶ As stated before, the MDD movement in this study is limited to the period before 1971. That is to say, later divisions, with their anti-Sovietism or anti-Kemalism are not taken into consideration.

1917-27.³⁷ For Çulhaoğlu, this early period was marked by the needs of the real politics more than theory:

In this period, (...) the search for a “third way” different from capitalism and socialism, the discourse of “oppressed nations” which the extension of the former, the content of the national war of independence and Kemalist authority which can sometimes be very radical and that kind of facts made the socialist intellectuals who were not already theoretically sufficient, drown in the labyrinths of the real politics and made them go away from Marxism. (Çulhaoğlu, 2002b: 50)

He states that the intellectuals of the early period as well as of today did not come to terms with the “emphasis on national independence, populism, developmentalism, industrialization, westernization and religion” and always stayed at the level of tactic in his/her relation with those concepts (ibid: 51). He also adds that this situation is not unique to Turkey but is a common feature of all the Third World countries.

The effects of “determination by the conjuncture” reveal itself as two features of the Turkish left. First of all, as discussed in the previous chapters, it resulted in the avoidance from the class struggle and instead the emphasis on the national independence. Secondly, since the “Marxist” intellectuals of the country were not able to develop their own model (although they did present socialism as something peculiar to Turkey), the decisions of the Comintern had a great effect. As stated by Çulhaoğlu, the pragmatic concerns of the Turkish socialists went hand in hand with the concerns of the Comintern which was shaped by real-politics and protecting international equilibrium. He also adds that although it is not possible to talk about a unity of understanding, there was “an overlapping which came out as a result” (Çulhaoğlu, 2002a: 19)

Below, the Comintern decisions and their reflections on the early TKP will be explained.

³⁷ Here 1917 corresponds to the October Revolution, while the latter is the year the search for the “third way” among the socialist movement became obvious (Çulhaoğlu, 2002b: 49).

4.2.1 The Comintern and TKP

The Comintern was founded in Moscow in 1919. At the beginning, the aim behind its foundation was associated with the world revolution which was thought to be approaching and originating from Europe. The possibility of revolutions in the East was dependent on the success of revolutions in the West. However, from the second half of the 1920s onwards, the hope of revolution in the West decreased and within the Comintern, the Eastern communist parties gained prominence. Moreover, revolutions in the East started to be considered as important for the European revolutions to begin. The first Comintern meeting that took the Eastern revolutions to the stage was the second of the meetings in 1920. In this congress, the problem of colonies was considered from an Eastern perspective, which meant criticizing Western colonial countries³⁸ (Gökay, 2007: 339). In this congress, the national independence movements in the underdeveloped world were considered and for the first time it was stated that “the national independence movements in the underdeveloped countries should be supported if it includes national democratic features which means if they are anti-imperialist” (Çetinkaya and Doğan, 2007: 293). Before it, at the Second International in 1920, a division was made between oppressor and oppressed nations. However, Aydınoğlu states that the “stages strategy” of the Second International was rejected by the second congress of the Comintern and it was not accepted until the Chinese revolution and Stalin’s “socialism in one country” principle (1992: 65).

In the second congress of the Comintern, the main debate about the underdeveloped world was between Lenin, Roy and Sultanzade. Here, according to Roy and Sultanzade, who claim that the destiny of the world revolution was dependent on Asia, the alliance with the national bourgeoisie was not possible and “from the very beginning of the revolution, the communist vanguard must seize

³⁸ Before that, the problem of colonies was not considered important or was overlooked since it was thought that colonizers brought civilization and progress to the colonies. Moreover, the positive impacts of the wealth gained by colonies on working classes of the West was an important factor (d’Encausse and Schram, 1969).

the leadership and not allow it to remain in the hands of the bourgeoisie” (d’Encausse and Schram, 1969: 29). However, according to Lenin, who was in favor of a temporary alliance, “a ‘good’ bourgeois movement, which the communists should support, was a movement which did not oppose the efforts of the communists to organize peasantry and the broad masses of the exploited” (ibid).

When it comes to the third congress of the Comintern, the principle of alliance with the bourgeoisie was clearly recognized and “in certain cases one could even go so far as to support pan-Islamism” (ibid: 43).

According to d’Encausse and Schram, the fifth congress was a crucial one because without Lenin, the decisions of the congress started to express the ideas of the Stalinist era. For them, for Lenin to support the national bourgeoisie was not sensible without the perspective of a world revolution or the support of the working class of the developed countries. Moreover, for Lenin, doing so was to support the bourgeoisie without an aim. However, with Stalin, since the perspective of world revolution was not convincing anymore, to support the national bourgeoisie of the underdeveloped world meant something different (ibid: 45).

In the seventh congress of the Comintern held in 1935, the decisions taken were very important for Turkey. Since it was the beginnings of the Second World War, the need for the “People’s Front” as an anti-fascist force was at the stage and in those terms, the Turkish republic as an ally, no more “eroded” by the “social struggles inside” and thus the TKP was to be decentralized (Gürel and Nacar, 2007: 127). The activities of the TKP, in that context will be emphasized below.

Another determinant for the Comintern decisions was the reality of “socialism in one country.” As stated by Yurtsever, socialism in one country, as a historical reality, had a great impact of Comintern decisions as well as Soviet foreign policy. Moreover, he states that the Soviet republic, theorized all the historical necessities in the name of Marxism and that was the real damage to the theory of

Marxism. Those “theories” were also owned by the underdeveloped world, again in the name of Marxism. Among those principles, he counts, alliances with the bourgeoisie, developmentalism and nationalism (Yurtsever, 2002: 24-25). Similarly, d’Encausse and Schram state that, “the years immediately following the Second World War were characterized by an almost total priority to foreign policy, which resulted in altogether surprising deformations of the Leninist theory of revolution in the underdeveloped countries” (d’Encausse and Schram, 1969: 63).

In terms of the reflections of the decisions that were emphasized from above on the TKP, firstly, the relationship of a party with the Comintern was not the only determinant factor. That is to say, the relationship of the country of the communist party and the Soviet Union should have also been taken into consideration. In the specific case of the TKP, the relationship of the Kemalist government and the Soviet Union sometimes became the most important factor.

The politics of the TKP was determined by the Soviet Union from the very beginning. The most important reason for it was the fact that the party was founded by the Turkish socialists living in the Soviet Union. At the foundation of the TKP, there were three elements, which were the Mustafa Suphi line, the leftist organizations in Anatolia that emerged around “national struggle,” and the intellectuals who returned from Europe or the Şefik Hüsnü line (Tunçay, 2007: 349). Tunçay regards the first program of the TKP as calling for a political structure which was “anti-capitalist, republican, secular and libertarian” and demanded “a centralized industrialization, nationalization of the banks and the foundation of worker unions” (ibid). For Tunçay, these were very similar to the program of the Bolshevik Party.

Here it should be stated that in the journal Kurtuluş, which was effective among the members of the TKP in İstanbul, in an article written by H.S. there is the very early example of peculiarism. H.S states that there are important differences

between the Western societies and Turkish society. That is why the socialism in Turkey should be peculiar to it (Çetinkaya and Doğan, 2007: 278-79).

Recalling the politics of the TKP, it is important to note the way it interpreted the War of Independence. According to Suphi, the struggle in Turkey was an anti-imperialist one and needed to be supported. However, along with the Comintern line, he states that those struggles had a meaning only if they are international. Moreover, those struggles were to have opened the way to the organization of the communist parties (ibid: 289). Similarly, in 1921, Şefik Hüsnü was talking about the reasons for supporting national struggle and national revolution. Similar to Suphi, Hüsnü states that the decisions of the new government should take the toiling masses into consideration (Gürel and Nacar, 2007: 122). However, starting with the early 1930s, the ideas of Hüsnü on Kemalism and alliance with the “progressive forces” started to change. In 1930, he states that the authority in Ankara was “the regime of individual dictatorship” (ibid: 128). Similarly, in the pages of *Kommunist*, which was a publication of the TKP, the criticisms against the Kemalist government started to take place in this period. In the journal it was stated that Kemalist government lost its revolutionary character as it made alliances with the imperialist forces. It was also stated that the concept of the nation hid the class antagonisms inside and that this concept should be used carefully (Çetinkaya and Doğan, 2007: 310-311).

In those years, the position of the party against Kemalism was the most controversial issue among the party members. In those debates, it is possible to see the beginnings of the dispute in the TKP which resulted in the emergence of Kadro movement. In the debates, Ş.S. Aydemir was in favor of supporting the government in every condition. Hüsnü and Vedat Nedim were in the opposition. However, later on, it was Vedat Nedim, who gave the important party documents to the police and caused the 1927 Captures (ibid: 299).

Finally, the 1936 decisions of the Comintern had the last word about the position of the TKP against Kemalist government. Accordingly, the TKP members should

continue their activities within the CHP, People's Houses (*Halkevleri*) and other organizations led by the Kemalist government. In other words, the decentralization decision of the Comintern about the TKP determined its politics after then in favor of the Kemalist government. In short, it can be said that the TKP was the victim of diplomacy between the Turkey and the Soviet Union as well as the Comintern and due to its dependent relation with Kemalism; it could not leave a sound legacy to the left.

4.3 Assessment of Influences on the Turkish Left

As stated in the beginning of the chapter, the sources of peculiarism of the Turkish left or the notion of "Turkish Socialism" is evaluated on the basis of the assumption that the early period of the Turkish left had a great influence on the later years. As stated by Çulhaoğlu, this early period is the period of acquisition and its concerns accepted as the principles by the later figures (2002b).

The impact of the Soviet Union on the leftist movements was decisive. When this fact combined with the internal dynamics of the society, it is possible to see the basic features of the socialist movement in that society. In the Turkish case, the principles of the Comintern such as the stages strategy and alliance with the bourgeoisie went hand in hand with Kemalism. Of course, here, the position of the intellectuals and the leading socialists should also be taken into consideration. It should be noted that even before the foundation of the TKP and thus the transfer of the Soviet principles the notions of socialism peculiar to Turkey can be observed.

Returning to internal dynamics such as Kemalism and the position of the intellectuals, it should be stated that these had a great influence on the presentation of the "socialism peculiar to Turkey." Many scholars claim that due to historical reasons, the intellectual tradition of Turkey is dominated by the traditional intellectuals whose main aim is to save the country. It can be said that the 1960s organic intellectuals were also on the stage but the previous tradition still had influences. Thus, the impact of Kemalism on the left could be associated

with the position of the socialist intellectuals and the tradition that they had inherited.

Up to now, how the conjuncture influenced the Turkish left has been discussed. The former part of this chapter, namely the theoretical sources, is more difficult to evaluate, because the relationship of the socialists to the theory has always been through the mediation of politics. It can be said that political associations of Marxism always dominated the theoretical or philosophical aspect of it. In other words, the theory is considered necessary in the debates over the strategy. Nevertheless, this says something about the way the classical texts are read. For instance, the selective reading of Lenin by the MDD group provides clues in how the peculiar way is presented. For the MDD group, the War of Liberation, thus Kemalism, was something to be supported. It can be argued that Lenin's strategic concerns were made a principle here and used as a base to support Kemalism.

Finally, it can be said that the sources and influences of the notion of "Turkish socialism" varies. Here, the critical point is that the presentation of the term was determined by conjunctural sources to a great extent. It should also be noted that although the figures of the 1960s intersect at the notion of peculiarism, the influences on them are so different from each other that sometimes different theoretical sources became the object of polemics. In the next chapter, the differences of the figures will be elaborated upon further and the notion of peculiarism as the common denominator will be discussed.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In this study, the notion of “Turkish socialism” or the concept of peculiarism and the theoretical and conjunctural sources of it is discussed in the period of the 1960s. Throughout the study, the terms of Turkish Socialism and peculiarism have been used interchangeably. Among those, one can also add terms like “Third Way” or the concept of *Sonderweg*. What is common amongst all those terms is an emphasis on the differences rather than similarities. In other words, rather than universal schemas, those concepts call for the uniqueness of concrete situations. In this study, the basic premises of peculiarism in the Turkish case were examined. Secondly, the possible sources of the peculiarism were discussed. It is important to note that there were two questions in mind related to peculiarism. The first one was to what extent was it possible to observe a peculiarist stand in the Turkish left. That is to say, how the discourse of “Turkey is a country that has peculiar characteristics” take place. This was mainly discussed on the basis of five main premises which are Kemalism, nationalism, anti-imperialism, developmentalism and the idea of a “popular national front.” It can be said that those concepts reflected the dominant ideology within the left in the period between 1960 and 1971. However, it should be stated that except for Kemalism, those concepts cannot said to be specific to Turkey. From here arises the second question related to the concept of peculiarism. Throughout the study, it has been questioned whether or not the notion of peculiarism was something peculiar to Turkey. In other words, were there any other socialist movements in other countries which placed emphasis on the “unique features of their countries” or not. The answer to this question was answered by the cases of China and other

Third World countries. In all those countries, Marxism was interpreted in accordance with the conditions of that country and from here the notions such as Chinese socialism, Latin American Marxism or Castroism came into existence. However, what was interesting in Turkey was that these experiences were presented in a way that they were created for the peculiar conditions of Turkey. It should be noted that the experiences of the other countries were attempted to be adapted to the conditions of Turkey but to look for the conditions of Turkey via investigations was not something common. According to Ünsal, the position of Turkey was different compared to the other countries. The influences of the experiences or theories of different versions of Marxism were much more in Turkey:

The relatively old or elderly Turkish socialists who were close to the West were trying to 'learn some lessons' from European communism, the social democracies of Germany or Sweden, from Czechoslovakia or Moscow. On the other hand, the scope of the young generations runs around the world such that while a strategy peculiar to Latin America is not supported in Asia or a strategy peculiar to Asia is not supported in Latin America, all those can live in Turkey and can find the conditions to reproduce themselves. (Ünsal, 2002: 333)

In the light of the above it can be said that in the 1960s it is possible to observe three lines of thought. The first compares Turkey with the Western countries and takes the histories of them as the ideal types. Accordingly, for that line of thought, Turkey can be said to have a *sui generis* history and its social structure is unique on its own. This line of thought is represented by Avcıoğlu and Aybar. The second line tries to reconcile the experiences of other countries with Marxism to the Turkish context. Finally, the third one considers the theses of the Soviet Union on underdeveloped countries and evaluates Turkey accordingly (Atılgan, 2007a: 312). In this schema, the MDD can be placed under all of the three. The MDD line can be regarded as peculiarist because it calls for the paths peculiar to Turkey. Although the representative of the third line is the TKP, the MDD group, in which there were some TKP members, can be said to have adopted similar principles.

The influence of Latin America or China on the MDD makes it an element of the second line of thought.

As stated before, what made Yön, the MDD and Aybar similar was their presentation of some concepts as peculiar to Turkey. It can be questioned how the opposite sides of the MDD-SD debate claimed to have a similar position. In these groups, one side, namely Aybar, talked about the undevelopment of the civil society and the lack of democracy and did this by looking at Ottoman history. The other side, namely Yön and the MDD groups, focused on the remnants of feudalism and the undevelopment of capitalism. Although these two groups had very different political strategies, there was still a common point that the evaluations were made on the basis of what was lacking in Turkey, when compared to the West. Moreover, both sides claimed that socialism was not in the monopoly of the West and attempted to find ways to present socialism as a native ideology.

Throughout the study, the reasons for the peculiarism have been explored. As stated in the fourth chapter, there are both theoretical and conjunctural grounds for this. However, as stated before, the conjunctural factors seem to have had a greater impact compared to the theoretical ones. It can be said that it is the nature of politics that creates this determination by the conjunctural influences. Nevertheless, in my humble opinion, when the issue at stake is Marxism, this relationship could have been different. The uniqueness of Marxism comes from its being a political ideology as well as a theoretical system. As stated by Oktay, in the Turkish case, theory has always been dominated by the strategy. Thus, the leftist tradition could not enrich itself (1998). Similarly Ünsal states that be it internationalist or peculiarist, since the Turkish left could not discuss the facts of Turkey theoretically, debates were always locked up in the topics of strategy and tactic and the debates over the alliances, major contradiction or the agent always remained baseless (2002: 335).

The problematic relationship of the left with theory and its determination by the conjuncture resulted in a deficient understanding of the history and the structure of Turkey. As a result, the search to find the correct path for Turkey remained in the discourses that either it became the tool of legitimization (as in the case of Kemalism) or the instrument of politics to prove to the people that socialism was not something alien.

Throughout the study a problem arose about the conception of peculiarism with regard to its difference from the above told versions of Marxism. In those terms, Marxism of Mao can be said to have the claim of considering the peculiarities of China, while Lenin represent the peculiarities of Russia. Here a common ground can be said to be an interpretation of Marxism in the underdeveloped world. Accordingly, it can be asked how and why the groups told in this study are regarded as peculiar to Turkey. Here, it should be stated that, the main problematic of this study is not to understand their peculiarities but how and why they have comprehended Turkey as a country peculiar to itself. In some cases, such as the MDD, the status of Turkey considered to be an underdeveloped and Eastern country. Nevertheless, at the level of discourse, Turkey was represented as having its unique features. In this study, it is intended to understand what the reasons behind this representation were. As stated before, the main reason of that was thought to be the attempts to be legitimate in the eyes of people by claiming socialism as a “native” ideology. This was mainly done so by attaching Kemalism to socialism. However, it should again be stressed that the analyses which were done in the name of exploring the uniqueness of Turkey was not an aim in itself but carries the element of legitimization inside.

Thus, the general picture of the Turkish left in the 1960s can be said to have the claim of adapting socialism to the unique conditions of Turkey. However, here we can talk about a different figure whose conception of peculiarities is somewhat different. Behice Boran who was a socialist with an academic background can be said to represent the universalist stand of the Turkish left. Nevertheless, this does not mean that she excluded the peculiar characteristics of Turkey. For instance,

she agreed that in the Ottoman state the administrative group is also an administrative class. However, according to Boran, this is not something peculiar to Ottoman society. She claimed that the applications can vary in different countries but this does not show that these countries are different type of societies. She says that the position of the bureaucracy is neither progressive as the MDD group supported, nor reactionary as Aybar claimed. For her, bureaucracy can either be progressive or reactionary in relation to the historical processes and class relations. (Atilgan, 2007a)

Similar to Aybar, Boran stated that there are differences between the societies and in each country the worker class party analyzes the differences of its own country as well as its conditions, needs and requirements. For her, each socialist party should do this with a reading of Marxist theory and combining it with the conditions of its own country. However, she does not claim that the socialism of Turkey will be peculiar to it and will be unique. For Boran, this attitude of Aybar is problematic because it comprehended some problems in Turkey as if they have existed only in Turkey. She stated that socialism of a specific country should neither emphasize upon a single model nor overemphasize the peculiarities. As rightly put by Atilgan, Boran saw that the opposite of an understanding that claim for the single model is not peculiarism. What needed was a method that explains the dominant structure in a holistic way without excluding the native peculiarities (ibid: 521).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Akdere İlhan, Karadeniz Zeynep (1996), *Türkiye Solu'nun Eleştirel Tarihi*, İstanbul: Evrensel
- Akın, Yiğit (2007) "Türkiye Sol Hareketinin Önemli Polemikleri", (ed.) Gültekingil, M., in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce*, vol.8 Sol, İstanbul: İletişim, 86-105
- Alpay, Şahin (1969) "Proleter Devrimci Çizgi Kitle Çizgisidir" *Türk Solu*, No: 96
- Atılğan, Gökhan (2007a) *Behice Boran Öğretim Üyesi, Siyasetçi, Kuramcı*, İstanbul: Yordam
- Atılğan, Gökhan (2007b), Türkiye Sosyalist Hareketinde Anti-Emperyalizm ve Bağımsızlıkçılık (1920-1971) (ed.) Gültekingil, M., in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce*, vol.8 Sol, İstanbul: İletişim, 662-704
- Atılğan, Gökhan (2002a), *Kemalizm ile Marksizm Arasında Geleneksel Aydınlar: Yön-Devrim Hareketi*, İstanbul: TÜSTAV
- Atılğan, Gökhan (2002b) "'Yön'ünü Ararken Yolunu Yitirmek", *Praksis*, 6: 119-151
- Avcıoğlu, Doğan (1962a) "Kalkınma Programı: I", *Yön*, No: 12
- Avcıoğlu, Doğan (1962b) "Sosyalizm Anlayışımız", *Yön*, No: 36
- Avcıoğlu, Doğan (1962c) "Devletçilik Nasıl Dejenere Oldu?", *Yön*, No: 47

- Avciođlu, Dođan (1964a), *Yön*, No: 78
- Avciođlu, Dođan (1964b), *Yön*, 81
- Avciođlu, Dođan (1965) “Ortanın Solu”, *Yön*, No: 122
- Avciođlu, Dođan (1966a), *Yön*, No: 168
- Avciođlu, Dođan (1966b) “S. Divitçiođlu’nun Kitabı Üzerine”, *Yön*, No: 169
- Avciođlu, Dođan (1966b), *Yön*, No: 182, 23 Eylül 1966
- Avciođlu Dođan (1966c), “Sosyalist Strateji ve Prof. S Aren”, *Yön*, No: 197
- Avciođlu, Dođan (1967), “Millet Gerçeđi ve Milliyetçilik”, *Yön*, No: 216
- Avciođlu, Dođan (1970a), *Yön*, No: 35
- Avciođlu Dođan, (1970b) “Ulusal Kurtuluş Devrimi”, *Devrim*, No: 56
- Avineri, Shlomo (1991) “Marxism and Nationalism”, *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol: 26, No. 3, 637-657
- Aybar, Mehmet Ali (1968) *Bađımsızlık, Demokrasi, Sosyalizm*, İstanbul: Gerçek.
- Aybar, Mehmet Ali (1987) *Neden Sosyalizm*, İstanbul: BDS
- Aybar, Mehmet Ali (2002) *Marksizm ve Sosyalizm Üzerine Düşünceler*, İstanbul: İletişim
- Aydınođlu, Ergun (1992) *Türk Solu (1960-1971) Eleştirel Bir Tarih Denemesi*, İstanbul: Belge.
- Aydın, Suavi (1998) “‘Milli Demokratik Devrim’den ‘Ulusal Sol’a Türk Solunda Özgücü Eğilim”, *Toplum ve Bilim*, no: 78

Aydın, Suavi (2001a) Sosyalizm ve Milliyetçilik: Galiyefizmden Kemalizme Türkiye’de “Üçüncü Yol” Arayışları, (ed.) Bora, T., in Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce, vol.4 Milliyetçilik, İstanbul: İletişim, 438-482.

Aydın, Suavi (2001b) “Aydınlanma ve Tarihselcilik Problemleri Arasında Türk Tarihyazıcılığı: Feodalite Örneği”, *Toplum ve Bilim*, no: 91

Aydın, Suavi (2007) “Türkiye Solunda Özgücülük ve Milliyetçilik”, (ed) Bora T., Gültekingil M., in Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce, vol. 8, İstanbul: İletişim, 543-578

Aytemur, Nuran (2000) The Turkish Left and Nationalism: The Case of Yön, Yayınlanmamış yüksek lisans tezi.

Baraner, Reşat Fuat (1968) “Anti-Emperyalist ve Anti-Feodal Mücadele Toplumumuzun Tüm Olarak Menfaatlerini Temsil Eder”, *Türk Solu*, No: 15

Belge, Murat (1987) “Sol”, Geçiş Sürecinde Türkiye, Irvin Cemil Schick, E. Ahmet Tonak (ed), İstanbul, Belge Yayınları, 1987, 159-188

Belge, Murat (2000) *Sosyalizm Türkiye ve Gelecek*, İstanbul: Birikim

Belli, Mihri (1966), *Yön*, No: 87

Belli Mihri (1967) “Devrimci Şiar Meselesi”, *Türk Solu*, No: 5

Belli, Mihri (1968a) “Türkiyenin Devrim Stratejisi Ne Olmalıdır?”, *Türk Solu*, No: 9

Belli, Mihri (1968b), “Ya Güçbirliği Ya Faşizm” *Türk Solu*, No: 24

Belli, Mihri (1969) “Türkiye’de Karşı Devrim”, *Türk Solu*, No: 64

Belli, Sevim (1969a) “Türk’ün Bayrağı Ayyıldızlı Bayraktır”, *Türk Solu*, No: 75

Belli, Sevim (1969b) “Başyazı”, *Türk Solu*, No: 75

- Belli, Mihri (1970), *Yazılar: 1965-1970*, Ankara: Sol.
- Belli, Mihri (1988) “Milli Demokratik Devrim”, in *Sosyalizm ve Toplumsal Mücadeleler Ansiklopedisi*, No: 7, İstanbul: 2145
- Belli, Mihri (2000), *İnsanlar Tanıdım*, İstanbul: Doğan
- Berkes, Niyazi (1965) “Batı Emperyalizmi ve Batı Uygarlığı”, *Yön*, No: 99
- Berktaş, Halil (1989) *Kabileden Feodalizme*, İstanbul: Kaynak
- Boran, Behice (1970) *Türkiye ve Sosyalizm Sorunları*, İstanbul: Tekin
- Bulut, Arslan (1969) “Milli Harp Sanayii”, *Türk Solu*, No: ?
- Callinicos, Alex (1999) “Marxism and the National Question” in *Scotland: Class and Nation*, (ed. Bambery Chris), London: Bookmarks
- Çetinkaya, Doğan and Doğan, Görkem (2007), (ed) Bora T., Gültekingil M., in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce*, vol. 8, İstanbul: İletişim, 275-338
- Çubukçu, Aydın (2002) “Türkiye’de Maoculuğun Doğuşu Üzerine Bazı Gözlemler”, *Praksis*, No: 6, 53-62
- Çulhaoğlu, Metin (2002a), “Türkiye’de Sosyalist Düşüncenin Doğuşu: Konjonktürün Başatlığı”, *Praksis*, 6: 9-21
- Çulhaoğlu, Metin (2002b), *Binyıl Eşiğinde Marksizm ve Türkiye Solu*, İstanbul: YGS
- Çulhaoğlu, Metin (2007) “Türkiye’de Marksizm: Yapılabilecek Olup Yapılamayan Nedir?”, (ed) Bora T., Gültekingil M., in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce*, vol. 8, İstanbul: İletişim, 69-85
- d’Encausse, Carrère Hélène and Shram R. Stuart (1969) *Marxism and Asia*, London: Allen Lane.

Divitçiođlu, Sencer (2003) *Asya Üretim Tarzı ve Osmanlı Toplumunu*, İstanbul: YKY

Erdođdu, Seyhan, “Milli Demokratik Devrim Mücadelesi Proleteryanın Davasıdır” *Türk Solu*, No: 110

Erdost, Muzaffer (1968), “Milliyetçilik ve Enternasyonalizm” *Türk Solu*, No: 41

Gökay, Bülent (2007), “Komünist Enternasyonel, Türkiye ve TKP”, (ed) Bora T., Gültekingil M., in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce*, vol. 8, İstanbul: İletişim, 339-348

Gürel, Burak and Nacar, Can, (2007), “Şefik Hüsni”, (ed) Bora T., Gültekingil M., in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce*, vol. 8, İstanbul: İletişim, 118-133

Kocabaşođlu, Uygur and Berge, Metin (1994) *Bolşevik İhtilali ve Osmanlılar*, Ankara: Kebikeç

Kafaođlu, Aslan Başer (1968) “Milli Demokratik Devrim”, *Türk Solu*, No: 38

Karpat, Kemal (1966) “The Turkish Left”, *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 1 No: 2, Left-Wing Intellectuals between the Wars, pp: 169-186

Küçükömer, İdris (2007) “Batılaşma” *Düzenin Yabancılaşması*, İstanbul: Bağlam

Konur, Hamdi (1968) “Milli Cephenin Önündeki Engeller”, *Türk Solu*, No: 27

Laqueur, Walter (1959) “The National Bourgeoisie: A Soviet Dilemma in the Middle East”, *International Affairs*, Vol. 35, No. 3, 324-331

Lenin, V.İ. (1992) *Ulusların Kaderlerini Tayin Hakkı*, Ankara: Sol

Lipovsky, Igor (1992) *The Socialist Movement in Turkey 1960-1980*, Leiden: E.J.Brill.

- Löwy, Michael (1977) “Marx ve Engels’de Uluslar ve Enternasyonalizm”, (çev. Bülent Aksoy) *Birikim*, No: 23, 65-83
- Macar, Elçin (2001) “Doğan Avcıoğlu”, (ed) İnel, Ahmet, in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce*, vol. 2, İstanbul: İletişim, 162-180
- Malley, Robert (1996) *The Call from Algeria, Third Worldism Revolution and the Turn to Islam*, London: University of California Press
- Marx, Karl (2002) *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations*, (ed) Hobsbawm, Eric, translated by Jack Cohen, New York: International Publishers
- Molyneux Maxine and Halliday Fred (1984), “Marxism, the Third World and the Middle East”, *MERIP Reports*, The Middle East After OPEC, No: 120, 18-21
- Mumcu, Uğur (1993) *Sosyalizm ve Bağımsızlık: Aybar ile Söyleşi*, İstanbul: Tekin
- Munck, Ronaldo (1986) *The Difficult Dialogue: Marxism and Nationalism*, London: ZED
- Oktay, Ahmet (1998) “Türk Solu ve Kültür”, *Toplum ve Bilim*, No: 78, 38-58
- Şener, Mustafa (2006) *Türkiye Sol Hareketinde İktidar Stratejisi Tartışmaları: 1961-1971*, Ankara Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Kamu Yönetimi ve Siyaset Bilimi (unpublished PHD thesis)
- Şener, Mustafa (2007) “Türkiye İşçi Partisi”, (ed) Bora T., Gültekingil M., in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce*, vol. 8, İstanbul: İletişim
- Şimşek, Gökçe Heval (2004) *The Conception of Development in the Turkish Left in the 1960s: The Case of TİP*. METU, Department of Political Science and Public Administration, (Msc Thesis)
- Tunçay, Mete (2007) “Türkiye’de Komünist Akımın Geçmişi Üzerine”, (ed) Bora T., Gültekingil M., in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce*, vol. 8, İstanbul: İletişim, 349-355

Türk Solu, (1968) “Her Devrim Milli Bir Yol İzler“, No: 15

Türk Solu, (1969a) “Türkiye’nin Gerçeği”, No: 64

Türk Solu (1969b) “Biz Geniş Cepheci de Değiliz”, No: 90

Yetkin, Çetin (1998) *Türkiye’de Soldaki Bölünmeler*, İstanbul: Toplumsal Dönüşüm.

Yön, (1962) “Sosyalist Kültür Derneği Tüzüğü”, No: 53

Yurtsever, Haluk (2002) *Süreklilik ve Kopuş İçinde Marksizm ve Türkiye Solu*, İstanbul: Etki

Ünlü, Barış (2002) *Bir Siyasal Düşünür Olarak Mehmet Ali Aybar*, İstanbul: İletişim

Ünsal, Artun (2002) *Umuttan Yalnızlığa: Türkiye İşçi Partisi (1961-1971)*, İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları

Woods, Alan and Grant, Ted, (2000) “Marxism and the National Question”
www.marxist.com/Theory/national_question2.html