

7 Military intervention, institutional restructuring, and ideological politics, 1960–1971

The military *coup* of 27 May 1960 was the first and the last successful military intervention made from outside the hierarchical structure of Turkey's armed forces. There have been two other interventions (on 12 March 1971 and 12 September 1980) but these were the work of the High Command with the lower ranks kept at bay. The reason for this important change was the new role that the High Command assigned for itself after 1960 and transformed the very character of the Turkish armed forces.

Until the Democrats came to power, the armed forces of Turkey were perhaps the most respected institution of the republic. The role that the soldier played in the national struggle and the creation of the new state gave him an honoured place in Kemalist society. The heroes of Kemalist Turkey were soldiers like Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Fevzi Çakmak, and İsmet İnönü to name only those who are the best known in the West. Society was taught to honour its military heroes and they were always visible on the newly established holidays like Victory Day (30 August) and Republic Day (29 October). Other important battles of the national struggle were also commemorated each year.

The army was also influential in decision making especially where national defence was involved. Thus railway construction often reflected strategic rather than economic concerns. The same was true for certain factories; the steel plant at Karabük was placed inland, and not near the Black Sea coast, so that enemy ships could not attack it. But the government did not lavish huge sums on equipping and modernising the army beyond the country's defence needs. There was no air force worth mentioning and no attempt was made to have one until the mid-1930s when Fascist Italy posed a threat. The rapprochement with Britain took place about this time and the Royal Air Force assisted in the training of the Turkish Air

Force. During these years, the army remained virtually unchanged. It retained the weapons, strategy, and mentality of the First World War and was therefore totally unprepared to enter the Second World War.

Despite the large proportion of retired officers within its ranks, in the government and the Assembly, the Kemalists actually favoured the transition to civilian rule. As early as 1925, when faced with the challenge from the Liberal Republican Party formed by some very prominent generals, Mustafa Kemal gave the officer corps the choice of either a political or a military career. Some of the most prominent generals chose politics and resigned their commissions. In his Great Speech of October 1927, Mustafa Kemal entrusted the duty of preserving and defending national independence and the Turkish Republic to the Turkish youth and not the army.

A military career lost its glamour and was no longer seen as the way to upward mobility and prestige as it had been in late Ottoman times. In those days there was no 'national economy' to which Muslims could aspire. That was no longer true after the revolution of 1908, and especially in the republic. But the army continued to be a source of gainful employment for the lower middle classes, particularly in the provinces. Youths of this class were able to acquire both a modern education, from secondary school to university, and a job with a pension on retirement.

Many of the officers who seized power in 1960 came from precisely this background. Almost all of them were trained in the military schools of the republic in the shadow of Atatürk's charisma. After his death in 1938, there was a sense of anti-climax when ordinary and lesser men took over the reins of power. The young officers came to resent the new ruling class made up of high officials and businessmen who were creating a new life style and culture with which the rest of the country could not identify. This class lived well while people who had to live on a fixed salary had difficulty simply keeping afloat because of the high rate of inflation. This was especially true during the war when corruption was rife and fortunes were being made on the black market. The government was forced to take such measures as the Capital Tax of 1942 partially to appease the anti-business sentiment of the time. Colonel Alparslan Türkeş, one of the leaders of the 1960 *coup* (about whom more later) was a young officer during the war. Later, he remembered the humiliation of living during those years:

During this period, the administration, with the *Millî Şef* [National Chief, the title adopted by İnönü in 1938] and his accomplices in the lead, adopted a patronising and belittling attitude towards the army and the officers and the generals who led it. The cost of living and the struggle to survive was humiliating and suffocating to the officers. Everywhere they were treated like second class human beings. In Ankara, people had labelled basement flats ‘Staff-Officer flats’. In places of entertainment officers were nicknamed ‘lemonaders’ because they could not afford to order expensive drinks and compete with the black-marketeers and profiteers; the sons of this sacrificing nation were described by such names!¹

After the war people like Türkes hoped that multi-party politics and the Democrat victory would improve the situation for the country and the army. The reform of the armed forces was long overdue and was part of the DP’s programme. One of the architects of the party’s scheme to reform the entire military institution was Colonel Seyfi Kurtbek, who was trained at St Cyr, the French military academy. He was a brilliant staff officer who had given much thought to the question of modernising the army and he had communicated his ideas to Celâl Bayar while the latter was leader of the opposition. Bayar had been most impressed. He had asked Kurtbek to resign his commission and enter politics so as to carry out his programme when the Democrats came to power. Kurtbek did so in April 1950 and in May he was elected to the Assembly as a member from Ankara.

Seyfi Kurtbek was appointed defence minister on 8 November 1952, a few months after Turkey joined NATO. His reorganisation plan, while popular with the junior officers who were anxious to see the armed forces modernised and opportunities for promotion made flexible, caused anxiety among the generals. They realised that many of them would have to retire because they were no longer capable of learning the techniques of modern warfare; moreover, they would have to share their authority with brighter and younger men. They therefore opposed the reforms and began a whispering campaign against Kurtbek, claiming that he was an ambitious officer who was preparing the ground for a military takeover.

It is not clear whether Menderes believed these rumours though Kurtbek was asked to postpone his reforms for the time being. Kurtbek understood that this was the end of reform and therefore resigned on 27 July 1953. Menderes, who tended to take the path of least resistance, shrank from challenging the generals. He decided to flatter

and woo them instead of alienating them, to maintain the status quo and establish a cordial relationship with the top brass. Menderes was very successful in winning over the pashas, and some of them, including Nuri Yamut, the Chief of the General Staff, and Tahsin Yazici, the 'hero of Korea', retired from the army and joined the DP before the 1954 election. Menderes felt quite secure with such prominent generals on his side.

Menderes's attitude to military reform, if that involved spending precious money, was the same as his attitude towards giving the workers the right to strike: temporise until the economy was developed and productive and then let some of the wealth filter down. Money for military reform was not on Menderes's list of priorities; he thought it was better spent on roads, cement factories, and other projects which would enhance the country's development. As it was, Turkey was already spending more in relation to her national income than most other members of NATO. Moreover, military expenditure was constantly rising, from \$248 million in 1950, to \$273 in 1951, \$307 in 1952, and \$381 in 1953. (This figure kept growing throughout the next generation; the military's appetite seemed impossible to satisfy.) Menderes had expected the country's military expenditure to fall after Turkey joined NATO because he believed, rather naively, that the alliance would provide huge subsidies. He did not intend to spend even more money on reforms or on adjusting officers' salaries to ever-rising inflation. Reform would have to wait until the economy had grown. That is what Menderes announced to the Grand National Assembly when he read his government's programme on 24 May 1954:

We shall continue our efforts to bring our heroic army to a position consonant with the needs of today and capable of meeting every kind of aggression. This will be accomplished by using all material and moral resources in proportion to the strength of our economic and financial potential [Applause]. In fact, one of the main goals of our economic measures and development is to maintain, with our own means, a large army as soon as possible...As has been our practice so far, military appropriations will increase in proportion to the growth in our national income.

Inside NATO the character of Turkey's officer corps began to change. Younger officers, who were open to the technology and the strategy of modern warfare, acquired a sense of importance and confidence they had never enjoyed before. They visited other countries and discussed

the world's problems with officers who presented perspectives different from their own. Their own world began to seem small and provincial in comparison, and the urge to reform and change grew stronger. They became contemptuous of their politicians who were constantly wrangling with each other while the country's problems remained unresolved. There was even some embarrassment when foreign officers asked about the situation in Turkey.

NATO deepened the division between junior and senior officers along technological lines while Menderes's appeasement of the pashas divided them along lines of rank and socio-economic status. Menderes proved so successful in winning the loyalty of his High Command that the conspirators had difficulty in recruiting a full general to act as leader of their movement.

The army began to get restless in the mid-1950s, years marked by growing inflation, political instability, and a general sense of discontent in urban areas. The soldiers shared the same grievances with the general public, especially the lower middle class whose position was being rapidly eroded. They deplored the erosion of moral values which they thought were responsible for making the Turkish nation unique; the Democrats were disregarding them in favour of materialist values which glorified the cash nexus. Orhan Erkanli, a radical member of the 1960 junta, said as much in an interview published in the Istanbul daily *Cumhuriyet* on 20 July 1960 seven weeks after the *coup*:

The clique in power after 1954 trampled on all the rights of the people. They deceived the nation and dragged the country into economic and social ruin. Moral values were forgotten and people were made oblivious of them. The institution of the state was transformed into an appendage of the party organisation. The pride of the Turkish Armed Forces, which are the only organised force in the country, was hurt on every occasion; the uniform which is the real legacy of our history brought shame to those who wore it.

Discontent in the armed forces took a political form reflecting the inter-party struggle of those years. The officers came to see the problems of Turkey in the way they were articulated by the Republican opposition and the press. The solutions that were acceptable to them after they seized power were also borrowed from the intelligentsia which supported the opposition. Only a few officers with a radical bent, men like Türkes and Erkanli, had an agenda for taking Turkey

in a direction different from the one envisaged by the elites. These people may well have been influenced by what they were witnessing in neighbouring countries like Nasser's Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and Pakistan, all under military rule in 1960.

The initial reason for the intervention, stated in the broadcast on the morning of the *coup*, was to extricate the politicians from the impasse in which they found themselves. It is worth quoting the 7 a.m. broadcast over Ankara Radio at some length in order to get a sense of the initial character of the *coup*.

Honourable fellow countrymen! Owing to the crisis into which our democracy has fallen, in view of the recent sad incidents, and in order to avert fratricide, the Turkish armed forces have taken over the administration of the country. Our armed forces have taken this initiative for the purpose of extricating the parties from the irreconcilable situation into which they have fallen,... [and will hold] just and free elections as soon as possible under the supervision and arbitration of an above-party administration,...[They will hand] over the administration to whichever party wins the election.

This initiative is not directed against any person or group. Our administration will not resort to any aggressive act against individuals, nor will it allow others to do so. All fellow-countrymen, irrespective of the parties to which they may belong, will be treated in accordance with the laws.²

The junta which had seized power called itself the National Unity Committee (NUC). It was a coalition of motley factions in the armed forces, all hungry for power. The reason why the junta was so large and unwieldy (it consisted of 38 members) was precisely because so many different secret groups claimed representation and not all of them could be accommodated. Those who were left out were naturally disgruntled and became an element of instability in the armed forces.

The NUC had no preconceived plan of action to solve all the problems facing the country. Most of the members were sincere about restoring order and then handing back power to the politicians after a general election. However, as a reaction to the DP's autocratic policies the opposition had already formulated a scheme of reform for when they came to power. Just before the 1957 election, the opposition parties (the RPP, the Freedom Party, and the Republican Nation Party) issued a joint communique promising to amend the constitution and

establish a bicameral legislature; to set up a constitutional court to test the legality of laws; to provide for proportional representation so as to prevent the tyranny of the majority; and to give the right to strike to unionised workers. The RPP went further and promised state employees the right to unionise, to repeal anti-democratic laws, and to put an end to partisan administration.

The NUC, unable to propose its own solutions, invited a group of academics to form a commission and prepare a new constitution. Such a commission was formed under the chairmanship of Professor Siddik Sami Onar, the rector of Istanbul University. This decision to involve intellectuals totally altered the character of the 27 May movement, transforming it from a mere *coup* to an institutional revolution.

On 28 May, the Onar Commission presented its preliminary report which stated that political power under the Democrats had been totally corrupted by personal and class ambition. Therefore the state no longer served society. The DP may have come to power legally, but the legality of a government lay not in its origins but in its respect for the constitution and for such institutions as the press, the army, and the university. The Democrats had failed to show such respect and had therefore been removed from power quite legitimately. At a stroke, the NUC had been provided with entirely new reasons for toppling the government and legitimacy for remaining in power.

The Onar Commission recommended creating a new state and social institutions before restoring political authority and legal government. That would require preparing a new constitution, new laws and institutions, and a new election law. In order to accomplish these tasks, the NUC set up an interim government which the professors legalised with a provisional constitution on 12 June 1960.

This document permitted the NUC to exercise sovereignty on behalf of the Turkish nation until an assembly had been elected under the new constitution. The junta exercised legislative power directly and executive power through the cabinet appointed by the head of state who was also chairman of the NUC. The Committee could dismiss ministers but only the head of state could appoint them; only the judiciary functioned independently of the junta.

The National Unity Committee ended up as a body of 38 only after much squabbling between the factions. General Cemal Gürsel (1895–1966) was chosen president (as well as head of state, prime minister, and commander-in-chief) because of his amiable personality and lack of personal ambition, and because he stood outside the factions. The

division within the NUC was essentially twofold: one group, which included Gürsel and the generals and may be described as the moderates, wanted to restore power to the civilians. They supported the Onar Commission's proposals for a liberal and democratic Turkey. The second group, the radicals, consisted mainly of junior officers with Col. Turkeş as the most prominent figure. They wanted the junta to retain power *sine die* so as to carry out a more thorough restructuring than that envisaged by the professors. They even talked of creating a 'new culture' and a populist political system without parties on the model of Nasser's Egypt.

For the next six months, the two groups in the NUC engaged in a struggle for power. Finally on 13 November, the moderates carried out a *coup* and purged 14 members with radical inclinations. They were all arrested and, emulating an old Ottoman practice, posted as 'advisers' to Turkish embassies around the world.

The removal of 'the Fourteen' (as they came to be called) was welcomed by the bourgeoisie, threatened by their collectivist radicalism. But the response from the junior officers and cadets in the armed forces was one of frustration and anger. Such people saw the purge as signalling the end of all hope for real change and the end of their indirect representation in the NUC. Consequently, groups of officers, especially those who had been involved in the 1960 conspiracy but kept out of the NUC, began to plot again. Some of the plots were discovered before they could be activated. But there were two attempts to overthrow the government, the first on 22 February 1962 and the second on 20/21 May 1963. Both ended in failure; the days of military *coups* from below were over.

Senior officers on active service became aware of the danger of intervention from below after 27 May 1960. They therefore took counter-measures to control dissident elements, measures which involved both appeasement and coercion. They formed the Armed Forces Union (AFU) in 1961, a body which included officers from all ranks and whose purpose was to limit military intervention to the hierarchical principle. The AFU monitored all sorts of activities, especially anything that was likely to cause unrest in the ranks of the armed forces. It was particularly concerned about activity in the NUC which could undermine its power. The first confrontation between the junta and the AFU took place in June 1961 when Gürsel used his authority to post İrfan Tansel, the air force commander, to Washington as head of the military mission. The AFU forced Gürsel to revoke the order and cut the NUC down to size by making its members resign from their military commands. As a result, the AFU

became the real power in the country and the guarantor of constitutional rule.

Meanwhile, the Onar Commission and the Constituent Assembly, dominated by RPP supporters, produced a new constitution and an electoral law guaranteeing proportional representation. On 9 July 1961 the constitution of the Second Republic was put to a referendum. It received only lukewarm support because people were still suspicious of the military regime and feared the return of the old mono-party order. Almost 40 per cent voted against the constitution while 17 per cent abstained from voting.

The 1961 constitution was a radical departure from its predecessor. It provided for a bicameral parliament with the lower chamber, the National Assembly, consisting of 450 members elected every four years by a system of proportional representation. The Senate consisted of 150 members elected for a term of six years by a straight majority vote, with one-third retiring every two years. All the members of the NUC were made life senators and 15 members were nominated to the Senate by the president. The two chambers together constituted the Grand National Assembly.

The president was elected for a term of seven years by the Grand National Assembly from among its own members by a two-thirds majority. (Cemal Gürsel became the first president of the Second Republic.) He appointed the prime minister, who chose the rest of the cabinet. The cabinet was responsible to the Assembly.

A noteworthy innovation which proved a great annoyance to future governments was the Constitutional Court whose principal function was to review the constitutionality of legislation. It became one of the most important and controversial institutions, constantly under attack from those whose arbitrary acts it refused to sanction.³

Perhaps as important as the new institutions were the explicit guarantees of freedom of thought, expression, association and publication, as well as other civil liberties, contained in the new document. In addition, it promised

social and economic rights, with provisions both for the right of the State to plan economic development so as to achieve social justice, and the right of the individual to the ownership and inheritance of property, and the freedom of work and enterprise.

The constitution also gave the military High Command a role in government. Article III created the National Security Council (NSC) which consisted of 'the Ministers provided by law, the Chief of the

General Staff, and representatives of the armed forces'. The president (himself a retired general), or in his absence the prime minister, presided over it. Its function was to assist the cabinet 'in the making of decisions related to national security and co-ordination'. The term 'national security' was so broad and all-embracing that the pashas had a say in virtually every problem before the cabinet. As Orhan Erkanli, one of 'the Fourteen', noted in an interview on the fourteenth anniversary of the 1960 *coup*:

From the price of rice to roads and touristic sites, there is not a single problem in this country which is not related to national security. If you happen to be a very deep thinker, that too is a matter of national security.

In March 1962, the power and influence of the NSC was increased by a Bill which virtually allowed the body to interfere in the deliberations of the cabinet through regular consultations and participation in preparatory discussions. As a result, there were rumours of differences between the Defence Ministry and the General Staff. In fact, the Chief of the General Staff already acted like a powerful deputy prime minister autonomous of the Defence Ministry because Art. 110 made him responsible to the prime minister not the Defence Minister in the exercise of his duties and powers.

The army had become an autonomous institution recognised by Turkey's ruling circles as the guardian and partner of the new order it had just helped to create. The High Command had become an integral part of the political and socio-economic life of the country. The new Assembly passed laws increasing pay scales and pensions and as a result the status and image of the officer improved sharply. Luxury homes were specially built for the pashas in the compound close to the presidential palace in the most exclusive part of the capital. Junior officers were no longer taunted by landlords or waiters and began to live in middle-class comfort. Retired officers were recruited into the upper levels of the bureaucracy; retired generals were posted abroad as ambassadors to Turkish missions, or they were given sinecures on the boards of directors of private companies and banks.

The creation of the Army Mutual Assistance Association (better known by its Turkish acronym OYAK) in 1961 brought the military directly into the sphere of business and industry. The new law obliged regular officers in the armed forces to contribute 10 per cent of their salaries to the fund, to be reimbursed at a later date. With the

participation of about 80,000 officers OYAK was able to accumulate substantial capital which was invested in some of the most lucrative branches of the economy. The association was attached to the Defence Ministry though it was run like a corporation by civilian managers and technocrats.

The professed aim of this association was to provide welfare for its members by supplying loans and other benefits. It set up 'Army Bazaars', which, like the British NAAFI and the American PX, sold goods to the armed forces at discount prices. This proved a great hedge against inflation because everything from food to refrigerators was sold at prices substantially lower than those which the average citizen was forced to pay.

The most notable feature of OYAK has been the rapid expansion and diversification it has undergone. Within a decade, the fund had acquired

controlling interests in the Turkish Automotive Industry, a company that assembles International Harvester trucks and tractors; MAT, a truck and tractor sales firm; the OYAK Insurance Company; Tukas, a food canning firm and a \$3,000,000 cement plant. OYAK also holds 20 per cent of the \$50 million Petkim Petrochemical plant...8 per cent of the state-owned Turkish Petroleum, and 7 per cent of a \$5.6 million tire factory owned mostly by Goodyear.

Perhaps its most successful partnership has been with Renault of France, in whose Turkish subsidiary, OYAK-Renault, the armed forces hold 42 per cent of the shares. According to its own report published on its tenth anniversary, OYAK began with an initial investment of 8,600,000 liras. By 1970 its investment had grown to 502 million liras while its assets in 1972 were estimated at 300 million dollars. Throughout the 1970s and the 1980s, the association has continued to grow and diversify, moving into such areas as hotels and tourism. No wonder it had come to be described as the 'third sector' of the economy along with the state and private sectors.⁴

As a result of these changes, the High Command became more involved with the defence of the system than with any particular party. The primary concern was with stability and there was an inclination to intervene against any party or political leader who appeared to be a threat to a stable order. The generals were naturally hostile to parties like the socialist Workers' Party of Turkey (WPT) whose very *raison d'être* was its dedication to change the system. Even the RPP of the

late 1960s, which had adopted a left-of-centre' posture with the slogan 'this order must change', was looked upon with suspicion by the extreme conservatives in the High Command.

The generals had become a privileged group in society and they were dedicated to the preservation of the status quo. While they sympathised with parties which shared their philosophy, they no longer had to link their fortunes with those of any party leader; it was the leaders who were inclined to seek the support of generals.

Apart from resolving the political questions inherited from the First Republic, the 27 May regime gave priority to finding solutions for the bankrupt economic legacy of the Democrat years. The most important decision in this regard was the creation of the State Planning Organisation (SPO) whose principal function was to supervise the workings of the economy in a rational manner within the context of a plan. The SPO was created by Law No. 91 on 30 September 1960 and was included in the new constitution under Article 129. It acted as an advisory body with the prime minister as its chairman. The economic plan was to be prepared by the High Planning Council with due regard to political and technical problems. But the final plan had to have the approval of the cabinet and the Assembly before it could be implemented by the relevant organs of the SPO.⁵

The process of planning remained essentially political with the prime minister, who was also a party leader, in full control. However, certain articles in the constitution established moral and social guidelines in the process which, though generally disregarded by the government, acquired considerable political significance and proved to be a source of embarrassment to the government. For example, Article 41 read:

Economic and social life shall be regulated in a manner consistent with justice and the principle of full employment, with the objective of assuring for everyone a standard of living befitting human dignity.

It is the duty of the State to encourage economic, social, and cultural development by democratic processes and for this purpose to enhance national savings, to give priority to those investments which promote public welfare, and to draw up development projects.

There was an obvious contradiction between Section III of the constitution headed 'The Regulation of Economic and Social Life'

(from which Article 41 is taken) and the regime's desire to win the confidence and co-operation of Turkey's businessmen and industrialists. Such people could not comprehend why the republic was described as 'a social State' in the constitution, and why all sorts of rights were being given to the people. For example, they preferred a disciplined and tightly controlled work force (as under the Democrats) and believed that it was premature to give Turkish workers the rights to strike and bargain collectively. The Second Republic, on the other hand, began by forcing capital and labour to co-exist. But this co-existence was always an uneasy one and in the end the contradiction between the two was resolved in favour of capital by the military intervention of 1971.

Meanwhile, Turkey's planned economy was set into motion in 1963 with the goal of rapid industrialisation based on the model of import substitution. But even before it was launched, the First Five Year Plan (1963–1967) had been savaged by its opponents in the Assembly. The supporters of the farm lobby refused to allow the passage of a mild land reform bill or a law (prepared by the British economist Nicholas Kaldor) permitting the taxing of farm incomes in a way that would have rewarded efficiency and productivity instead of rent-racking. Supporters of private industry, on the other hand, refused to permit state economic enterprises to be reorganised so as to be turned into efficient competitors against the private sector; they preferred the state to continue to subsidise private manufacturing on the model of the mixed economy.

Despite the lack of structural economic reform, the Turkish economy in the 1960s grew at the respectable rate of almost 7 per cent, the target set by the SPO. This constituted almost an industrial revolution and a take-off of a kind which few other Third World states have managed. The economic climate in the world economy was favourable; the European economy, particularly the German, was booming and stimulating the demand for labour which Turks helped to meet. During these years Turkey exported labour on a large scale with the result that its own unemployment figures remained more modest than they would otherwise have been. More importantly, Turkish workers in Europe began to send home large sums of foreign exchange which enabled the country to import capital goods and raw materials for its industry and maintain an equilibrium in the balance of payments. By the early 1970s, remittances from the Turkish workers in Europe had reached such a proportion that they actually added 1 per cent to the annual growth of the GNP.⁶

Unfortunately, the expansion of the economy was lopsided and

unhealthy in the long run. Production in agriculture and industry increased only 75 per cent as fast as the planners had hoped while growth in the construction and service sectors, where the returns were quicker and the profit margins higher, exceeded the goals set by the SPO. Moreover, the economy became overly dependent on foreign exchange sent by Turks working abroad; that source was unpredictable and dependent on the boom in Europe. When the downturn came in the early 1970s, the consequences for Turkey were severe. By the end of 1973, the flow of Turkish labour to Europe had virtually stopped and the German government began to introduce schemes to repatriate foreign workers in order to mitigate Germany's growing unemployment. But while the boom lasted, Turkey was able to enjoy all the benefits as well as the stimulus of a more open economy.

By the end of the 1960s, the character of Turkey's economy and society had changed almost beyond recognition. Before the 1960s, Turkey had been predominantly agrarian with a small industrial sector dominated by the state. By the end of the decade, a substantial private industrial sector had emerged so much so that industry's contribution to the GNP almost equalled that of agriculture, overtaking it in 1973. This was matched by rapid urbanisation as peasants flocked to the towns and cities in search of jobs and a better way of life.

The increasingly industrial character of the economy was naturally reflected in the social transformation. By the late 1960s, two new groups began to make their presence felt politically. One was the working class led by an increasingly class-conscious leadership. This group broke away in 1967 from the non-political, pro-government trade union confederation, *Türk-İş*, (the Confederation of Workers' Unions of Turkey) and formed *DİSK*, the acronym for the Confederation of Revolutionary Workers' Unions. The other was an increasingly self-conscious industrial bourgeoisie determined to further its interests through its own exclusive organisation, the Association of Turkish Industrialists and Businessmen (better known by the Turkish acronym *TÜSİAD*) formed in 1971.

Turkish industry began producing virtually every consumer product which had been imported in the past. Most of the goods—cars, radios, refrigerators, irons, etc.—were assembled in Turkish factories in collaboration with foreign companies which initially supplied many if not most of the components. The first car, which was named *Anadol*, an abbreviation of the Turkish word for Anatolia, became the symbol of the new industrialisation. It was built

by Koç Holding, the largest Turkish corporation at the time, and Ford Motors. The planners regarded such collaborative schemes as the best way to attract foreign capital and know-how. Between 1960 and 1969 \$61 million were invested in the Turkish economy. Though foreign investment never came in the quantities the planners would have wished, it played a role far more significant than its size might suggest.

Industrialisation began to change the consumption habits of the Turks and soon transformed the country into a consumer society. People became more conscious of the way they dressed as the 'off-the-peg' industry grew and provided them with a greater variety of clothes to choose from. The production of beer which had been a state monopoly was thrown open to private enterprise and was again brewed in collaboration with large European companies. Even in predominantly Muslim Turkey where Islamic reassertion was thought to be a menace, the private companies succeeded in having beer classified as a non-alcoholic beverage which could be sold any where and at any time. As a result consumption grew rapidly in the cities and towns with beer more easily available in Turkey than in England with her licensing laws.

The Turkish sparkling soft drinks or *gazoz* industry experienced a similar metamorphosis. Until the early 1960s, this industry had been totally de-centralised and one or two small producers had met the needs of a given town. But once multi-nationals like Coca-Cola entered the field, the local producers were unable to compete and were driven out. They could neither package their product as attractively as the multi-national giants nor provide generous terms of credit to retailers. Within a short time consumer tastes had changed and *gazoz* and *ayran* (made from watered-down yogurt) were abandoned in favour of Coke and Fanta.

Radios, which had been quite rare outside the city and the town, now became commonplace even in small communities. Describing the small town of Susurluk in the advanced region of north-western Anatolia, the anthropologist Paul Magnarella noted that the first radio reached the sub-province only in 1937. The number did not grow substantially until the manufacture of cheap, affordable radios in the country; by 1967 there were 4,239 officially registered sets and 98 per cent of the author's adult sample claimed that they listened to the radio regularly.⁷ This proved significant for the growth of small parties like the Workers' Party which, with very limited financial resources, were able to reach voters through their radio broadcasts.

The process of modern companies, often large corporations in partnership with foreign capital, ousting smaller local enterprises was duplicated in virtually every profitable industry producing consumer goods. This resulted in the elimination of numerous concerns which failed to withstand the competition. Süleyman Demirel, leader of the Justice Party and prime minister on seven occasions between 1965 and 1991, was quick to understand the political implications of this trend. He informed his party that there had been 95 bankruptcies in the Istanbul market during the first seven months of 1964 while 1,495 workshops had been forced to close down. This process was repeated throughout Turkey causing severe economic and social dislocation. At the same time, the new patterns of consumption led to constantly rising prices and inflation and created a demand for higher wages and salaries. The consequence of the rapid economic changes of the 1960s was to aggravate a political situation which was already unstable after the army restored civilian rule with the general election of 1961.

Under the 1961 constitution, Turkey enjoyed a greater degree of freedom than ever before. People had more civil rights, the universities greater autonomy, and students the freedom to organise their own associations. Workers were given the right to strike in a state which the constitution described somewhat ambiguously as a 'social state'. In such an environment, trade unionists and sympathetic intellectuals organised a party to represent the interests of workers and peasants. At the same time, the penal code, taken from Fascist Italy in the 1930s, included restrictive provisions (the notorious Articles 141 and 142) which did not permit what was nebulously described as 'communist propaganda'. Nevertheless, in this atmosphere of ambiguous freedom, there was constant criticism of the status quo and proposals for alternatives outside the two-party consensus which had offered only different ways to achieve the same end.

The 27 May regime had changed much in the structure of political life though the foundations remained the same. The Democrat Party had been closed down and its leaders (as well as all its deputies in the last assembly) were put on trial for violating the constitution. Many were sent to prison and 15 were sentenced to death. However, 12 of the sentences were commuted but not those of Prime Minister Menderes and his finance and foreign ministers, Hasan Polatkan and Fatin Rüştü Zorlu respectively. They were hanged on 16 and 17 September 1961, leaving behind a legacy of bitterness which poisoned the political atmosphere for years to come. Menderes became a martyr

and his memory was exploited for political ends by virtually every politician and party.

The Democrat Party became a part of history but its political base remained a much sought after prize by all the neo-Democrat parties. Two such parties were formed in 1961 as soon as political activity was restored. They were the Justice Party (JP) led by a retired general with close ties to the junta, and the New Turkey Party (NTP) whose leader Ekrem Alican had opposed Menderes and formed the Freedom Party in 1955. In the general election of October 1961, these parties won 48.5 per cent of the vote between them (34.8 and 13.7 per cent respectively) compared to the 36.7 per cent won by the RPP. The results were a tribute to the power Adnan Menderes continued to exercise from the grave and a vote of censure against the military regime which had ousted him. As there was no question of permitting a neo-DP coalition to form the government (that would have invited another intervention by the army), President Cemal Gürsel asked İsmet İnönü to do so.

The first coalition (10 November 1961–30 May 1962) was a partnership between the RPP and a reluctant JP. It lasted as long as it did (a bare six months) because of constant threats and prodding from the Armed Forces Union. The second coalition was formed with great difficulty on 25 June after much bullying by the army; it survived until December 1963. All the parties in the Assembly except the JP provided ministers; that is to say the RPP, the NTP, the Republican Peasants' Nation Party, and Independents. But the RPP's partners performed so badly in the local and municipal elections of November 1963 that they withdrew from the coalition, concluding that the voters were punishing them for collaborating with İnönü. After these elections, the Justice Party became the most popular party in the country.

İnönü formed his third and last cabinet with Independents on 25 December 1963. The timing coincided with the crisis over Cyprus which threatened to lead to war with Greece. No longer commanding a majority in the Assembly, İnönü survived and received a vote of confidence on 3 January 1964 because some members of the opposition parties supported the government because of the crisis. But throughout 1964, the opposition gave no quarter to the government, despite the country's preoccupation with Cyprus. The cabinet could have been brought down at any time. But Demirel, who led the Justice Party, waited for the opportune moment after his own position was more secure both in the party and with the generals. By the beginning of 1965 he was ready to assume control

and decided to use the budget debate on 12 February as the occasion to force İnönü's resignation.

The fourth coalition was JP rule by proxy. It was led by Suat Hayri Ürgüplü, an Independent senator elected on the Justice Party list, and included other Independents as well as ministers from the parties of the right. This government's principal task was to lead the country to the general election later in the year and restore political stability. The voters were tired of weak, ineffective governments. In the 1965 general election they therefore voted for the nearest option they had to the populist Democrats and that was Süleyman Demirel's Justice Party.

The Justice Party was formed on 11 February 1961 with the blessing of the army. It is no coincidence that its leader, Ragıp Gümüşpala, was a retired general who had commanded the Third Army in May 1960. He was appointed Chief of the General Staff on 3 June and retired in August to emerge as the leader of the principal neo-Democrat party six months later. Gümüşpala was the army's insurance against DP revanchisme and the ex-Democrats' insurance against military pressure.

Gümüşpala's death on 5 June 1964 brought the party face to face with the crisis of leadership. All the factions put forward their candidates: the hardline ex-Democrats nominated Said Bilgiç; those who wanted to appease the army proposed a retired air force general, Tekin Ariburun, who had also been Celâl Bayars aide-de-camp; the conservatives supported a law professor, Ali Fuad Başgil; and the middle-of-the-road moderates put forward Demirel, a relatively unknown engineer whose patron had been Adnan Menderes. Because he was the least controversial candidate, the party chose Demirel as its leader.

Süleyman Demirel (1924–) epitomised the new Turkish politician who rose to the top because the top layer of the DP leadership had been eliminated from politics by the junta. That was perhaps the most destructive or the most constructive aspect (depending on one's political perspective) of the military intervention. An artificial political vacuum was created which sucked in people who would otherwise have remained outside politics. Demirel had been an engineer in the state's Department of Water Works and it is doubtful if he would have entered politics but for the extraordinary circumstances of the 1960s.

Within the party Demirel was seen as a technocrat ideally suited to deal with the modern world and who, in sharp contrast to Menderes, understood the working of a complex economy. Since he

lacked a political base in Isparta, his place of birth, he was considered politically weak and therefore unlikely to dominate the party. Moreover, his modest village-small town background, which Demirel exploited with skill, made him appealing to the 'ordinary Turk', especially the ambitious rural migrant who had settled in the shantytowns of all the major cities and who could identify with Demirel as a 'self-made man'. Though he was not an exceptional orator, his idiom and the way he spoke made him a 'man of the people' while leaders like İnönü, and even the socialist Mehmed Ali Aybar, the leader of the Workers' Party, clearly belonged to the old military-bureaucratic elite.⁸

Politics in the 1960s contrasted sharply from those of the previous decade. Turkey had been thoroughly politicised after 1960 and the new freedoms provided by the constitution permitted ideological politics for the first time. There was now a left-wing presence in the country especially in the universities. Students had organised their own political associations, some affiliated to the Workers' Party. Political literature, especially translations of left-wing writings from around the world, became readily available in cheap editions. The isolation of Turkey came to an end and the country became more aware of the world around it. The right, alarmed by this awakening, abandoned its complacency and began to mobilise its own forces against what was described as the struggle against communism.

These political trends coincided with the country's disenchantment with the United States. Menderes had remained totally loyal to Washington and supported US policy without question; he even refused to deny that Gary Powers's U-2 reconnaissance plane which was shot down over the Soviet Union had taken off from a Turkish base when it had not. On seizing power, the junta immediately reaffirmed Turkey's commitments to her Western allies. During the Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962, Prime Minister İnönü promised to stand by Washington even if that meant facing a Soviet attack and nuclear annihilation, as it very nearly did. But during the same crisis, Turkey learned she was little more than a bargaining counter in the negotiations between the super powers and that her ally did not take her interests into account during the negotiations. Public opinion became convinced that Turkey's interests were negotiable and that she was no longer a 'strategic asset' for Washington. The Cyprus crisis of 1963/4 in which Washington seemed to side with Athens inflamed public opinion against America. There were anti-American demonstrations

which continued on and off until the military takeover of 12 March 1971.⁹

Turkey's involvement in the Cyprus question began in the early 1950s when the Greek-Cypriot movement for independence and union with Greece (Enosis) began its bitter struggle against British colonial rule. Ankara's initial response was to seek the continuation of the status quo. By 1955, when it became clear that British rule over the island could not be maintained for much longer in the age of decolonisation, Ankara asked that the island be restored to the Turks from whom Britain had originally acquired it in 1878. Since that too was out of the question, Ankara pressed for partition in 1957. Turkey's pro-British policy estranged her from her neighbour and exacerbated relations between the two communities on the island. Difficult negotiations followed and in 1959 both sides finally agreed to create the Republic of Cyprus in which the rights of the Turkish minority (about 20 per cent of the island's population) would be guaranteed by Britain, Greece, and Turkey. The independent republic of Cyprus was proclaimed on 15 August 1960 with Archbishop Makarios as its president and Dr Fazıl Küçük, the leader of the Turkish Cypriots, as vice president.¹⁰

Within three years, President Makarios declared that the constitution was unworkable and that he intended to amend it. In December 1963, his proposals to amend some of the basic articles of the constitution led to Turkish protests and communal violence. In Turkey, there were anti-Makarios demonstrations and a demand for partition now that the 1960 regime was dead. Ankara sought joint intervention with her co-guarantors, Britain and Greece. Meanwhile, on Christmas Day, Turkish aircraft buzzed the island as a warning against further attacks on the Turkish-Cypriot community.

Makarios refused to be bound by the 1960 treaty and joint intervention by the three NATO allies; he preferred to take the matter to the UN where he enjoyed the support of the non-aligned nations while Turkey was totally isolated. The UN refused to do anything beyond sending a peacekeeping force to the island. Meanwhile, communal violence intensified and on 13 March 1964 the İnönü coalition sent a note threatening unilateral action unless there was an immediate cease fire, the siege was lifted from Turkish districts, there was freedom of communication for Turks on the island, and Turkish hostages were released. Makarios rejected the note and the parties in Ankara began to seek a consensus for intervention in Cyprus.

Turkish public opinion had become so outraged by the events on the island and was so convinced of the righteousness of the Turkish cause that there was overwhelming support for military intervention. That is why the shock was so great when the country learned of President Johnson's letter of 5 June to Prime Minister İnönü forbidding intervention. İnönü was informed that weapons provided by Washington could not be used without US consent and warning him that the NATO alliance would not come to Turkey's aid 'against the Soviet Union if Turkey takes a step which results in Soviet intervention without the full consent and understanding of its NATO allies'.

Though the full text of the letter became public knowledge only much later, its contents were leaked to the press almost immediately. It seemed to confirm the claims of the nationalist intelligentsia which, since the Cuban Missile Crisis, had charged that Turkey was a pawn of her allies who had no intentions of coming to her defence if ever the need arose. The Johnson letter gave rise to virulent anti-Americanism and a clamour from nationalists and the left for a 'non-aligned Turkey'. Even the government was shaken by Johnson's bluntness and its own impotence. The Foreign Ministry was therefore asked to reappraise the country's external relations; meanwhile the general staff created a new division totally independent of NATO to be used solely in the national interest.

Anti-Americanism became more than an issue of foreign policy; it polarised the country into two camps which have been rather crudely defined as the pro-American right and the anti-American left. In fact, those who made up the anti-American camp included neo-Kemalist nationalists of all political stripes as well as leftists and the two often overlapped. Such people came to see Turkey's predicament in terms of dependence on and exploitation by the capitalist West whose leader was the United States. The history of Turkey's war of liberation was re-interpreted and presented as a struggle against imperialism with the Kemalists bent on establishing an independent, non-aligned state while their opponents were willing to accept foreign tutelage.

A similar analysis was applied to post-war Turkey and the rulers were criticised for lacking the determination to preserve the country's true independence. Both the RPP and the DP were found guilty; the former for accepting the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan and the latter for leading Turkey into NATO and the Baghdad Pact. However, there was no excuse of continuing these policies now that they had been exposed by recent events as being futile.

For the first time, such criticism came from outside the bureaucratic establishment and the major parties. It came mainly from the intelligentsia, especially groups of students who formed 'Ideas Clubs' (*Fikir Kulüpleri*) in the universities where they discussed the problems confronting their underdeveloped society or, in their words, a society which had been 'left underdeveloped' by imperialism. These clubs were the first serious attempt to create a civil society in a country where bureaucratic control had smothered all initiative. Some of their members joined the Workers' Party which provided a political platform for their views. Even the RPP was influenced by these radical trends and was forced to respond by turning to the left if only to keep up with the times.

The right was alarmed by the appeal of this new radical nationalism which it denounced as communist. Since the neo-Kemalists had succeeded in making nationalism one of the tenets of their ideology, the right, which hitherto had monopolised nationalism, was forced to use Islam as a counter-force. New right-wing organisations such as the 'Association to Combat Communism' were formed as early as 1962 and presented 'Islam as the antidote to communism'. This political manipulation of Islam continued to increase throughout the 1960s, especially after Saudi money became influential through the organisation known as the 'Union of the World of Islam' or the *Rabitatul Alemul Islâm*. But religion also became significant politically when the economic policies of import substitution marginalised an entire sector of society, parts of which, as we shall see, sought a remedy in Islamist politics.¹¹

Demirel, whose Justice Party won the 1965 election with a majority sufficiently large to form the government, had to cope with all the new forces released by the 27 May regime. Because he spent a year in America as an Eisenhower Fellow and was employed by a US multinational corporation operating in Turkey, Demirel became the symbol of modern capitalism and the link with the United States. He was therefore attacked from all sides: by the left, the neo-Kemalists, as well as the religious right which denounced him as a Freemason. Demirel's political position deteriorated as the 1960s drew to a close. He had no solution for the frustration over the Cyprus problem which continued to fester with time favouring the Greek side. The country became more politicised resulting in increasing anti-Americanism especially after the US intervened in Vietnam and the 1967 war in the Middle East.

During these years, Turkey's workers became more militant in their struggle for higher wages and better working conditions. The

employers resisted and the struggle between the two sides became bitter, marked by strikes and lock-outs. The workers also became politicised by the events of the 1960s, especially by the propaganda of the Workers' Party. Consequently, in 1967 a group of unions broke away from the pro-government confederation, Türk-İş and formed the radical confederation DISK. The former, founded on the American model, concentrated on economic demands and discouraged political affiliations; the latter, following Europe's example, claimed that economic demands could be won only through political action and it therefore supported the WPT. The split resulted in defections and the weakening of Türk-İş which, despite claims to the contrary, was unofficially affiliated to the Justice Party. The government and the employers' unions were alarmed. They saw that they were losing control of the workers' movement and decided to regain control before it was too late.

Demirel may have controlled the situation better had his own party remained united. But that was not the case, not because of any failing on his part, but because of the consequences of economic policies with which he was identified. According to his own claim, made in 1965, he wanted to be the architect of a modern capitalist state and society, willing to bury old, out-moded structures in order to achieve this goal. He told the Assembly: 'The path of the modern Turkish state will be totally different from the methods of nineteenth-century capitalism.' And so it was. Large-scale modern capitalist enterprises which in some areas had the character of a monopoly soon became dominant throughout Anatolia. A small group of capitalists, some of whom were soon to be listed among the 'Fortune 500' companies, took advantage of the new economic policies. But the small independent tradesmen, merchants, and artisans who were scattered throughout the country failed to survive the competition.

Those who represented this traditional lower middle class in the Justice Party began to criticise Demirel for falling into the hands of vested interests and serving them rather than the people. They adopted Islamist rhetoric and denounced him as a Freemason as most big business men and industrialists in Turkey were alleged to be by their critics.

Demirel recognised the dilemma of these people. But he offered them no help, only advice, telling their delegation:

In our country, there are a million and a half tradesmen and artisans; that means about five or six million people. Self-sufficient, experienced, knowledgeable, and skilled people are a force in the

democratic order. Today's small tradesman may be tomorrow's factory owner.

But in order to rise out of their predicament they were told to organise and pool their resources. However, few were either able or willing to do that; many went bankrupt.

If these people failed to heed Demirel's advice, they did begin to organise politically, supporting those who opposed Demirel and his policies. In May 1968, Professor Necmettin Erbakan, soon to found and lead the Islamist National Order Party (NOP), attacked the government's economic policies which he said had made Turkey into 'an open market for Europe and America'. A year later, with the support of the delegates from Anatolia, Erbakan defeated Demirel's candidate in the election for the presidency of the Union of Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

The Justice Party won the general election in October 1969 but its share of the vote was reduced by 6.4 per cent. Encouraged by these results, Erbakan formed his own party in January 1970. Later in the year, in December, another faction broke away from the JP and formed the Democratic Party. Meanwhile, Col. Türkeş, who had seized control of the Republican People's Nation Party in 1965, renamed it the Nationalist Action Party (NAP) in February 1969. His aim was to attract the same lower middle-class vote by creating a militant, ultra-nationalist, neo-fascist party claiming to be equally opposed to monopoly capitalism and communism. The RPP had also split soon after it adopted the left-of-centre programme in 1965. Its right wing broke away in protest and under Professor Turhan Feyzioglu's leadership formed the Reliance Party. This fragmented right became the major factor of political instability.

Rising political tensions, societal changes, and events around the world coalesced in the late 1960s and early 1970s to produce an explosive situation. Industrial expansion with a high rate of growth created ever-rising expectations which proved impossible to meet. High inflation restricted consumption to an affluent minority; the labour force grew but never in proportion to the demand for jobs so that unemployment was always rising, though mitigated by emigration to Europe. At the same time workers became more militant and joined unions in increasing numbers. As in most Third World countries, Turkey's population not only increased rapidly, but the sheer numbers of those under 30 assumed alarming proportions. The educational system, already inadequate, failed to meet the needs of a growing student body while the economy failed to provide jobs for thousands

of new graduates each year. Schools and institutions of higher education (universities, teachers' training colleges, and schools of theology) doubled their enrolment in the 1960s and became recruiting grounds for fringe political groups of the left and right.

Murat Belge, a left-wing activist in the 1960s and an ideologue of the left in the 1990s, wrote that in

the prevailing hothouse atmosphere of Turkish student politics, the dramatic events of 1968—the Tet offensive in February, the French student rising in May, and the invasion of Czechoslovakia in August—had an even greater impact than in most countries.¹²

These events coincided with the amendment of the electoral law on 1 March abolishing the 'national remainder system'.¹³ This provision of the electoral law had allowed the Workers' Party to win 14 seats in the 1965 Assembly and play an oppositional role of historic importance totally out of proportion to its size. That is why the government wanted to amend the law and remove the WPT from the political scene.

Under the amended law, the Workers' Party would have secured only three seats for the same number of votes; in the 1969 election it won only two. Commenting on the new law, *The Economist* (9 March 1968) drew the obvious conclusion:

Since the Turkish Communist party is banned, the Labour [i.e. Workers'] party is indeed the only legal home for extreme left-wingers. Subversion thrives in political frustration, and whether the Labour party is subversive now, it is much more likely to be tempted in that direction if its parliamentary outlet is largely stopped up.

Just before the law was passed, Mehmed Ali Aybar, the party's leader, gave a warning to the Assembly that 'if this law passes, unrest in the country will rise to another level'. He begged the ruling party to take back the law 'otherwise you will be responsible for whatever befalls our democracy'.

The WPT itself did not turn to subversion though some of its supporters did. Convinced that the parliamentary road had been closed off to the left, some came to believe that the only way to power was via a military *coup* in partnership with sympathetic officers. The left became divided among those who continued to support the Workers' Party, those who supported the 'National Democratic Revolution', that is to say an alliance with radical military officers, and those who

believed that the answer to Turkey's problems was to be found in Maoism of perhaps the Indian, Naxalite variety, or the Latin American urban guerrilla strategy.

Meanwhile, the government, having wounded the left with the election law, decided to destroy political unionism led by DİSK by passing a law favouring the pro-government Turk-İş. The amended law, wrote Professor Isikli, an expert on the Turkish union movement,

prohibited the existence of unions unless they represented at least one third of those working in a particular workplace. Most important, however, was the explicit and public admission by government spokesmen that the amendment was going to be used to wipe [DISK] out of existence.¹⁴

The workers responded to this law by staging a vast and largely spontaneous demonstration on 15/16 June 1970 and succeeded in totally paralysing the entire Istanbul-Marmara region. The government was able to restore order only by a show of military force and by cutting off all physical communications to the city. This was the last straw for the regime which described the demonstration as 'the dress rehearsal for revolution'. Observers noted the government's inability to maintain law and order with the institutions of the Second Republic and predicted another period of military tutelage this time on the Pakistani 'Yahya Khan' model. Demirel had often complained that it was impossible to run the country with such a liberal and permissive constitution.

The generals were well aware of the situation. The National Intelligence Organisation, created in 1963, and military intelligence founded the same year, had penetrated various conspiratorial groups and were well abreast of their activities. (One can only guess the extent of this penetration by the large number of government agents who had to be exposed in order to give evidence during the trials held after the military intervention of 1971.) There were reports of military purges during the summer of 1970 with at least 56 generals and 516 colonels being retired.

After 1963 the armed forces were divided into a number of competing factions and there was a threat of intervention from outside the chain of command. If such a threat existed, the High Command attempted to forestall it by proposing a programme of radical reforms which they would support. But if such reforms were intended to undermine the liberal constitution they would be difficult to implement while there was an opposition in the Assembly. This was made clear to

President Cevdet Sunay when he consulted the party leaders in January 1971. They refused to rescue Demirel and were surprised that the High Command was so firmly behind him.

By January 1971, Turkey seemed to be in a state of chaos. The universities has ceased to function. Students emulating Latin American urban guerrillas robbed banks and kidnapped US servicemen, and attacked American targets. The homes of university professors critical of the government were bombed by neo-fascist militants. Factories were on strike and more workdays were lost between 1 January and 12 March 1971 than during any prior year.¹⁵ The Islamist movement had become more aggressive and its party, the National Order Party, openly rejected Atatürk and Kemalism, infuriating the armed forces.

By the beginning of March, Demirel had been eclipsed by the rapidly deteriorating situation which he no longer controlled. A meeting of his party's assembly group on 8 March showed that he no longer enjoyed its confidence and the pashas learned of this immediately from their confidants in the Justice Party. Two days later, they met and decided that Demirel would have to go since he no longer enjoyed the full support of his own party. Therefore on 12 March, the generals (the COGS and the commanders of the army, navy, and air force), acting on behalf of the Turkish Armed Forces presented a memorandum to President Sunay and the chairmen of the two chambers. They demanded the formation of a strong, credible government capable of implementing reforms envisaged by the constitution. They threatened to assume power if the government refused to resign, leaving Demirel with no alternative. His resignation cleared the way for the anti-democratic measures he had often called for but had been unable to take because of the guarantees provided by the 1961 Constitution.