

Prelude to a Coup: The Press and the May 27 1960

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Abstract

Before, during and in the aftermath of the May 27 coup the mainstream press was utilized by the military bureaucracy as a means to persuade people about ‘justifications of the coup’. The press is a useful instrument for this purpose. It is obvious that the coup organizers attempted to manipulate the public opinion through the newspapers and journals close to them. However, the effect of press used in order to legitimize the coup and bolster public support did not bring about the desired outcomes; this can be seen in the fact that the public support for the parties close to the Democratic Party continued in the elections after the coup. Therefore, it is clear that this military intervention was formed not only by means of internal dynamics but also through international environment and external dynamics. Nevertheless, the approach of mainstream press towards this intervention was built on the approval of the actual state rather than analyzing the coup, discussing the significance of intervention in the international system or criticizing what happened in the aftermath of the coup. In this study, the attitude of mainstream press was questioned and exemplified. Furthermore, a discussion on the history of formation of press-power party-opposition party axis in Turkey was carried out. Particularly, the attitude of the mainstream press, which can be regarded as a primary source in terms of examining Turkish Political Life, to the May 27 was problematized.

Keywords: The May 27 Coup, the Press, International System, Disinformation.

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Darbeye Giden Yol: 27 Mayıs ve Basın

Öz

27 Mayıs Darbesi öncesinde, sırasında ve sonrasında, ana akım basın, askeri bürokrasi tarafından ‘darbenin gerekçeleri’ konusunda halkı ikna etmek için kullanılmıştır. Basın bu amaç için kullanılan etkili bir enstrümandır. Darbecilerin kendilerine yakın gazete ve dergilerle kamuoyunu yönlendirme çabaları vakiadır. Bununla birlikte, darbeyi meşrulaştırmak ve kamuoyu desteğini güçlendirmek için kullanılan medyanın istenilen etkiyi tam anlamıyla yaratamadığı darbe sonrası yapılan seçimlerde Demokrat Parti çizgisine yakın partilere halk desteğinin sürmesinden görülebilir. Dolayısıyla, bu müdahale yalnızca iç dinamiklerle değil, uluslararası konjonktür ve dış dinamiklerle bağlantılı şekilde biçimlendirilmiştir. Ana akım

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basının bu müdahaleye yaklaşımı ise darbeyi analiz etmek, uluslararası sistemde bu müdahalenin ne anlama geldiğini tartışmaktan veya ortaya çıkan durumu eleştirmekten ziyade, fiili durumun fazla sorgulanmadan kabul edilmesi üzerine inşa edilmiştir. Bu çalışmada ana akım basının bu tutumu sorgulanmış ve örneklendirilmiştir. Buna ilaveten, Türkiye’de basın – iktidar - muhalefet ekseninin biçimlendirilmesi tarihine dair bir tartışma yürütülmüştür. Türk Siyasi Tarihi’nin incelenmesi açısından birincil kaynaklardan birisi olarak gösterilebilecek olan basının, özellikle ana akım medyanın, 27 Mayıs koşullarında takındığı tutum ve gösterdiği reflekslerin sebepleri üzerinde durulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: 27 Mayıs, Basın, Uluslararası Sistem, Dezenfermasyon.

Introduction

Verba volant scripta manent. The attitude adopted by the Turkish mainstream press both before the coup d’etat and during the trial of the people under arrest still linger in memories.

“That those fallen are going to be put on trial has become definite. The National Unity Committee issued an order for making the provisions” (Akşam, July 20 1960).

It is quite possible to mention that how disturbing the attitude adopted against this fallen and tail discourse for the electors, as it is seen in 1961 and 1965 elections (Ahmad, 1994, p. 251-275). The founder and leader of the Justice Party (Adalet Partisi) and one of the Chiefs of Staff of the Turkish Army for two months (from June 3 1960 to August 4 1960) *Ragıp Gümüşpala* said: *“There are no fallen or tail, there are only citizens!”* (Örtülü, 1966, p.121), his words may be taken for granted for today but at a time when the impact of the May 27 was still hot such a statement could also be interpreted as *betrayal to the revolution*. Despite the negative attitude adopted and slanders by the mainstream press during the *Yassıada* trials, the partial hesitation seen in the October 15 1961 elections about the fact that which party is the heir to the Democratic Party disappeared in the October 15 1965 elections and the AP [Adalet Partisi] (the Justice Party) was unarguably

accepted as the unique inheritor of the DP for the electors (Bozbeyli, 1977, p.74; Bozbeyli, 2000, p.64).

The failure of the May 27 coup d’etat plotters and their partners in feeling the pulse of public opinion was manifested through the fact that they overgeneralized the approval displayed for the coup in big cities to the whole country. In fact, what motivated the 14s, a radical sect within the *National Unity Committee* [Milli Birlik Komitesi], for remaining in power at least one electoral period and then participating the elections as the *National Unity Party* was the visible support of this small fraction. However, the base the DP was standing on was the traditional commons, who with the introduction of multi-party system could manifest themselves and known as the silent majority, rather than the sections that the Committee members were observing, and those expecting an electoral victory by looking at the deceptive inertia of people had ignored that these commons would disappoint them in the elections.

In the first days of the coup young people on the tanks with soldiers or the city dwellers hanging Turkish flags on their windows and balconies doubtlessly did not mean much except for the expression of approval by a small group. (Sağiroğlu, et al, 1960, p.97). Also, the rude behaviours towards the DP members expressed, especially the unkind manners seen by the public during the *Yassıada* trials, led to a decline even in the support of those groups backing the coup. The abuses became so unbearable that the bespoke leader of the coup *Cemal Gürsel* himself had to give this harsh warning: *“Those harassing the DP members are going to be punished”* (Milliyet, June 28 1960).

With the court decisions declared on September 11 1961, four among 102 defendants were condemned to death and only *Celal Bayar* could evade this punishment thanks to age limit, his penalty being changed to imprisonment. Even the executions of death penalties, which still deeply affect people, were not satisfactory for some people at that time. For instance, it is claimed that one of the most hard-line members of the MBK

(the National Unity Committee) *Suphi Gürsoytak* says: “If we don’t hang at least 50-60 people, the legitimacy of the coup will be questioned” and upon this statement more than fifty graves are digged for caution (Perin, 1970: 24). Today, it is well known that the social support for the coup has dramatically declined in the aftermath of the sad fates of *Adnan Menderes*, *Fatin Rüştü Zorlu* and *Hasan Polatkan*, who are buried in three of the mentioned graves (For the details see: Dilligil, 1989, p.36).

It is interesting that the DP was overthrown before a probable early election prior to the May 27 in which the DP would test its support and at that time the party was apparently losing power (Belen Keleş, 1995, p.94). It has been claimed by the DP members that in this setting, solutions for some problems were appearing, woes were alleviating and a fresh period was beginning between 1957 and 1960. Those supporting these claims also asserted that the coup plotters noticed these improvements and began to worry about the fact that they would not be able power grab with an early election and with an anti democratic, unfair and baseless manner seized the power (Ağaoğlu, 1972, pp.232-233).

It is also claimed that a special effort was made in order to provoke and influence especially the lower levels of the military bureaucracy with a defamatory campaign against the government and it is known that some of those plotters regretting later on admitted this campaign (Er, 2007, p.62). Those executing the coup de facto and, in a sense, the civil section of the coup argue that the DP aimed at obliterating the opposition by constantly making laws contradicting the constitution and establishing an autocratic rule by not calling elections. They build their claims on these statements that are claimed to be stated by the members of the party in power: I will not let be called an ousted prime minister, if necessary we can govern with dictatorship, if you want you can bring back even the caliphate, if needed I can manage the army with reserve officers, it is time for banishment and criticism (Öztuna & Gökdemir, 1987, p. 89). However, the reason why these statements are expressed is a comprehensive

report on the preparations for a coup d’etat, resulting with the May 27. The writer of the report *Nusret Kirişçioğlu*, who is one of the members of the investigation committee, points out that the chair of the supreme court of justice *Salim Başol* did not allow the report be read during the trial (Kirişçioğlu, 1973, p.256).

The dimension of disinformation for the purpose of reinforcing the legitimacy of May 27 coup was at an unbelievable level. Both during the years the DP was in power and after the coup took place the defamation through the press was used for justifying the extrajudicial executions. Also, behind the convicted executions there existed this deliberate information pollution. In this study, how the public was deceived through the press in order to be persuaded for the legitimacy of military coup is going to be demonstrated by presenting examples.

1. The Press before the May 27 Coup d’Etat

It is possible to examine the relationships between the press-the power-the opposition in a few stages; the period from the DP was founded on January 7 1946, after a short hesitation following the abandoning of single party system political life, to the May 14 1950 elections when the DP came in power can be designated as the first stage.

In this stage, due to the autocratic aspect of the single party system there existed a biased press and quite limited press freedom. Especially, in the aftermath of 1925 *Takrir-i Sükûn Kanunu* (Law on the maintenance of order) a number of newspapers were shut down, some important newspapers, even irrelevant to the scope of the law, were banned and their owners were arrested. The first newspapers and journals that were shut down were *Tevhid-i Efkâr*, *İstiklâl*, *Son Telgraf*, *Aydınlık*, *Orak Çekiç* and *Sebilürreşat*. The journalists that were arrested on the grounds that they incited the *Şeyh Sait* Uprising indirectly were: *Eşref Edip*, *Velid Ebüzziya*, *Abdulkadir Kemali (Öğütçü)*, *Fevzi Lütfi (Karaosmanoğlu)*, *Sadri Ethem (Ertem)*, *İlhami Safa*, *Gündüz Nadir*, *Ahmet Emin (Yalman)*, *Ahmet Şükri (Esmer)*, *Suphi Nuri (İleri)*, *İsmail Müştak (Mayakon)* (Tunçay, 1981, p.142).

After the authorities silenced the *Progressive Republican Party* (Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Fırkası) and some celebrated generals, the regime gained a more authoritarian character; as a result the General Press Directory forced the press to comply with strict enforcements upon gaining the status of decision maker (Kabaklı, 1989, p. 273).

The failure in transition to an open regime that is open to competition through a second organized opposition party at the end of 1930 also led to the withdrawal of newspapers close to this party from the world of press; the regime again returned to its single voiced character under the single party authoritarian government (Tunçay, 1981, p.269 & Kabacalı, 1999, p.142).

The National Chief period officially beginning on November 11 1938 found itself on the verge of a world war that would break out nine months later. About six years the regime hesitated to get involved into the war and began to focus on reintroducing the multi-party system once again, which was realized at the end of the war upon the victory of the democratic forces (except for the USSR) and the convenient international setting appeared (Yeşil, 2001, p. 54).

The attitude of the mainstream press during the war years bears resemblance to the activities of the forces waging war in Turkey. While writers like *Nadir Nadi*, *Peyami Safa* were thinking that Germany would win the war and recommending for Turkey a policy in this direction (Nadi, 1964, p.37 et al); writers like *Ahmet Emin Yalman* were insisting on the inevitable victory of the allied forces (Yalman, 1970, p.275).

In this regard, the adaption problems of Turkey, with its single party, single chief and mechanisms for setting up a controlled public opinion, with the new international environment that was being reshaped in the aftermath of the Second World War appeared.¹ From the *Takrir-i Sükûn* (Law on the Maintenance of Order) to the transition to the 1935 state-party unity understanding, the country was de facto governed with dictatorship and until the end of the war, until 1945, it was officially governed with dictatorship under the control of the national chief¹ (Gürkan, 1998, p.165). What

happened to the *Progressive Republican Party* (Zürcher, 1992, p.152) and the *Free Republican Party* [Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası] (Avşar, 1998, p.197) was still lingering in memories, therefore the foundation of a new opposition party could only be realized by means of a signal, more precisely, a permission. It is clear that it is the *National Chief* that this signal is expected from (Akandere, 1998, p. 331). It is known that May 19 1945 and November 1 1945 are two important dates in the Turkish political life when these expected indications were given (Kara-İncioğlu, without date, pp.265-278). It is also known that after the first sign the *National Development Party* [Milli Kalkınma Partisi] (MKP) was founded and after the second one the DP was established as two important political parties (Eroğul, 1990, p.46). It can be said that the establishment of the DP created the most serious expectation in the public compared to the other parties.

The first evidence of the petty schism created by the presentation of report regarding abolition of anti democratic laws and governing the country in line with the constitution was the *Memorandum of the Four* (Dörtlü Takrir). Following this, when the mainstream press began to talk with sympathy and give wide coverage to figures like *Celal Bayar*, *Adnan Menderes*, *Refik Koraltan* and *Fuat Köprülü* the relationship between the mainstream press and the DP showed up (Yeşil, 2001, pp.189–192).ⁱⁱ Given the fact that the close and sincere relations established with the DP by many people with leftist tendencies in this stage triggered accusations in Republican People's Party [Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi] CHP regarding a communist and DP cooperation, it can clearly be understood how some roles were changing in the Turkish politics in fifties (Karpaz, 1996: 154, also Sertel, 1978, p.217 & Sertel, 2000, p.253). Also, a great majority of the press later on would argue that the DP could not fulfill the promises it made during the years, 1946-1950, it was in opposition.

2. The DP-Press Relations during the DP Rule

In terms of the ruling party-mainstream press relations the first years of the DP rule, 1950-1954, can be defined as the stage when the initially good

relations got tense afterwards. However, it was the DP that relieved journalists by changing the the Press Law dated 1931 on July 24 1950 as soon as it came to power (Özgen, 2004, p.34). In this regard, the first reason of the displeasure arose between the DP and the mainstream press was stemming from the criticism of newspapers against the ruling party, it seems that the other reason of this rupture in relations was originating from the fact that many old parliament members writing in the mainstream press could not develop an impartial and independent journalist identity and continued to engage with the former ruling party (Toker, 1991a, p. 116).

It can be argued that the link between a vast majority of the journalists and the former ruling party continued after the CHP became the party in opposition (Erer, 1965, p.225 et al). It seems that the determination of the mainstream press in following the path of the leader of main opposition party attacking the new ruling party was the reason for DP's negative attitude against the mainstream press like an opposition party. In this setting, the leader of the former ruling party was almost always stating that they lost the election because the DP could deceive people (Erer, n.d., p. 52).

Afterwards, the ruling party had to establish its own group of public information and press division, the *Zafer* newspaper at the outset, which was called by the CHP members as partisan media. For example, it was claimed that the newspaper of *Mükerrem Sarol, Türk Sesi*, could afloat with the aid of government support and official advertisement, it was said that even public schools were forced to subscribe to this newspaper (Toker, 1991b, p.106). The fact that to be able to afloat within the media sector at that time was depending on getting public advertisements and procurements may not legitimize DP's support for its advocates but it is understandable to some degree (Erer, n.d., p. 135).

In this regard, especially the enactment of the law regarding the *transfer of CHP's properties obtained illegally* in 1953 became a turning point (Arsebük, 1953, pp. 426–432). It seemed that

closing the *Ulus* (this newspaper was reopened as *Yeni Ulus* later on), which was regarded as the media organ of the CHP, was defined as an attack on the opposition and reinforced the degree of enmity between the ruling party and the opposition (Arcayürek, 1985, p. 109).

Between 1954 and 1957 is the second stage of the DP rule and in this period the ruling party-press relations evolve into a phase in which the press is oppressed, rather that a period in which the ruling party is pressurized by the press. The ruling party, by successfully making use of public advertisement and procurement leverage, managed to win some figures in the media over (Öymen, 2009, p.457). In addition to the leverage of public procurements, the paper supply tool of the government is an important move for breaking the resistance of the mainstream press. Nevertheless, the most efficient newspapers and journals of the media still take side with the main opposition party (Birgit, 2005, p.299).

Furthermore, the ruling party, which was struggling to balance the opposition it faced in the media, began to preclude the use of the radio by the opposition (Aksoy, 1960, p.113). The first dissidence within the ruling party also rose in consequence of an event at this time. The *6-7 September Events* occurring at a time when the *Cyprus Issue* was a hot topic in the Turkish foreign policy was regarded as a clear complot organized by the government. During the *Yassıada trials the Chair of the Higher Investigation Committee, Altay Ömer Egesel* also often utilized this claim by giving reference to the media (Ağaoğlu, 1972, p.190; Dosdoğru, 1993, p.147 and Güven, 2005, pp.76-78).

Upon the introduction of the claims appeared in the media about corruptions and abuses conducted by some ministers to the court led to another discussion. These arguments called as discussions on the right to prove did not give a chance to the journalists accusing ministers with such charges for presenting their proofs with regard to their claims; upon this attitude by the ruling party, nineteen DP members broke away from their party believing that such an action to be unjust and they decided to establish the Freedom Party (Hürriyet

Partisi) (Toker, 1991b, p.154). The arrestments of some journalists pursuant to some provisions amended in the press law also were seen at this time. However, it is also necessary to state that a major part of the criticism seen was involving in defamation by going beyond reason.

The years between 1957 and 1960 is the period in which the mainstream press broke away from the ruling party. On the newspaper columns it was often seen the news about infraction of rules in the last election or transforming some provinces and towns into smaller administrative units only because they supported the opposition parties.

3. The Press in the Aftermath of May 27 Coup

In the beginning of 1960, the indications of a military coup d'état could be fully felt. Especially, the student protests occurring in İstanbul on April 28 and in Ankara on April 29 extended to the NATO Summit Meeting on May 2 and the Kızılay Square in Ankara on May 5. The civil students were behaving as if they were oriented by someone and were giving the impression as if they represented the general feeling of the young people. And on May 21 1960 the silent manifestation of the cadets took place. These events occurring just before the coup were reflected with a high level disinformation in the aftermath of the coup. In the days as the May 27 was approaching the grapevine was put down on paper and in the aftermath of the coup no mercy was shown for the victims and fallen (Küçükılınç, 2010, pp.23–41).

Especially, in the *Kim* and *Akis* journals the claims by the opposition party against the ruling party were presented as absolute truths; the fact that the owner of the latter journal was the son-in-law of the leader of Main Opposition Party turned this journal almost into the semi-official media organ of the party (İlıcak, 1975, p.13). It was true that before the coup the managing editors of the newspapers and journals, though in these media organs also news involving in defamation appeared, were being taken into custody, arrested or imprisoned; and that was interpreted as a prelude to an intervention. The prison where those

were sent into custody was nicknamed as *Ankara Hilton* at that time (Arcayürek, 1984, p. 89).

“In order to determine number of martyrs a committee was established. The police officers who buried university students after they killed them are being interrogated. The new work undertaken should not be abused” (Tercüman, 31 May 1960).

“Dr. Gedik, who cold-bloodedly executed illegal deeds of the Menderes rule, threw himself out of window and immediately died” (Tercüman, 31 May 1960).

“Those abusing İnönü are paying the price before the court. 11 DP members were arrested on charges of attempting to assassinate İnönü in Topkapı. The number of Uşak events suspects rose to 29” (Milliyet, 28 June 1960).

“Menderes’s terrifying plans were revealed. A fabricated uprising would be organized and many people would unmercifully be killed. In the store of the Ziraat bank, 2 thousand guns and many military uniforms were found” (Tercüman, 31 May 1960).

“It is said that the ousted president told that there are no reservations about the extermination of 1500 cadets” (Milliyet, 9 June 1960).

“A new document pertaining to a plot by the ousted authorities was found” (Akşam, 17 August 1960).

“The prosecutor implied that Celâl Bayar escaped from the independence war” (Akşam, 16 October 1960).

As it is seen in such news, the press also was mentioning about the incredible methods applied by the security forces in April and May of 1960 when the student demonstrations began. Such news as that hundreds of students were killed, the bodies of some students were turned into animal feed by being grinded in the machines of the *Meat and Fish Authority*; the bodies of some others were buried in unknown places appeared.

Furthermore, these publications were recorded even in the official registers of the state (TC Milli Birlik Komitesi İrtibat Bürosu [TC the National Unity Committee Contact Office], 1960, p.12).

One of the first actions of the coup organizers was the release of everyone detained, arrested or convicted for press crimes in accord with the MBK [the National Unity Committee] Paper Number 22, being valid from May 28 1960 at 3 a.m. The manner adopted by the great majority of the press after the ousting of DP is such a substantial issue that it can be subject of a bulky book (Altuğ, 1991, p.39). The DP, which came in power by promising that it will not engage in revanchism (devr-i sabık), itself became the victim of revanchism. For example, almost no news was appearing regarding what was happening to the DP members during the detentions; although no escape attempt was seen, such news as that some of the DP members were caught at the border or some others were caught while escaping after gathering their belongings light in weight but heavy in value appeared (Perin, 1990, p.37). Even a bulletin in which the escape of former power possessors with 12 planes full of gold and jewellery had been depicted was published and it was distributed to the public.ⁱⁱⁱ

In fact, those killed by the security forces is thought to be not more than five people, one of them, *Turan Emeksiz*, was killed by a ricocheting police bullet (Fersoy, 1979, p.144); however, the mainstream media was claiming that hundreds of the *Revolution Martyrs* had become the symbol of this new era.

The stories of those losing their lives, in fact, are very different than reflected in the media. Lieutenant *Ali İhsan Kalmaz*, Cadet *Sökmen Gültekin* and *Ersan Özey*, who was just 11 years old, were all killed by the bullets of coup plotters. *Nedim Küçüközpolat* lost his life under a tank tread on which he was trying to climb excitedly (Civaoğlu, 1994, p.80). The deaths of these people, clearly, were not enough for labelling the ruling party as bloodshedder but this was reflected in such a way.

The Investigation authority, formed under the title of *Higher Investigation Committee*, was continuing to gather proofs against the defendants and meanwhile the mainstream press was reflecting the events in such a manner that as if the corruptions and abuses had been proved. The most unimaginable claims were these: The governor of İstanbul *Ethem Yetkiner* had one and half million Liras the source of which was abuses (Tercüman, 2 June 1960). The mayor of İstanbul during the coup, *Kemal Aygün*, embezzled the bonds of the municipality and misused the dues of guardians (Akşam, 12 July 1960). The Prime Minister, *Adnan Menderes*, during his ten years of presidency got 480 thousand Liras salary and compensation; he also took travel allowances, both in 1954 and 1957 elections, for the electoral campaigns (Milliyet, 13 July 1960). The President *Celal Bayar* was a shareholder in a coffee import business (Akşam, 27 September 1960) and he also said that there were no reservations about the extermination of 1500 cadets after the silent demonstrations of cadets on May 21 1960 (Milliyet, 9 June 1960). *Menderes*, who returned from the US trip, conducted for the purpose of economic aid, empty handed wanted to give *Ardahan* to Russians in return for a loan from the USSR (Hürriyet, 17 June, 1960). All these were headline-grabbing news.

Except for the press, in this regard, there were books by these writers aiming at distorting the truth: (Çulcu, 1960; Bürün, 1960; Elevli, 1960; Evliyazade, 1960; Sözman, 1960)^{iv}. Further, some deranged writers (Özbey, 1960; Benlioğlu, 1947; Günel, 1960; Koran, 1961) were reflecting information pollution and using vulgar swearing for the former ruling party members in their books and booklets. It seems that these publications did not only encourage the coup organizers but also influenced the death sentences of *Menderes*, *Zorlu* and *Polatkan*.

Conclusion

In the aftermath of the July 15 coup attempt, the major break experienced in the Turkish military coups traditions and the fact that paradigm concerning this subject should be revised was

thoroughly discussed and it is still being discussed. The Army is regarded as the pioneer institution of the Turkish modernization and modernization is a secular project within the Turkish context; thus the military was long seen as both the project site and the hard power of the modernization and before the July 15 coup attempt it is known that for long time the military had adopted a spoils system in which secular tendencies were favoured. However, this last coup attempt indicates that any ideological spoils system within the military may spell trouble.

As a natural consequence of restructuring the military as the guardian of regime instead of people, May 27, March 12, September 12 and April 27 coups or memorandums occurred reflexively in accordance with this military doctrine. Although what happened during the July 15 attempt was dreadful, it is also observed that this event bear similarities with the previous coups or memorandums in terms of instrumentalisation of the military for a specific purpose.

It is interesting that the cadre that staged the coup on May 27 were mostly colonels, majors, commanders and captains belonging to a small clique, only five generals were in action, and this fact became known just one week after the coup. Although the coup plotters were insisting that the intervention was the consequence of internal dynamics, it is clearly seen that also the external dynamics played a major role. The government had to face a super powers rivalry in the region in the aftermath of the Second World War and this put the government in an awkward position.

The government that faced the May 27 coup supported the US and its allies in the Korean War and afterwards Turkey became a NATO member; it is known that the United Kingdom denounced this decision. It is not a secret that the USA was struggling to grab the power in the Middle East and the United Kingdom was resisting. However, after the Second World War the new world order or system was based on a bipolar structure in which the US and the USSR were in a power-grabbing struggle.

The reason why the USA conceded the Eastern Europe to the Soviet expansionism in the aftermath of the War, when US had used nukes and was seeming to have the leverage to impose its demands, has much been discussed and still a satisfactory answer seems to have not been found. Within the Turkish publication world, there exist some conspiracy theories related to this issue (Kaynak, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c, 2009; Kaynak and Gürses 2007; Kaynak ve Mete, 2008); according to these theses the US ceded the Eastern Europe so that Europe cannot gain its former strength and can be controlled more easily this way, however the dominant paradigm seems to ignore these theories.

More questions may be propounded; indeed, geostrategy seems to have played a major role in shaping the post war Europe. France, Italy and Greece, where strong socialist tendencies existed at that time, could have been sovietized but on the contrary Poland, Roumenia, Hungary, Bulgaria and Albania had to be Soviet subjects; this can be explained by means of geopolitics rather than ideological tendencies. Prior to the pull down of Berlin Wall; the way of making alliance between Warsaw Treaty countries and USSR was based on sphere of dominance of Russia; also the way of forming an alliance between NATO and USA can be interpreted in the same way.

Therefore, as a member of NATO, what happened in Turkey in the military interventions mentioned above cannot be explained only by internal dynamics contrary to the general tendency. In the Turkish military coup cases, when one seeks an external factor, mostly the CIA is indicated especially by the Turkish leftist intelligentsia who are influenced by the European leftist traditions rather than a Moscow based Sovietic understanding of left. In any case, a curtain of mystery surrounds the Turkish military interventions to some degree.

In the case of May 27 coup, it does not seem to be possible to legitimize the coup by emphasizing the internal dynamics like poverty and shortages in the country, inflation, declining purchasing power of fixed income class, pressure of government on

the press, universities and jurisdiction, pressure on the opposition and investigation committees established by the government, which are quite anti democratic practices.

Why so? Aside from the Ottoman past who can claim that such shortages and difficulties were not witnessed in the Turkish history, especially during the single party, eternal and national chief periods? Did those shortages and recessions not make *Fethi Bey's* Free Republican Party the primary candidate for power even after one month the party had been founded? Did this party not have to abolish itself upon the suggestions or commands of *İsmet Paşa* and his supporters in spite of *Atatürk's* earlier objections?

In case of liberty of speech and press freedom, did we not witness the arbitrary shut down of newspapers, the control over the newspaper owners and censure during the national chief period? Was the universities not shaken off by 1933 the University Reform Act on the grounds that *they do not sufficiently contribute to the revolution?*

The explanations and approaches reflecting the period between 1925-1946 in the Turkish history, a time when it was not easy to find out exactly what the public opinion was regarding the social and economic problems, as an era of bliss is misleading and in the same vein, it is not rational to argue that the Democratic Party was overthrown because it was not democratic enough.

All science would be superfluous if the outward appearance and the essence of things coincided. It seems that the literature attempting to legitimize the May 27 desire people to believe that appearance should be deemed to be essence. More important than all of these: The protagonist of all these processes seems to be *İnönü* but this fact is usually ignored which displays the weakness of the plots regarding the grounds of the coup. It is known that *İnönü* lost *Atatürk's* favour in the last days of him; after his death *İnönü* became the president with the support of parliament and army while still his role as the second man was explicit and as a political figure having this background it

is interesting that he was presented as the leader of the democratic front during the opposition years.

Trying to predict effects from causes is one of the significant methods of forming a vision for future but the causes of historical events rather can be put forward in company with their effects. If the May 27 is the cause of internal dynamics or a CIA operation, some questions should be answered. The ruling party overthrown with the May 27 coup was a pro-USA party in the USA-UK competition that was witnessed during that time. USA did not have a beef with the DP ruling but there were two fronts within the US struggling with each other. Therefore, there are some claims that the pro-European or pro-British front in the USA gained the initiative and this front turned its back on the DP for some reasons, the demands of the DP for loans were rejected and as a consequence, *Menderes* had to organize a trip to USSR for economic aid. The event behind the narrative that USA organized the coup is told that way but this alone cannot prove the claim that the coup was supported by some deep fractions in the US which were struggling to maintain the USA-USSR balance in the world and confine Europe.

Why so? Because in the aftermath of May 27, the social project envisaged with a top-down approach and the 1961 Constitution, which is simply the draft of this project, and the laws enacted in line with this constitutions paved the way for a left oriented, to put it more correctly an anti-American, structuring in the country. Until the March 12 1971 Memorandum among the left or right fractions there is one common ground: Anti Americanism. To socialist left, USA was the center of imperialism and to conservative right groups; it was a great malice establishing Israel in the Middle East among Muslims and Palestinian people.

Following the Second World War, there was a USA which had seized the leadership of the world order and here the CIA, the universities working closely with the intelligence service and think tanks could develop strong visions. Therefore, it is hard to believe that the US allowed the establishment of an Anti-American structure in

Turkey by overthrowing the DP by not being able to predict such effects.

At this point, it can be claimed that Turkish political figures cannot acquire the skill to learn lesson from mistakes by basing the disasters experienced, including the July 15 attempt, on a wrong external factor or a few trivial internal dynamics.

In this study, the function of mainstream press before, during and in the aftermath of May 27 was investigated. It was seen that the mainstream media contributed to legitimize the coup by depicting the events after this incident in a way that conforms to apparent causes of the intervention. The May 27 and all the following coups, memorandums or coup attempts should be interpreted by taking into consideration the global competitions of the great powers or systems within the world system.

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Notes

ⁱ For the details see (Koçak, 1996a ve 1996b).

ⁱⁱ For a narrative that can shake what we know about the establishment of the DP see Nesimi, 1977: 211–222.

ⁱⁱⁱ For the facsimile of the bulletin, see.

<http://www.takvim.com.tr/guncel/2014/02/27/menderes-e-de-ayni-tuzagi-kurdular> [Access: 15 May 17].

^{iv} The criticism on these books had been conducted in this work, see Sunay, 2010.