

## «THE POLITICS OF STUDENTS AND YOUNG WORKERS IN TURKEY» \*

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With the growing social consciousness of almost all the countries of the «Third World» and their relative weak and predominantly traditional orientated pluralistic structure, the importance of the most dynamic, active and educated part of their population is gaining increasingly weight. Thus, the role of university students began to exercise a quite remarkable influence in countries undertaking major efforts in order to realize full economic development. In this respect students of Latin America have certainly opened the path way back in the 1920's with their demand for autonomy and «cogobierno» (cogestion). Beginning in Peru in 1919, it spread from there to Chile in 1920, Columbia 1924 and so on. After World War II, countries like Turkey, Greece, Lebanon, and the Far East such as Korea, Vietnam and Japan have witnessed intensive and recurrent interventions of university students long before their European and American peers began to exercise criticism on their respective society.

In the case of Turkey no doubt that the demands of students for freedom and constitutionality were used as major support for the unrelentless criticism of progressive political groups and parties. They even lead to situations which served as triggers for the revolution of May 27, 1960, Viewed in the retrospective one can easily say, that until 1960 student movements in Turkey were free from ideological commitment. Their action was not coherent at

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(\*) This paper has been given at the ISA (International Association of Sociology) 7 th World Congress - Varna Sept. 14-19, 1970.  
Committee on **Political Sociology**, Session Sept. 18, Chairman: S. M. Lipset 1970.

every issue, they carried on a non-committed, rather spontaneous struggle against arbitrary use of power and social injustice.<sup>1</sup>

During the last five years this situation has drastically changed since the coming to power of the Justice Party, strongly committed to the sponsoring of private enterprise and foreign capital investment, both right and left orientated student groups have constantly build up their arguments around precise, sharp, consistent, ideological analysis and demands. Following the events in May 68 in France, increased violence and planned action seemed also to spread among Turkey's students. However the passing over a new phase in Turkish student movements can not only be attributed to a world wide phenomena. It is rather the fast polarisation on the Turkish political scenery and the unrelentless efforts of political parties to mobilize supporters among university students, that introduced new dimensions within the students struggle. Thus the excessive use of weapons, the training and drilling of armed students, not only provokes constantly dramatic incidences such as death casulties on the campuses, but also shakes the confidence of public opinion toward a constitutional, efficiently functioning parliamentary system.

On the other side the increased political activity of workers cannot be fully be attributed to an enhanced social consciousness of the younger generation Nevertheless it is indeed the low age category which espouses the more radical political views.

No doubt that both groups —students and young workers— have definitely printed their demands and opposition to major political issues upon Turkish public opinion during the last two years.

Permanent criticism of governmental policy, local, regional strikes, national wide boycotts, condemnation of various policies by means of press releases, official declarations of professional bodies, publication of detailed reports, street demonstrations, violent clashes with the police forces, occupations of university buildings and factories, annexation attempts of land, armed confrontation between political milice forces all these elements of increased social tension have repeteadly beent the headlines of the press and beyond that have lead since June 16, 1970 following a prohibited, regional general strike to the pronouncement of martial law in the

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(1) Nermin ABADAN, «Values and Political Behavior of Turkish Youth» *Turkish Yearbook of International Relations*, 1963 Ankara 1965, P. 92-93.

provinces of Istanbul and Kocaeli, two provinces with a relatively high percentage of industrial workers and students.<sup>2</sup>

#### *A — Organized actions by student bodies*

Recent foreign publications dealing with the relationship of students and politics in Turkey have concluded as if the strong involvement of Turkish students in politics after having reached its peak in the days before the 1960 revolution was shortlived and seems to be much less in present day Turkey than in many other developing countries.<sup>3</sup>

The analysis of the events of the last two years alone are clearly showing that especially since May 1968, occupation of Faculty building or complete campuses, boycotting of examinations and lectures have practically paralyzed normal teaching schedules of Turkish universities. During the whole academic year of 1969/70 at least one if no more of the major seven state universities, was obliged to close its doors temporarily, so intense were the armed conflicts between various students organisations and official authorities.

Although it might be correct to state, that the leaders of Turkish student organisations tend to be considerably more leftist than the student body itself<sup>4</sup>, protesting actions of the recent past are clearly showing that there has been a surprising high degree of solidarity between the leaders and the rank and file. This has been openly displayed at various incidents such as at the occasion when the official car of US Ambassador Komer was burned down during his call at the president of the Middle East Technical university. When students of the same university decided by means of an open forum to oppose the appointment of the board of trustees of an US friendly professor as university president, 45 members of the teaching staff signed their resignation as a gesture of solidarity with the students. Similarly students and teaching staff repentedly manifested together against assaults of rightist elements, leading to the death of one director of laboratories of the Hacettepe university, Ankara. In the same line the unexplained assassination of a student leader, such

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(2) The connection between labour and student action shows itself in the almost equal composition of arrested persons by the military courts of Istanbul.

(3) Leslie L. ROOS, Jr., Noralou P. ROOS and Gary R. FIELD, *Student and Politics in Turkey*, *Daedalus*, Winter 68, P. 184.

(4) Özer OZANKAYA, *Üniversite öğrencilerinin siyasal yönelimleri*, Ankara 1966.

as the shooting of Mustafa Kuseyri in the School of Journalism and Communication of Ankara University, on May 23 1970, provoked large size solidarity demonstrations in other university cities. Briefly Turkish university students no more carry on local, narrow struggles. The action of one university almost inevitably incites the remaining student bodies to react. This should be acknowledged as one of the most important change in attitude and strategy. In addition to this change on the domestic scenery, Turkish students also espouse the common struggle of youth of the Third world, which means rebellion against oligarchical rule, oppressing governmental machinery, international orientated business groups.

To sum up one could say that Turkey's student movement has passed from childhood to adolescence. Not only are Turkish students from now on displaying an openly adult political behaviour pattern, but to a large extent their discontent with non-realized aspects of national development has increased the ideological tone of political discussion. The consciousness of Turkish students in regard of their belonging to the future ruling elite has also conduced them to regard upon themselves more than ever as «speakers of the underprivileged classes». Their motivation has enlarged even more than in industrial societies, such as West Germany, the concept of «extra parliamentary opposition».

A comparison between the issues, which preoccupied the major student bodies during the years of 1950-1964<sup>5</sup> and the years after 1965, is clearly indicating that the predominantly domestic concern in regard of national interest is still prevailing, but it has completely changed its framework. Where as previously issues of national interest such as the Cyprus conflict, were dealt on a rather emotional basis, now the safeguarding of national interest is viewed through the framework of international relations, by means of careful analysis of the impact of world dominating monopoly capitalism, foreign intervention, foreign capital investment, bilateral and regional agreements, system of alliances such as NATO and CENTO. It is in this perspective that the below cited figures should be interpreted :

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(5) Nermin ABADAN, op. cit., P. 94.

Table : 1 Public statements of student organisations<sup>6</sup>

	1950-64	65	66	67	68	69	70
<i>Student Affairs</i>							
Unification of student organisations	4	3	4	—	—	—	—
<i>Ideological Issues</i>							
Anti-imperialistic and anti-US statements	—	5	15	35	20	34	229
Disapproval of reactionary religious actions	16	25	15	17	32	28	204
<i>Domestic issues</i>							
In favour of protecting Ataturk's reforms	24	3	7	6	11	14	37
Criticism of government and police	—	20	26	38	47	61	282
Economic problems	—	11	16	23	30	47	94
Appeals for collaboration to the general public	8	—	—	—	—	—	63
<i>International issues</i>							
Cyprus	24	4	3	7	5	5	—

It can be clearly seen, that the major issues on which the attention of student bodies was attracted, consists of disapproval of religious motivated, obscurantist practices and actions such as anti-communist, revenge prayers pronounced collectively in mosques; strong dissent of governmental policy especially in regard of not realizing constitutional directives such as land reform, etc.; wrong priorities accorded to economic problems and intensive criticism to excessive close ties with US government. This later reaction coincided almost every time with the visits of the 6 th US fleet in various Turkish ports.

The following tables, which are dealing with other forms of students disapproving activities, are revealing similar trends.

(6) The figures covering the years 1965-69 have been calculated and analyzed by Mr. Mehmed Ali KILIÇBAY; the two papers covered are «Cumhuriyet» and «Ulus». The figures for 1970 are also including non printed hand distributed material such as pamphlets and leaflets, the number is not fully comprehensive. Closing date: June 6, 1970.

**Table : 2 Meetings**

	1965	66	67	68	69	70
Commemoration of revolutionary actions such as student protest of 28/29 April 1960 and the revolution of May 27, 1960	2	2	2	3	3	10
Commemoration for Ataturk	1	1	—	—	—	1
Loyalty to the constitution of 1961	—	—	—	2	1	2
Criticism of the government and the police	—	—	2	1	2	11
Against reactionary religious actions	—	1	—	3	—	—
Anti - Communist demonstration	—	1	—	3	—	—
Anti - imperialistic and anti - US meetings	—	1	4	4	4	—
Against restrictive university admission	—	—	—	3	2	—

The above cited distribution is showing that there has been an open switch from pathetic loyalty pledging toward disapproval of government practice and military commitments.

**Table : 3 Boycotts**

	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970
To improve students conditions	2	2	3	4	2	—
Protesting the government	—	—	1	—	19	41
Protesting private higher educational institutions	—	—	10	—	—	—
Protesting the general educational system	—	—	—	33	6	—
Nationwide boycotts	—	—	—	—	6	5
Occupation (Buildings or campus)	—	—	—	23	45	7

In regard of students boycotting lectures there has been an interesting evolution. Where as in earlier years student organisations attempt to impose miscellaneous specific conditions within various faculties, such as higher grades for lower performance or readmission of discharged, failed former students, etc. in recent years non-participation of the lectures as a vehicle of expressing disapproval of the educational policy of the government or other governmental policies and decisions has obviously very much increased. At the same time students have tried to avoid occupations in order not to appear in the eyes of public opinion as law breakers.

Some recent research is clearly showing the major reasons of this accentuated critical attitude. It reveals itself in the highly unbalanced structure of lycee education.<sup>7</sup> Within the 219 state lycees of Turkey the distribution of teachers is as follows: Turkish literature 564, philosophy 225, history 463, geography 523, mathematics 331, biology 338, physics 213, chemistry 113. This means that whereas a teacher of geography has to give 13 hours teaching a week, a teacher in chemistry has a teaching load of 82 hours a week. The same research is also revealing that within the 219 lycees, 9 have no teacher at all in literature, 64 in philosophy, 15 in history, 10 in geography, 8 in mathematics, 45 in biology, 65 in physics, 139 in chemistry. Looking upon regional distribution the same research reveals that in the 16 lycees of Eastern Anatolia, there are no teachers in chemistry at all, only 3 in physics and 11 in biology. Taking in consideration that admission to universities, which if they are full comprehensive can by virtue of the constitution only be established and run by the state, has to be realized by the participation of a series of competitive, objective tests. The results are of course calculated by means of computers. This utterly depersonalized way of selecting potential university students reduces the chances for student candidates from less developed regions nearly to zero.

Another research carried on at the same university of Hacettepe, Ankara, has revealed that out of 723 students, which enrolled

(6a) Mahmut TEZCAN «Memleketimizin yüksek öğrenim kurumlarında öğrenci hareketleri ve ortaya çıkardığı sorumlular», **1968 Yılı Öğrenci Hareketleri, Dünyada ve Türkiyede**, 25-27 Kasım 1968 tarihinde Symposium, Eğitim Fak. yayın Sh. 167-205;

(7) Necati CEBE and Behran UCKUNKAYA, **Üniversiteye giriş sınavları**, Ankara Hacettepe University 1970.

by means of these objective tests, 426 that means 59 %, came from Ankara, the capital of Turkey.

In 1969, 64.183 lycee graduates applied for admission to the entrance examinations carried on at a national wide scale stretching as far out as also giving these tests in embassies such as the Turkish embassies of Washington, D. C., Bonn, etc. As the results of these tests 13.000 out of the 64.000 were registered at the seven universities of the country, out of which universities in Erzurum, Trabzon and even to a certain extent at Izmir cannot be looked upon as fully staffed.

All these figures are clearly indicating that Turkey after having enjoyed for a short period some kind of mass entry system to the existing universities, now is entering by force into an elitist system. Since the character of the general educational system is not geared up to this result and the awareness of almost all stratas of the population has been growing in favour of higher education as only vehicle for social mobility, the tension as growing within a very fast speed. It should not sound exaggerated to say that obstacles against the access of higher education is one of the most serious themes within the revolution of rising expectations Turkey nowadays is going through.

As pointed out the explosive increase of potential university students did not only produce a highly inbalanced development to be related to regional origin, but also lead to an astonishing growth of private school of higher educational level. Among the 103.000 students in higher educational institutions during the academic year of 1968/69, 43.000 were enrolled in private higher educational schools. Since state universities are requiring a very low tuition, where as private institutions are demanding exorbitant prices. This situation has even forced the Turkish upper House, the Senate, to constitute a mixt investigation committee. The recommendations of this committee in Spring 1969 were strongly in favour for the liquidation and improvement of almost all of the than existing 43 higher education institutions.

All of these problems are clearly indicating that serious obstacles for an equality of chances in regard of Turkey's future elites are leading student bodies to recurring protest actions.<sup>8</sup> In addition

(8) The 3.200 large student body of the private Kadıköy Engineering and Architect School in Istanbul decided to buy out the school. After the



the increasing number of serious, scientific reports about Turkey's economic difficulties, the alarming growth of its shanty towns (favellas), the retardness of its rural structure, the impact of feudal remnants especially in eastern provinces, the revolting inequality in income distribution, have constantly contributed to the heightening of social tensions. It should not be minimized that alone from December 1969 on, Turkish universities had to record more than 20 deaths as a result of students manifolded actions.

**Table : 4 Silent marches**

	1965	66	67	68	69	70
Protest against the government and police	—	—	2	2	4	12
To support boycotts	—	—	—	4	3	7
Anti-imperialistic and anti US marches	—	1	1	2	5	3
In favour of full independence and Ataturk's reforms	—	—	—	1	—	1
To honour killed students	—	—	—	—	—	9
To solidarize with farmers						
To protest rejected student candidates	4	4	3	4	5	—
For the improvement of university conditions	2	3	—	1	1	—

One of the major purpose of silent marches is to concretize definite topics such as the desolate situation of non-admitted students, the solidarity students wants to display in favour of peasants who are displeased with prices determined by the government, to remind the general population of non realized promises, pronounced before the general elections of 1969. The escalated fighting in Israel, which could lead to an indirect involvenent of Turkish armed forces through the channels of American bases has also been recently a target of strong criticism.

refusal of the owner to turn over ownership, the students decided to found their own school by using the fees of last year deposited at a bank. The teaching staff is backing the students. *Cumhuriyet*, June 2, 1970.

## 2 — *Political parties, political movements and Students*

Turkish political life has gained during the last years a definitely strong ideological tint. It started with the entering of the first Turkish socialist party, TIP, with 15 deputies in parliament; in 1965 it gained weight after this party went through serious innerparty conflicts which led to the resignation of its leader, a phenomena which was the case with all the minor parties in Turkey and finally culminated in an intensive ideological controversy carried out mostly through various weeklies and some of the daily press. The polarization between right and left has not only produced a rather significant change in the platforms and policies of the major political parties, but of course caused also some rather deep repercussions among the auxiliary youth organisations of the parties as well as within the major student organization themselves.

After the pronouncement of the new Turkish constitution nationwide student organisations received in the first years of this decade a rather substantial amount of government subsidy. The two major organisations - the National Turkish Student's Union (MTTB) and the National Turkish Student's Federation (MTTF) have been supported by funds from the nation budget. Both are legally obligated to remain politically neutral. After 1965 with the advent of the Justice Party, the TMTF, which after having sympathized for some time with the People's Republican party (CHP) turn later toward the Turkish Labour Party. This resulted in the deprivation of its subsidies. The MTTB after remaining the only government sponsored youth organisation, has completely alligned itself to the official governmental position, with time it became a rather active anti-communist organisation. Thus both major student organisations were strongly pulled in the political area. This is equally true for the non-subsidized organisations.

One of the most critical and active student organisations, which although never officially subsidized, managed to build up a nation wide organisation, the FKF (Fikir Kulüpleri Federasyonu) took first for a longer period the function of providing the Turkish Labour party with strongly motivated precinct workers. The so far not yet fully solved crisis of this party however lead the FKF to a reconsideration of its strategy. The result has been, that this student organisation following the serious losses of the Turkish Labour party - which partly was produced by an amendment of the electoral law, strongly handicapping the winning chances of small parties decided to dissolve itself. Thus in October 1969 the Turkish

Debating Club Federation decided to change its name, to cooperate with the peasants and workers and reorganize itself under the name of «Revolutionary (Youth Organisation)» (Devrimci Gençlik Federasyonu). This organisation is also publishing a weekly called «Isci ve Köylü» (Workers and Peasants), which is mostly sold by volunteering students.

The increasingly radical position of the above mentioned organisation as well as the solidarity actions of almost all student organisations on local or regional level, lead the government to the submission of a bill concerning the reorganisation of associations in general. This bill is basically prohibiting «meetings, discussions, exhibits, which are advocating the doctrines, ideologies, ideas or actions of living or dead, Turkish or foreign personalities». Among other prohibitions the same bill forbids students to join a political party. The bill foresees 3-6 months jail. It has so far not yet been passed by parliament.

Although the general impression leads outside observer to the conclusion that Turkish students are heavily leaning over to radical leftist views, this would be a hastened and unjustified observation. Actually there are among young students an almost equally strong sympathy toward open or disguised rightist, practically real fascist organisations. It has not only produced an increasing amount of adherents but also lead to the creation of special training, indoctrination and drilling centers. Although this kind of milice organisation is strictly prohibited both by the constitution and the special law concerning political parties, the so called «commando» group are regularly and increasingly more frequently harassing left-wing organisations.<sup>9</sup>

The most interesting aspect of this evolution are the explanation of the leader of the National Movement Party, Alparslan Türkeş, who stated that their goal is not only «to give Turkish students physical training, religious teaching but to mobilize them to combat communism on a national scale».<sup>10</sup> Although this party has actually only one representative in parliament, its real strength lies in its powerful youth organisations. (Ülkü Ocak Birlikleri) The financial support for their large activity, which covers almost the training

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(9) Walter F. WEIKER, Turkey's Elections may bode ills, *Mideast*, Dec. 1969, P. 33.

(10) Abdi IPEKCI, *Liderler diyor ki*, Ant yayını, Istanbul 1969, P. 297-298.

of 17.000 youngsters, is said to be provided by voluntary contribution».<sup>11</sup>

Among the major opposition parties, the People's Republican party has both a separate auxiliary organisation for young party members and has been attempting to mobilise the Social-Democracy Association on its side. It is rather interesting to observe, that although the government party, AP of course disposes of a well subsidized youth organisations, their members are not appearing to frequently on the scenery.

The sharp controversies within the government party and the governmental crisis in February 1970, has very much contributed to increase the discontentment of students in regard of the survival chances of a democratic system. This tense political climate reached its peak in June 1970, when due to major labour disturbances martial law was pronounced in Istanbul and Izmit. This development certainly pushed students even more than ever to radical thoughts since cited development was partly provoked by the tacit approval of governmental forces in regard of rightist students to carry heavy fire weapons and to attack student hostels and dormitories, which predominantly leftist sympathizers. The most convincing proof was the nonpermitted raid and control of the students-dormitory of the Faculty of Political Science of the University of Ankara. An action which was unanimously denounced as «unconstitutional and incompatible with university autonomy «by the entire Faculty staff.

The most important feature of the right camp, is it strongly proreligious, anti-masonic, xenophobic and anti-communist orientation, which permits a cooperation between fanatic and secular minded elements.

Among the disciples of the left, the controversy ranges between the partisans of a leftist political participation within the ranks of

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(11) When because of serious clashes with fire arms at the Faculty of Letters in Istanbul, one «commando», a student of geography, Yusuf Imamoglu, was killed, the remaining members of the «commando» group, who were protecting the leader of the National Movement Part, A. Türkes, stopped in Istanbul some parts of the traffic and demanded the handing over of the murder. **Cumhuriyet** 9 June 1970.

At a press conference of the president of International Rotary Club, Mr. J. F. Conway, a group of «commandos» stormed the Istanbul Hilton Hotel, shouting «No to Jews», «No to the capitalist, masonic lodges» **Cumhuriyet**, February 25, 1970.

two parties, the moderate left of the center CHP and the socialist TIP on one side and the followers of the extra parliamentary opposition. The later are arguing around the possibilities of creating a «large front» uniting workers, peasants and the small bourgeoisie versus a rather «narrow» front giving the working class a predominant place. Another dimension in this camp belongs to the sympathizers of a military intervention.

What seemed to be true some years ago, is no more valid. Participation in politics as an alternative to other forms of extra-curricular activity seems no more to apply to Turkish students. Another hypothesis, whether intense involvement of student in politics is least likely, where their universities have very high standards, adequate study and research facilities also seems not to be assertable.<sup>12</sup> Among all Turkish universities the Middle East Technical University (METU) at Ankara as well as Hacettepe also in Ankara, have been receiving the highest amount of foreign assistant and technical aid. They also have the smallest number of students in class. Yet, after the first years, when predominantly children of middle and upper middle classes enrolled, the fact that these universities offered generous teaching in foreign languages, are carrying partly the complete teaching in English on, did not decrease but on the contrary increase both the political mobilisation as well as the critical appraisal of their student body. The social background of Turkish university students can not serve as a basis for identification with class interest. On the contrary: although the majority of students are coming from large cities, with a relative high income, their willingness to identify themselves with the practical not represented underprivileged classes, such as the workers and peasants, is remarkably strong.<sup>13</sup>

### *B — Young Turkish workers and their political attitudes*

Before entering the subject in particular, first some introductory remarks. Although the economic records of the past ten years are showing that there has been a vigorous growth within the

(12) Seymour M. LIPSET, *University Students and Politics in underdeveloped countries*, *Daedalus*, Winter 68, P. 56.

(13) According the survey carried out by Özer ÖZANKAYA (footnote 4), 73 % of the students of Ankara university came from large cities, only 13 % from small cities and 12 % from the villages. Again 49 % of the students came from families with an average income above 1.000 TL, 27 % of families with a monthly income of 500-1.000 TL and only 23 % of families with an income below 500 TL a month. *op. cit.*, P. 83.

industrial sector, the place of Turkey's labour class is small in comparison to the rural part, where the agricultural sector still dominates with 62 % of the national economy. However due to constitutional guaranties and incentives, the realization of collective bargaining and the right to strike have introduced new dimensions in Turkey's labour class.

The beginning of trade unionism in this country goes back to 1947 and was rather imposed from above. Before that date the government party (CHP) deliberately attempted to prevent a development of class consciousness by trying to apply some forms of corporatism. After the liberalisation of the regime in 1945, a Ministry of Labour was created. The government after prohibiting the founding of a socialist labour party, tried to establish the control over the newly founded trade unions. The rather authoritarian approach of the government, pushed the newly constituting trade unions towards a cooperation with the Democratic party, basically a right liberal and rather conservative party. The golden age of Turkish trade unionism however begins with the concretisation of the new constitution of 1961. It also coincides with the birth and entrance of the first socialist party into parliament. Where as in 1960 the total number of trade union members in Turkey were around 290.000, eight years later they exceeded one million.

**Table : 5 Growth of trade unions in Turkey <sup>14</sup>**

1948	52.000	73	1	—
1958	262.591	394	18	1
1960	282.967	432	27	1
1964	338.769	595	28	2
1967	834.580	798	18	3
1968	1.057.928	755	22	3

The development of non-committed trade unionism as it is the practice in the US has not been difficult in the beginning in Turkey, since the movement did not grow out from class conflict. With the increasing support of American organisations such as the AID, the largest Turkish labour confederation, TÜRK-İŞ, adopted this practice and consequently managed to place on the voting hallot

(14) Cahit TALAS, Sendikacılığımızın dünü, bugünü ve politikası in **Yavuz ABADAN'a Armağan**, Ankara 1969, SBF Yayını, P. 643.

of all major parties, labour candidates. This class interest detached political attitude lead in 1967 to a split and the creation of a new labour confederation «DİSK» (Revolutionary Labour Confederation) with a strong stand against compromising, consensus orientated policies. This paper will attempt first to draw some basic labour orientation and than will make a retrospective appraisal of the labour movements of the recent past.

### *1 — Political attitudes of young Turkish workers*

Although empirical material on voting behaviour specifically related to the socio-economic status of voters is still very much lacking, the findings on voting behaviour and intentions of Turkish workers, carried out by a team of economists and statisticians of Istanbul University has brought a considerable amount of interesting and challenging data in the field. The team consisted of members of the Faculty of Economics of Istanbul university comprising Kenan Bulutoğlu, Ahmed Niyazi Koç, Metin Göker, Ilter Turan and Cengiz Arin. A sample of 4.959 workers was drawn from a universe embracing 700.000 union members. Since the cited research is comprising a very substantial spectrum, only findings concerning the political motivation of young workers will be cited here.

The most interesting fact concerning young workers political intentions lies in the tendency that their preferences goes definitely toward both ends of the political spectrum, that means toward the extreme left and right. Thus it can be said, that the political choices of university students, which also is indicating a very strong polarisation, is founding partly its repercussion also among the basically less indoctrinated young workers groups. In addition the preference of young workers still lies more openly with functioning political parties, than hypothetical models.

**Table : 6 Party preferences and groups (in percentages) <sup>15</sup>**

Age group	AP	CHP	GP	MP	MHP	TIP	Other	Do'nt Know	Total
21 - 30	37	35	41	41	50	55	37	39	39
31 - 40	41	36	36	47	50	31	37	36	38
41 - 50	17	21	18	11	9	11	16	19	17
51 - 60	4	5	1	—	—	2	5		
61 +	1	2	4	1	3	—	4	1	1
	100	100	100	100	100			100	100

(15) Milliyet, September 1969.

- Expl: AP = Justice party, successor of Democratic Party, dissolved after Revolution of May 27, 1960.
- CHP = People's Republican Party, founded by Atatürk, leader I. İnönü.
- GP = Reliance Party, conservative wing, split from CHP, leader Feyzioğlu.
- MP = Nation Party, strongly attached to regional loyalties, core in Central Anatolia, leader Bölükbaşı
- MHP = National Movement Party, leaning toward nazizm, disposes over «commando» forces, leader former National Union Committee, Alparslan Türkeş.
- TİP = Turkish Labour party, first socialist party, leader before election D. A. Aybar.
- The other small parties such as Union party and New Turkey Party were not mentioned at all.

This table clearly indicates that young voters are attracted by the rightist political party in 1969 such as the MHP, which denounces the evils of capitalism and socialism, insists on an active nationalist foreign policy, takes definite stand against Zionism, Masonic lodges, even cooperation with the Common Market. Its commitment to train and drill young members for the implementation of their goals seems to fall in concordance with some basic elements of Turkish political culture, in which militarism as a virtue and a value system to aspire still holds a relatively great place.

On the other side it also seems to be relevant that the first Turkish socialist party TİP with its open demand to reorganize Turkey's foreign policy, quit the Nato, abolish all foreign bases, nationalize banks, fundamental industries, realize land reform, etc. seems equally even more than the right party to attract young voters. This would also be an indicator that the Turkish workers are not lacking class consciousness although the general appraisal that the Turkish labor class has a weak tie toward his strata could be supported both because of the nature of a rather temporary employment in industry and the high ratio of unskilled labour.<sup>16</sup> It also should be stressed that the preferences are not in line with the

(16) The most comprehensive study about membership, age groups, motivation, social background of the Turkish Labour Party is presented by Artun ÜNSAL *Parti Ouvrier de Turquie*, Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation submitted in Paris 1970, President Maurice DUVERGER. Equally interesting for comparison, Toker DERELİ *The Development of Turkish Trade Unionism*, (in English) İstanbul İktisat Fakültesi yayını, 1968, P. 50.



overall motivation, voting intentions in the sample covered. This fact again would indicate, that there is definitely a deviant, more radical element inherent in the political attitudes of young workers.

**Table : 7 Voting preferences of workers, estimates and electoral return <sup>17</sup>**

AP	35	37	52	47
CHP	30	3	1	3
MHP	4	29	17	47
TIP	10	3	1	3
MP	2	9	3	3
GP	3	2		6
YTP	—	2	= 3	2
BP	—	2		2,5
Bilmiyorum	15	14	24	—

This table reveals some quite relevant questions. Not only is there a sharp discrepancy between the estimates and the return, even in case of the government party, but the chances given to small parties —on the contrary of young workers— is rather low. This leads us to the conclusion that although among young voters there is a rather high percentage of undecided (39 %) in comparison to the total sample (24 %), the evaluation of minor parties seems to be more accurate, which again leads to the observation that there seems to be a correlation between the increase of political radicalisation and the decrease of age.

Having partly explained a stronger commitment for radical political solution, it would be interesting at this point to pass over to the political involvement of Turkish workers in general. The likelihood that many of the below cited various incidents might have been the result of political activities of younger workers cannot be proven. Unfortunately so far; there has been empirical research carried on dealing with the age factor as a determinant in relation with open violence. Thus it seems rather convincing to leave interpretations for further dates without neglecting the evolution of labour movements in Turkey since the last two years. This point should be stressed as there seems to be an unproved however defensible point of building up a parallelism between student action and labour commitment.

(17) *Milliyet*, September 1969.

2 — *Recent labour activities in organized and spontaneous form*

Although already in 1965 the first sharp clashes with authorities, leading to the intervention of armed forces at Zonguldak, center of Turkey's coal mines, indicated that there has been a sharp turn within the Turkish labour class, it is since the last two years that unexpected, spontaneous actions, begins to appear regularly in the daily press. A short survey of labour activities during 1968/69 will serve to indicate the nature and in some cases the similarities of responses with the students actions in the cities.

- July 3, 1968 : 12.000 workers employed at the state owned Karabük Steel and Iron factory started a food *boycot* against the use of US soya beans.
- July 5, 1968 : The workers of the Derby rubber factory alledging the employer having signed a contract with a yellow trade union, *occupied* the factory.
- Sept. 11, 1968 : The owner of the Kavel factory, which was *occupied* by workers since a fortnight, applied for evacuation by force to the prosecutor general.
- Sept. 12, 1968 : The factory Emayetaş, which was *occupied* a night before by 650 workers was evacuated by the police.
- Nov. 24, 1968 : *Protest* march of 2.000 workers employed by the US firm constructing the petro-chemical installations at İzmit, Yarımca (at present time under military administration) due to the refusal to allocate special transportation means for the workers.
- January 11, 1969 : *Occupation* of the Singer factory by 450 workers due to wage conflicts. Serious clashes with the police, 11 wounded, arrest of 20 workers.
- January 15, 1969 : *Destruction* of the cafeteria at Keban in East Anatolia following a court decision declaring a strike attempt as illegal. The strike was started to protest the discharge of 1400 workers out of a total of 1700. 60 workers arrested.
- March 20, 1969 : *Occupation* of the city hall of Diyarbakır (East Anatolia) following the discharge of 186 municipality workers.

- April 13, 1969* : Occupation of the Akis textile factory in Antakya because of overdue wages by workers and employed.
- May 20, 1969* : Resistance action of 35 workers against arbitrary discharge from a nail factory in Istanbul. Serious conflict after the arrival of a group of university students, tried to back the workers. 15 workers arrested. Following day 21 students arrested.
- July 14, 1969* : Occupation and taking over of the management by workers at the Alpagut lignite mine.
- July 23, 1969* : Evacuation of the same mine by the gendarmeries, discharge of 10 workers.
- August 2, 1969* : Resistance and taking over controlling power by 2.200 workers at Türk Demir Döküm factory in Istanbul. At the attempt of evacuation 61 police and 18 workers were wounded. Workers left factory upon arrival of military forces.
- August 13, 1969* : 4.400 workers starts a strike at Eregli Steel and Iron factory. They are demanding participation in management.
- Dec. 15-18, 1969* : Upon the invitation of two teachers union, TÖS and ILP all over Turkey 100.000 teachers did not enter classes during four days. This action lead to the dispense of about 8.000 teachers.
- June 16, 1970* : Regional general strike in Istanbul and Izmit, started by the DISK confederation in order to protest the governmental bill concerning reorganisation of Turkish union. Serious demolitions, violence acts, intervention of armed forces, pronouncement of martial law in the two provinces. Prolongation of military administration for two months more. Large number of arested workers.

This uncomplete chronological list is attempting to show, that within the last two years, mainly after the events of May 68 in France, both students and workers in Turkey have tried to apply

various forms of spontaneous actions, all which serves to indicate a more intensive degree of dissatisfaction. It also can be interpreted as the closing up of the primary phase in Turkish unionism history. Where as in earlier years the concept of class consciousness and a combattant standing against authority was lacking within the concept of the average worker, nowadays a new orientation has replaced the traditional standing. It would not be surprising to find out in future investigations, that this change in attitudes has mostly been developed within the rank and file of younger workers.

The attempt of the government to bring Turkish unionism to an artificial stop by passing an amendment in labour legislation can so far not be appraised. The purposes of these amendments are the reduction of the numbers of unions, an improvement in their efficiency. A closer look up however might indicate some other motives.

The cited amendment which was backed by Türk-IS, the largest Turkish confederation, envisages an open «guided» trade unionism. According the amendment :

- 1) Strikes can only be announced if a labour court decides upon the debated issue,
- 2) In any institutions, where a strike has taken place, this this action can only be repeated 180 days later,
- 3) Only labour organisations which are able to organize at least 30 % of workers within a distinctive sector, are allowed to organize themselves nationwide,
- 4) The resignation of a union member can only be acknowledged if this act is ratified by a notary.

It seems rather obvious that these new amendments actually are favorizing the largest confederation, namely TÜRK-IS. The legal mechanisms which helped to achieve this monopoly situation, might become more understandable if the rather extenuated discussion between the two major confederation is scrutinized. As a matter of fact the second largest confederation DISK, which was formed on January 17, 1967 by 17 union federation from the building metallurgical, chemical and textile sectors, kept on charging the leaders of TÜRK-IS to be heavily subsidized by American funds. Indeed alone in the years of 1961-63, Türk-İs received from AID (American Economic Development Agency) 1.600.000 TL. in addition the

I.C.F.T.U. gave 733.000 TL, and O.E.C.D. 150.000 TL. Thus it becomes evident, that the core of the controversy was the charge of serving according the inclinations of the donors rather than the working class to be represented.<sup>18</sup> The real impact of these changes and the role which will be played by the younger workers generations will only be traceable, when normal conditions will return in the major industrial centers and some detailed research will enable us to draw on more scientifically gathered material.

Pefore concluding a final important point on the analysis of the relationship between student and workers protest actions. A careful breakdown of various forms of legal and illegal protesting actions, registered during the last three years, shows a numerical decline of student demonstrations and an increase of labour activities. The following table gives an overlook of mass actions realized in one of the following action pattern: boycott, occupation, strike, demonstration.

Table : 8 Various forms of protesting actions in Turkey  
1968 - 1971

Protesting social groups	68/69		69/70		70/71	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Student actions	83	74.9	81	49.9	67	41.4
Workers actions	10	11.0	27	16.3	26	16.1
Peasant actions	1	1.1	9	5.3	7	4.5
Boycot of public and technical personel	—	—	13	21.4	30	17.9
Reactionary mob actions (including sabotage))	—	—	—	—	32	20.0

There is not doubt, that starting from June 1970 on the volume and size of Turkish labour movements, espoused by the multifaceted protesting actions of various public servants against the personel law, created an intense storm of reaction in Turkish public opinion. Tarık Z. Tunaya uses the most eloquent term, when he speaks of a «social earthquake» which continuous to shake Turkey's foundations. The variety of these exploding small volcanoes reveals the following tendency:

- 1) The real causes of Turkey's permanent unrest are not as it is often alledged the direct products of radical university

(18) Ahmet Taner KISLALI, *Forces Politiques dans la Turquie Moderne*, Ankara 1968, SBF Yayını, P. 144.

- circles. The declining proportion of student activities is a direct indice for the proposition.
- 2) Student action can also not been declared as being the major source of this unrest since during the years of 1963-1968, 6746 striking days with a participation of 53.000 workers were recorded.
  - 3) The real cause of the social unrest lies in the consequences of an outdated economic system. The resistance of almost all professional and labour groups may be used as the most convincing evidence.
  - 4) The protesting actions are not the result of the provocation of a handful of youngsters, but the product of deeply unsatisfied and restless social groups.

### *Summary*

Scrutinizing Turkish student activities, it seems obvious that the cleavage which heavily hangs upon the structure of political institutions in Turkey, has equally if not more influenced students options, strategies and preferences. It should not sound of exaggerated importance to state that the legacy of Atatürk to Turkish youth as being «the owner and guardian of the revolution» is taken extremely serious. In addition new attempts to reappraise the real sense and meaning of the Turkish revolution, to enhance the anti-imperialist aspect of the war of independence has shapened more than ever the motivations of students.

Where as in the late 1950's and early 60's the main concern of students was an extreme sense of dedication for national issues without special relevance to the social structure, during the last years the interdependence of wealthy and poor nations, the openly declared preference of the government for the fostering and care of free enterprise has reintroduced a great amoung of discussions on the role of the state, as it has been the case in the early 30's. Students are shaping their opinion and determining their strategies on the base of comparative material showing the influence of economic under development, the heavy burdens of foreign debts, the strings of strong military commitments and the unwanted consequences of international alliances.

The impact of the spread of higher education and especially of scientific research has openly showned the heavy mortgages of the

past such as feudal remnants in the rural areas, strong oligarchies exercising unjustified political power, influential pressure groups, sharp discrepancies due to the entrance into the early phase of capitalism without having realized any significant infrastructural changes.

It is in this context that various strategies such as a) first economic upheaval of Eastern Anatolia and then socialism, b) concentration upon the major requirements for the improvement of living conditions of the urban working class and the landless peasantry, c) priority for a vigorous anti-imperialistic fight paired with the eradication of feudal elements has to be considered.

Considering the future evolution of political attitudes of young Turkish workers, it seems that the declining impact of the legally constituted Turkish Labour Party might induce the neutral observer to reach the conclusion, the Turkish worker has a more conservative approach. But taking in consideration the voting preferences of younger generations as well as the latent tendencies among this age group, it might seem that in the coming years more and more and more activism will be developed by these members.