

A PROCESS ANALYSIS: 24 JANUARY DECISIONS IN THE FIELD OF SOCIAL STRUGGLE¹

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Abstract

In the study, the "24 January Decisions" are analyzed within the field of social struggle and it is traced how the policies envisaged by the 24 January Decisions were put into effect in the period from the 1980 military coup to the transition to restricted civilian rule in 1983. In this process, by examining the conflicts and intersections between both national and supranational actors, it is aimed to reveal which actors, which identities and which actions are privileged by the "strategic selectivity" of the state. In this context, it was planned to use the document analysis method in the study. Care was taken to collect data through reports, official documents, books, magazines, newspapers and similar sources that shed light on the historical process of the research subject. In the 1970s, the hardening social struggle made it impossible for political actors to implement a fundamental structural change. The series of stabilization programs began with the intervention of the institutions of global capitalism in the absence of a strong political authority. With the intervention of the army on September 12, 1980, the policies drawn by the international financial institutions and clarified by the January 24 decisions could be put into effect. On the other hand, the lack of political actors who would introduce the new economic model to the society and support it with convincing arguments still continued in this period. As a matter of fact, the 'guided' elections that would enable the parliament to reopen in November 1983 aimed to find the political actor that the neoliberal agenda needed.

Keywords: January 24 Decisions, 1980 Coup D'état, Social Struggle, Strategic Selectivity.

JEL Codes: N43, N45.

BİR SÜREÇ ANALİZİ: TOPLUMSAL MÜCADELE ALANI İÇERİSİNDE 24 OCAK KARARLARI

Özet

Çalışmada "24 Ocak Kararları" toplumsal mücadele alanı içerisinde analiz edilmekte ve 1980 askeri darbesinden 1983 yılında kısıtlı sivil yönetime geçiş sürecine kadar geçen zaman diliminde 24 Ocak Kararlarının öngördüğü politikaların ne şekilde yürürlüğe konulduğunun izi sürülmektedir. Bu süreçte gerek ulusal gerekse de ulusüstü aktörler arasında yaşanan çatışma ve kesişmeler incelenerek, devletin "stratejik seçiciliği" ile hangi aktörlere, hangi kimliklere ve hangi eylemlere ayrıcalık tanıdığı ortaya çıkarılması amaçlanmaktadır. Bu bağlamda çalışmada doküman incelemesi yönteminden yararlanılması planlanmıştır. Araştırma konusunun tarihsel sürecine ışık tutan raporlar, resmi dokümanlar, kitap, dergi, gazete ve benzeri kaynaklar aracılığıyla veri toplanmasına özen gösterilmiştir. 1970'lerde, sertleşen toplumsal mücadele siyasi aktörlerin köklü bir yapısal değişikliği uygulayabilmesini olanaksız kılmıştır. İstikrar programları silsilesi güçlü bir siyasi otoritenin yokluğunda küresel kapitalizm kurumlarının müdahalesiyle başlamış, özellikle enflasyonun ulaştığı düzey ve ödenemeyen dış borçlar, dönemin siyasi iradesini uluslararası finans kurumlarının ve Türkiye'de ki destekçilerinin sunduğu koşulluluğu kabul etmeye itmiştir. Ordunun 12 Eylül 1980

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tarihindeki müdahalesiyle, çerçevesi uluslararası finans kuruluşları tarafından çizilen ve 24 Ocak kararlarıyla berraklaşmış olan politikalar yürürlüğe sokulabilmiştir.

Key Words: 24 Ocak Kararları, 1980 Darbesi, Toplumsal Mücadele, Stratejik Seçicilik.

JEL Codes: N43, N45.

1. INTRODUCTION

In this study, it is traced how the "January 24 Decisions", which can be described as the birth moment of neoliberalism in Turkey, were taken in the field of social struggle and how these policies were put into effect in the period from the 1980 military coup to the transition to restricted civilian rule in 1983. In this analysis process, the state is not accepted as a tool that a class (or fraction) can direct as it wishes, nor as a sanctity with an independent power. Instead, the state represents a social relationship, in other words, the area where the struggles of different social actors spread from the global to the local and the whole of the institutions that these struggles create (Poulantzas, 2000, s. 49-120; Akca, 2011; Akcay ve Turkey, 2006, s. 63). In this context, the struggle between political and social forces determines which actors, identities and actions governments will privilege. This situation is called the "strategic selectivity" of the state, which is embedded in the intensifying power relations (Jessop, 2002, s. 40; 2005a, s. 173). Thus, the state can assume historically different functions both as an object determined in the capital accumulation process and as a subject that plays an active role in shaping the process. As a matter of fact, with the changing social power relations on a global scale with the 1970s, the institutional structure and strategic selectivity of the state have also been transformed.

Because the Keynesian accumulation regime has given birth to a nationalism in which full employment and the associated economic growth are centered. In this period, it was aimed to reach full employment in economies and wages were seen as the main element providing domestic demand. Thus, state budgets could be prepared on the basis of money circulating within their borders, and the share of government expenditures in gross domestic product increased steadily. Some of the production capacities associated with the public services provided could be taken into public ownership. In this context, the main competition issue of the political parties is to expand the welfare policies based on national citizenship and to build the realization of full employment. The emerging situation is a state structure that can intervene directly in the market and play an active role in redistribution. The state has evolved into a position that takes into account the interests of labor in the redistribution process, especially through unemployment compensation, educational assistance and the provision of social services without payment.

However, with the accumulation crisis that emerged in the 1970s, it became very difficult to achieve Keynesian targets such as full employment, economic growth and balance of payments. The point reached has led to the loss of validity of the understanding of economic administrations that center the national economy. The global response to the crisis to increase the structural strength of finance and discipline labor has resulted in the regulatory functions of the state taking place in a broader economic space and in a more authoritarian way (Jessop, 2005a, s. 314). However, the practical effects of this process have not been met in the same way, they have been constructed by the complex relations between local, national and supra-national powers. This situation shows that this social process cannot be fully understood without considering the local characteristics of each country. As a matter of fact, analyzing the 24 January Decisions as a process will make certain intersections and conflicts experienced on a national and supranational scale in this time period in Turkey visible. In

addition, the aforementioned analysis will also help to reveal more clearly which actors, which identities and which actions are privileged by the decision makers in this process.

2. TOWARDS JANUARY 24

“No political party had the luxury of implementing the January 24 Decisions”

Suleyman Demirel.

As Keyder said, those who carried out and supported the 1960 coup in Turkey laid the foundation for a new accumulation model. This model, which is called import-substitution in the periphery countries, was also supported by the hegemonic powers of the period. The IMF and leading European governments were putting pressure on the governments of the time to create an efficient and safe domestic market in Turkey (Göker, 2006). In addition, the US aid played a primary role in closing the foreign trade deficit that emerged every year due to the fact that imports were more than exports in Turkey until the 1970s (Keyder, 2012). In particular, the Justice Party (JP) government between 1965 and 1969 was implementing a successful version of import substitution from an economic point of view. In this period, while the growth rates rose to the top, on the other hand, the wealth created by the growth was reflected to a large part of the society, albeit to a certain extent. In particular, the struggle for union rights was very effective in helping the labor to get a share of the wealth created (Boratav, 1989). However, the deep capitalist crisis that this model experienced throughout the world in the 1970s and the rise of neoliberal globalization as a response to this crisis meant that the labor-capital consensus that symbolized the period had come to an end (Silver ve Arrighi, 2000). In the periphery countries, this transformation determined the transition from the 'development project' to the 'neoliberal globalization project'. The introductory part of a deep socio-economic and socio-political restructuring story in both the center and peripheral countries was beginning (Mezzadri, 2010).

The main theme of the economic crisis in Turkey during this period was the currency constraint. The foreign dependency and consumption economy created by the import substitution industrialization policies caused the system to go into crisis when the need for external resources could not be met. While industries dependent on imported inputs played an important role in the formation of external deficits, the sustainability of growth depended on the availability of suitable foreign debt resources. As a matter of fact, the unavailability of imported inputs due to the foreign exchange constraint experienced in this period brought with it the decrease in the industrial capacity focused on the domestic market and the inability to realize new investments. Economic expansion, which was sustained through foreign loans and aid throughout the 1960s, ended in 1969 when the country began to transfer net resources abroad. Although the crisis was tried to be postponed for a certain period of time through inflationary policies, with the decisions taken by the Justice Party government under Demirel's chairmanship on August 10, 1970, the door was opened to the demands of the IMF (Boratav, 1989; Keyder, 2012).

However, while the IMF's short-term loans, especially given to countries with balance of payments problems, used to have a conditionality based on the stability of the currency of the member country, after 1970 this conditionality included heavy conditions for regulating the entire economic policy of the country, which were imposed on desperate governments. As a matter of fact, the primary target with the 10 August decisions was to devalue the valuable TL, which enabled the sustainability of import-substituting industrialization by transferring value to industrialists competing for limited foreign exchange resources. 1 dollar was increased from 9 TL to 15 TL. In addition, the main elements of the 10 August decisions were

the suppression of wages, liberalization in foreign trade regulations, lowering the prices of agricultural products, creating the transfer of resources to the industry by increasing the tax taken from agriculture and increasing exports based on labor-intensive industrialization (Boratav, 1989; Ataay, 2005). This program, which was put into practice by the JP government, was in a way the first step of the transition from an accumulation regime targeting the domestic market to an export-based accumulation regime and laying the first stones of the process that would lead to the January 24 decisions. However, this program, which envisaged significant changes in social relations, could not be fully implemented due to the reactions of social actors.

Neither the JP government before 12 March nor the technocrats government established after 12 March could implement the supranational solution proposal to the economic crisis. The Oil Crisis in 1973 deepened the dire situation of the economy, and no government that promised to manage the crisis could gain the support of large segments. With the effect of the oil shock, transportation and energy services, especially dependent on oil, caused a significant decrease in exports, on the one hand, and on the other hand, increased the invoices paid for imports, thus creating large external deficits. The current balance of payments, which was in a positive position in 1971-1973 through incoming workers' remittances, started to run a deficit in 1974. While total exports accounted for 63.1% of total imports in 1973, this rate fell to 30.2% in 1977 (Sönmez, 1998, s. 460-464). Oil imports on that date amounted to 80% of total export revenues. In addition, the austerity policies of the EEC member countries, which reduced the demand for workers from non-member countries, also had negative effects on the Turkish economy in this period (Arıcanlı, 1990).

Despite the negative situation of the economy, the annual average economic growth achieved in this period was remarkable. Because in this period, an average annual growth rate of 7.2% could be achieved and total investments were increasing significantly. So, how were the rates reached in an economy in crisis and where were the necessary resources obtained? The answer to the question was hidden in the struggle for global hegemony. Since the late 1960s, comprehensive loans have been given to developing countries through newly formed financial markets. Banks based in New York and London offered the petro-dollars deposited to them at affordable interest rates to the countries in need, causing the size of the loans to increase even more. Thus, banks that met the investment needs of oil-importing countries, at the same time, got ahead of the loans transferred from the state to the state with the 1970s and became the main credit authority. This also meant that these banks could be more effective in the decision-making mechanisms of countries. However, the fear caused by the realization that many of the indebted countries could not repay their loans, later led to the banks not wanting to give new loans to these countries.

As a matter of fact, the I. MC government largely based the sustainability of the economy on these short-term foreign debt instruments. The share of fixed investments in Gross National Product (GNP) increased from 17.5% in 1963-73 to 22.7% in 1974-76. GDP per capita growth rate rose from 3.2% in 1960-73 to 5.2% in 1973-76. The existence of foreign borrowing in this period allowed Turkey to maintain its growth momentum without making a significant change in the exchange rate. In particular, the fact that the exchange rate appreciated by 9.9% in real terms between 1972 and 1976 brought with it a significant decrease in export incentives (Yeldan, 1995). High growth rates, on the other hand, put heavy bills on the treasury.

The economic crisis, which could thus be postponed for a certain period of time, manifested itself more seriously in 1977. Foreign banks' reluctance to give new loans caused

the depletion of foreign exchange reserves and then the wheels in the economy to stop (Borotav, 1989, s. 114-118; Sönmez, 1998, s. 464-478). International banks required the approval of international financial institutions for the foreign source sought. Because, while the debt given by these institutions contributed to the reserve need of the central bank, the institutions determined the conditions that would prevent the country from accumulating debt by focusing on Turkey's timely repayment of its external debts. Countries with balance of payments problems, such as Turkey, could only borrow from the IMF and the World Bank when they promised to implement the stabilization and structural adjustment programs offered to them by the institutions.

However, the situation in the country confirmed that the existing parties could not create a government that could implement such a structural change in this period. In particular, the suppression of conflicts between different social actors by the MC government by force was causing the chaos in the country to become more intense day by day. In this context, international organizations expected the new government to be determined to implement the economic program that would guarantee the entry of the needed foreign resources to the country, and to have the capacity to create consent mechanisms for the social opposition that might arise against the program. In this period, business circles within the country were proposing a broad-based coalition government, as in the early 1960s. However, they thought that a government in which the Republican People's Party (RPP) and the Justice Party were actively involved could implement the structural adjustment program, which would have severe socio-economic consequences mandated by the IMF. However, the fact that both parties closed their doors to this option left the answer to the question of which party would implement the structural adjustment program to the 1977 elections.

In this period, the RPP was conducting an election campaign similar to the Labour Party that came to power in Britain in 1974, emphasizing that it would attach more importance to employment and growth than exchange rates and inflation, and was coming out of the election as the first party.³ According to the 'fair order' approach it put forward, workers, small commodity producers, peasants and artisans would be directed to productive investment with the support of the state. Thus, the people, who are the employees of the factory and the partners of the factory on the one hand, would be able to position democracy in daily life by producing self-management mechanisms. Large segments which were in the status of small commodity producers in the country and labor, would be able to clamp down around the industrial capital as both labor force and financier (Önder, 1998). As a matter of fact, after the election, business people such as Sakıp Sabancı, President of the Union of Chambers of Industry, Vehbi Koc, and actors such as Turk-İş declared their support for the government with the idea that the RPP minority government could continue the employee-employer agreement and provide the necessary external resources. Against this, the government cannot get a vote of confidence by 12 votes and instead II. MC government was being formed. Measures taken by the newly established government, such as the price hikes for certain state economic enterprise products and the reduction of base prices, were welcomed by the IMF. However, the expectations of the IMF in terms of reducing the growth momentum, reducing the budget expenditures by interrupting the public investments, increasing the interest rates, limiting the wages and implementing a significant devaluation could not be met by the new government. This situation, which caused disagreements among the coalition partners, prevented the foreign resources needed by the economy from entering

³ One of the factors that increased the electoral success of the RPP was the outstanding success of the RPP mayors elected in 1973. For 'social municipalism' practices in the big cities of the period such as Istanbul, Ankara, Izmit and Adana, see Sezgin and Canbulut, 2021.

the country. The support of the capital circles to the government was decreasing, and organizations such as TUSİAD, ISO, ASO were starting to make statements that the government could not be considered as an interlocutor. Turk-İş and DİSK were also threatening to go on a general strike by intimidating the government during this period (Ataay, 2005, s. 95-126).

The success of the RPP in the 1977 local elections and the subsequent resignation of many MPs from the JP showed more clearly the legitimacy problem that the government experienced in this period. As a matter of fact, with the vote of confidence held on January 27, instead of the II. MC Government, a coalition government with a majority of the RPP was formed. In the first place, the newly established government made statements that Turkish democracy could lose its functionality if the IMF's prescriptions were implemented, and emphasized the need for the IMF to soften its classical prescriptions. On the other hand, in the same period, foreign banks stated that credit taps to Turkey could only be opened with an agreement with the IMF. At this point, the RPP-dominated government had two options. The first of these was the market-centered accumulation model based on the interests of global and some national capitals drawn by the IMF. The second one was centered on the development strategy of the RPP, which was based on heavy industry, including the working class and small commodity producers, which was put forward in its election strategy. As a matter of fact, the government was choosing to make an agreement with the IMF, thus giving up vital social programs and accessing the credit it needed by cutting public expenditures, similar to the Labour Party that came to power in Britain in 1974. The strategic selectivity of the government in taking this decision revealed the dominance of the supranational financial institutions' power to influence the decision-making mechanisms. Global hegemony was absorbing blows like a pillow, making counter-hegemony projects consistent with its own ideas (Cox, 1994, s. 51-52). As Boratav stated, governments that could not integrate into neoliberal policies had to either be forced to keep up with these policies or be ousted from power in some way (Boratav, 1989, s. 82).

As a matter of fact, the policies implemented to make stand-by agreements with the IMF during the RPP-dominated government were, on the one hand, wearing out the Party, which entered the elections with a social democratic face, and on the other hand, causing the loss of confidence in the idea that social democracy could constitute an alternative to the neoliberal perspective. As in many countries, the IMF was used as a tool to achieve desired behavioral change in the internal economy of a sovereign state. Undoubtedly, this was related not only to the coercion of the bankers in Washington, as Colás (2005, s. 77-78) pointed out, but also to the fact that the collective interests of the ruling classes within the country were largely compatible with structural adjustment program. As a matter of fact, in its report in 1978, TUSİAD stated that, similar to the IMF and the World Bank, the economic problems in the country could only be overcome by suspending public investments, reducing budget expenditures, increasing interest rates and export subsidies, limiting wages and implementing a significant devaluation (TUSİAD, 1978, s. 1-7). On the other hand, the space created by social forces through conflicts made it difficult for the government to fully implement the stand-by agreements it signed with the IMF. To give a short example, after the stand-by agreement signed with the IMF on July 19, 1979, international commercial banks initially promised to provide a loan of \$407 million to Turkey as long as it complies with the conditions of the IMF. However, considering the midterm elections to be held in October, the Ecevit government had to significantly increase the base prices applied to agricultural products, so the limits set by the IMF were being exceeded at the very beginning. The

decrease in support for the RPP in the midterm elections revealed that the society had the idea that the economic, social and political crisis could be overcome through a new government.

The resignation of Prime Minister Ecevit following the by-election results made it possible to form a Justice Party minority government with the support of right-wing parties and independent deputies in the parliament. Demirel thought that the most important problem of the economy in this period was inflation, and stated that the primary condition for controlling inflation was the sincere implementation of a correct stabilization program. As a matter of fact, it was not difficult to catch the core of the January 24 decisions in the statements he made immediately after taking the task of forming the government.⁴ After a short while, the new government's Finance Minister, İsmet Sezgin, announced that relations with the IMF would be continued in a good atmosphere. A single name, Turgut Ozal, was appointed to the Undersecretariat of the Prime Ministry and the State Planning Organization, which can be seen as a situation that has not been encountered very often in state organization, in order to carry out the economy from a single source (Rifat Serdaroglu, Personal Interview, September 2021). This situation was one of the first signs of the necessity of transforming the institutional structure of the state in order to coordinate and quickly implement the economic decisions recommended to be taken on a supranational scale.

Ozal, who worked in international financial institutions and had close relations with these institutions, was at the center of the negotiations on behalf of the government with the IMF and the World Bank. The new stability program was also taking shape after long meetings held at Ozal's house. When Prime Minister Demirel saw the final version of the program, he could not stop himself from saying these words: "So what will be the income distribution? What about the farmer, tradesmen, civil servants, workers? What will they do?". Ozal's answer, who believed in the necessity of measures such as tight exchange rate adjustments, raising interest rates, large hikes and limiting the wages of employees, suggested by the IMF, revealed his belief in the impossibility of another alternative to overcome the economic problems experienced. "We are introducing an austerity policy. No other choice..." (Çolaşan, 1983, s. 92). As a matter of fact, this discourse reflected a kind of expression of the dogma of "There is no alternative" (TINA) against the redistribution mechanisms in which different social actors are at the forefront. In this way, tight fiscal policies dictated to states through global markets could be given the legitimacy of being the only realistic way for the sustainability of the economy.⁵

When the newspapers were examined before the January 24 decisions, Demirel's emphasis on social struggle and increasing violence stood out instead of Ozal's technocratic perspective. "Four Americans were killed in Istanbul. Ecevit: Troubles and difficulties increased with the government. A coffee shop was bombed in Beşiktaş, five people were killed. There is only a few days of fuel left in the country. Seven people, including a high school principal, were killed in five provinces. Sezgin: Negotiations with the IMF resulted in positive results. Two armed sisters wanted to rob Orhan Gencebay. Martial law is extended for two more months. Demirel: Anarchy is no longer a government problem. 20 factories in Bursa stopped production due to the lack of fuel oil. Eight people were killed in the dorm yesterday. Turkeş asked Demirel for life safety. Currency was found for three days' worth of

⁴ Demirel's statement during this period is as follows: "One of the most important economic issues facing Turkey is inflation. Unless Türkiye can control inflation, it cannot organize its economic and social life. The main condition for keeping inflation under control is to implement a correct stabilization program with seriousness and sincerity. While solving this issue, it is necessary to implement the right economic and fiscal policies that will not paralyze the economic life, that will not stop the growth, that will finance the budget and other incomes from strong sources. We will explain the more detailed elements of this stabilization program as appropriate" (Çolaşan, 1983, s. 36).

⁵ For different policy choices that can be implemented in this period, Şenses, 2016.

oil... The Minister of Energy stopped 95% of the factories working with fuel oil. The foreign exchange reserves of the Central Bank have decreased to 9 million dollars” (Cölaşan, 1983, s. 100).

As a matter of fact, after these developments, the Army invited political parties to duty against increasing anarchy, terrorism and separatism in order to ensure the survival of the state, national unity and solidarity (Milliyet, 03.01.1980). The first response from the centre-right to this invitation, which was an ultimatum and could perhaps be considered one of the first harbingers of the coup, was given by Turgut Ozal, with Demirel's permission. Shortly after the ultimatum, Ozal said in the briefing he gave to the top military commanders about Turkey's economic situation: “It is as dangerous in economic anarchy as in political anarchy. Both can overthrow the state. If some measures are not taken as soon as possible, the inflation rate will reach 120 percent this year, and the people who have not participated in anarchy until now will also join”. Thus, Ozal argued that national unity and solidarity in the country could only be created by neoliberal methods dictated by international financial institutions. In particular, measures such as the inefficiency of SEEs, the fact that collective agreements fuel inflation, the freezing of wage increases, the change of strike legislation, the importance of international capital, the multitude of public holidays, and the re-counting of Saturdays as workdays were the prominent points in Ozal's discourses. This showed that in Ozal's imagination, the social and political struggle of the working class occupied an important place as responsible for the organic crisis in Turkey. This first meeting of the army and Ozal, which took place in a moderate atmosphere, was the first stage of the partnership that would take place after September 12. A similar meeting will be held after the January 24 Decisions, and Ozal would use similar expressions more confidently here as well.

In the night hours connecting January 24 to January 25, the following statements were included in the telex sent from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Washington in English: “Mr. Larosierre and Mr. To Woodward's attention... At the meeting held this evening, our government accepted the economic stabilization program on the main principles of which we had previously agreed with the IMF. The Council of Ministers meeting will continue tomorrow and some price adjustments will be accepted. In this case, it's up to the foreign aid we hope to receive, and this issue needs to be expedited. I hope we will have detailed discussions in the coming days. FYI... Turgut Ozal” (Cölaşan, 1983, s. 136). The decisions of January 24, which were published in the Official Gazette late at night and which, in the words of one of its chief executives, Kaya Erdem, "will bring heavy burdens to the citizens", were being discussed at the Council of Ministers meeting all day and were approved as a result of the fierce debates between the ministers.

Symbolized as a turning point in Turkey's transition to neoliberalism, these decisions envisioned a new export-based accumulation regime, a liberal market economy, and a new role and organization for the state (Önder, 2016). Thus, the Program determined the structural framework of the transition from Keynesian economic policies to monetary economic policies. The first steps of this framework were the 32.7% devaluation of the Turkish lira, the removal of control mechanisms on prices and restrictions on imports, the liberalization of trade and the promotion of exports (Baysan ve Blitzer, 1990). Although there was no direct reference to the labor market in the Program, the transition to an export-oriented growth model and the creation of an exportable surplus value in this context necessitated lowering wages and restricting domestic demand. In this respect, the program had a perspective that enabled the evolution of class power relations by strengthening international and domestic capital against labor. Thus, on the one hand, the opportunity to compete in the international market could be created for the domestic capital, which was strengthened by protectionist

economic policies, and on the other hand, the international capital could be encouraged to invest in the country (Özgun, 2014).

However, in order to achieve these goals, it was necessary to provide a predictable political-economic environment for the interconnected transnational and local historical bloc, with strict loyalty to stabilization measures and structural adjustment policies. Because, putting into practice the neoliberal economic reforms, which are now normalized and narrowing the political ground by tying the hands of many politicians, would not be as easy as a technocratic perspective would have hoped. As Prime Minister Demirel stated, “No political party had the luxury of implementing the January 24 Decisions”.

3. MILITARY AUTHORITARIANISM AND STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT

“September 12 may give us the opportunity to do many things that we could not do before... What we have suffered from this anarchy, the absence of the Parliament. Now the word that comes out between these men's lips will become law... The strike story... is banned.”

Turgut Ozal

The January 24 decisions were praised by international financial institutions and OECD governments, and a 3-year stand-by agreement was signed between the IMF and the Justice Party government. Similarly, in order to benefit from the structural adjustment loans of the World Bank, an agreement was made with this institution in March 1980 (Önder,1998). However, the World Bank did not consider the January 24 Decisions to be sufficient for the agreement to be concluded. The institution stated that it would give structural adjustment loans to Turkey on a conditional similar to that of the IMF, in a method never encountered in practice, and for the first time requested a letter of intent from a country in a similar way to the IMF. The main condition was to prioritize the reduction of inflation rather than a high rate of development. In this context, the government adopted measures such as narrowing the public sector, liberalizing the trade and foreign exchange regime, facilitating the entry of foreign capital into the internal market. In June 1980, the largest loan ever granted among developing countries - SOR 1,250 (US\$ 1,630 million) amounting to more than 70 percent of all compliance loans granted to developing countries - was provided to Turkey (Yeldan, 1995). This situation made Turkey, in the words of Yeldan and Bedirhanoglu (2010b), "the darling of the [World] Bank".

In Turkey, on the other hand, there were different reactions to the decisions. Even within the Justice Party, which took the decisions, the debates were increasing day by day, and Demirel was having difficulty in establishing the balances within the Party. As a matter of fact, in the session of the Council of Ministers to determine the base prices for wheat, Ozal referred to the stabilization package and explained that the wheat, which found buyers for 9 liras in the free market, could only be bought for 6.5 liras by the state. This situation caused great controversy among the ministers. After Demirel took Ozal out of the room, the base price of wheat was set at 10 liras. Similarly, frictions continued during collective bargaining, although Ozal tried to limit wages as much as possible from a technocratic point of view, the interventions of Demirel and some ministers made further wage increases possible. The striking reactions of the politicians of the period on this issue also revealed the absence of a strong political authority that could implement the stabilization program.

Demirel: “Devaluation will not lead to inflation. The goal is to activate the stalled economy and save Turkey from being a black market country.”

Turhan Feyzioglu: “Those who ruthlessly criticize even compulsory devaluation while in opposition are now devaluing.”

Sener Battal: “The JP government has taken an attitude that makes it look like the CHP government it criticizes.”

Ziya Muezzinoglu (RPP): “AP adopted the brutal rules of the market economy and the state's coffers were handed over to private banks.”

Necmettin Erbakan: “These decisions are not a requirement of the economy, but the order of the IMF. Demirel ruthlessly hit the nation on the head.

Alpaslan Turkes: “Today's situation has been reached by the irrational economic policies pursued until now.”

Ismet Sezgin: “The most severe penalties will be applied to those who increase prices excessively.”

Bulent Ecevit: “The economy, even the state, has been handed over to big interest groups. The government wants to apply an outdated South American model in Turkey with more objectionable measures.”

Looking at the capital circles, it was seen that industrialists and banks welcomed the decisions taken. TUSIAD stated that exports meant independence in this period and argued that the economy, which had come to the point of bankruptcy with the January 24 decisions, regained dynamism (TUSIAD, 1980, s. 6; TUSIAD, 1983, s. 8-18). Army, another important actor in Turkey's political life, was leaving very satisfied with the second briefing Ozal gave them after the January 24 Decisions. Ozal's rhetoric about removing the subsidies given to SEEs in general, giving much more support to the export-oriented entrepreneurs, and providing cash flow to the country were also adopted by the commanders. In addition, when the interview was examined in more detail, important clues for the social and economic life after September 12 could be caught between the lines.

As a matter of fact, Ozal's statements at the meeting that TPAO should not be seen as a national organization, that the important thing is to strengthen the country no matter who finds the oil in Turkey, and that foreign oil companies should not be offended by this issue, was not met with objections by the Army, which is considered the most national organ of the country. Army did not deny the necessity of carrying out a joint work with international capital in every field, similar to the economic growth model that Ozal internalized. The emphasis on integration with the global economy at the highest level showed how much the previous period's 'dependent development' criticisms lost their effect in a short period of time. This was not surprising at a time when international financial institutions could directly determine their economic policies (Yalman, 2002).

In addition, Ozal's statements on the necessity of regulating the labor market, such as the abolition of collective agreements, the determination of wages according to the inflation rate, the prevention of competition between unions, the revision of strike areas and strike legislation, were also affirmed by the commanders. Admiral Bulend Ulusu, the Commander of the Naval Forces of the period and the first Prime Minister after September 12, said, “If this collective bargaining system does not sink Turkey, nothing can sink it. Let's know this well”, emphasizing how much he agrees with Ozal's views. As a matter of fact, the background of Ulusu's discourse was the fact that since the mid-1970s, organized labor increased wage demands in industrial production with the help of collective agreements. Because the share of labor in the industrial value added rose from 28% in 1975 to 37% in

1979 (Yeldan, 1995). Similar to Ozal, the commanders shared the idea that the organic crisis in Turkey was directly related to the social and political struggle of the working class (Akca, 2011).

In addition to these, Ulusu stated at the meeting that maritime businesses in no country were run by the state, and that the state's duty was only to create maritime infrastructure businesses. Ozal, on the other hand, joined Ulusu with the following sentences: "The duty of the state is to fulfill functions such as defense, justice, regulating the economy in general, and to deal with infrastructure investments. In addition to these works, the state in Turkey has also started to do industrialism and trade with the help of SEEs. Of course it's not going to happen..." (Cölaşan, 1983, s. 138-146). Thus, it could be seen that Army and Ozal achieved an important consensus on the point of activity that the state would gain with the new economic growth model. This reconciliation was of such a nature as to hinder the state's feature of being a producing actor.

After the January 24 Decisions, the aforementioned state primarily assumed the role of discipline in terms of its relations with labor. In addition to being a cost factor for capital in the import-substitution accumulation regime, labor, which signifies local demand and purchasing power, lost this characteristic to a large extent with the new accumulation regime. Especially in the competitive environment in the global market, it was becoming a production cost that had to be reduced. In this case, in order to create favorable conditions for the reproduction of capital, the state had to find a solution to the increasing militancy of workers.

By the end of the 1970s, the number of striking workers had reached record levels. According to official statistics, which did not include illegal strikes and mass actions, 1,303,253 working days were lost in 220 strikes involving 84,832 workers. Against this, the ruling Justice Party government was taking steps to regulate the Trade Unions Law and the Collective Bargaining, Strike and Lockout Law in a restrictive manner, and was working to erode the social rights of workers, including severance pay. In this period, the Collective Bargaining Coordination Board, which was established under the Prime Ministry, played an important role in the state's restructuring of the relations between labor and capital. Through this institution, it was aimed to completely take control of the collective bargaining system, which was thought to "sink the country". However, although the Justice Party government tried to increase its power over the trade union movement in this period, the resistance from both the government itself and the left opposition was pushing the government to take a step back. Unable to produce a viable alternative, the opposition against it was strong enough to hinder the sustainability of the neoliberal program. In particular, the lack of a parliamentary majority significantly limited the ability of the government to implement the program. Terrorism and political violence continued to increase in this period when the parliament lost its function (Keyder, 2012; Önder, 2016; Şenses, 2016).

As a matter of fact, the current chaos environment gave legitimacy to the intervention of a non-political actor. The army seized the administration with the coup on September 12, 1980. At the General Staff meeting held right after the Turkish Armed Forces took over the administration, the army, which was seen as the most nationalist instrument of the state, was making a decision that might seem ironic at first glance. The stability program of January 24, which aimed to subordinate the country to the requirements of the global market, was to be continued. Turgut Ozal was offered to work with the junta, and Ozal accepted the offer. The first issue addressed by the junta after the coup was the abolition of strikes and lockouts, which meant that workers had to return to work. The first problem Ozal had to solve was the determination of the wages that the 100,000 workers who were on strike at that time would

receive when they started their duties. Ozal thought that 70% advance should be given to all workers whose collective bargaining agreement has expired in this regard, and he did not neglect to obtain the approval of Halit Narin, the President of Turkish Employers' Unions and his close friend, before presenting this proposal to the junta (Cölaşan, 1984, s. 45-58). As a matter of fact, Narin would later be remembered with the following statement that revealed the organic relationship between military intervention and class struggle. "For 20 years, the workers laughed, we cried; Now it's our turn to laugh" (Akca, 2018, s. 30).

It was clear that the junta agreed with Ozal on the point that the economic crisis in the country could only be overcome with the stable implementation of the January 24 Decisions after September 12. However, an appropriate political and institutional structure that would lead the economy to an export-led growth model had not yet been established. The commanders wanted to appoint Ozal as the Minister of State in charge of foreign economic relations. However, Ozal argued against this proposal that he should be given the titles of Deputy Prime Minister responsible for economic affairs, as well as the Ministry of Finance and Trade. The conversation between Turhan Feyzioglu, whom the commanders wanted to make Prime Minister at that time and Ozal, was interesting in that it revealed the authoritarian and anti-democratic side of neoliberalism.

-Feyzioglu, "Mr. Ozal, do you know that your proposal is against the constitution and all the rules of the state?"

-Ozal, "Mr. Feyzioglu, our commanders are here. If what I have said is unconstitutional, they will issue a decision and it will not be unconstitutional or anything" (Cölaşan, 1984, s. 58-63).⁶

This situation also showed that, as Poulantzas (2000, s. 203-204) stated, neoliberal policies could only be realized by "transferring power from the legislature to the executive and the public administration to a small number of high-level units". As a matter of fact, according to Ozal, the January 24 stability program could be implemented more easily after September 12. In particular, the fact that decisions were taken in an almost frictionless environment, in a council that would work instead of the parliament, would make it possible to implement many decisions that could not be taken before due to fear of social resistance.

Because, in an environment where all political parties were closed, organized labor was suppressed and all civil rights and freedoms were restricted, there was no power left that could stand against the socio-economic program put into practice by the military regime. The National Security Council, which is the only power in the political arena, initially entrusted the economy management to a small technocrat group headed by Ozal. Later, Ozal was appointed as the Deputy Prime Minister responsible for the economy, while Kaya Erdem, with whom Ozal prepared the January 24 decisions at his request, became the Minister of Finance. As Ozal stated, this situation facilitated the implementation of the January 24 Decisions (Yalman ve Bedirhanoglu, 2010b). A new capitalist power bloc could be formed under the leadership of industrial and financial capital, the commanders who took over the administration of the state, and a group of technocrats who had internalized the neoliberal point of view. In particular, the pro-capitalist and anti-labor attitude of the technocrats and the military regime made it possible to set aside the class conflicts of the bourgeoisie and to ensure integration between rival capitals. However, following the open market and export-

⁶ As a matter of fact, with the Law on the Constitutional Order adopted on October 27, 1980, all the powers of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey were transferred to the NSC, and the powers of the President to the Chairman of the NSC, Kenan Evren. Decisions, declarations and laws enacted by the MGK were gaining value in the status of "constitutional amendment" (Erogul, 2007:308).

based accumulation strategy also brought with it the necessity of radically changing the socio-economic life. This situation made it necessary for the military regime to reshape the entire political system and state-society relations as well as maintaining law and order (Önder, 2016).

As a matter of fact, the needed state was institutionalized through both the 1982 Constitution and the basic laws put into practice by the military regime. With 669 laws enacted during this period, the entire civil, legal and political structure was being updated, from political parties to trade unions, from political rights including collective bargaining and strike rights to the high judicial system. Neoliberal politics was built on the discrediting of democracy and was based on the creation of a socially disciplined, depoliticized society. The reinvention of tradition through terms such as the sanctity of the state, national security, survivability and public order played an important role in the trivialization of civil rights and freedoms. The strong state phenomenon, far from the influence of social actors, took place in people's memories. In particular, the powers of the Prime Minister were increased in order to create an institutional machine in which the executive was effective over the legislature. Many institutions were directly connected to the Prime Ministry and mechanisms such as the National Security Council were established. In addition, the frequent use of decree-laws, which gave the government the power to make laws in a way, was normalized. Laws that could face objections in the parliament were put into effect through these decrees (Tanör, 2002; Akca, 2018). During this period, both the IMF and the World Bank did not hesitate to cooperate with an oppressive junta regime. However, as Gill and Law (1994) stated, a new historical bloc needed to have its own political networks and organization as well as civil society and economy. Through these networks, a convincing position could be reached in discourse and actions, and a conscious and planned hegemony struggle could be continued beyond the capture of the state's institutional machinery. Within this, political participation and political space had to be limited even more strictly.

4. TRANSITION TO RESTRICTED CIVIL ADMINISTRATION

The Bulend Ulusu government, which was appointed by the National Security Council after the coup, was in a managerial position in the country until the first elections held on 6 November 1983. In reality, the administration was in the hands of the NSC. As a matter of fact, on October 18, 1982, the new constitution was first adopted by the NSC. Because the final draft had to be approved by the Council before it could be put to a referendum. On Sunday, November 7, 1982, when the country was under martial law, the new constitution was approved by the plebiscite, while Kenan Evren, the head of the junta, became the seventh President (Dogan, 2020, s. 188).

The belief of the commanders in the necessity of rebuilding the political sphere in this period was reflected in the new constitution approved by the junta. Because, with the provisional Article 4 of the 1982 Constitution, all executives of political parties that were dissolved by Law No. 2533 of October 16, 1981 were prohibited from appearing on the political scene for 10 years. In addition, for the first time, with the 1982 Constitution, the sentence of "participating in ideological or anarchic actions and provoking and encouraging such actions..." was added to the criteria for being elected as a deputy. In fact, a concept that could easily be filled in, such as "taking ideological actions", gave the military regime a space to use at will. With the reference to political crime, commanders could now ban any politician they thought reflected the spirit of the previous era. The 10% country threshold, on the other hand, aimed at making it impossible for the parties, which were seen as ideological by the commanders of the period, to gain representation, in addition to the strong desire to execute

(Alkan, 2006, s. 148-162). Thus, as Munck (2005) stated, democracy was devalued as a political currency.

As a matter of fact, the Political Parties Law No. 2820, which was put into effect on April 28, 1983, was being created in accordance with the new constitution. The law strictly stipulated that new parties could not be in a permanent relationship with the old parties and that political parties could not establish an organic bond with any association or union. For this, all parties to be elected had to pass the approval of the NSC. The criterion for entering the election was that at least 30 founding members of the parties had to be approved by the NSC by August 24, 1983. The eligibility conditions, which were left open-ended, complemented the mechanism that allowed the junta to construct the political space as it wished. The junta would determine which of the 16 parties established after the lifting of political bans could survive and which parties could participate in the first elections to be held.

5. CONCLUSION

If the process is to be classified, the radical transformation insisted by the global hegemony began in 1970. Then, in August 1977, it continued with the Demirel government's 'Fight Against Inflation Package'. In the Ecevit government, on the other hand, it was tried to be continued with the names of "Structural Change Program" in March 1978, "Money Credit Measures" package in September 1978, and "Economy Strengthening Program" in March 1979. The January 24 Decisions under the leadership of the Justice Party represented the point where the transformation matured. The series of stabilization programs began with the intervention of global capitalism institutions in the absence of a strong political authority. Especially the level of inflation and unpaid foreign debts pushed the political will of the period to accept the conditionality offered by international financial institutions and their supporters in Turkey. In this process, Turkey could only borrow from the IMF and the World Bank when it promised to implement the stabilization and structural adjustment programs offered to it by the institutions. The approval of the institutions instilled confidence in other investors in lending to the country. On the other hand, the country's economic policies were under surveillance by institutions, and international commercial banks were able to enable the transfer of resources from the people of the country to them through loans whose risk ratio was reduced by the IMF and the World Bank.

However, it was very difficult to put the 24 January Decisions into practice under democratic conditions. As a matter of fact, with the intervention of the Army on September 12, 1980, the policies drawn by the international financial institutions and clarified by the January 24 decisions could be put into effect. The failure of existing political actors to implement the radical transformation opened the door to a non-political solution to the 'political actor' problem. Just as the 1960 coup made possible the transition to the import substitution industrialization model, the 1980 coup made possible the transition to neoliberalism by crushing the political representations of the revolutionary left and the working class. This situation could only be achieved by the detention of more than 650,000 people, the criminal record created for more than 1,500,000 people, the trial of 7,000 people with the death penalty, the execution of 50 of them, and the murder of hundreds of people in an unsolved manner or by torture. . In addition, 388,000 people's passports were confiscated, 14,000 people were stripped of their citizenship, tons of printed works were destroyed and 23,677 associations were closed (Akca, 2018, s. 31). In an environment where all political parties were closed, organized labor was suppressed and all civil rights and freedoms were

restricted, there was no power left that could stand against the socio-economic program put into practice by the military regime.

On the other hand, the lack of political actors who would introduce the new economic model to the society and support it with convincing arguments, in other words, who could continue the hegemony process in a conscious and planned way, still continued in this period. The 'guided' elections that would enable the parliament to reopen in November 1983 were, in a way, aimed at finding the political actor that the neoliberal agenda needed. However, first of all, political participation and political space had to be limited even more strictly. Accordingly, a democracy with restricted freedoms was seen as the most reasonable option for Turkey. The new political system was built on a blank slate, on which neoliberal principles could be easily applied, by restricting the demands that could come from the people. As Laclau and Mouffe (2001) stated, the current situation was transformed into a historical necessity and then this ideological ground could be accepted as natural for years. Thus, neoliberal economic reforms, which are now normalized and narrow the political ground by tying the hands of many politicians, could be put into practice.

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