

THE SEARCH FOR POLITICAL AND SOCIAL  
TRANSFORMATION: DOĞAN AVCIOĞLU  
AND HIS STANCE ON THE SUBJECT OF HISTORY  
FROM THE 1960S TO 1980

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DOĞAN AVCIOĞLU AND HIS STANCE ON THE SUBJECT OF HISTORY  
FROM THE 1960S TO 1980**

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## ABSTRACT

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This thesis tries to analyse the political stance of Dođan Avciođlu (1926-1983) as one of the most controversial political figures of the left in Turkey. The fundamental purpose of this thesis is to examine Avciođlu and his political ideas in a reciprocal relationship during the most turbulent period of the socialist movement in Turkey. In the beginning, besides the ideas of Avciođlu, a framework of the political sphere of the 1960s tried to be formed. In the second step, the most significant components of Avciođlu's ideas were chosen to be emphasized. In later parts, while discussing the idea of the immaturity of the working class, a material connection aimed to be formed with this idea shared by him to resolve Avciođlu's political stance as an intellectual in the 1960s. As the keystone of this thesis, it was claimed that, in immature and insufficient conditions, building a successfully connected intellectual-class relationship is nearly impossible. On the other hand, expecting this action only from the intellectuals might be accepted as another problematic point. For the subject of this thesis, Avciođlu was an instance of that circumstance. However, he and the movements he was involved in could not overcome this depression.

**Key Words:** Dođan Avciođlu, Yön, socialism, intellectual, working class

## ÖZ

### SIYASİ VE TOPLUMSAL DEĞİŞİM ARAYIŞI: DOĞAN AVCIOĞLU VE 1960'LARDAN 1980'E TARİHİN ÖZNESİ HAKKINDAKİ DURUŞU

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Bu tez Türkiye solunun en tartışmalı figürlerinden biri olan Doğan Avcıoğlu'nun (1926-1983) siyasi duruşunu analiz etmeye çalışmaktadır. Bu tezin temel amacı Türkiye'de sosyalist hareketin uyanışı döneminde, Avcıoğlu'nu ve onun düşüncelerini karşılıklı olarak incelemektir. Başlangıçta, Avcıoğlu'nun düşünceleri yanında 1960'lı yıllardaki siyasi ortamın çerçevesi çizilmeye çalışılmaktadır. İkinci adım olarak, üzerinde durmak için Avcıoğlu'nun düşüncelerinin en önemli bileşenleri seçildi. İlerleyen bölümlerde işçi sınıfının olgunlaşmamış olduğu fikri tartışılırken, Avcıoğlu tarafından da paylaşılan bu görüşün bir aydın olarak kendisinin siyasi tutumu ile maddi bağlarını oluşturmak amaç edildi. Bu tezin temel iddiası olarak, yetersiz ve/veya henüz yeteri kadar gelişmemiş koşullarda aydın-sınıf bağının kurulmasını imkansızla yakın olduğu ileri sürüldü. Diğer yandan, bu eylemin tek başına entelektüeller tarafından kurulmasını beklemek de başka bir sorun olarak kabul edilebilir. Avcıoğlu bahsedilen bu durumun bir örneğidir. Ancak hem kendisi hem de içinde bulunduğu hareketler bu sıkıntıyı aşmayı başaramamışlardır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Doğan Avcıoğlu, Yön, sosyalizm, aydın, işçi sınıfı

*To My Mother*

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AP	Justice Party
CHP	Republican People's Party
DP	Democrat Party
TKP	Communist Party of Turkey
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
YDM	Yön-Devrim Movement
TİP	Workers' Party of Turkey

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. Aim of Thesis and the Content

This paper examines the life and ideas of Doğan Avcıoğlu (1926-1983), a prominent political figure in the 1960s who spearheaded the intellectual current called the Yön-Devrim Movement (YDM). Rather than offering a comprehensive analysis of all his works, the focus is directed towards specific notions pertaining to the evolution of material circumstances, the material conditions that shaped the social, economic, and political environment, as well as the significance of social classes as the driving force of historical change during the late Ottoman Empire and the early Republic periods. This approach aims to illuminate the contextual factors that influenced Avcıoğlu and other socialist intellectuals of his time. Avcıoğlu's contributions were especially noteworthy because of his profound impact on literature. The paper explores the dynamic interplay between Avcıoğlu and the socio-political milieu of the 1960s, a period marked by a vibrant socialist awakening. It is important to note that the discussions surrounding the YDM extended beyond Avcıoğlu himself, as their political stances garnered considerable attention. The paper contends that Avcıoğlu's perspective should be evaluated in the broader context of material conditions rather than from a singular viewpoint.

This paper also delves into the factors that influenced Doğan Avcıoğlu's political convictions, positing that while endeavouring to enhance the working class's awareness, there were inherent limitations that the class struggled to overcome, and such imperfections eventually manifested in the perspectives of the 1960s. In the absence of this recognition, Avcıoğlu's political stance might be erroneously construed as having arisen spontaneously. Within this framework, his ideologies and political orientation were subject to debate within the context of the Marxist concept of class-intellectual dualism. Avcıoğlu's political legacy as a political figure and his

position in the organic-traditional classification of intellectuals (Gramsci, 1971) necessitate scrutiny due to the material conditions that moulded the intellectual landscape, particularly in Turkey after the 1960s.

This is not a biography of Doğan Avcıoğlu; its primary objective is to gain insight into the political convictions of an intellectual during a pivotal period in Turkey's history marked by significant class movements. While the paper provides valuable answers about Avcıoğlu's political convictions, it also raises important questions about the future of the socialist movement. Following Özdemir (1986), the paper characterizes Avcıoğlu and the YDM as key leftist figures in the political history of the period rather than strictly classifying them as socialist or communist. This characterization does not imply that the movement or Avcıoğlu should be viewed as anti-socialist or anti-communist political entities. Furthermore, specific aspects, particularly Avcıoğlu's perspective and that of the YDM, were assessed in accordance with their socialist inclinations, recognizing that the term 'socialism' itself remains a highly debatable element within their ideological framework.

This paper predominantly concentrates on Avcıoğlu's perspective regarding the working class, aiming to elucidate his viewpoint while closely examining the material circumstances that influenced his approach. Within this framework, the intricate relationship between social class and intellectual individuals will be a central theme of this paper. It also assesses the role of intellectuals during one of the most intense phases of class movements, considering how their positions reflected the progress of these movements in Turkey. This approach seeks to highlight the reciprocal relationship between intellectuals and the working class. An equitable focus on both the intellectual and material conditions is imperative for a comprehensive understanding of Avcıoğlu's outlook.

If intellectuals are, in part, products of material struggles, the analysis must encompass the conditions that shape their perspectives. Apart from delving into Avcıoğlu's ideas on the subject, the paper draws from material conditions and debates to ground its exploration in the realm of reality. His interpretations of material conditions, not only during the Republic period but also during the late Ottoman Empire, are pivotal for grasping his perspective. In his works like *Türkiye'nin Düzeni*, beyond the contemporary debates, valuable insights can be

gleaned regarding his approach to the development of capitalism and the role of imperialism. These insights are essential for understanding Avciođlu's political stance and his approach to debates about the development of the working class in Turkey.

## 1.2. Dođan Avciođlu

Dođan Avciođlu was born on March 13, 1926, in Bursa. His intellectual journey began in 1943 after he graduated from Bursa Male High School. While he initially enrolled in the law faculty at Istanbul University, Avciođlu pursued his higher education in France, where he studied business and political sciences. His years in France played a significant role in shaping his political convictions, particularly in his comparative assessments of European nations and Turkey. During this time, he had the opportunity to scrutinize liberal democracy, a concept he later critiqued in his writings (Özdemir, 2000). Avciođlu was also part of a generation of Turkish intellectuals who visited France between 1950 and 1960, where they were exposed to the works of Marx, particularly those focused on Eastern countries (Kahraman, 2011). During the 1960s, the *Yön* movement, in contrast to the *Forum* perspective, adopted a critical stance towards the concept of parliamentary democracy (Küçük, 1988, p.641). In addition to his academic influences, Avciođlu's political stance was also shaped by figures such as Pierre Mendes France, who had a lasting impact on him and contributed to his development of certain concepts, including “*zinde kuvvetler*<sup>1</sup>” (Özdemir, 2000, p.13).

Upon his return to Turkey in 1955, Dođan Avciođlu became actively involved in various institutions, including the Republican People's Party (commonly abbreviated as CHP) Research Bureau, a role he assumed in late 1957. His engagement with these organizations laid the foundation for his evolving perspectives. With the adoption of the 1961 Turkish Constitution, Avciođlu entered the political arena as a member of the Chamber of Deputies, representing the CHP's quota in 1961. His experiences and activities during this period significantly influenced his beliefs regarding the pivotal role of the military and the concept of rapid development (Özdemir, 2000, p.16). Due to his reservations concerning the functionality of the constitution, Avciođlu abstained from participating in the voting for the 1961

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<sup>1</sup> Literally translated as "lively forces" or "vigilant forces".

Constitution (Özdemir, 2000, p.17). This illustrates his early disagreements not only with the CHP but also with the legislative authority, predating the *Yön* journal period.

Other influential figures, including Mümtaz Soysal, who would become another critical figure associated with *Yön* journal, shared similar ideas with Avcıoğlu regarding Turkey's economic development and independence (Özdemir, 2000, p.18). On December 20, 1961, the first issue of the *Yön* was published. Interestingly, the original name planned for the periodical was *Devrim* (Revolution), but the journal was ultimately named *Yön* (Direction) (Küçük, 1988, 637). Under this title, a wide range of topics were explored, and the publication introduced readers to concepts such as socialism as a means of development and the notion of development itself. The *Yön* journal represented not only an intellectual endeavour by various figures in Turkey but also an attempt to embrace new ideas. Despite certain similarities, the Yön-Devrim Movement (YDM) was distinct from previous initiatives like the *Kadro* Movement or the *Forum* journal.

The authors of the memorandum, featured in the inaugural edition of *Yön* journal, contended that it was imperative to reinterpret the etatist ideology in light of the circumstances. While the term "reformulation" appears in subsequent publications, this article posits that the *Yön* journal, under the leadership of Doğan Avcıoğlu, marked a departure from the foundational tenets of etatism. However, the Yön-Devrim movement failed to fully grasp the significance of the working class as the primary political actor in history, so the movement should not be simplistically regarded as a mere reinterpretation or reformulation of the preceding regime. While some scholars see the *Yön* and *Devrim* as a continuation of the *Forum* journal, the movement denies any connection to the *Forum* (Küçük, 1985, p.177). The Yön-Devrim movement rose as a famous voice in the 1960s and 1970s and became a representative of the opposition not solely to the Justice Party (*Adalet Partisi*, or AP) but to the CHP. Despite his close relationship with the CHP, Avcıoğlu was always one of the chief names who criticized figures like İsmet İnönü and the party itself.

In terms of their political orientation, the intellectuals associated with this journal and Doğan Avcıoğlu represent a notable example of the duality within the intellectual class. Some scholars argue that the YDM embodied a dominant intellectual manifestation of socialist ideals (Giritli, 1969). Avcıoğlu also held the role of a

mentor to the extra-parliamentary opposition in Turkey during the 1960s (Özdemir, 2000). Under his leadership, the YDM emerged as a central focal point for opposition during that period. Avcıođlu, in this regard, remained one of the most consistent intellectuals regarding his political stance among his fellow writers and kept his distance from social democracy and CHP, even after the events of 12 March 1971 (Özdemir, 2000).

Avcıođlu played a significant role within the Socialist Cultural Association, established in 1962 (Özdemir, 2000). Such endeavours represented another attempt by the same group to mobilize intellectuals around socialist theory. However, following the 1971 Turkish military memorandum, Avcıođlu's political journey was marked by a growing disconnect from other figures and political parties. Starting in the late 1960s and continuing until his passing, he authored substantial works, including *Türkiye'nin Düzeni* and *Milli Kurtuluş Tarihi*, during which period he expressed his ideas through the *Devrim* journal. Avcıođlu enjoyed less political prominence during this phase compared to the early 1960s. Regardless, he made efforts to articulate his ideas in this journal, although it never gained the same level of popularity as that of *Yön* journal.

As an intellectual, Dođan Avcıođlu enjoyed a certain degree of freedom, particularly in terms of engaging in socialist discourse after the military coup in 1960. Even four decades after his passing, his ideas remain a valuable subject for discussion. While his ideas may not be neatly organized into a doctrine in his works, he stands as an example of an intellectual who witnessed the emergence of socialist theory in Turkey. For researchers and contemporary politics, the period he lived through offers various insights into the interplay between intellectuals and the broader society. This phase in Avcıođlu's life provides numerous lessons concerning the duality of the intellectual class, raising fundamental questions about the working class and intellectuals in 1960s Turkey. In this paper, the focus is not solely on establishing a discussion rooted in the Asiatic mode of production but rather on tracing a pattern that connects the birth, or the mobilization, of the socialist movement with the intellectual figure of Dođan Avcıođlu. This approach involves examining multiple subjects, seeking not only connections among them but also with the prevailing material conditions. Furthermore, it delves into whether Avcıođlu's ideas and his persona served as causes or effects within this context.

This paper addresses fundamental concerns that revolve around the mobilization of socialist theory, the activities of socialist organizations both before and after 1960, the shortcomings of the left in Turkey, the intricate relationship between intellectuals and social classes, the influential ideas that particularly shaped Avcıoğlu's perspective, and his political stance in the context of these issues. His analyses of the evolution of material conditions will be explored as a foundation for his views on the working class in Turkey. Rather than strictly engaging in abstract intellectual theorizing, Avcıoğlu consistently maintained a connection with material, real-world practices. As discernible in his works, he articulated his ideas while simultaneously depicting or interpreting the ongoing material struggles. This approach underscores the significance of his ideas in the context of concrete societal dynamics.

Avcıoğlu's ideas underwent diverse interpretations owing to the fusion of socialist theory and Kemalism in his works, although his most substantial influence was felt within the realm of leftist Kemalism. Furthermore, the core objective of the Yön-Devrim Movement consistently revolved around Turkey's development (Yurtsever, 2020), and Avcıoğlu occupied a prominent position within this ideological approach, especially during the 1960s when it garnered a considerable following. As one of the most prominent ideological trends of that period, leftist Kemalism also marked a significant imprint on the political consciousness of the left. Owing to its anti-imperialist orientation and its supportive stance towards class-based movements, the ideology found resonance and received substantial backing. Even during the 1970s, youth movements continued to be influenced by it (Şahin, 2019), and the complete disengagement from the military and Kemalism did not occur until the events of 12 September 1980. Another crucial aspect of Kemalism relates to its perspective on the condition of the working class, as it can be seen as emerging from the notion of the country's underdevelopment and the perceived weakness of the working class in Avcıoğlu's view.

### **1.3. Literature Review**

Given the central focus of this paper, we should underscore the significance of Avcıoğlu's works (1971, 1974, 1976, 1976a, 1979, 2013, 2016) because very few members of the movement could rival his intellectual prowess, particularly during the 1960s and 1970s. Avcıoğlu's writings spanning both *Yön* and *Devrim* journals

were selected for in-depth analysis concerning the subject matter as well as his approach to various concepts and issues. Avcıoğlu's contributions as an eminent intellectual extend across a wide range of areas, encompassing topics such as democracy, class-based analyses of Turkey and its history, and the notion of revolution. This expansive intellectual territory persisted even beyond the 1970s. Additionally, Avcıoğlu's 2018 book, a collection of his writings that focuses on Turkey's past and present, can be regarded as a comprehensive summation of his ideas, complementing the insights gleaned from the *Yön* and *Devrim* journals. Rather than delving into a meticulous analysis of each individual work, this paper opts for a selective approach, choosing functional excerpts from Avcıoğlu's writings to maintain conciseness and clarity of ideas to the greatest extent possible.

Numerous sources serve as valuable guiding lights for researchers, each presenting relatively distinct discourses. While they collectively contribute to the broader understanding, they do not all tread the same path. For instance, Akural's (1984) work serves as a critical resource for delving into the intellectual and material context underlying Avcıoğlu's ideas, with a particular focus on the modernization efforts in the newly established Republic of Turkey. Alpkaya (2002) seeks to elucidate the ideology previously mentioned, namely Leftist Kemalism, of which the YDM is a well-known exponent. Additionally, the works of Ateş (2021), Ciddi (2010), Çelik (2021), and Pınar (2008) provide valuable sources for investigating the interactions between Kemalism and leftist currents in Turkey.

Atılğan (2002, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010) stands out for offering some of the most comprehensive insights into the movements of the 1960s and 1970s in Turkey, examining them in a detailed manner. His research deals with the significant figures and movements of the Turkish Left, including the YDM and other leftist intellectuals of the 1960s. Atılğan's (2002) earliest work related to this topic aims to uncover the roots of the Yön-Devrim Movement and then focuses on its anti-Marxist evolution in terms of Turkish Leftist discourse. Atılğan's (2007) subsequent work provides a descriptive analysis of various aspects of the YDM. In Atılğan's (2008) research, the relationship between Kemalism and Turkish intellectuals is explored, with particular relevance to the pivotal figure of Doğan Avcıoğlu, making it essential for analyzing "socialist intellectuals" in Turkey. Besides, Atılğan's (2010) work attempts a broader analysis of the Turkish Left's perspectives on Kemalism, although it does not delve

as deeply into specific issues as this paper does. However, one of Atılgan's (2008) works stands out as one of the most comprehensive studies among the others, which has led to numerous references in the literature. This high referencing frequency might pose a challenge in the literature review due to its extensive citation, but it is worth noting that Atılgan's works have significantly contributed to the proliferation of discussions surrounding the approach of the YDM and Avcıođlu.

Aydın's (2007) work can provide insights into the approach of intellectuals in the 1960s to conditions in Turkey. Aydınođlu's (1968, 2010) work is a valuable contribution to the Marxism-Kemalism debates and its reflections on the Turkish Left, especially between 1960 and 1970, due to Avcıođlu's political stance. His other work (2010) is also a valuable source for understanding the most crucial phase of the left in Turkey, as it contains significant and well-founded claims. Bařkaya's (2007) work is another critical work on the background of the leftist movement in Turkey. Bora's (2021) work, as one of the canonical works on ideologies in Turkey, briefly analyzes the Yön-Devrim Movement and primarily focuses on Avcıođlu's political actions and ideas. The comparison between the Kadro Movement and YDM is essential due to both movements' relationship with Kemalism.

The works of Çiçek (2016) and řener (2015) are other informative sources on the YDM that can be useful for finding valuable studies about the YDM. řener's (2015) work is particularly comparative, focusing on three significant movements of the Turkish left in the 1960s. Dumont (2019), Giritli (1984), and Hershlag (1984) may provide a valuable background for this paper's subject, as they analyze the origins and key elements of Kemalism, as well as its relationship with modernism. This could also help to identify common ground between Avcıođlu's ideology and Kemalism. The works of Durgun (2015), Ergil (1974), Karpat (1966), Küçük (1988), Lipovsky (1991), řahin (2019) and Yurtsever (2020) are valuable due to their specific focus on the leftist movements in Turkey and the intellectuals of many of these, especially between the 1960s and 1980s.

The works published by Ahmad (1998, 2020), Akkurt (2020), Çetinkaya (2015), Kurthan (1969), Güzel (2016), Sencer (1969), Sertel (1969), řiřmanov (1990), and Zürcher (2011, 2013) are descriptive endeavours on the history of politics in Turkey and the development of the class movements. Ahmad (1998) and Çetinkaya (2015)

discuss interconnected themes, engaging in a mutual dialogue about the methodology behind the study of class movements' historical significance and their comprehension of the material circumstances leading to the emergence of social classes in Turkey. On the other hand, Akkurt's (2020) research is centred on exploring how movements in the Ottoman Empire approached the prevailing conditions, which played a pivotal role in shaping their ideologies.

On the problem of the development of the intellectual-working class relationship, the works of Akin (2012), Euron (2019), Gramsci (1971), Hoare&Sperber (2016), Karabel (1976), Moreno (1997), Said (1994), Yetiş (2002) are valuable sources to clarify the issue, especially in one of the most controversial periods regarding the mobilization of socialism.

Exploring the intricate dynamics between the Turkish Left and the Turkish Army presents a fascinating avenue of investigation, particularly within the context of historical analysis. This relationship is not confined solely to the 1960s but extends across various phases of Turkish history. In this regard, Ulus's comprehensive study (2016) provides valuable insights, particularly with respect to the 1960s. Furthermore, Kahraman (2011) and Şener (2015) offer additional perspectives on the connection between the Turkish Left and the military. While Şener's research (2015) contributes to a deeper understanding of the YDM, Kahraman's work (2011) takes a broader approach, considering the nexus between the Turkish Left and movements associated with Kemalism, offering a more comprehensive viewpoint on the subject.

#### **1.4. Awakening of the Left**

After World War II and during the Cold War, the left gained a platform to speak out in many parts of the world. However, the meaning of "left" varied widely among different currents and movements between 1945 and 1970. The problem of development was particularly important, and many countries experimented with non-capitalist paths to development. It is essential to understand the different meanings and nuances of socialist ideology in the 1960s when analyzing this period. Rather than pursuing their own policies, countries and regimes under the name of socialism had to find a way to counter the threat of capitalism, especially in terms of development. Economic dependency and the pressures of the imperialist bloc forced them to search for an alternative path. Terms like "non-capitalist way of

development" reflected the foundational ideological points of socialism in this context of the economic struggle between the two blocs. Countries and movements under the flag of socialism tended to focus their ideological discourses on developmental issues rather than class struggle, especially during this period.

The leftist movements of the 1960s were experienced in many different parts of the world, and the Republic of Turkey was no exception. However, the changes that took place in Turkey during this period were not solely due to the power of the working class or student movements. This does not mean that there were no movements at all, but rather that the meaning of the changes of the 1960s varied depending on the movement in question and their approach to the May 27 coup. Even before the 1960s, there were political movements in Turkey that were influenced by leftist ideas. Socialist and communist parties were founded as early as the late 1880s, and there was a rise in unionism in the early 1900s. However, due to government oppression of any kind of mobilization, these socialist movements were unable to put their class struggle politics into practice until the 1960s. Intellectual movements were also on the rise in Turkey until the mid-1950s (Küçük, 1988, p.637).

As a result of the ups and downs of the socialist movement, and primarily due to downs, in the 1960s, the left maintained its defects from the previous experiments. The shortcomings of the left in Turkey, which will be explored in greater detail in forthcoming sections of this paper, can only be surmounted through practical initiatives. Therefore, discussions revolving around the contradictions and struggles among intellectuals serve as a reflection of these issues. While intellectuals may play a role in addressing these questions, they cannot solely provide the solutions. However, during the most dynamic phase of class movements in Turkey, spanning from 1960 to 1980, the political perspectives of intellectuals became pivotal for analysis. Nonetheless, this awareness may influence the course of certain movements, but it should not be equated with those that emerged in the early days of the 1960s.

The 1960s witnessed a significant shift in the political landscape of Turkey, particularly impacting leftist parties and groups. Given the prevailing political conditions at the time, virtually all leftist factions struggled to engage in the so-called legal political arena in any meaningful way. This period marked a crucial turning

point for the Turkish left. The Democrat Party (DP) and the Republican People's Party (CHP) were both distant from leftist currents, and they made concerted efforts to suppress any mobilization, especially by socialist groups, during their respective periods in power until 1960. Even before the 1960s, publications featured articles condemning the torture and mistreatment of workers by communist governments (Akin, 2012). Such efforts to distance themselves from communism in the 1960s could be interpreted as an attempt to avoid being investigated by the government, which was hostile to leftist ideas. However, this was not simply a matter of caution but also a reflection of the newspapers' anti-communist stance (Akin, 2012).

Due to various factors, Turkey had no legal or political climate before 1960 that allowed for the free existence of leftist currents. As a result, socialist currents were only able to become a significant factor in Turkish politics in the 1960s, which was relatively late compared to other countries (Başkaya, 2011). There were some efforts by the working class in Turkey in the lead-up to the 1960s, and attempts were also made to develop the working class. However, in the 1960s, unlike in previous decades, leftist currents in Turkey tried to play a leading role in shaping political life. Nevertheless, parties like the Justice Party (AP), a successor to the Democrat Party, would go on to win multiple elections. In the aftermath of the May 27 Coup in 1960, new voices from the left emerged, but there were different approaches among different parties and movements.

There are likely other reasons for the disparities and disengagement of Turkey's leftist groups. The 1961 Constitution brought about some significant changes for the movements, but not only due to the success of that reform. Even Avcıoğlu, a leading leftist intellectual, understood the challenges that lay ahead after the May 27 coup, and his criticisms can be seen in his various works. Nevertheless, the 1961 Constitution did provide communist-socialist movements with an opportunity to operate on legitimate political platforms, compared to previous leftist groups. This paper will centre its focus on Doğan Avcıoğlu, a prominent figure and spokesperson within the leftist movements of 1960s Turkey. A thorough comprehension and analysis of the YDM demands closely examining Avcıoğlu's contributions, as he is integral to this understanding. Instead of offering an all-encompassing exploration of Avcıoğlu's political and intellectual journey, this paper will narrow its scope to investigate his approach toward the working class during a period marked by the

quest for political and social transformation within the socialist movement. This approach holds significance not only due to its style but also because of the historical context in which Avcıoğlu operated. This paper will also delve into Avcıoğlu's usage and interpretation of terms such as socialism, Marxism, and revolution within his political and intellectual journey. This analysis aims to shed light on his perspective regarding the working class and the relationship between intellectuals and the working class. Such inquiries are crucial for a comprehensive grasp of the leftist movements in the 1960s and their broader impact. As one of the most influential intellectuals of that era, Avcıoğlu's approach offers invaluable insights and serves as a significant case study for understanding the approaches of intellectuals at the onset of the awakening of class movements.

Understanding the political ideology of the YDM and the broader leftist currents of the 1960s goes beyond a mere examination of ideology alone. Analyzing leftist Kemalism solely in terms of the combined terms can mislead the researcher. Hence, a comprehensive analysis must encompass these terms' backgrounds to unravel their intricate interactions. This thesis posits that Kemalism is one of the most influential factors shaping Avcıoğlu's approach to the working class. However, this influence extends beyond Avcıoğlu or the Yön-Devrim movement; it is a consequence of Kemalism's pervasive dominance in the political landscape of Turkey (Ciddi, 2010, p.28). The inherent anti-imperialism within leftist movements holds profound significance in the study of the 1960s leftist movement in Turkey. This characteristic was not unique to a single political movement but rather permeated nearly all political currents in Turkey during that period. Importantly, electoral considerations in the wake of the Democrat Party's electoral victory presented an opportune moment for the promotion and alignment of Kemalist ideology with the communist movement, particularly after the year 1950. This marked a distinctive phase in Turkey's political history, albeit a relatively short-lived one, as the Republican People's Party (CHP), the principal standard-bearer of Kemalism, assumed the role of the primary opposition party. However, during this period, figures such as Avcıoğlu and the YDM emerged as some of the most influential adversaries of the CHP.

The CHP legally relinquished its authority over the country at that point in history. However, the military background of the party's leaders should never be forgotten, as

the control of the military did not suddenly disappear. Rather, the party's attention turned to the army's critical role. As mentioned above, Kemalism influenced practically every component of the political sphere during its long rule. The nature of this influence changed in 1950—although the CHP shifted to the opposition camp, the party's dominance in the political sphere did not disappear immediately. Thus, its characteristics followed and developed along with the other opposition members, such as the socialist movements (Aydın, 2007), which would be discussed in Turkey after the 1960s.

Marxism and socialism were not new ideologies in Turkey; they appeared in the political arena in the 1960s. According to different names, Marxism and socialism or, in a broader sense, the left started its progress in the 19th century (Durgun, 2015; Lipovsky, 1991). Some authors also studied this history by dividing the phases of the Turkish left into three parts, and the years between 1960 and 1980 were considered the most influential part of it (Durgun, 2015). Whether it was accepted or not, this classification of the phases also gained some ground in scholarship. Yurtsever (2020) examined those years as the rise and fall phase of the left in Turkey. As a result, the period between 1960 and 1980 was critical for the Turkish left. It was one of the most turbulent periods in the country's political history. Moreover, the years between 1960 and 1971 can be considered as a period of legitimate political search, while up to 1980, the left experienced the army's control over the movements, and governments banned them in almost all aspects. There may be different explanations for this significance. However, during the single-party regime, socialist movements had difficulties and were frightened by speculations (Şahin, 2019).

First, unlike the previous decades, there was a potential for it in the legal and political arena after the suppression of the left by the CHP and DP. However, this statement does not apply to the so-called freedom that followed the May 27 coup, which brought the left into the limelight. The 1960 coup in Turkey is sometimes referred to as a counter-coup as it restored the legislative system that had been abolished by the previous coup (Eroğul, 2017). Consequently, some individuals saw the 1960 coup as a positive development. It also prompted significant inquiries regarding movements within social classes. The reasons behind and outcomes of the coup were intricately linked to the conditions of various social groups, with a particular emphasis on the working class.

Avcioğlu himself considered this “relative independence” to be a significant accomplishment (Avcioğlu, 1970a). However, it did not result from the left-wing movement or its participants. The second factor is the impact of the global wave of socialism on Turkey. Many socialist movements emerged in China, Cuba, and Africa. However, everyone would interpret it differently depending on their political and material circumstances. As previously stated, socialism emerged under a variety of conditions, which influenced the Turkish left's view of socialism and Marxism as a distinctive ideology rooted in Turkey's political context.

The wars of independence in Africa were arguably the most influential political events for the Turkish left in the 1960s. The so-called “African socialism” shared principles with the movements of that phase. Socialism without class struggle was the primary phenomenon, and capitalism was defined as imperialism (Durgun, 2015). Thus, socialism and capitalism also became blurred in the nationalist-imperialist war. On many fronts, the left in several countries found a chance to participate in the political sphere to a greater extent than ever before and gave itself the name “socialism”. In contrast to the previous decades of the Republic, Turkey had a chance to experience a closer relationship with Marxism and socialism after 1960, during its peak century.

After the 1960 coup d'état in Turkey, several different leftist ideologies gained prominence in Turkish politics, unlike before. The Communist Party of Turkey (TKP), for example, was unable to organize and mobilize the masses and, therefore, could not become a major player (Başkaya, 2011). Instead, socialists were able to organize politically and legally after 1960 (Ahmad, 2020). The so-called far left was not an ordinary current until the 1960s (Zürcher, 1998). This claim should be considered from the perspective of the government, not from the perspective of real-world politics. The TKP was seen as a dependent party because it lacked public support (Somay, 2007). This lack of support may also have been a factor in the coup, which was primarily politically motivated rather than socially or economically motivated (Tanör, 2019, p.365). This analysis would later be critical for the YDM and especially Avcioğlu. Despite his varied interests, such as the development of working-class consciousness and the revolutionary roles of other political actors, his initial view of the coup influenced his political stance. Critical voices rose during this decade, and even Avcioğlu became a critic of the coup in his later writings.

Although the army played a role in the transitional phase, according to Avcıoğlu, this role was never overcome, so the possibility of creating a class-conscious organization was blurred from the very beginning. However, this was not the only reason for this approach. Some scholars argue that the 27 May coup aimed for structural shifts, unlike the Young Turks' revolutionary policies (Ahmad, 2020). After 1960, a window opened for democracy, which brought a chance for socialism, at least in the realm of discourse. Despite the challenges, democratization was one of the critical elements of that phase (Tanör, 2019, p.405), and yet this change could not become a truly liberating experience, and it did not last long enough for the political currents of that period to achieve their ideals. In retrospect, the beginning of this decade is open to criticism regarding the development of class consciousness.

This period did not start as a result of class movements; the essence of this decade is just as problematic as other elements, if not more so, for the history of class consciousness. Such issues may not be attributed to the underdevelopment of the working class but rather to the army's overthrow of the Democrat Party (DP), which influenced the view of this decade. In conclusion, the beginning of this decade, or in other words, the end of the DP's oppression, was not the result of material class actions. Thus, intellectuals who embraced Kemalism in some ways experienced the problems of those circumstances. Besides, these attempts would have had further flaws, not only because of current events but also as a result of previous practices.

The insufficient material conditions and reliance on a coup instead of class politics were crucial factors in the failure to create a class-conscious organization in the early 1960s. The *Yön* journal and the intellectuals who founded and represented it played an initial role in this period of change. Although they did not make the shift to class politics, they would become one of the most influential intellectual currents in Turkish history (Atılğan, 2002).

## CHAPTER 2

### YÖN MOVEMENT AND AVCIOĞLU IN THE CONDITIONS OF THE 1960S

#### 2.1. Yön Movement and Avcioğlu

The Yön-Devrim Movement (YDM) and Avcioğlu were profoundly influenced by the changing landscape of the 1960s. This aggregation, in turn, gave rise to one of the most salient currents of the decade. Many scholars have examined, criticized, and categorized the YDM and Avcioğlu himself according to their political stances and two fundamental ideologies underpinned the entire movement: Marxism and Kemalism. These relatively controversial ideologies were the key influencers of the YDM and Avcioğlu, and debates on the subject often revolved around them. Despite its several appearances, Marxism found a place in almost every sphere of life, while Kemalism remained Turkey's most essential ideology or political stance due to its founding role in history. This dominant status also led to a range of issues for the Turkish left. In the 1960s, another contentious association emerged between Marxism and Kemalism.

Moreover, the YDM can be considered the first legal example of socialist discourse in Turkey, bringing together participants from diverse social strata. It was not the only socialist movement of the decade, but it had a more positive attitude towards socialism than other movements in the decade. Of the three main leftist currents of the 1960s, the YDM represented the so-called national democratic revolution in contrast to the Workers' Party of Turkey's (TİP) more traditional socialist stance (Durgun, 2015; Şener, 2015).

This paper argues that the YDM and its key figure, Avcioğlu, represented a watershed moment for socialist theory in Turkey. This was not simply a positive development for the Kemalism-Marxism synthesis, but it also revealed many problematic issues that must be addressed in order to draw different lessons for the future of socialism and Marxism in Turkey. In that regard, the termination of

reactionary ideas, views, and the bloc itself—which can be broadly understood as the ideas and movements opposed to any progress of class movements—was necessary for any advancement of class movements. Socialists must also contend with these issues first and foremost.

Avcıoğlu believed that there is a transitional phase whose main goal is not socialism but government. Only in this way can the problem of underdevelopment be solved. However, the term "development" in this context also refers to grassroots movements' conditions, not simply economic development. It is also about dispersing the fog of the political sphere to enable the people of Turkey to mobilize. Avcıoğlu's approach requires further evaluation from this perspective. The following chapters will argue that the weakness of the working class was the primary reason for this approach. Additionally, the material conditions of the working class's development are another essential issue in understanding this view. Finally, Avcıoğlu's political stance will be examined in light of the flaws and challenges that arose during this development.

Socialism and Marxism had a central place in Avcıoğlu's political stance. Until the *Devrim* (Revolution) journal, he emphasized and utilized these ideologies to understand Turkey's development problem. Marxism was especially important to him, as he noted in his writings. In one of his most famous works, *Türklerin Tarihi* (History of the Turks), Avcıoğlu attempted to historize the Turks from their origins using Marxist methods. In addition to Marxism, Avcıoğlu also formulated the concept of “zinde kuvvetşer”, which he believed would play a decisive role in Turkey's future, especially on the path to socialism. This group would consist of people from diverse strata of society, including the army. Although the relationship between the army and the socialist current would weaken after the memorandum on 12 March 1971, it did not end completely. Avcıoğlu himself continued to believe that the army could play a positive role in Turkey's development (Pınar, 2008).

Avcıoğlu was first introduced to Marxism in France, not Turkey, during his studies at the Paris Faculty of Political and Economic Science in the 1940s. He was aware of the political conditions around the world, especially the development problems, and his interpretation of Marxism was soon altered, or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that Kemalism influenced the shaping process of his ideas. As a political

figure, Doğan Avcıoğlu exerted a significant impact on the political landscape in Turkey, particularly through two prominent journals, *Yön* and *Devrim*, published in the 1960s and 1970s, which became important forums for intellectual debate. Avcıoğlu's ideological stance, particularly in those decades, made the Yön-Devrim Movement a significant current in Turkish politics, but his influence in the political arena gradually diminished following the coup on March 12, 1971.

The *Yön* journal emphasized the role of intellectuals, as evidenced by the many intellectuals who signed its proclamation, including Muammer Aksoy, Çetin Altan, and Melih Cevdet Anday. It brought together intellectuals from a variety of fields. The *Devrim* journal, on the other hand, did not share the same characteristics as its predecessor. The publication became a mouthpiece for a minority of intellectuals, especially Avcıoğlu himself, and underscored the role of the army and encouraged it to support a possible socialist revolution. Such a shift in *Devrim* did not happen overnight; the radicalization of Avcıoğlu's ideas in the later phases reflected the material conditions of Turkey, especially concerning democracy. The analysis of this shift in ideas could be a fruitful area of research.

Research into Avcıoğlu and the Yön-Devrim Movement (YDM) is crucial due to their dominant influence in the intellectual and political sphere of the 1960s, particularly within the Turkish left (Bora, 2021). Their dominance mirrors key elements of Avcıoğlu and the YDM's ideology, with a special emphasis on their interpretation of Kemalism. The *Yön* journal was a melting pot of intellectuals and individuals from various backgrounds, and its ideological position significantly contributed to its intellectual dominance. The YDM was perceived as a revitalizing force in numerous debates during a period when the left was experiencing stagnation in the early 1960s (Çiçek, 2016). Despite certain common points, such as the importance of intellectuals, *Yön* differed from other opposing voices, such as *Forum*, in its diagnosis of the crisis in Turkey (Atılgan, 2020).

Even in the phase of the *Devrim* journal, Avcıoğlu can be considered the only name to lead the movement. Besides the orthodox socialist movements, in this period, Kemalism and socialism found a chance to coexist within the same political environment. Figures like Avcıoğlu and YDM tried to make these ideologies cooperate in a so-called independent and self-developed Turkey. Avcıoğlu viewed

Kemalism as a positive element for socialist agendas. He also interpreted both ideologies in his own way. According to his political stance, the form of organization and the subject of the movement were different. Reflections of Kemalism can be found in his approach to socialist theory, especially in his view of the subject of the possible revolution, which was influenced by his Kemalist ideological background. For such reasons, Avcıoğlu's thoughts and approach to the conditions in Turkey remain valuable elements relevant for discussion today.

Avcıoğlu's political engagement did not begin in the 1960s. He was aware of the political conditions of the Republic of Turkey and was a member of the Research Bureau of the Republican People's Party (CHP), where he published many research documents about Turkey (Özdemir, 2000). Avcıoğlu was also researching the idea of development, which would become one of the critical points of his political thought. After the coup in the 1960s, he was elected to the Chamber of Deputies. Thus, as an active political figure as part of the YDM, Avcıoğlu was no stranger to the previous decade's political environment and the development of ideas, which almost entirely shaped his world of thought.

During this relatively short period of time, the Turkish left, especially the socialist wing, made significant contributions and engaged in many debates. Among these actors, Doğan Avcıoğlu and the YDM were particularly influential. Intellectuals from all walks of life, including academics, judges, and teachers, participated in these movements without organizing into a political party (Küçük, 1988, p. 643). The political agenda of such movements regarding a revolutionary party is another topic of discussion. Finally, and crucially, Avcıoğlu placed a strong emphasis on socialism, unlike previous movements such as the *Kadro* Movement. The YDM openly attempted to theorize the ideology of a self-developed Turkey with socialist ideas. In contrast, the *Kadro* Movement sought to shape an ideological framework for the existing government rather than opposing it (Aydınoğlu, 2011, p.88).

The YDM was not a purely Marxist movement, nor did it exist independently of the Kemalist ideology that had previously been hegemonic but was now in opposition. Avcıoğlu's debt to Kemalism is well-documented (Atılğan, 2020; Şener, 2015; Yurtsever, 2020). In his development idea, which he constructed and created in the *Yön* journal, he drew on Marxism as well as the Turkish War of Independence, but he

viewed the second one as the more important of the two (Avcıoğlu, 1964). The YDM's and Avcıoğlu's unique contribution was their Marxist foundation, which distinguished them from previous intellectual movements in Turkish history (Atılğan, 2020). However, this paper argues that the YDM and Avcıoğlu were unsuccessful demonstrations of Marxism and informative instances of Kemalism. This claim is supported by Avcıoğlu's writings in *Yön* journal, which attempted to connect with a class-based understanding but also referred to society as a misled mass that needed to be convinced of a possible revolution or development.

At the superstructural level, Avcıoğlu's predictions were all valid interpretations of the new conditions emerging at the time, although as a movement trying to change the country, they were unable to focus their efforts and organize effectively to change the material conditions in Turkey. While they attempted to revolutionize the army, the movement was ultimately crushed by political oppression after 12 March 1971.

Efforts were made to establish a new, socialist Turkey and continue the Kemalist Revolution, but they failed or were defeated. The Movement's success without a political party can be considered its most significant organizational failure. Avcıoğlu's approach to the working class may also be related to this circumstance. Hence, it is important to study Avcıoğlu's Marxism. Many scholars and political figures have criticized the YDM for failing to establish a political party, arguing that this failure led to the demise of both the YDM and leftist Kemalism (Akdere and Karadeniz, 1996, p.201). However, Avcıoğlu's writings reveal a sort of consistency in his thinking. While he did not thoroughly consider the working class as the fundamental force of revolution, he did not ignore it entirely. His works contain many ideas about the working class and its role in history, but also many distanced ideas about the working class's role. It is possible that Avcıoğlu's decision not to establish a political party was intentional. While discussions were held on this topic, theoretical issues also emerged. This failure to establish a political party would exert a lasting impact on the future of Turkey.

Combining Kemalism and Marxism created a greater chance to unify the intellectual camp following Avcıoğlu's concept of "lively and fit forces", which would be vital in the revolution. However, socialism was a way of economic development more

than an ideology of the working class for Avcıoğlu and other intellectuals (But one thing should never be forgotten: Avcıoğlu was aware of Marxism's significant theses.). At that time, intellectuals' ideas of Marxism, communism, and socialism were associated with anti-imperialism and development, so people were drawn to the ideology of leftist Kemalism. The Yön-Devrim movement's Kemalist face was a positive asset in terms of organization, but it led to many problems with regard to the organization of the working class, revolution, and the role of intellectuals. Avcıoğlu's ideas were initially criticized primarily based on these issues. In fact, due to their approach to the working class, Avcıoğlu and the other intellectuals in the YDM were seen as traditional intellectuals (Atılğan, 2020, p.26). Also, Avcıoğlu and the left in the 1960s were criticized for focusing on anti-imperialism instead of a class-based approach (Somay, 2007). Nonetheless, due to the relationship with the working class, Avcıoğlu might be accepted as a traditional intellectual (Said, 1994).

Avcıoğlu's identification can be another resource for interpreting the Yön-Devrim Movement in this way (Atılğan, 2020; Özdemir, 1995). However, it would be a mistake to reduce the Movement and Avcıoğlu to mere interpreters of Kemalism without considering their overall efforts. In the new decade, not only Avcıoğlu but also other voices on the left were trying to find a way out of the total hegemony of the Democrat Party (DP). This was not simply a rejection of the DP but also of the early policies of the Republic. According to Avcıoğlu, the new election system suspended revolutionism (Avcıoğlu, 1962c), and his criticism was not limited to the problems of the post-DP period but also extended to the changes in the Republican People's Party (CHP).

Avcıoğlu's Marxism is a complex subject that can be interpreted from many different perspectives. This stems from his unique political approach, which was heavily influenced by Kemalism. Some scholars have argued that Avcıoğlu's Marxism was simply a tool for interpreting Kemalism (Atılğan, 2020, p.54). They point out that he used Marxism to develop political programs after the authoritarian rule of the Democrat Party. In other words, Kemalism and its political legacy, rather than Marxism itself, determined Avcıoğlu's political stance. However, these claims do not mean that Avcıoğlu was simply using Marxism for his own benefit or that he distorted it to suit his own interests. Rather, his understanding of Marxism as a theory of non-capitalist development (Atılğan, 2020) led him to approach it

differently than Marxist philosophers of the 19th and 20th centuries. Therefore, he was unable to develop a unique or specific form of Marxism; his thinking was also influenced by the Turkish left's intellectual inheritance and the political structure of Turkey and the world in the 1960s. Despite such limitations, Avcıoğlu and the YDM differed from previous movements, such as *Kadro*, in significant ways. These differences reveal some of the most critical issues facing the Turkish left, including the relationship between Marxism and socialist transformation, the role of intellectuals, and the relationship with the army. Such issues still continue to be relevant and worthy of further study.

Avcıoğlu's Marxism is best understood by examining his intellectual background, the intellectual legacy influencing his views, and the phases of the journals *Yön* and *Devrim*. A timeline of Avcıoğlu's engagement with Marxism, from his first encounter to the publication of *Devrim*, would reveal significant changes in his thinking about history. Avcıoğlu's handling of history stands out as one of the key elements of his Marxism. However, such an approach is not entirely original to the Turkish left. As Ulus (2016) notes, the Turkish left's attitude towards the army was one of the critical factors that distinguished different movements in the political arena. A similar attitude can be observed in the Turkish left's response to the 1960 coup. One of the few things that leftist actors agreed on was not to criticize the coup (Çiçek, 2016), and Avcıoğlu shared this characteristic as well.

Avcıoğlu's approach to the army and the subject of history between the 1960s and the 1970s is crucial to understanding his Marxism. This paper argues that Avcıoğlu's Marxism represents a failed instance of orthodox Marxism but that this approach is rooted in his world of thought regarding the working class and the history of socialism in Turkey. His views on the working class and its development can be found in his famous works such as *Türkiye'nin Düzeni* and *Devrim Üzerine*. Despite the failure of the movement's aims, Avcıoğlu represented a different version of Kemalism in the intellectual realms. His most significant advantage was his ideology's adaptation capability derived from Kemalism. The intellectual backgrounds of both the Turkish left and Avcıoğlu are essential to understanding the Turkish left's understanding of key Marxist concepts such as class, history, and revolution. The Turkish left's heritage, especially in terms of the history of the Ottoman Empire, played an important role in shaping this understanding. However,

this background was not a priori but rather reflected the material conditions of the Ottoman Empire. Similarly, the role of intellectuals was not a priori situation for both Ottoman history and Avcıoğlu. The approach of leftist actors towards the army determined their stances and separation (Ulus, 2016). Such considerations are essential because the so-called famous leftist figures of the 1960s in Turkey, such as the Yön-Devrim Movement, the Workers' Party of Turkey (TİP), and the National Democratic Revolution Movement, approached the army and intellectuals in varying ways, and thus their political stances differed significantly.

The phrase “Avcıoğlu's Marxism and ideology” may seem essential, but there is more to it than meets the eye. Avcıoğlu's Marxism, or his approach to Marxism, has some problematic areas for the Turkish left, especially compared to their European counterparts. Like all other ideologies, Marxism did not suddenly appear in Avcıoğlu's thinking. As various authors have noted, Avcıoğlu's views were influenced by both Marxism and Kemalism (Atılgan, 2020; Kahraman, 2011; Şener, 2015). Kemalism was the defining factor of Avcıoğlu's Marxism, and these two ideologies cannot be analyzed without considering the influences they had on each other. Both the Yön-Devrim Movement and Avcıoğlu himself can be considered to represent one of the key problems of the Turkish left (Kahraman, 2011). In addition to Avcıoğlu's personal influences, the material conditions around the world also led to a relationship between Marxism and Kemalism. However, Avcıoğlu was not the only one who paid attention to the mutual influence between these two ideologies.

The Kadro Movement, which preceded the YDM and Avcıoğlu, also attempted to synthesize Marxism and Kemalism. The movement's primary goal was to reformulate Kemalism in light of the current conditions in Turkey rather than to formulate Marxist ideology in Turkey (Atılgan, 2020). In the 1960s, Avcıoğlu was not the only one to carry the flag of the Marxism-Kemalism relationship. The same ideologies also influenced the National Democratic Revolution camp during that time. After the 1970s, various names and political parties attempted to negotiate or sever the connection between Marxism and Kemalism (Kahraman, 2011).

Examining the relationship and conflicts between Marxism and Kemalism, as interpreted by Avcıoğlu, can help us understand many specific events and actions in the history of the Turkish left. Such events had a significant impact on the

development of both ideologies, both in the early Republican period and the 1960s, and they continue to evolve today. It is important to note that nearly every event in political history offers valuable lessons for the future, and the political journey of the YDM and Avcıoğlu himself is certainly no exception. The attempt to merge or reinterpret Kemalism with Marxism yielded a variety of outcomes, but the lack of a well-organized mass movement with a socialist perspective had a profound effect on the political landscape, with the YDM and Avcıoğlu facing isolation because of such challenges.

## **2.2. Idea of Weakness of the Working Class**

This chapter briefly analyzes the weaknesses of class politics and the potential power of the working class in Turkey. The approach of Doğan Avcıoğlu to this subject will be discussed in another chapter. A panorama of the material conditions in terms of the development of the working class would be helpful for answering various questions. This is because intellectuals such as Avcıoğlu argue that the material conditions of the working class are essential for understanding class politics and its potential power. Despite claims that the movements' approach towards the army was a determinant factor (Ulus, 2016), the leftist currents in the 1960s had another vital political stance: their view on the historical development process of class consciousness and material conditions. Their view of the working class was mainly shaped by their evaluation of the progress of the capitalist mode of production and the roots of capitalism in the country. On the side of the peasantry, social movements arising from class distinctions faced similar grim challenges throughout the history of the Ottoman Empire. This perspective can contribute to understanding the emergence of socialist discourse in Turkey during the 1960s. Besides, movements occurring between 1870 and 1908 were often viewed as spontaneous responses to economic crises (Sencer, 1969). One of the central claims of this paper is that the relatively fragile foundation of the working-class movement led to class-based movements struggling to gain traction and establish a solid footing in Turkey. During the 1960s, the movements and intellectual figures within the Turkish left exhibited disparities compared to their counterparts in Europe. Exploring the relationship between intellectuals and social classes in Turkey is another crucial aspect to consider. Nonetheless, the awakening that occurred in Turkey during the 1960s can be accepted as a starting point for establishing a connection with the masses, influenced

by previous experiences. Avcıoğlu can be regarded as a notable example within this sequence. His approach to Marxism and Kemalism was not an inevitable outcome but rather a potential result of the Turkish left's historical trajectory.

While the combination of Marxism and Kemalism may have been controversial, it can also be seen as the beginning of the left in Turkey. One question that can be asked here is why Avcıoğlu did not fundamentally consider the working class, especially in the conditions after the 1960s. The answer is that the rise of the working class in the 1960s was in a wholly different stage compared to the phases before. This was the awakening of the socialist movements in Turkey, and the first steps were taken to mobilize the masses—the success of this period was the ultimate mobilization of the left. Class movements in Turkey finally gained new ground to spread around the country like never experienced before. To better understand Avcıoğlu's thoughts and how they developed, it would help to provide a brief explanation of the socialist theory and material conditions in Turkey up until the 1960s. This analysis should consider not only intellectual influences but also the real-world context that shaped Avcıoğlu's ideology. Why were his “Marxist” ideas rejected by more orthodox Marxist theoreticians of the time despite his Marxist framework? Could this be explained by the lingering influence of Kemalism? Did Avcıoğlu's understanding of Marxism reflect lingering legacies from the past? Answering these questions is vital for understanding the history of Marxism and socialist thought in Turkey. Exploring some parallels to situations experienced by 1960s movements could allow for more accurate analyses. Rather than dismissing these efforts as merely Kemalist, we should identify reasonable causes underlying their perspectives, which would provide a more well-rounded view instead of unfair blame.

Kemalism and Marxism are two essential elements of Avcıoğlu's intellectual legacy. These ideologies spark discussion today but were much more popular in the 1960s. At that time, Marxism represented developmental programs, especially in African and Asian countries. Meanwhile, Kemalism was resurging after its defeat in the previous decade. The 1960s offered an opportunity to reformulate Kemalism following the single-party government and the Democrat Party's capitalist decade. This relatively unrestrained political environment allowed not just new formulations of Kemalism but many diverse voices to emerge.

One of the main reasons that alienated Avcıoğlu from the so-called self-organized working class might derive from the results of the elections in two different decades. First, in the 1950 elections, the Democrat Party organized the working class and peasantry to win. According to Avcıoğlu (1966a), due to the oppressions from the apparatuses of the government, the poor masses followed the compradors and the gentry and supported them. After the 1960 coup, in relatively free conditions, many opposition figures hoped that there would be an opportunity to gain power over these classes after a decade of authoritarian Democrat Party rule, and yet the outcome was completely different than expected. These facts likely influenced Avcıoğlu's view of the classes.

This view of the working class shaped the character of YDM and Avcıoğlu's ideas. Despite talk of revolution, socialism, and socialist organization, it is rather difficult to find an organic relationship between Avcıoğlu and socialist groups. During this period, socialism was openly debated by various individuals and organizations, but common ground proved elusive, and there were many different discussions between these actors. Nonetheless, what almost every camp seemed disconnected on was the possibility of revolution in Turkey.

In addition, while intellectuals in the 1960s theorized their approaches, the working class and workers' consciousness were emerging in Turkey to an unprecedented extent (Aydınöğlü, 2011, p.15). According to various scholars, the 1960s era marked the rise of the working class on a scale not seen before (Şişmanov, 1990; Aydınöğlü, 2011). In these formative conditions, establishing links between intellectuals and the class itself may have required significant efforts. Moreover, just over a decade prior, the Democrat Party had been elected with support from exploitative social groups. Indeed, rapidly forging bonds between the newly emerging voice of the working class and intellectuals could pose a challenge for both sides. This also implicates one of Marxism's most crucial questions. Dissensus and disconnection may emerge if these two parties cannot develop an organic relationship. In the initial phases of struggle, movements and ideas can inherit the defects of that period. Thus, this should not be viewed as a one-sided issue but rather a reciprocal outcome of Turkey's historical class movements. In subsequent sections, this approach will be discussed to clarify Avcıoğlu's perspective. He gave much consideration to this issue, but his views cannot be fully comprehended without examining it. Because the condition of

the working class in Turkey also defined the political environment following the 1960s. The role of intellectuals as representatives of class interests should not be forgotten. Avcıoğlu and his stance on class conflicts can likewise be analyzed in this manner. The emergence and development of social classes in Turkey are naturally tied to the formulation of socialist ideology. As such, effects and inherent problems were carried throughout the post-establishment Republic period. Theoretical disputes would mainly occur in the 1960s, unlike prior decades. In that decade, besides the awakening and mobilization of leftist forces, issues around the organization, projecting a socialist future, and the subject(s) of revolution would also be contested.

Under the title of the underdevelopment of the working class, Avcıoğlu—whether intentionally or not—put forth a perspective that principally examined the working class and material conditions of prior decades as not advancing adequately. The immaturity of the working class was one of the primary reasons cited for the underdevelopment of the capitalist mode of production. Avcıoğlu analyzed capitalism and its roots in Turkey differently according to his reinterpretations of prior works. However, this approach was not unique to Avcıoğlu; a similar interpretation can be found in various other studies on the history of the working class.

### **2.3. Debating on Avcıoğlu's Thoughts**

One of the most contentious points raised by critics of Avcıoğlu's ideas, and indeed a broader critique of the socialist currents of the 1960s, lies in the examination of the political landscape of that era and the preceding decades. Delving into analyses of those preceding decades, and perhaps even centuries can offer valuable insights into Avcıoğlu's perspective. Rather than simply criticizing him for his Kemalist views on the role of the working class, one could also explore the history of class movements. An alternative approach would involve unravelling the contextual meanings of Marxism and Kemalism during that particular era.

Avcıoğlu's Marxism did not develop in a vacuum and was inevitably shaped by global material conditions and circumstances, but those influences did not impose a rigid understanding of Marxism on Avcıoğlu. This adaptive feature may have been one of the crucial aspects to analyze regarding his ideological position during that time and whether it was unique. Prior to his first encounters with Marxism, Avcıoğlu

was a university student in the 1950s. It was in France where he had the opportunity to properly acquaint himself with Marxism as a systematic ideology. Moreover, the influences of Pierre Mendes and French Revolutionary philosophers must be considered regarding his intellectual foundations (Özdemir, 2000, p.13). Nevertheless, domestic impacts likely also informed his evolving political stances in the 1960s, as evidenced by his disengagement from the Republican People's Party (CHP) and alignment with opposition to the Democrat Party (DP). Nevertheless, Kemalism's formative impact on his intellectual development is apparent throughout; Avcıoğlu simply cannot be fully understood or analyzed without considering Kemalism's ongoing influence.

The first and most crucial fact about Avcıoğlu is that he did not provide a complete source of his ideology or Marxism. Instead, his writings on recent political events and books on Turkey and history became a guide to analyzing Avcıoğlu's world of ideas. Even his famous work *Türkiye'nin Düzeni* was a book of political agenda and a near-past interpretation rather than a systematic collection of his ideas (Bora, 2021, p.611). His ideas could be collected from commentaries and interpretations of material events from the *Yön* and *Devrim* journals. Even his famous works "*Türklerin Tarihi*" or "*Türkiye'nin Düzeni*" were apparent instances of the disordered political ideas of Avcıoğlu. While no single work encompasses Avcıoğlu's ideas in a completely unified manner, the journals *Yön* and *Devrim* can still serve as valuable sources of his thinking. Although *Yön* brought together intellectuals from a variety of 1960s-era perspectives (Atılğan, 2020), it remains an important reference given Avcıoğlu's role as its editor, though his seminal contributions to the Yön-Devrim Movement extended beyond merely holding an editorial post.

Avcıoğlu held the paramount role of editor-in-chief due to his leadership position within the YDM. Because of this critical function, the journals served as his platform for the declaration and interpretation of ideas. However, like almost all other ideologies and political movements, the YDM and Avcıoğlu did not emerge on Turkey's political scene overnight. In addition to influencing the future trajectory of socialist thought, Avcıoğlu inherited aspects of his political stance from prior phases of Turkey's political and social atmosphere. Such influences prompted comparisons by some authors between the YDM and earlier movements like Kadro or the Young Turks (Atılğan, 2020, p.307; Bora, 2021).

In any case, the *Devrim* journal provided the platform for Avcıoğlu to express his more crystallized ideas, particularly about the junta (Şener, 2015, p.97). His Marxism in the 1970s, after the March 12, 1971 coup, was shaped by his experience with *Devrim*. This period saw a crystallization of Avcıoğlu's thoughts on topics like revolution, revolutionary forces, and the subject of history. His disappointment with the possibility of democratic change led his ideas about revolution and democracy to evolve. The pages of *Devrim* captured this ideological transformation as Avcıoğlu's thinking on issues like revolution became more sharply defined.

The intricacies of Avcıoğlu's ideas continue to provoke extensive discussion on various fronts. Kemalism and socialism, being the pillars of his ideology, underwent multiple transformations throughout their evolution. To provide a succinct overview, Kemalism, particularly rooted in the late Ottoman intellectual realm and Jacobinism, experienced diverse manifestations, including the Kadro Movement prior to the 1960s. During the 1960s, after a decade under the rule of the Democrat Party, Kemalism intertwined with socialist and developmental notions. Simultaneously, endeavours were made to interpret Kemalism from a right-wing perspective.

After the 1970s, Kemalism gradually lost its significant influence within the political landscape due to a multitude of reasons. Similarly, socialism underwent a transformative journey, subject to diverse interpretations by various political factions. Its essence underwent substantial shifts throughout the years, particularly between 1880 and 1940, reflecting the varying political contexts. Consequently, Avcıoğlu's ideological stance can only be comprehended within the framework of these evolving conditions. In the early 1960s, both socialism and Kemalism grappled with distinct political challenges. Moreover, the 1960s witnessed the emergence of numerous ideologies, which, alongside Kemalism, became subjects of extensive deliberation and examination.

During this era, neither Marx nor Lenin dominated the socialist landscape as the "new left" movement gained momentum. Furthermore, the debate surrounding the definition of a socialist economy had already commenced in the early 20th century (Hobsbawm, 2012). Hence, considering socialism as a viable path for development was not an exclusive idea of the YDM or Avcıoğlu. The repeated crises experienced under capitalism sparked discussions regarding socialism as a potential alternative

long before Turkish intellectuals took an interest in the matter. However, the approach to this idea remains a subject of contention, as it also influenced the perspectives on the YDM and Avcıoğlu's ideas. While Marx did not foresee or prescribe a rigid path for socialist development, establishing the concrete connections between these subsequent formulations and Marx's theory proves to be a compelling endeavour (Hobsbawm, 2012, p.8). Similarly, the rationale behind the YDM and Avcıoğlu's stance can be understood. Advocates of socialism as a developmental pathway distinct from capitalism were susceptible to criticism for seemingly deviating from Marxism.

A point of contention among critics lies in the fact that until the 1960s, the prevailing conditions were far from establishing an organized and self-liberated working class, with the consciousness of the working class remaining underdeveloped despite various endeavours. There are numerous reasons that can be put forth to explain these circumstances leading up to 1960, and even thereafter, the process of cultivating class consciousness cannot be accomplished overnight. These considerations are crucial when seeking to comprehend and evaluate Avcıoğlu's thoughts, as well as the approaches of other socialist movements during the 1960s. The search for the primary political actor in history can be acknowledged as the central point of contention within socialist debates revolving around the "subject question" of the socialist revolution. Depending on the perspective towards the working class in Turkey, ideas and the strategic roadmap of the movement have diverged. However, the primary issue at hand concerning class consciousness and the emergence of a well-grounded socialist theory primarily revolves around qualification, or in other words, the defining characteristics of the working class.

The mere emergence of the working class alone is inadequate for the development of any organization, movement, or theory. That type of group only represents the class in itself, which refers to a mass gathered around shared economic conditions but has little awareness of its class. As Marx stressed, the mass might be against the capital "...but not yet for itself." (Marx, 1955). Thus, the working class must revolutionize itself and become a class for itself. According to Marx (1955), only in this way can the interests of its defence become the interests of this class. It might thus be claimed that until the 1960s, the working class in Turkey sought to form itself as a class for itself yet could not complete it. If we were to consider the history of the left in

Turkey as synonymous with the history of the Communist Party (Çiçek, 2016, p.250), it becomes evident that the persisting oppression and the challenging circumstances have hindered the establishment of robust and deeply rooted class movements. After the 1960s, socialist movements had a chance to connect with the masses regarding class politics, unlike the previous weak attempts. These movements' characteristics were debatable, but socialism had never found such an opportunity as it did in the 1960s and afterwards, until 1980.

In essence, Avcıoğlu's political stance is intricately intertwined with the prevailing conditions of the 1960s and the preceding decades. Consequently, any discussions concerning his ideas and works cannot be considered complete without taking into account these historical contexts. Moreover, it is imperative to broaden the scope beyond domestic factors and consider the global understanding of Marxism and socialism. By doing so, a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of Avcıoğlu's intellectual journey can be attained. Avcıoğlu, as an intellectual, was also a reflection of the emerging and awakening class movements regarding socialist understandings. At the same time, due to that background, he could not solve the issues faced by Marxist theory. Instead, whether deliberately or not, both Avcıoğlu and YDM tried to compensate for the deficiencies through different approaches. Nevertheless, it is crucial to recognize that this movement can be seen as a transitional intellectual endeavour aimed at fostering class consciousness and advancing the class movement. While their primary objective may not have been solely centred around constructing this consciousness, the emphasis on non-capitalist modes of development, such as socialism, and the critical perspective on capitalism were significant viewpoints, particularly given the popularity of the journals during the 1960s.

#### **2.4. Concluding Remarks**

Doğan Avcıoğlu, who was one of the most popular political figures in the 1960s, never actively pursued the establishment of a socialist party or intended to develop a proper organization in terms of class politics. However, under the banner of *Yön*, previously unexplored debates were given the opportunity to unfold. The decision to organize within a journal, as opposed to forming a political party, was not merely a political choice; it also reflected their ideological underpinnings. Avcıoğlu's stance

and, consequently, the predominant approach embraced by the intellectuals within this movement were greatly influenced by discussions regarding the evolution of material conditions and, thus, the characterization of potential historical subjects.

However, the YDM and Avcıođlu, as discussed later, represented a threshold for the left in many ways. Due to the influences of his ideas, various problems could be easily found at both the ideological and practical levels. Kemalism, a central tenet of their political views, ultimately led to undesirable outcomes for him. His view of history was another reason for such outcomes. Overall, Avcıođlu and his approach exemplified the various shortcomings of the Turkish left, which experienced significant growth in the 1970s.

## CHAPTER 3

### IDEOLOGIES, BACKGROUND AND RELATIONS

#### 3.1. Introduction

Marxism and Kemalism were the key components of the Yön-Devrim Movement (YDM) and Avcıoğlu's ideological evolution. However, Marxism's history in Turkey and the Ottoman Empire was not as successful as the source of the ideology. In a broader context, the fate of the left in Turkey appears to parallel that of Marxism (Tunçay, 1991). According to some scholars, the awakening of the left in Turkey began in the 1960s and socialism and communism have no empirical background contrary to their instances in the West before (Tunçay, 1991, p.17).

Examining figures like Avcıoğlu requires an understanding of the positions and political orientations of intellectuals in Turkey's history. During the late Ottoman Empire era, these intellectuals primarily served as defenders of the Empire rather than being driven by class-based activism, essentially functioning as traditional intellectuals. Their paramount concern revolved around the survival of the Empire (Tunçay, 1991, p. 21). Consequently, they explored various avenues for renewing the Empire. This approach, influenced by the historical context, led them to largely overlook the leftist ideologies that emerged in Europe during the 19th century (Tunçay, 1991, p. 21). While this was not the sole reason for the limited progress of the left in Turkey, the preoccupation with the renewal project diverted intellectuals from concentrating on class politics. Thus, the state's survival was the primary concern, unlike in Western Europe.

This is not the only explanation for the historical background of the left in Turkey. As Marx formulated, the emergence of the classes is highly dependent on material conditions. Thus, the lack of industrialization in Turkey helps to explain the intellectuals' understanding and political stance (Tunçay, 1991, p.23). The emergence and mobilization of social classes within the Ottoman Empire encountered delays

and, in certain instances, failed to materialize altogether. Transformations in the agricultural system of the Ottoman Empire had a detrimental impact on the peasantry, resulting in their weakening. Additionally, some scholars posit that religious and cultural factors played a role in hindering the mobilization of the peasantry (Ergil, 1974).

External influences also played a dominant role in shaping the political landscape of the Ottoman Empire; pressures exerted by European powers and concerns related to the continuity of the monarchy constrained the political currents and responses of the populace (Ergil, 1974). The emergence of the bourgeoisie and the working class, as well as the effectiveness of the existing peasantry, remained relatively weak in terms of driving social change within the Empire. The issues inherited from the Empire persisted into the Turkish Republic, influencing the social structure, ideologies, and intellectual discourse accordingly. It is essential to consider the formation of the Turkish bourgeoisie during the early years of the Republic as a crucial element in understanding class dynamics (Ergil 1974). The stance of intellectuals, as described by Atılgan (2008), was characterized as a form of “*maarifçilik*” (a movement emphasizing the importance of education and knowledge) until the Yön-Devrim Movement (YDM), though attempts were made to curtail this but were unsuccessful. However, this approach, particularly when one of the ideological currents was Marxism, posed certain challenges. The relationship between intellectuals and class associations, in light of Avcıoğlu's Marxist perspective, can be considered a debatable subject in its own right.

While this section will not delve into an exhaustive analysis of the YDM and Avcıoğlu's background, it is crucial to provide some context. This is because they were not solely shaped by the domestic intellectual milieu but were also influenced by socialist and developmental theories prevalent in the 1960s. The external influence was a critical element in shaping the YDM's approach. Additionally, this background is essential not only as a reflection of historical events but also as an illustration of what did not occur. Marxism's ineffectiveness within the confines of Turkey and the Ottoman Empire represents another facet that must be examined when analyzing the YDM's approach. This inefficiency contributed to one of the deficiencies of Avcıoğlu's Marxism, influencing the entire socialist theory in Turkey both before and after the 1960s.

A noteworthy aspect of Avcioğlu's Marxism is that it encompasses far more than mere concepts associated with socialism. Avcioğlu's approach should not be solely evaluated based on his ideological stance. From the early 1960s to the end of the decade, it underwent significant transformations in response to Turkey's evolving political landscape. Avcioğlu's political stance and, thus, his strategies underwent substantial changes in tandem with the shifting conditions across the country. A striking example of this ideological shift throughout the decade can be observed in his evolving ideas regarding the military. We should note that the YDM had always held certain ideas about the role of the military, but the intensity of these ideas escalated regularly, particularly after the events of 12 March 1971. Following that pivotal moment, the notion of the military's progressiveness began to erode, and even Avcioğlu himself experienced the repercussions of that coup, including torture (Macar, 2021).

### **3.2. Marxism**

Marxism is a complex ideology that has been interpreted and elaborated on in many ways, thanks to its central concept of historical materialism. While it is, therefore, impossible to say definitively which version of Marxism is the “true” one, Karl Marx remains one of the most influential thinkers in the political and intellectual spheres (Hobsbawm, 2012, p.7). The 20th century witnessed a proliferation of Marxist thought and practice, marked by the adoption of Marxism as the official ideology by numerous regimes around the world, and it played a more prominent role in the political sphere in the 20th century than in any other century (Glaser et al., 2007, p.1). The impact of the "Third World" debates is also essential to understanding the effect of Marxism in Turkey during the 1960s (Hobsbawm, 2012). Marxism is known to be difficult to define because it influenced many different areas of intellectual and political life (Glaser et al., 2007), and it was interpreted and elaborated on in various ways by numerous people and regimes. Marxism influenced both the realm of thought and the practice of political life. In its heyday, namely after the 1960s, Turkey had a chance to experience a closer relationship with Marxism than in the first decades of the Republic. The Yön-Devrim Movement, the Workers' Party of Turkey (TİP), and numerous other figures took action in the legal political sphere, although Marxism was not completely suppressed before the 1960s. Marx and his ideas emerged as one of the most influential ideological concepts challenging

the prevailing "*status quo*" (Hobsbawm, 2012, p.11). Marxism played a pivotal role in the political landscape of this decade, not only in theoretical realms but also in practical arenas where the masses in Turkey began to mobilize, exerting a substantial influence on these movements. It is also important to recognize that interpretations and approaches to Marxism varied, leading to ongoing debates and disputes within the movement itself. The diverse understandings and perspectives toward Marxism continue to be a matter of dispute.

This brief explanation of Marx's philosophy of human nature is meant to justify the many different interpretations of Marxism. There is no reason to think that Marxism can only be interpreted in one way worldwide, and all the different Marxists were shaped according to Marx's philosophy. The different interpretations of Marx's thought are not inconsistent with his philosophical and practical intentions. It is important to note that Avcıoğlu was not the only political figure in the 1960s who interpreted Marxism. The Workers' Party of Turkey (TİP) also debated Marxism, taking the other side in the dispute over Turkey's socialist future. Aybar argued that the national democratic revolution and socialist strategies must be combined (Lipovksy, 1992), while the TİP's new strategy differed from Avcıoğlu's vision of socialism. Different interpretations of Marx's ideas have emerged over time, reflecting changing political and material conditions. In this context, Marxism in Turkey during the 1960s gained prominence, shaped by both the historical context of Marxism and Turkey's specific material and political conditions. The role of the Turkish Republic in defining social classes remained pivotal in either advancing or hindering the development of Marxism in Turkey. Etatism and the populism associated with Kemalism were two significant challenges that Marxism had to contend with, particularly during the period from 1960 to 1980.

Marxism is a controversial subject, but this paper does not seek to determine definitively whether Avcıoğlu was a Marxist. Instead, it aims to trace the understanding of this key intellectual and political figure of the 1960s in Turkey and to explore the debatable points of the 1960s socialist understanding through his lens. Some scholars argue that Avcıoğlu was a Kemalist, whereas others claim that he was a Marxist. Özdemir (2000, p.59) even characterized him as a Jacoben intellectual. Atılğan (2020) maintains that the YDM was Kemalist rather than Marxist and that it utilized Marxism to correct the defective points of Kemalism. One might also claim

that he was a Marxist, and a reasonable piece of evidence can be found easily in his approach to both ideologies, which is the primary interest of this paper. Avcıoğlu was the leading figure of the YDM and consistently kept writing and representing the movement even after the government's oppression. Therefore, Avcıoğlu's approach did not crystallize in a single camp, making this topic worthy of work and discussion. His political stance represents leftist Kemalism (Atılgan, 2009, 2020), which is a hybrid approach to the 1960s material conditions that goes beyond the traditional definitions of both Kemalism and Marxism. Over the years, Avcıoğlu's approach evolved in response to political events and elections, and by studying this evolution, we can learn more about the limits of leftist Kemalism and Marxism in Turkey, as well as the approaches used to analyze the country's political conditions. Overall, Marxism was one of the focal points of the ideological background of the YDM and Avcıoğlu. Avcıoğlu tried to link Kemalism with Marxism because he saw Marxism as an effective method of understanding the material world (Kahraman, 2011).

In Turkey, Avcıoğlu and the YDM serve as valuable examples of the global Marxist influence. Unlike the *Kadro* Movement, the YDM and Avcıoğlu leaned more towards the Marxist perspective. Exploring their political stance not only allows for an analysis of their ideologies but also sheds light on Turkey's political struggles and perspectives, particularly within the left-wing sphere. Additionally, delving into the background of the YDM and Avcıoğlu can provide clarity on the Marxist understanding prevalent during the 1960s. Thus, for both comprehending the historical context and envisioning the future trajectory of Marxist currents in Turkey, researching the YDM and Avcıoğlu proves worthwhile. Their affiliation with different ideologies, such as Kemalism and socialism, not as mere instances but as Avcıoğlu's attempt to reinterpret both currents adds further depth to the subject. Furthermore, this thesis holds appeal not only for scholars studying Turkish politics but also for foreign researchers interested in exploring the intricate relationship between Marxism and domestic politics.

The 1960s marked a period of significant emergence for various ideological currents. Unlike previous attempts, this era saw ideologies like Marxism take centre stage and become one of the most hotly debated topics in the political arena. The idea of socialism in Turkey did not suddenly surface in the 1960s. The opposition camp that split from the Republican Party (CHP) in the 1960s consisted of more than just pure

class-based political movements. Alongside contemporary and emerging movements in the 1960s, the Communist Party of Turkey (TKP) held a dominant position within leftist movements (Yurtsever, 2020). However, the TKP faced numerous challenges stemming from both domestic and external issues.

Throughout Turkish history, various efforts were made in the realm of socialist currents. Socialist opposition had existed, in one form or another, before 1960, grappling with crucial existential questions, while in the 1960s socialist-communist movements were relatively more homegrown compared to earlier communist movements. Avcıoğlu was already a part of the political landscape during the Republican wave of the 1950s.

Another point is that the theoretical issues of Avcıoğlu and his movement were reflective of the so-called socialist understanding of the 1960s. Under the banner of socialism, many political actors articulated different notions that shaped their political agendas. One of the most notable features of the socialist currents of the 1960s was their tendency to reformulate and negotiate socialist principles rather than creating the material conditions for socialism and organizing the working class. The Yön-Devrim Movement (YDM) exemplified this tendency through its use of terms such as "real nationalism" (Atılğan, 2020, p. 99). The meaning of nationalism varied among the YDM and two other leftist currents of the 1960s (Atılğan, 2009). However, this thesis will specifically focus on Doğan Avcıoğlu, the leader of the YDM. As can be seen in many sources, the YDM's voices were relatively limited in theorizing the movement's political stance. Avcıoğlu and Soysal were two of the leading figures in the movement until their divergence.

Avcıoğlu remained the central figure of the entire movement until the late 1960s, portraying himself as its leader and chief theoretician, although analyzing and interpreting the YDM's and Avcıoğlu's ideologies is not a straightforward task. Their ideological expressions and theories drew from a multitude of sources, including the intellectual heritage of late Ottoman and early Republican thinkers, the political influence of Kemalism during the early years of the Republic, the global Third-Worldism movement, 20th-century socialism and Marxism, and the specific political context of the Turkish Republic following the Democrat Party rule. These influences were not static but rather dynamic and evolving. When examining Avcıoğlu's

Marxism, it is essential to consider both global and domestic factors. The integration of these diverse elements led to a political stance that can be understood in the context of what is sometimes referred to as classical Marxism. For example, Avcıoğlu's approach to the military should not be associated with the coup-oriented political agendas that characterized the era. It had deeper implications that transcended the political landscape of 1960s Turkey. One can detect connections between the intellectual legacy of the late Ottoman and early Republican periods and Avcıoğlu's unique interpretation of socialism as a development tool for severely underdeveloped nations. As Atılgan (2009) notes, nationalism and Marxism coexisted in Avcıoğlu's ideology despite their complex relationship.

Avcıoğlu's ideas cannot be understood without *Yön* and *Devrim* journals—one must take a closer look at both, although chronologically, the former should take precedence. The YDM, as a political movement in Turkey's history, did not simply stem from class conflicts; it was a forum for all the intellectuals and those who were against the Democrat Party's oppressive government. Beyond representing class interests, the movement was also a member of the uprising opposition in the early 60s. Another point that should be considered about his ideas is his approach to different political events on several occasions. Avcıoğlu's hope for the Turkish Constitution of 1961 was dashed back in the day.

The election results marked a turning point in Avcıoğlu's view of democracy. After the coup, he and many other intellectuals, including Yön-Devrim Movement followers in the late 1960s, yearned for a different future. The early 1960s was a period of renewed political activity, which allowed for the emergence of new movements. Avcıoğlu's ideas developed in this context when political movements had more freedom of expression than in the 1950s.

Class as a determinant factor and as the agent of Marx's philosophy of history was also repressed differently by the State. The newly established state and the collapsing Empire's ideological legacy fettered Marxism in Turkey in both political and existential senses. While the 1960s was a relatively free phase for the idea of socialism, Marxism appeared in the ideological arena of Turkey in a different form. Previous and recent factors somehow shaped it, and as it can be understood, many debates on the so-called "nationalist approach to socialism", or Turkish socialism,

came to the foreground in the 1960s. For instance, Şevket Süreyya Aydemir from the Yön-Devrim Movement and Mehmet Ali Aybar from the Workers' Party of Turkey (TİP) tried to formulate “Turkish Socialism” in their ways in that era. However, according to Atılgan (2008), the movement did not have a Marxist understanding of the class, yet had a close relationship with the working class, and the TİP was a Marxist party.

To fully appreciate Avcıoğlu's approach, we need to examine the economic conditions of the working class until 1960. While several analysts have explored these circumstances, Avcıoğlu distinctively elucidated his perspective by delving into Turkey's agricultural, industrial, and economic situations. Throughout his body of work, one can uncover multiple instances of his explanations, constituting an integral part of his intellectual legacy. It is possible to elaborate on key concepts and terminology to construct a comprehensive framework for understanding Avcıoğlu's thoughts.

As pointed out by Atılgan in 2009, the Marxism associated with the movement is subject to considerable criticism. Given his role as the central figure and ideologist of this movement, Avcıoğlu stands as a significant figure requiring thorough analysis. This examination should encompass both his political inheritance from the past and the legacy he continued to shape after the 1960s. The aim of this research is to address a noticeable gap within Avcıoğlu's political legacy, particularly within the sphere of Marxism. It intends to scrutinize this aspect within the context of Avcıoğlu's intellectual influences and the ever-evolving landscape of Marxism throughout the 20th century, both in Turkey and on a global scale. The primary objective is to determine whether Avcıoğlu developed a distinctive form of Marxism for the movement and where it fits within the broader spectrum of Marxist thought. This paper also endeavours to illuminate how leftist intellectuals embraced Marxism, taking into account the distinctive features of Avcıoğlu's interpretation.

The Yön-Devrim Movement (YDM) and the ideas of Avcıoğlu offer a rich and complex tapestry of thought that continues to be debated, particularly their relationship with Marxism. One of the most intriguing enigmas in Turkish political history is their dual view of the Turkish Army as both a saviour of the people and a vanguard for their development-oriented theory. This perspective is enigmatic

because of the complex interplay between Kemalism and Marxism. Their vision of a socialist society also diverged from orthodox Marxism. The YDM and Avcıoğlu were among the three most prominent leftist voices of their time, and their intellectual output warrants further exploration, as their interests were not limited to a single topic. Socialism was their central focus, but Avcıoğlu, in particular, made significant contributions to the development of Marxist thought in Turkey by merging his concept of “*ara tabakalar*<sup>2</sup>” with Marxism and using it to reinterpret Turkish history from a Marxist perspective.

### **3.3. Kemalism**

As a substantial actor in the political arena of Turkey, in one way or another, Kemalism found many chances to influence the approach of the actors. There are various reasons for that due to its critical role in Turkish history. The legitimacy problem, Kemalism’s political dominance and the contextual conditions might be the fundamental reasons for it. However, one should also remember that Kemalists in 1930 were trying to improve the conditions of capitalism and the bourgeoisie. Any ideology that bears the class struggle is oppressed (Ahmad, 2020). In the global context, the so-called Kemalist revolution was admitted as one of the first and most primitive instances of the National Democratic Revolution model (Ateş, 2021), and Kemalism was always one of the elementary parts of the YDM (Yurtsever, 2020).

Contrary to its name, Kemalism lacked a definitive guideline or manifesto both before and after Mustafa Kemal's death. This absence of a clear definition has given rise to a broad spectrum of interpretations of Kemalism. Alp kaya (2002) discerns three distinct phases in the evolution of Kemalism: The Kadro Movement, the Yön-Devrim Movement, and the post-12 March military memorandum period. Despite variances in their interpretations of Kemalism, both the Kadro Movement and the YDM were firmly committed to it, yet their divergent political positions and objectives moulded their distinctive attributes.

This thesis posits that the common ground between Kemalism and the various movements that intersected with it lies in their adaptability. Kemalism was perceived as a crucial factor even in the context of the May 27 coup (Giritli, 1969). The Kadro Movement of the 1930s sought alternative paths for economic development outside

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<sup>2</sup> Literally translated as "interim strata".

the realms of socialism and capitalism, particularly amid global economic crises. The YDM emerged during a period when capitalist systems were in a critical phase (Alpkaya, 2002). Both the Kadro Movement and the YDM endeavoured to embrace and reform Kemalism, albeit with varying degrees of emphasis (with the Kadro Movement taking a more foundational approach). This shared aspect underscores the adaptability of Kemalism, particularly when it intersects with leftist currents. Notably, some prominent figures within the Kadro Movement were former Communist Party (TKP) executives, and others were well-versed in socialist ideas (Alpkaya, 2002). The YDM, on the other hand, placed significant emphasis on socialism, discussing it more frequently than any other term (Özdemir, 1986, p.63). Until the March 12 and 1980 military coups, Kemalism maintained close ties with leftist currents.

Kemalism has been a contested ideology, but its lack of rigid ideological boundaries enabled it to adapt and evolve in response to its needs and circumstances (Landau & Dumont, 1984; Özdalga & Zürcher, 2011). Like any ideology, Kemalism was shaped by the material conditions it sought to transform. As a new state, this fluidity was to be expected. Kemalism's conception of nationalism differed significantly from that of the previous intellectual class by placing less emphasis on ethnicity and religion. This shift can be attributed to the need to suppress uprisings and prevent separatist movements (Landau & Dumont, 1984).

Populism was also embraced by Kemalists, although it was used to maintain an anti-class perspective and legitimize single-party rule (Landau & Dumont, 1984). This suggests that Kemalism was not a static set of ideas but rather evolved alongside the establishment of the Republic. The members of the YDM interpreted the six arrows of Kemalism according to the circumstances in Turkey, just as Kemalists had done in the past. This flexibility allowed for both reformulation and the potential for rupture. Avcıoğlu's approach to Kemalism represents a rupture in this regard due to his anti-capitalist stance. Kemalism had not directly opposed capitalism during its foundational era, but Avcıoğlu argued that the only way to achieve Kemalist goals was to end capitalism (Avcıoğlu, 1970f).

Legitimacy for leftist currents in Turkey was a perennial problem. During the single-party era, the Communist Party (TKP) tried to defend its position, but the

government and even the Comintern itself inflicted irreparable damage, silencing the communist movement in Turkey for a long time. In this context, it was unsurprising that attempts were made to forge a link between Kemalist principles and socialism after the May 27 coup. That relationship will be analyzed in the following sections in detail. However, the relationship between Kemalism and Marxism had a much more complex bond than it was thought, and besides their profound belief in Kemalism, Avcıoğlu and the YDM utilized it as a source of legitimacy. While the 27 May coup brought the importance of Kemalist principles and created a free space for different voices, it was tough to be out of step with Kemalism's rise. That coup was also considered the first phase of the increasing role of the Atatürk image in Turkey (Bora, 2021). Kemalism represented a limit of political life (Atılgan, 2020); hence, after the 27 May coup d'état, a mandatory bond emerged between the left and Kemalism.

The dominance of Kemalism derives from its character. Unlike the efforts of the Kadro Movement, Kemalism was not simply systematized before and after the death of Mustafa Kemal. Even some prominent names like Karaosmanoğlu proposed to systemize the political principles of Mustafa Kemal, but that offer was rejected by him as well (Bora, 2021). As such, there was no guidebook for Kemalism, which led to many different interpretations of it. Besides its power in the political arena, that characteristic of Kemalism helped it to exist under different ideological interpretations. It was a “common tongue” for any ideology that helped Kemalism live in the name of entirely different ideologies (Atılgan, 2020). Unlike the other way of thinking, which derives the power of Kemalism from its authoritarian character, its adaptability to political circumstances has ensured its dominance. Owing to its indeterminate and pragmatic nature (Bora, 2021), Kemalism enjoyed the opportunity to persist and exert influence over various ideologies throughout Turkey's political history—the reasons behind its dominance are manifold. During the single-party era, the Communist Party faced repression from both the Comintern and the Turkish government. The Comintern, mindful of the capitalist countries' focus on Turkey, sought to avoid severing political ties by suppressing the TKP.

In 1921, Kemalism paid no heed to the tragic killings of Communist Party members. The motive behind such brutality was to silence any opposing voices within the newly established republic. Additionally, the political climate in Turkey during the

1960s provided fertile ground for Kemalism to reclaim its stature as the cornerstone principle and driving force behind the modern republic. After a decade marked by oppressive policies under the Democrat Party and economic turmoil, Kemalism once again emerged as the vanguard of the people. Avcıoğlu and the members of the movement maintained a close association with Kemalism, albeit with their own distinct interpretations. In one way or another, Kemalism exerted its influence on Avcıoğlu prior to the emergence of the Yön-Devrim Movement. However, it can be argued that Avcıoğlu and the movement also left an indelible impact on the future trajectory of Kemalism.

### **3.4.-Leftist Kemalism**

Avcıoğlu's political stance requires analyzing different ideologies and the relatively favourite one of the 1960s in Turkey, leftist Kemalism. The base of that current can be found in several places, such as opposition against the Democrat Party, opportunities provided after 1960, and anti-imperialism debate between the 1960-1970 period derived from the War of Independence. Kemalism's political influence is linked to its articulation of etatism (Ciddi, 2010, p.19) due to the material experiences outlined above.

The emphasis on anti-imperialism in Kemalism can be traced back to the period of the War of Independence and the later stages of the 19th century. The historical connection that began to take shape in the 1960s facilitated the association between Kemalism and Marxism, particularly in the aftermath of the May 27 coup. Within the leftist currents of that era, anti-imperialism emerged as a common point of convergence (Atağenç, 2012). However, it should be noted that the leftist interpretation of Kemalism encompassed an amalgamation where the essence of socialism and Marxism became somewhat blurred.

The notion of nationalism, which carried distinct connotations in the 1960s, underwent a reframing within the framework of Kemalism, although leftist Kemalism diverged from the prevailing hegemonic discourse by acknowledging the incompleteness of social transformation (Savran, 2022, p.94). The approach to Kemalism in the decade cannot be seen solely as an attempt to preserve Kemalism in its original form. The leftist interpretation of Kemalism represented a departure, identifying capitalism as the primary obstacle to progress. Avcıoğlu's ideas during

this period, particularly his perspective on Kemalism, played a notable role in advocating an anti-capitalist stance within the broader leftist movement. The inherent anti-imperialist stance of Kemalism (not exclusive to leftist Kemalism) remains noteworthy.

Given Kemalism's hegemony over Turkish ideologies, some collaboration or a subtle relationship between Kemalism and the search for socialism could be observed between 1960 and 1980. Almost all left-wing actors, despite being self-described Marxists, interacted with Kemalism in different ways. This was not simply due to its legitimacy but also to Kemalism's character, as mentioned previously. The weak roots of Marxism in Turkey allowed Kemalism to be modified with Marxism. However, in this context, Kemalism was more successful than Marxism in attracting the masses.

Another factor that made Kemalism appealing to the Yön-Devrim Movement was its ideological and strategic flexibility. Ideologically, Kemalism's focus on eradicating feudal forces aligned with the YDM's perspective on history. The YDM saw Kemalism as a tool to achieve political freedom and create a democratic revolution while also abolishing feudal remnants. Avcıoğlu believed that socialism in underdeveloped countries must abolish feudal remnants and achieve rapid economic development (Avcıoğlu, 1962d, 1969). While there are many ways to discuss this approach, its roots can be found in Lenin's thoughts on the program of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party and his ideas about capitalism in Russia. In difficult circumstances for the so-called progressive forces of a country, alliances between different camps can be observed. However, in the case of the YDM and Avcıoğlu, the relationship between Kemalism and socialism was not about unified class politics but about a transformative vision for the future. This approach was similar to that of the first generation of Russian socialists, who also grappled with the dilemma of political freedom versus mass organization. (Lih, 2011).

The 12 March 1971 coup was a landmark moment in the weakening of leftist Kemalism. After that date, it ceased to be a common ground for intellectuals and became an ideology defended and debated by various newspapers (Alpkaya, 2021). In later phases, Kemalism's adaptive nature manifested itself in different ways that also inflicted significant damage on the left in Turkey.

### **3.4.1. Anti-Imperialist Roots**

To further evaluate the negative and affirmative influences of anti-imperialism on class politics, it is important to discuss its inherent connection to the ideas of Avcıoğlu and Kemalism. As some authors have argued, anti-imperialism was the most influential idea of the Yön-Devrim Movement during its second phase (Şener, 2015, p.143). This is particularly relevant to the idea of building class consciousness among the weak working class in Turkey. Under this heading, anti-imperialism will be briefly evaluated as one of the most significant elements that evolved into a fundamental essence of leftist ideas in Turkey.

The War of Independence period, with its material experience as much as its ideas, remained influential in the Republic's history. Avcıoğlu questioned the anti-imperialist and, at some points, anti-capitalist approach of the War of Independence period, but the struggle against imperialism ultimately influenced the reflexes of the movements. Rather than emphasizing the class character of imperialism, voices rose against the foreign employers from the working class. As Sencer (1969) argues, imperialism had a significant effect on the path to building class consciousness. However, due to the left's inability to organize the masses around a socialist view, movements were utilized against the occupying forces. This was a necessity in this period, and the actions of these movements were planned according to the circumstances of the war rather than class conflicts.

The practice of the anti-imperialist struggle during that era had a significant impact on the development of ideas. Avcıoğlu's strong emphasis on the pivotal role of imperialism in Turkish history may have left an indelible mark on his political stance. In some cases, the struggle for liberation was seen as equally important, if not more important, than the class struggle. Post-war politics introduced another dimension to this issue. While resistance to colonization was paramount during the war, subsequent political developments began to dilute the essence of anti-imperialism. After the war, Turkey aligned with the capitalist bloc, in line with the ideological stance of the newly established Republic (Timur, 2018). This shift caused the potent influence of anti-imperialism to lose its class-oriented character and be used as an ideological component of Kemalism. In conclusion, this approach, which initially posed a limitation for class politics, eventually lost its pivotal significance.

The confusion could have potentially impacted the political development of leftist movements up until the 1960s. The notion of redefining the tenets of Kemalism should also be viewed within the broader context of the enduring influence of anti-imperialism from 1919 to the 1970s.

### **3.5. On Revolution**

Despite much debate about Avcıoğlu's ideas, he had a clear understanding of the main drivers of revolution. In his 1971 book *Devrim Üzerine* (On Revolution) (1971), he attempted to chart the trajectory of a possible revolution. While the book covers more than just the revolution itself, Avcıoğlu also discusses and debates developmental programs. However, it is in his discussion of the revolution and its antagonists that his unique perspective is most evident.

According to Avcıoğlu (1971), there were two revolutions: the national liberation movements and socialist revolutions. After initial pieces of information on the revolution, he tries to explain the situation in Turkey in terms of classes, allies and enemies of the revolution in his work. As mentioned in the previous parts, his approach to the circumstances in Turkey was not so-called “optimistic”. Instead, emphasis on the low level of organization of the working class and all other actors can be determined. In this work, Avcıoğlu (1971) defined the working class in Turkey not as an organized one but in the way of organization. According to him, the working class in Turkey was in the first steps of organization. Turkey was in the national liberation revolution stage, which could be understood as an intermediary.

This stage bears similarities to national democratic revolutions. It can be seen as a period of organization, not only in terms of the working class and the revolution but also in terms of educational and progressive initiatives. Organization and these processes are interdependent. Avcıoğlu's ideas on revolution strategies can be seen as first breaking the conservative veil over the people and then organizing the masses to resist imperialism, the primary source of potential counter-revolution. His thoughts on this subject are consistent with his goal of saving a fully independent and contemporary Turkey through a national liberation revolution. The process initiated by Mustafa Kemal underwent discontinuation and corruption in 1971, deviating from its original intentions. It was no longer focused on the working class's revolution or fundamental enlightenment. These various aspects should be seen as interconnected

rather than conflicting, with capitalism being the primary culprit behind the need for termination (Avcıoğlu, 1971).

In that same work, Mustafa Kemal's program for the national liberation revolution was outlined, and following his ideas, several alternative plans were formulated, often referred to as "unachieved programs" of the Kemalist revolution. The approach to the period after 1919 holds valuable insights for analyzing intellectuals, particularly figures like Avcıoğlu, as nearly every aspect of Avcıoğlu's thoughts relates to that specific historical period. Interpreting the so-called Kemalist revolution is a pivotal element in understanding Avcıoğlu's subsequent ideas.

Despite other factors at play, such as the political actors' stance toward the military, as emphasized by Ulus (2016), Kemalism continued to occupy a central role in political discourse. In Avcıoğlu's case, he sought to both fulfil and extend Kemalism in "his" own way. This endeavour was unique because even defining the fundamental tenets of Kemalism remains a subject of debate. Consequently, the perspective of intellectuals influenced the interpretation of Kemalism, subsequently shaping the understanding of other elements that were relatively less associated with Kemalism, such as the working class and the proletarian revolution. In the same work from 1971, Avcıoğlu initially aimed to determine the "direction" of Turkey. Subsequently, revolutionary policies took centre stage, and within this realm, one can identify a multitude of elements that can be used to interpret Avcıoğlu's ideas in various affirmative ways concerning this issue.

The diversity of ideas surrounding Avcıoğlu's thoughts is worth exploring because he defies categorization solely as a representative of Marxist theory or as an orthodox Kemalist, as seen in earlier movements like the Kadro Movement. His unorthodox stance may indeed stem from this unique position. Avcıoğlu's approach can be attributed to the resurgence of Kemalism following the dominance of the Democrat Party for a decade and the global wave of Marxism in various interpretations. Interpreting the 27 May coup as a form of Kemalism's revitalization provided an opportunity to hear diverse voices. A pivotal aspect of this thesis revolves around the notion that Avcıoğlu defies confinement within traditional intellectual frameworks. Rather than subscribing to the conventional understanding of transitioning "from intellectual to class," it may be more apt to perceive his perspective as "from class to

the intellectual." This alternative approach recognizes the intricate nature of his ideas and their deep-seated connections to societal and class dynamics.

In the process of identifying the allies and adversaries of the revolution, Avcıoğlu diligently endeavoured to pinpoint the key actors involved. According to his perspective, this task held paramount importance during times of conflict (Avcıoğlu, 1971). Beyond the classic arch-enemies of the bourgeoisie, Avcıoğlu identified collaborators in the bureaucracy and universities, as well as followers of Sharia and its currents. He warned that it would be a critical mistake to view the comprador bourgeoisie as a monolithic group when determining the enemies of the revolution (Avcıoğlu, 1971). The term "allies of the revolution" has been interpreted in many ways. Avcıoğlu first cited Mustafa Kemal to argue that the army is the most important ally (Avcıoğlu, 1971).

The actor was not the sole focus of Avcıoğlu's analysis. He viewed the 1960s as a distinct era from Mustafa Kemal's circumstances in the 1920s and subsequent periods. Delving deeper into this perspective, Avcıoğlu embraced class politics affirmatively during the later era. He posited that while the 1920s appeared relatively stagnant, the 1960s witnessed the resounding voices of various social classes. The working class and peasantry found opportunities for political participation. Avcıoğlu consistently emphasized the significance of the "unorganized" state of these classes. One of the central topics explored in this paper is Avcıoğlu's focus on the issue of "organization" as a foundational element in constructing his political thought. Across many of his works, Avcıoğlu repeatedly emphasized organizational subjects such as education, dismantling feudal relationships, and resisting imperialist influence. He viewed unionization in Turkey as a particularly problematic area in need of reformation regarding organization (Avcıoğlu, 1971). Not solely industrial workers but also agricultural labourers were considered a vital part of that organizational issue, and unionism was not just for the former but for the latter.

Avcıoğlu has been criticized for not placing enough emphasis on the working class. However, it would be a mistake to judge his ideas in light of recent conditions rather than the 1960s. Another point worth reconsidering is the outlook of 1960s intellectuals, particularly Avcıoğlu. His relationship with Kemalism and the "newly arising classes" was shared by other intellectuals as well (Mumcu, 2019). Kemalism

faced intense counter-propaganda after the 1970s and began to lose contact with socialist ideas. Governments have recently used their political agendas to undermine military tutelage and challenge Kemalism's perceived hegemony.

Kemalism and its syncretic fusion with diverse ideological streams had entered into a weakened and allegedly transformed state. In other words, Kemalism's ability to assume plural voices and adapt different guises over the decades while enabling its longevity also paradoxically constituted one of its most conspicuous vulnerabilities. Avcıoğlu's thoughts encountered distortions from the Turkish Right and the Turkish left's recent position, which may be another vital issue. Because its two essentials are mostly distorted nowadays, that problem in terms of Marxism does not simply belong to Turkey but other countries as well. In addition, Kemalism was almost terminated after the coup of 1980. The two roots of Avcıoğlu's thoughts faced many different challenges and underwent many changes.

As Avcıoğlu notes, in terms of the material conditions, the essentials of his world of thoughts burdened him with many responsibilities. In his later works, however, he emphasizes the succession of many coups in underdeveloped countries, yet in that path against the various problems, very few had a true revolution (Avcıoğlu, 1970d). He was still conscious of the requirements of a "true" revolution, which alters the country's material conditions, not only the state apparatus.

Not all predictions and plans of Avcıoğlu found a chance to emerge, especially after 1971. His thoughts cannot be comprehended by intellectual resentment. Contrary to his active intellectual life in politics, there was neither a significant mass movement in which he was involved nor a revolutionary party. Besides his efforts in intellectual realms, he could not find a chance to form his political programs.

### **3.6.Socialism**

First of all, socialism and the emphasis of the Yön-Devrim Movement did not appear in the political era, especially after 1960. The leftist currents experienced various issues while trying to develop itself in the early phases of the Republic (Ciddi, 2010, p.7). The term socialism was a response to the Democrat Party's oppressive era. On the other side was an answer to the circumstances shaped after the 27 May coup d'état. Another reason was that the Constituent Assembly could not provide solutions

on the developmental side for Turkey, and its overall actions were on the “democratic” side as well. That emphasis on democracy resulted from the *Forum*’s influence, and the most essential impact was made by that group (Atılgan, 2002). On the opposite side, according to Atılgan (2002), despite *Forum*’s focus on the political regime as a source of all the problems, the *Yön* journal’s point was more on the economic side as the reason for problems. As an example, the first article written by Avcıoğlu in the very first issue of the *Yön* journal was a declaration of the direction of the movement. In that article, Avcıoğlu considered socialism as the only way out for underdeveloped countries in the second half of the 20th century (Avcıoğlu, 1961). Socialism, in his first-ever writings, began to shape as a way of development. That definition, though, was not limited to the development idea. Later in his political life, socialism was more than the only way of development. Socialism was not the initial issue during this process. Instead, the problem was the quickest way to develop the country (Avcıoğlu, 1965a). Socialism, in his thoughts, began its journey in an extraordinary way. This view did not singly belong to the Yön-Devrim Movement (YDM) or Avcıoğlu. Especially in the debates of Third-Worldism and the rise of the new left around Europe, the understanding of socialism differed.

The YDM was another one in the 1960s in which socialism was widely used and had different meanings. Avcıoğlu asserted that socialism has only meaning yet in principle (Avcıoğlu, 1962d). Forming a proper socialist understanding might be considered the starting point of Avcıoğlu and the whole of YDM’s approach to socialism. Their analysis of Turkey’s current conditions shows that socialism has found its direction. Avcıoğlu divided socialism into three in terms of execution and considered the so-called “underdeveloped countries’ socialism” as a solution for Turkey (Avcıoğlu, 1962d).

Besides the idea of development, the projection of socialism, which Avcıoğlu shaped in the same article, also contains valuable materials to understand the relationship with Kemalism. Socialism, according to him, must dissolve the ruins of the Middle Ages, create new norms for people and provide a way of rapid development (Avcıoğlu, 1962d). As it can be comprehended that the common points on the termination of the feudal remains are one of the most vital points that closed the socialist understanding of Avcıoğlu and Kemalism. As an executor of the same mission, Avcıoğlu has not hesitated to discuss Kemalism and socialism during his

political career. At the very beginning, the YDM was a saviour of the Kemalist principles and would also direct these principles in the right way.

Furthermore, Kemalist principles were reformulated by them (Atılgan, 2020) in a so-called more revolutionary way. However, it did not singly belong to Avcıoğlu. Even names like Boran point to the affirmative relationship between Kemalism and socialism (Atılgan, 2020). The definition of socialism was, therefore, highly dependent on Turkey's unique conditions, and almost every intellectual of the three mainstream leftist currents in the 1960s insisted on the relationship between Kemalism and socialism—he could at least not easily throw that corporation away.

The YDM might be considered the first current among the legal opposition that approaches the problems from the base, not the structural bodies. That was not a direct reference to Marxism; instead, it can be seen as a reflection of the development idea. Nevertheless, Avcıoğlu and the YDM were criticized for being economists (Atılgan, 2020). Socialism and Marxism in the Cold War circumstances were interpreted differently and shaped by different conflicts. To comprehend Avcıoğlu, one must understand the conditions around the world and how socialism was shaped after the War. However, in the 1960s, Marxism/socialism was also highly related to that development speech, so Marxism cannot be singly analyzed in accordance with the recent approaches to the theory. While understanding the material conditions of the time is essential to comprehending how Marxism was reinterpreted in the 1960s, it is also necessary to understand Avcıoğlu, the YDM, and their unique interpretation of Marxism. Socialism became a defining term for leftist currents in the 1960s. For the YDM, it was the most frequently mentioned term (Özdemir, 1986), reflecting the movement's deep commitment to social justice. Beyond the role of the military, these movements also diverged in their understanding of socialism as an end goal. This differentiation was rooted in their different perspectives on history. On the one hand, the YDM and National Democratic Revolution movements embraced a stagist approach, arguing that a national democratic revolution was a necessary precursor to socialism. On the other hand, the Workers' Party of Turkey (TİP) rejected this stagist view of history and advocated for socialism without any preliminary capitalist stages (Atılgan, 2009; Çiçek, 2016). It can be argued that this sort of distinction between the two camps led to other outcomes about their whole ideology. While the former camp aimed for a prior so-called national democratic revolution, the subject of that

revolution differed from the classical Marxist approach and attributed a developmental side (Şener, 2015) rather than an emancipatory manner. Given the national democratic revolution idea, the necessity of the working class was pushed into the background, and the first target became nothing but the national democratic revolution because the prior aim was about the abolishment of feudal political bodies and order in Turkey, and that action's possible subject was the vanguard forces (Yön, 1965b, p.9).

Another topic directly related to the differentiation mentioned above is history. It is possible to argue that this was a natural result of the approaches of the currents in the 1960s. In contrast to the TİP's approach to the working class, Avcıoğlu and the YDM defended relatively different understandings of the issue. Avcıoğlu criticized the TİP for misunderstanding the conditions of the classes in Turkey by simply translating old Western sources, arguing that this problem stemmed from the immaturity of socialist theory (Avcıoğlu, 1966d). In terms of vanguardism and the agenda of the socialist struggle, Avcıoğlu openly debated the issues in his writings (Avcıoğlu 1966d, 1967b). They never denied the significance of the working class and excluded the working class from their political stance (Atılğan, 2020, 2009; Çiçek, 2016).

Rather, the working class should have been supported by the different forces in Turkey, such as the youth, the army, and the intellectuals (Çiçek, 2016). The understanding of socialism before the 1960s was not shaped by a single individual or group. Socialism had already become effective as a way of development before the YDM and Avcıoğlu. Moreover, socialism was not only considered by the working class in Europe but also in the USSR, in an economist manner (Yurtsever, 2020, p.25). Interpretations of socialism under different titles emerged in various parts of the world. These developments, particularly the understanding of socialism as a way of development, were shaped by the circumstances of the Cold War. Until the Second World War, the relationship between the communist parties, their failure to complete or even initiate the elements of revolution, and the bureaucratization within and among the parties led to questioning the entire process (Yurtsever, 2020).

### **3.6.1. An Interpretation of Socialism**

A different but not unique approach to socialism came into the foreground with the 1960s leftist currents, and the Yön-Devrim Movement (YDM) became a famous

advocate of that combination. The Movement always had an affirmative approach to the Maoist agendas and the Chinese attempts at the democratic republic with the critics of the USSR (Aydın, 2020, p.459). However, the roots of the national democratic revolution were formed in the Communist Party of Turkey (TKP), and the YDM was a latter example of it (Aydın, 2020, p.461). While evaluating the socialist approach of the YDM and Avcıoğlu, it is crucial to comprehend that the different terms and ideas might be found in several actors in the political history of Turkey. Moreover, this is another indicator of the weakly developed conditions of the class movements in Turkey. However, this should not be understood as the denial of the emergence of it.

To analyze and place Avcıoğlu's Marxism in a historical context, which is crucial to be completed. Along with that term's legitimacy issue (Atılğan, 2009), it has more profound points that must be examined to fully understand Avcıoğlu and the other movements of the Turkish left in the 1960s. For that work, the main issue will be Avcıoğlu's approach. After the Republican People's Party (CHP) and Democrat Party (DP) governments, socialism was a stranger and an enemy for Turkey, and after the 27 May coup, socialism had to be familiar and an ally for the people to ensure its place in the political sphere (Atılğan, 2009). This is a crucial point for Avcıoğlu's Marxism, according to Atılğan's (2009) claims regarding the legitimacy issues of socialism. The ideological consistency cannot be ignored regarding the relationship between socialist nationalism and development ideas (Atılğan, 2009). Why did socialist currents have to legitimize themselves to be accepted by the people? Was that a periodical or an ontological problem for Marxism in Turkey from the beginning? These questions can be answered in terms of Turkey's history and the speeches of the 1960s around the world.

For the YDM, socialism was different from communism. It was seen as a tool to achieve the incomplete goals of the Kemalist revolution and sometimes as a means to develop the country (Soysal, 1962). Kemalism was considered essential to Turkish socialism and the only way to prevent communism (Karan, 1962). Socialism had different meanings for different members of the movement, but they all agreed that it was about developing the country. Unlike other socialist movements, the YDM tried to link socialism to Kemalism in a positive way. Avcıoğlu (1976a, p.1011) classified the communist way of development as a separate category. According to Küçük

(1998, p.638), the YDM placed socialism on the agenda of development, but it also had a borderland that could not be crossed, beyond which it never ventured.

Avcıoğlu defined the mission of socialism as the fight against imperialism and feudalism (Avcıoğlu, 1962e). Anti-imperialist efforts united Turkey's different strata and classes (Avcıoğlu, 1966f). Imperialism was considered essential when drawing up the socialist agenda (Avcıoğlu, 1967a). For Avcıoğlu and the other members of the YDM, socialism was always linked to the practical issues of the country. However, they believed that associating all the forces in the country around the Kemalist agendas, which would lead to rapid development, was even more important (Avcıoğlu, 1962f).

Avcıoğlu often prioritized Kemalism over socialism in his article titles, but this does not mean that he denied socialism. In one article, he argued that Kemalism was a transitional ideology to socialism, playing the role of a national democratic revolution that would rebalance social forces in favour of socialism (Avcıoğlu, 1963b). The influence of Kemalism on Avcıoğlu's political approach cannot be simply understood as a reflection of the foundational ideology. Rather, he saw Kemalism as a model for a future phase in which the obstacles to the working class would be removed and rapid development would be achieved. One of the main goals of socialists, in Avcıoğlu's view, would be to organize the different classes into a national liberation camp (Avcıoğlu, 1962e). The main goals of this national liberation camp would be to abolish feudalism in Turkey and implement land reform (Avcıoğlu, 1967a).

A divergence in the interpretation of socialism is evident in Avcıoğlu's statements. He argued that the democratic revolutions in European countries, distinct from those in the presence of imperialism, would primarily be directed against imperialism (Avcıoğlu, 1967a). This reflects Avcıoğlu's view that, before even addressing socialism, the dominance of imperialism in the 1960s had set specific preliminary priorities in the political landscape.

Another important point is Küçük's idea that the Yön-Devrim Movement's goal was to contact the working class (Küçük, 1988). The CHP and its supporters were the masses they wanted to reach, and this was always their target (Küçük, 1988). One inherent problem in this relationship was that Avcıoğlu's ideas were primarily

focused on this approach until the 1965 elections (Küçük, 1988). It was a critical mistake if the YDM and Avcıoğlu's initial goal was to focus directly on the CHP until the 1965 elections. Instead of building comprehensive relationships with the working class, trying to find a solution in the same area was a fundamental error. Avcıoğlu himself may have also recognized this. His first article after the 1965 elections was titled *Yeni Dönem* (New Era) (Küçük, 1988, p.670). Whether this was a recognition of his mistake in terms of the relationship with the working class is unclear, but this year can be seen as a turning point in Avcıoğlu's political stance. Following the elections, this period can also be seen as the beginning of the radicalization of Avcıoğlu's ideas, which would also spread to the *Devrim* journal.

Several intellectuals, along with Avcıoğlu, considered the term socialism with a distance to actual class struggles. Socialism, according to their approach, might be viewed as an ideal that would emerge after the completion of the preliminary goals. Rather than a direct objective which must be urgently seized, socialism had multiple, on the other hand, progressive sides for them as well. Despite the progressive parts of this understanding, one of the most significant reasons for the disconnection between the working class and intellectuals was the approach to socialism. Instead of organizing around socialist agendas, Jacobinism influenced their approach. The masses were not ready to organize but rather were ready to be educated. Jacobinism was perceived as a matter of power, namely the government, rather than the agendas about the path before the power (Başoğlu, 2021, p.210). The source of this influence might also be detected in the characteristics of Kemalism that adopted French positivism and Jacobinism (Kahraman, 2011).

Some scholars argue that the Yön's only goal was to gain power, but they never explicitly stated this goal (Küçük, 1988, p.651). This manner stemmed from their political stance on the weakness of the working class, which will be discussed in the following chapter. The view of socialism is closely tied to the approach of the working class. Political opinions are reflections of material conditions, and these practical experiences grounded their approaches in this dialectic.

### **3.7. Army and Socialist Theory**

That title is the most controversial part of Avcıoğlu's approach and the 1960s socialist currents. According to Ulus (2016), attitude towards the army determines

the overall stance of the 1960s left. Not solely as a claim, but the relationship between the army and names like Avcıoğlu was evident in the 1960s. Back in the day, a strong belief in the army's role in any alteration was popular among the names in newly rising leftist currents. This situation can be analyzed in many ways as well. The army in Ottoman and Republic history has always been crucial and significant. According to Ahmad (2020), however, this view might blur one's analyses, especially on the drastic changes in Turkish history. In remarkable instances, the army played a vital role in the Independence War. Before that, in Ottoman history, the army was considered a way of competing with the Western countries' rapid development (Ahmad, 2020).

The army was a crucial factor in history, yet it was not the only one and was not the only reason. The army was unrivalled without the forces of classes, not just as an actor but as a place of contesting ideas and as an apparatus. In the Republican era, this situation did not vanish for a while. That importance in late Ottoman history was based on the state's salvation. After the Independence War, it was also the saviour of the motherland. In all circumstances, the army became a fundamental element of the regimes in different ways. According to some scholars, military interventions somehow formulated the left in Turkey, and these were much more determinant than Marxism itself (Kahraman, 2011). Kemalism and its roots played another significant role in the approach to the army as a substantial political actor. This inherent connection from the beginning became much more substantial with the additional political events. Perhaps this could not shape a distinctive socialist left contrary to the so-called orthodox instances, but due to the material background of the left, an inescapable relationship between the socialist left and the army emerged.

Avcıoğlu referred to the military as the "Revolutionary Force of the Army" in his writings, and he saw this as a unique reality of Turkish history, unlike the European examples (Avcıoğlu, 1970c). This instance of radicalization regarding the role of the army also derived from his view against the ineffectiveness of democracy. Avcıoğlu argued that all attempts at reformism would ultimately fail because the system is inherently corrupt and serves the interests of the ruling class (Avcıoğlu, 1970g). He also believed that the Turkish army, unlike the armies of other developing countries in Africa, Asia, and South America, had anti-imperialist reflexes and could not be easily manipulated by foreign powers. (Avcıoğlu, 1970e). Avcıoğlu's belief in the

army as a revolutionary force was also rooted in his hopelessness towards the established institutions. In addition to his ideas about the underdeveloped working class in Turkey, other key factors in his thinking included the inefficiency of democracy and the inherent anti-imperialist attitude of the army.

However, in the Marxist sense, especially in the 19th century, the army was not an option amid class struggles. Marxism in this century was not a supporter of the army because the power of the class struggle was proven a century ago, and the time belonged to the working class for the revolution. It was considered an oppressive apparatus of the bourgeoisie governments. That was proven several times by repressing the revolts in bloody ways; Marxism always kept its distance from the army.

Avcıoğlu's approach to the army was significantly different from the Marxist understanding, emphasizing its central role in Turkish history as a decisive factor. This positive view of the army was not unique to Avcıoğlu but was shared by other members of the journal in a similar way. Their stance was uniformly positive, and they isolated the Turkish Army from comparisons with other military forces, particularly those in European countries. This emphasis on the army stemmed from an analysis of Turkey's unique circumstances, encompassing not only its developmental challenges but also the disconnect between the masses and what they referred to as intellectuals. According to Soysal (1965), the solution to this societal rift lay in the mission of socialism. Within this context, the concept of the "*interim strata*" played a central role in Avcıoğlu's approach and can be considered the aspect most divergent from Marxism. This role was not limited solely to the army, the army, as Soysal (1962a) pointed out. Instead, it encompassed various individuals and entities that shared the common goal of achieving contemporary civilization. This included youth, educators, civil servants, media professionals, and army officers (Soysal, 1962a). The new social layers defined as '*interim strata*' were accepted by Avcıoğlu (1966g) as the determinant factor in political life and considered a progressive part of society. This sort of approach contradicts Marxism's most essential component: classes and their roles in history. However, Avcıoğlu tried to find a material base for that in his theory. Theories systematized in specific conditions by the European communities were not suitable for underdeveloped countries; in other words, third-world countries, and Marxism ignored the '*interim*

*strata*' in view of the dominant position of the conflict between the working class and bourgeoisie (Avcıoğlu, 1966e). As observed in the anti-imperialism issue of the Yön-Devrim Movement, there is another point in which the class reflections were blurred regarding the role of the '*interim strata*'.

Efforts to approach the army as a class-based organization are not limited to that previous analysis. Avcıoğlu did not simply consider the army as a component of the super-structure and an apparatus of the bourgeoisie government. Contrary to the Western examples, the army in Turkey was of the people, and Kemalist and the military forces were composed of low-income families' children (Avcıoğlu, 1962e). However, ironically, after eighteen years, on the same day that article was written, the left in Turkey would be faced with the destructive force of that army and would be damaged like never experienced before. As an autonomous and conscious actor, Avcıoğlu's approach to the army injured his Marxist understanding at the significant place. As a result of that understanding, the term class itself lost its meaning as the perpetrator of history. Conversely, the army and the 27 May coup were considered affirmatively a favorable source for progressive actions (Avcıoğlu, 1970a). Rather than a perpetrator, the army, according to Avcıoğlu, always was the icebreaker for the so-called progressive forces in Turkey. Unfortunately, Avcıoğlu's ideas and approach were falsified multiple times after 1971.

After that period, the inherent relationship between the army and the intellectuals also began to be dissociated (Kahraman, 2011). Considering the army as an initial actor might be derived from the conditions in the 1960s besides the previous instances of the interventions of the army. If the regime terminated on 27 May 1960 were accepted as the already collapsed one in every arena (Eroğul, 2017), the army's intervention would be examined differently. Because this instance in 1960 may be considered a counter-revolution (Eroğul, 2017) rather than a direct intervention to orders of the State itself. According to Eroğul (2017), the army's intervention was against a regime that had already terminated the democratic values and systems, so the perpetrator of the first coup was the DP.

Accordingly, the army intervened to terminate the subversive government (Eroğul, 2017). Had the intervention on the 27th of May been perceived in this manner, the army would have overthrown the ruins of the DP. The intervention of the army in the

government in the early 1960s, which had already lost control in almost every political dimension, provides an example of the vanguardism of the army under challenging conditions. This example can be seen as a justification for a more positive approach to the vanguard role of the army in Avcıoğlu's theory of socialist transformation. This acceptance was not difficult for Avcıoğlu to make, given the recent events and his ideological relationship with Kemalism.

For the radical alterations, the ideas and actions must be rooted in the material force of the classes. Otherwise, any further expectations of the so-called actors like the army would be senseless regarding the process of history. Despite the army's historical role in the country's history, material practices proved the essential elements of Marxism in the 1970s. The rise of the mobilizations that emerged during the previous decade was terminated in the early phases of the 1970s by the army. The army's reformulation of Kemalism as an anti-leftist ideology (Kahraman, 2011) undermines Avcıoğlu and the YDM's belief in the army's potential progressivism.

### **3.8. Concluding Remarks**

This chapter analyzes the fundamental ideologies and approaches that influenced Avcıoğlu's political stance. As mentioned, Marxism and Kemalism were the two essential ideologies for him and the YDM. However, Kemalism was the more determinant factor for the movement and Avcıoğlu, with Marxism always in the background (Kahraman, 2011). This is not to say that Marxism was absent, but rather that it was subordinate to Kemalism. The following chapters will attempt to show the differences between Avcıoğlu and other leftists or the reflections of the inherent defects of the Turkish left. Avcıoğlu's views had many defects, but this was also a natural consequence of the lack of practical experience, socialist intellectualism, and ideology in Turkey before the 1960s (Başkaya, 2011).

The YDM and Avcıoğlu's political stance can also be seen as a turning point in the development of leftist ideologies in Turkey and for a socialist theory to be truly independent of Kemalism, the rupture that occurred on March 12, 1971, had to happen much earlier. In other words, the reliance on the army as a potential revolutionary force only exacerbated the radicalization and existential crises of the Turkish left (Kahraman, 2011). Avcıoğlu and the YDM played a role in this turning point, both in terms of ideological struggles and material conditions. Their

problematic relationship with the working class was just one aspect of a broader crisis in the political history of the Turkish left.

## CHAPTER 4

### IDEA OF THE WEAKNESS OF THE WORKING CLASS

#### 4.1.Introduction

The concept of ‘class’ is a fundamental element of Marxism, as it is one of the most important pillars of the ideology. The emergence of the working class is another vital element of Marxism. Both are necessary for each other and without either, the working-class movement will be pointless and unsuccessful. In every different situation, Marxism must not be adapted but rather used to construct the ideology. However, the case of Avcıoğlu presents a situation that leads to debates about the relationship between Marxism and the working class itself. (Şener, 2015). Moreover, it will support the instance of the claim of the failed Marxism of leftist Kemalist intellectuals. Both the relationship of the Yön-Devrim Movement (YDM) and Avcıoğlu with the working class has led to many debates when the focus came to revolution and socialism in Turkey in particular. As Marx noted, a revolution without an organized working class is unthinkable in any situation (Marx & Engels, 2012).

In this chapter, the focus will shift from solely considering the interpretations provided by intellectuals to a more comprehensive analysis that encompasses the material conditions. Rather than merely examining the validation of the approach adopted by both the YDM and Avcıoğlu, the chapter will endeavour to scrutinize it in light of the actual circumstances surrounding class movements. Avcıoğlu's stance on issues such as the underdevelopment of class movements in Turkey resonates with the perspectives of many other thinkers, and evidence of this viewpoint can readily be located in various sources. Even sources that have embraced a Marxist analysis of the material conditions tended to interpret the circumstances in the aftermath of the 1960 coup in a similar manner. Notwithstanding the shortcomings or

weaknesses within the working class in Turkey, we will explore these elements in order to provide a more insightful understanding of Avcıoğlu's perspective.

Because more than sixty years after the 1960s, conclusions could be completed efficiently. Foreseeing the actions and results might also not be accurate in those conditions. The rising leftist currents, apart from its ideological roots and claims, were another fact that could not be ignored in the 1960s. This wave should not be ignored as a rootless one. Without the efforts and actions of the working class, the left in the 1960s could not raise its voice contrary to the previous decades. Some scholars considered the leftist intellectuals before the 1950s similar to the bureaucrats of the CHP. Rather than being working-class intellectuals, they were petty bourgeoisie members (Moreno, 1997). This view will always remain the inherent issue of the debates. Instead of the class origins of the intellectuals, their political stances can be better options to be evaluated, and will also be an unsolvable problem of the intellectual-class relationship. Each and every movement in the history of socialist theory and even the founders of socialism might be the subject of that critique. The crucial point in determining the political stances of these names is the relationship of the intellectuals with the class, contrary to their occupations or class origins.

Avcıoğlu, one of the most prominent intellectuals of the 1960s, and the Yön-Devrim Movement (YDM) have sparked extensive discussions, particularly regarding their perspective on the relationship between the working class and intellectuals. Aside from working-class awareness in Turkey, intellectuals such as Avcıoğlu were always the origin of debate on the working-class relationship. The connection between intellectuals and workers has always been problematic because of the allegation of the working class's immaturity in Turkey. Material conditions before the 1960s, the origins of socialist movements in Turkey, and the oppression of any leftist opposition until the 1960s contributed to many deficiencies in the formation of class consciousness. The class characteristics of the newly established Republic might be considered the main obstacle for the self-developed working class in Turkey. The inherent sense in the political background of anti-imperialism regarding the history of the working class in Turkey cannot be ignored. From its initial formation to the most potent eras, such as the 1960s until the 1980s, anti-imperialism can be spotted in different movements.

However, the idea itself should not be comprehended as the absence of the working class. In this thesis, the idea of the weakness of the working class was considered the critical point regarding the view of Avcıoğlu. Despite the struggles of its emergence, the working class in Turkey experienced many issues while building a consciousness throughout the process. The issue's base was on the problem's organizational side. Rather than questioning the emergence of a class, the form of this tried to be analyzed. This section will go beyond analyzing Avcıoğlu's ideas pertaining to this subject, highlighting perspectives and assertions from various other figures and sources to provide a more comprehensive understanding of his approach. The approach draws primarily from the diverse interpretations of the conditions prevalent before and during the 1960s. The notion of underdeveloped conditions in Turkey was not exclusive to Avcıoğlu but was a sentiment shared within Turkey's intellectual and academic milieu, so in addition to Avcıoğlu's viewpoint, we will incorporate similar but distinct perspectives. This broader examination will not only illuminate Avcıoğlu's stance but also demonstrate the convergence of ideas among multiple intellectuals.

#### **4.2. Working Class and the Intellectuals**

Following the method used by Atılgan (2007, 2020), which is based on Gramsci's formulation of intellectuals and classes, this thesis examines Avcıoğlu's approach to intellectuals from a Gramscian perspective. While there are other approaches to intellectuals (Yetiş, 2002), Gramsci's formulation differs from others in its categorization of intellectuals within class politics (Yetiş, 2002, p.78). In this regard, the vital function of intellectuals in transforming class consciousness from class in itself to class for itself (Yetiş, 2002, p.81) should be examined in the context of the efforts of intellectuals in Turkey throughout the 1960s.

The link between the working class and intellectuals dates back well before the 1960s. The historical conditions in Turkey impacted the formation of this interaction between the working class and intellectuals. For starters, the growth of class awareness was blocked during the start of the Ottoman Empire's last period due to underdeveloped conditions. Another essential factor to consider is the concentration of economic activity in Istanbul. Almost every type of ideology in Turkey found an anti-imperialist common ground during and after the War of Independence. Rather

than class struggle, the socialist/communist movements' vision was blurred by the concept of anti-imperialism.

This should not be construed as an absolute association between industrial development and working-class consciousness (Çetinkaya, 2015, p.134). The Ottoman Empire's industrial underdevelopment cannot be ignored (Sencer, 1969, p.298). The Republican government sought to play a leading role in the development of the industrial sector (Sencer, 1969, p.298). Given the challenging industrial conditions and the prevailing capitalist expansion in Anatolia, the focus shifted toward anti-imperialism rather than immediate class-based action, resulting in long-term complexities. In its nascent stages, leftist currents in Turkey had to grapple with this mandatory prerequisite. However, the Yön-Devrim Movement believed that the industrial sector represented the most effective means for advancing the nation's development (Özdemir, 1986, p.263).

This also does not refer to the unnecessary of the intellectuals regarding the political struggle. Material conditions can be a fundamental determinant among others, yet the working class struggle also requires a developed ideological conflict. This is another reciprocal relationship. For the full and proper development of class consciousness, a sort of backing, regarding the ideological support, by the intellectuals to reflect the contradictions of the world is necessary (Karabel, 1976). A relationship between the class and the intellectuals is necessary. In this compulsory link, the intellectuals' role in developing class consciousness is not constituent (Karabel, 1976). This cannot be considered the rejection of the class-intellectual relation in which the former determines the latter (Karabel, 1976). Justifiably, the relationship between the intellectual and the class should not be reduced to a single dimension regarding the Gramscian formulations of the class-intellectual duality. Classes have the capacity to cultivate their own intellectuals as they come into existence (Gramsci, 1971), but the quality of this intellectual formation may also be contingent on the progress of the class itself. This relationship is not entirely straightforward in its connection to the development of material conditions, but it cannot be entirely severed either (Gramsci, 1971). Unlike traditional ones, organic intellectuals do not merely echo existing ideas or sentiments; they are tasked with generating new ideas (Euron, 2019). From this perspective, organic intellectuals have the responsibility of challenging prevailing consensus and ideological constructs, working towards their transformation.

Avcıoğlu cannot be classified as the representative of the hegemonic classes, but it is essential to determine the position of Avcıoğlu and the intellectuals associated with the YDM, as this is a critical assessment. According to the Gramscian perspective, the movement initially represented traditional intellectuals (Atılğan, 2020). The same scholars also reinterpreted them as individuals striving to transition into the role of organic intellectuals for the working class (Atılğan, 2020). Criticism was directed at the movement for its inability to establish strong connections between the class and the intellectuals, which hindered their classification as organic intellectuals (Atılğan, 2020). The main issue in this subject is understanding the intellectual-class relationship. In the case of Avcıoğlu and the YDM, if they were indeed considered traditional intellectuals according to the Gramscian approach (Avcıoğlu, 2020), it would imply that their initial role should have been to establish and promote the hegemony and consent of the masses, aligning with the interests of the ruling classes (Gramsci, 1971). The primary question may arise about this definition of the intellectual. In this respect, the whole movement and Avcıoğlu himself cannot be regarded as the traditional intellectuals whose aim was to rebuild consent and provide the material force of the State at the ideological level. In practical experience, that reciprocal relationship contains more than the definitions. In different instances, further evaluations must be made to enlighten the views and stances of the intellectuals. The YDM cannot simply qualify as traditional intellectuals for the initial elaboration.

Another critical element in this debate revolves around their relationship with the working class. As the foundational element of the formulation mentioned above, a connection between the intellectuals and the working class is necessary for the organizational issues and the ideological struggle. In this context, working-class intellectuals might naturally emerge from within the movement, and numerous instances of such relationships can be observed. It is indeed challenging to identify a strong connection with the working class for the specific case of the YDM and Avcıoğlu. Despite numerous attempts, a genuine link between the working class and intellectuals has never been established. Nevertheless, another crucial point emerges here: the problem of how this bond between the class and the intellectual can emerge. If the working class is to build its intellectual bloc, it must possess organizational and ideological strength to compete with one of the most controversial political issues.

Alternatively, if any link between intellectuals and the working class is to be established, this formulation implicitly accepts the separate existence of two camps. In both cases, the ideological struggle is confined by strict boundaries.

The termination of the existing understandings mentioned above can be embraced as another key point in determining the stance of the organic intellectuals. The YDM and Avcıoğlu sought to reevaluate these terms and build a bond between them and the masses through their writings and outreach efforts. The content of such materials and the movement's understanding are other important aspects to examine.

In the same formulation, if the root of the intellectuals is the society, in other words, the intellectuals do not have the power to exist on their own (Hoare & Sperber, 2016), their existence is open to question. From this point of view, the approach of scholars like Atılgan has deficiencies. The emergence of intellectuals cannot be separated from the development of conditions of the classes. In the case of the YDM and Avcıoğlu, their position was evaluated as an autonomous existence. In this dialectic relationship, the duty of building a connection cannot simply belong to the intellectual. Otherwise, the classical understanding of the concept of intellectuals will also be repeated. While denying their existence concerning the material conditions and the class itself, intellectuals will be considered an independent and responsible stratum for the ideological struggle of the working class according to this approach. When classifying intellectuals based on their relationship with the class, only the class is considered as the basis for evaluation. Another problematic aspect is the interpretation of intellectuals' stance from a recent perspective. It is also important to consider the development of working-class consciousness. Just as intellectuals cannot build consciousness without material struggles, classes themselves cannot do so either. During this period, classes may become more sharply defined in terms of their flaws and characteristics. It is essential to consider the material background of intellectuals when evaluating their stance, as ignorance of this background can lead to a distorted understanding of their views. It is therefore important to examine possible links between intellectuals and the working class that could lead to disconnection, as well as analyse the problem of intellectuals' own views.

The failure to build a relationship with the working class is a factuality for the political life of the YDM and Avcıoğlu. This problem might be questioned

reciprocally regarding the organizational background and the force of the working class in Turkey until the 1960s. Until the 1960s, weakness in terms of that dimension might be taken into consideration as a fundamental issue, and the decade was a formative period not merely for socialist theory in Turkey but for the much more mobilized class politics.

According to so-called Marxist intellectuals like Avcıoğlu, revolutionary forces in Turkey were not limited to the working class. His approach to the working class had a significant influence on the Marxism of the YDM, especially in terms of its relationship with the working class. The idea that the working class in Turkey is ineffective did not emerge overnight; the emergence of the working class was accompanied by many challenges. The working class struggles that emerged were the result of a variety of factors. Marxism's emphasis on development and its interpretations (Atılğan, 2020) were related to the expression of the ineffectiveness of the working class. However, unlike Marxism's formulation, the situation in Turkey cannot be explained in terms of the spontaneity and autonomy of the class, nor can it be attributed to tradition. Like all actions on Earth, this situation emerged out of the material conditions of the Ottoman Empire and the newly established Republic of Turkey.

These issues come under extensive criticism when viewed from the perspective of the relationship between intellectuals and social classes. According to Gramsci, the true definition of an intellectual stems from their activities and mission rather than their personal attributes (Karabel, 1976). Intellectuals play a crucial role in uniting diverse classes into a cohesive entity known as the "historical bloc" (Karabel, 1976). In this regard, Avcıoğlu can be considered a relevant example. In the context of 1960s Turkey, his efforts aimed to create a bloc that would oppose the successor of the Democratic Party (DP), the Justice Party (AP). As mentioned earlier, the DP was also perceived as the first to attempt a coup and had already dismantled the parliamentary system in Turkey (Eroğul, 2017). Avcıoğlu's endeavour could thus be seen as an early attempt to form a bloc against the reactionary forces in the country during the 1960s.

Although this approach remains fundamentally connected to the notion of the working class's weakness, and Avcıoğlu's thoughts deviate from the Marxist

understanding of intellectuals and their roles. In addition to material conflicts, the working class must also cultivate its own culture and ideology to effectively contend with the bourgeoisie, so dismantling the prevailing bourgeois ideology becomes an inherent responsibility of the class movement itself. While intellectuals can certainly aid in this endeavour and are indeed obligated to do so, the factors mentioned earlier should not solely dictate their role. The examination and resolution of the approach towards Avcıoğlu and the dynamics between intellectuals and social classes should be undertaken within the framework of this understanding in order to grasp the circumstances that shaped the class struggle. The political positions adopted by intellectuals served as the determining factor in any analysis, with Avcıoğlu assuming the role of a flawed yet prominent figure in cultivating class consciousness.

### **4.3. Material Conditions and the Approach of Avcıoğlu**

This section examines the ideas of both Avcıoğlu and other scholars to shed light on Avcıoğlu's own perspective and the conditions that shaped it. The goal is to show how the intellectual and the class are mutually constitutive by relating both sides in a single way.

#### **4.3.1. Debates on the Development of the History**

The Turkish peasantry had not become mobile in previous centuries, unlike the peasantry in Europe. This means that there were no strong peasant movements in the Ottoman Empire. There are many reasons for this, and it may also be seen as another factor that weakened the working class in the future. Capitalism also developed slowly in the Ottoman Empire and the early Republic. The bourgeoisie would create its own "gravediggers" (Marx & Engels, 2000), but under what conditions would this happen in Turkey? Relationships of the people with the local authorities, capital accumulation in the upper hands of the society, or the State itself may be regarded as several reasons for that. The bourgeoisie in the Ottoman Empire was a class of small-scale craftpersons and tradesmen (Ergil, 1974). Alongside the peasantry, the bourgeoisie struggled to complete its strife. According to Ergil (1974), alteration of the relationship between the agricultural part of the society and authorities (first the State and then *ayan* as the local authority and the rupture of these) prevented the mobilization of the peasantry. *Ayan* was a representative of the feudal system for the Empire, and *Sened-i İttifak* (Charter of Alliance signed in 1808) would end this

process as the recognition of the local authorities by the State itself. This system created certain challenges by creating economic zones in different areas, weakening the delicate connection between the peasantry and the central government. (Ergil, 1974).

Compared to Western Europe, feudalism peaked in the early stages of the 19th century. On the other hand, the most crucial part of the history of the Empire was considered the consolidation of capitalism in Europe (Akşin, 2008). As another difference, peasants generally had small-scale lands, which could help them to survive (Ergil, 1974; Aydoğanoglu, 2010). The Yön-Devrim Movement rightfully examined the failed agrarian reform of the Republic in terms of the transformation of social structure in Turkey (Özdemir, 1986). In Avcıoğlu's view, conditions in the 1960s in Turkey were similar to days back in 1919, unlike the struggle between the working class and bourgeoisie in the West (Avcıoğlu, 1966c). Instead of interpreting the issues in the material conditions based on the class struggle, he intended to resolve them with an anti-imperialist approach.

The issue of land ownership played a pivotal role in the formation of the Turkish working class, presenting a significant challenge in the historical trajectory of capitalist development within the country. Instead of organically cultivating its own path towards capitalism, Turkey witnessed the expansion of imperialism, characterized as the 'highest stage' of capitalism. While capitalism began to take shape in Turkey during the early 19th century, its progress remained constrained. Notably, several scholars contend that the economy of the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century exhibited characteristics of semi-colonialism (Akşin, 2008). However, an expected correlation between the formation of the consciousness of the working class and the development did not emerge clearly; hence, the correlation between class consciousness and the rise of industry in Turkey also led to crucial defects in the future. This negative connection derives from the transformation of the peasantry into the working class. Due to the lack of socialist parties and the government's interference (Ahmad 1998, p.140), the working class lacked class consciousness. According to Ahmad (1998, pp.140-141), the working class's weak consciousness was not caused by the ineffectiveness of Marxist and socialist literature; the government's oppression was the main challenge that socialists faced after the early 1920s (Ahmad, 1998, p.140).

The approach that attributes the working class's lack of class consciousness to its immaturity and underdevelopment can also be criticized and questioned. This approach perpetuates the existing understanding of class consciousness development, as it depends on the development of industry and industrial workers (Çetinkaya, 2015, p.133). Hence, the key to addressing these inquiries lies in the reliance on a well-established industrial sector. Diverse interpretations of the relationship between industrialization and historical processes, along with contrasting definitions of relevant terms, can give rise to disparate approaches to the construction of history (Çetinkaya, 2015, p.138). If we consider dispossession as a crucial factor in the shaping of the working class, it becomes evident that industrial workers in the Ottoman Empire experienced this predicament to a greater extent than their counterparts in other sectors, such as agricultural labourers (Koç, 1992, p.50). Although the correlation between the growth of the industrial sector and the emergence of the working class may be subject to scrutiny, instances of exploitation are most prominently observed within this domain. While exploitation does not determine the entire formation of the working class, material conditions must be experienced by workers to some extent in order for them to develop a pre-consciousness. This is evident in the different approaches to the working class that emerged in the 1960s, which were often diametrically opposed. Disagreements over the emergence of capitalism and even the existence of the working class led to different perspectives on the history-making of the working class in Turkey. These disagreements also led to ruptures in the developing process of class consciousness. The connection between intellectuals and the working class in Turkey was shaped by the idea of the working class's weakness, and this carried its defects from the past decades.

#### **4.3.2 View of Avcıoğlu on the Development of History and the Background**

This section examines Avcıoğlu's analysis of the growth of capitalism and the impact of anti-imperialist thought, providing some historical information about the history of the Turkish working class. In addition to Avcıoğlu's theoretical analysis, the struggle of the Turkish working class is a comprehensive issue. The difficulties faced by the Turkish working class can be attributed to flaws in the development of class consciousness, and the issue of the duality of intellectuals and the working class has had a significant impact. In his analysis of history, Avcıoğlu cited the 1838 treaty,

the so-called "Treaty of Balta Liman," as the Empire's death warrant (Avcıoğlu, 2013). This concept is key to understanding some of Avcıoğlu's early ideas. He argues that the trade agreement went beyond simply being a trade agreement and that it significantly hampered the Empire's economic self-development, thus resulting in the collapse of the Empire into an open market (Avcıoğlu, 2013).

Imperialist oppression was not limited to the agreements. The imperialists controlled political events in the Empire. Avcıoğlu (2013) argued that all reforms made in the Empire, including the Edict of Gülhane, were related to colonization. Rather than being instances of Westernization, they were manifestations of the colonization of the Empire. Sencer's work (1969) supports this idea. Sencer argued that capitalism in Turkey was imported rather than developed domestically. Another alternative view to Avcıoğlu's ideas on the emergence of capitalism in the late centuries of the Ottoman Empire relates to the source of dispossession.

The impact of imperialism, the cessation of military operations, and the loss of revenue from these operations can be considered another factor in the Ottoman Empire's dispossession (Koç, 1992, p.38). This approach, which was not only emphasized by Avcıoğlu, is crucial to understanding his view. It can be found in almost every part of his thought, including his most important formulation, "*zinde kuvvetler*". Given the weak material conditions in Turkey, the modernization process of the 19th century was attempted to be accomplished by the "military-intellectual-bureaucrat alliance" (Somay, 2007). This alliance became even more intense in the early 20th century (Kahraman, 2011). As a result, Avcıoğlu's political stance can be found in many different works by different scholars, but the YDM's approach has been criticized for ignoring the domestic oppressions that impeded the transformation of material conditions (Özdemir, 1986, p.118). Still, the views of intellectuals cannot be entirely considered a reflection of their intellectual world.

All these perspectives were shaped by the practical experiences of previous eras—the idea of working-class weakness originated before the 1960s. As mentioned above, a similar approach can be found in many other sources and movements, even those that differ in other respects, that were based on the ideology of national democratic revolution in the same decade. This debate extends beyond Avcıoğlu's ideas alone. Capitalism in Turkey had both positive and negative impacts. It ended feudal

relationships in the Ottoman Empire, contributing to historical progress through its ties to imperialism. However, it also sparked numerous struggles. In the late 19th century, the Empire's situation was seen as complex, not purely capitalist nor a complete end to feudalism (Okçuoğlu, 1999). Conditions across different regions of the country did not undergo equal shifts, resulting in variations in the development of means of production (Okçuoğlu, 1999). These variations marked a period of transition, but during this transitional phase, the Empire collapsed, giving rise to the establishment of a new Republic (Okçuoğlu, 1999). It was not just the emergence of the working class but also the evolving conditions themselves that exhibited inherent complexities. Throughout this phase, the primary focus throughout the country was on defending it rather than forming a class movement. Even socialist intellectuals in the early 20th century, up until the founding of the Republic, directed their efforts toward resisting imperialist forces. The fundamental perspective of the class movement during this period was intricately linked to this struggle.

In the second volume of his famous work titled *Türkiye'nin Düzeni*, Avcıoğlu formulated his ideas on various events. He emphasized the importance of the national democratic revolution to build suitable conditions for consciousness and class politics rather than the necessity of capitalist development. In this work, Avcıoğlu divided the methods of development into three categories: communist, American-style, and national revolutionary (Avcıoğlu, 1976a, p.1011). However, Avcıoğlu generally approached the methods of development as fruitful examples for countries like Turkey that are trying to find a way to progress (Avcıoğlu, 1976a, p.1012). According to Avcıoğlu (1976a, p.1012), the case of the USSR held significant importance as it marked the first instance of a proletarian dictatorship and demonstrated a model of economic development guided by national plans, free from foreign capital influence. In alignment with his interpretation of Marxist theory, Avcıoğlu emphasized that the foundation of capitalism fundamentally rested on the advancement of industry. (Avcıoğlu, 1976a, p.1013). One of the main sources of Avcıoğlu's idea of the weakness of the working class in Turkey was its underdeveloped industrial base. In the same work, he briefly summarized the course of history, arguing that the bourgeois-democratic revolution had overthrown feudal relations and that the working class would eventually overthrow capitalism, but that this would happen only after capitalism had developed the productive forces

(Avciođlu, 1976a, p.1013-14). Avciođlu's thoughts regarding land reforms in the USSR reflect a consistent perspective. He viewed the Bolshevik actions as somewhat unconventional, as they refrained from implementing the national democratic revolution through the capitalist hands and instead sought to bring about the proletarian revolution (Avciođlu, 1976a, p.1014-15).

Avciođlu's ideas on developing the economic conditions of Turkey can be found in his book *Türkiye'nin Düzeni*. In the second volume, he emphasized the material conditions and debated the most controversial ideas related to the working class and the emergence of capitalism. This provides a typical example and summary of his development ideas. According to Avciođlu, the peasantry lived in a closed economy and had a mentality of thankfulness. After the Tanzimat Reforms, the country became an open market for capitalist countries. He argued that the Republic's first and most important mistake was failing to end the semi-colonized mode of agricultural production, emphasizing the backwardness of agricultural production and its similarities to the pre-capitalist mode of production in various parts of the book (Avciođlu, 1976a). Additionally, the momentum of capitalist development, with the help of the United States, began in the late 1950s (Avciođlu, 1976a). He also argued that Turkey's economy can be seen as semi-colonial due to the underdeveloped conditions of capitalism and class movements. In this context, Avciođlu (1976a) pointed out a contradiction in the role of classes in Turkey.

Unlike in Europe, the industrial bourgeoisie was unable to eliminate the feudal classes. On the contrary, there was a sort of alliance between them, and at times, the petty bourgeoisie and the working class also supported this alliance (Avciođlu, 1976a). Furthermore, because of the explicit support of the United States, the struggle would eventually be against both the imperialists and the conservative alliance (Avciođlu, 1976a, p.945). He also criticized the struggle around the trade unions; this idea was directly a result of the intervention of the USA in the country. The bureaucrats in Turkey were educated by the United States (Avciođlu, 1976a). The primary example of this could be detected in the unions. Unionism, according to Avciođlu (1976a), had limitations that could not be overcome, and the ultimate demand of the unions was higher wages. This issue did not concern the unions alone; even the reformist members of the regime of 27 May were excluded by the same forces as well (Avciođlu, 1976a).

On the development of the working class, Avcıoğlu (1976a) considered this process in the idea of delay contrary to European instances. However, one may find that the two essential approaches that influenced his ideas were imperialism and the concept of semi-colonization (Avcıoğlu, 1976a). Imperialism was one of the fundamental points of this work (Atılğan, 2021). Another detection was that the working class in Turkey was in the process of being a class in itself rather than a class for itself. With this approach, rather than being hopeless about the development of class politics in Turkey, the idea of delay in the social movements and the keeping the country backward might be found as other focal points of his ideas. Instead of blaming the working class, a sequence of the oppressions and the underdeveloped material conditions were also emphasized (Avcıoğlu, 1976a). Perhaps the most essential analysis was delivered on the national independence war. The Kemalist revolution was left half-finished because of the classes that took along this process and could not be able to form a sort of grassroots movement (Avcıoğlu, 1976a).

In conclusion, Avcıoğlu (1976a) emphasized that the primary obstacle to fostering capitalism in Turkey was the dominance of imperialism. While attempts were made to establish a national form of capitalism to shape a national economy after the war of independence, this effort only positioned Turkey as an intermediary for Western interests. He argued that true political independence needed to be complemented by economic independence, in contrast to earlier intellectual stances (Avcıoğlu, 1976a). He maintained that a critical error of the regime was its detachment from the masses, which hindered the mobilization of a nationalist revolutionary movement. This disconnect was later exploited by conservative forces, resulting in a change in terminology but not the essence of Westernization. Avcıoğlu (1976a) believed that the Kemalist revolutions failed to fully achieve their goals, particularly in overthrowing feudal remnants. In essence, this was a critique of the inability to spark a grassroots revolution. Avcıoğlu's perspective called for grounding the Kemalist revolutions at the grassroots for their completion.

Debates on the development of class consciousness among the working class in Turkey and the emergence of the working class itself can be helpful for understanding Avcıoğlu's approach as well. As mentioned before, the problem of the development of the working class and the approaches to this issue determined the political stances of movements. In the early stages of the class struggle between the

working class and the bourgeoisie in Turkey, there were many challenges due to various historical events. Therefore, it is important to examine Avcıoğlu's analyses and key findings on the development of this process. Although there are different approaches to the mode of production and the emergence of the working class in Turkey, there are also significant points to be made in this debate. However, it is important to avoid two pitfalls: exceptionalism, which views Turkey as unique, and denial of the emergence of classes. The working class faced a few challenges during various wars, and these challenges must be addressed in order to fully understand Avcıoğlu's ideas on the development of capitalism and the formation of the working class.

In addition to the movements of the 1960s and 1970s, works published during this period also share the same concerns. This interpretation of the working class's conditions is organically linked to the approach to other classes and the understanding of the development of material conditions. The central claim of this thesis is that the conditions that the working class experienced in Turkey shaped the views of the intellectuals in accordance with the struggles. The central claim of this thesis is that the conditions experienced by the working class in Turkey shaped the views of intellectuals in accordance with their struggles. This can be seen in the debate on resistance to imperialism, where the anti-imperialist essence blurred the relationship between intellectuals and the working class, contrary to Marxist theory. As a result of previous experiences, especially during the period beginning in 1914, solidarity rather than class consciousness emerged among the people of Turkey.

One of the most valuable explanations of this issue is found in Sencer's (1969) famous work. Sencer does not deny or distort the emergence of the working class in Turkey, but she re-evaluates this process with a similar attitude to the approach mentioned above. As Sencer acknowledges, the emergence of the working class is directly linked to capitalism and private ownership of the means of production. One of her key claims is that the emergence of capitalist development in Turkey was heavily influenced by external factors (Sencer, 1969). Sencer also argues that the emergence and characteristics of the working class in Turkey differed from its European counterparts. Given these differences, the working class and its consciousness would also be different, and the essence of the working class can be interpreted in different ways. Hence, Sencer's assessments hold significance not only

in shedding light on the origins of Avcıoğlu's approach but also in aiding our understanding of the material conditions that eventually contributed to the shortcomings in class consciousness and the relationship between intellectuals and the working class.

In this landmark work, Sencer (1969, p.299) comprehensively outlines the primary challenges encountered throughout the process, categorizing them under different headings. These four reasons hold immense significance for any analysis seeking to understand the differentiation of the working class in Turkey from its European counterparts. These reasons, identified as the underdevelopment of industrial sectors, the impact of the multinational structure of the Ottoman Empire, external influences on the emergence of the working class within the Empire, and the working class's limited capacity to engage in antagonistic class struggle, serve as fundamental factors shaping the progress of the working class in Turkey (Sencer, 1969, p.298). The emergence of the working class in the country can be attributed to the advent of capitalism (Sencer, 1969). However, the primary distinctions lie in the formation of the working class during its nascent stages, which, in turn, influenced the approach of subsequent movements. Sencer's findings retain their enduring value concerning the genesis of the working class. One can discern a similar perspective aimed at illuminating the shortcomings of the movement, thus facilitating an exploration of the ideological challenges at hand. The claim regarding the initial inability of the working class to confront exploitative classes holds significant merit. Within this context, one can once again trace the influence of anti-imperialist sentiments and the roots of the working class's formation, delineating its differentiation from European counterparts.

Avcıoğlu's approach extended beyond merely highlighting the weaknesses of one side. For instance, he posited that the underdeveloped state of private enterprises in Turkey could be attributed to a lack of capital accumulation (Avcıoğlu, 1962c). Similarly, Avcıoğlu held similar views regarding the development of capitalism in Turkey, contending that the distinction between the left and right, as observed in developed countries, was not applicable due to the perceived failure of capitalism (Avcıoğlu, 1965b). In his later writings, Avcıoğlu maintained a critical stance towards the development of class consciousness (Avcıoğlu, 1970b). Throughout his work, one can discern the presence of underdevelopment theory. However, it is

important to note that Avcıoğlu's approach was not solely negative. He also acknowledged the influence of Kemalist populism at times and recognized socialism as the sole pathway to achieving a classless society (Avcıoğlu, 1963a). It is evident that there exists a reciprocal relationship between social classes and intellectuals. To truly grasp the approach of the YDM and Avcıoğlu, a thorough analysis of the concept of weakness in both directions is imperative.

As a completely different view, similar ideas about the weakness of the working class should also be considered alongside the hopelessness of the people in Turkey during the War of Independence. In the third volume of his famous work on the history of the national struggle in Turkey, *Milli Kurtuluş Tarihi* emphasized that the people in every area of Anatolia were hopeless and exhausted in every sense to resist the occupation (Avcıoğlu, 1974). In the same work, Avcıoğlu exemplified various memories of several figures during the national struggle period about the demoralization of the people. He also tried to show the only hope of the people, which could be admitted as the protection of their only agricultural land with the survivors from World War I (Avcıoğlu, 1974, p.911). Another important example to illustrate the people's perspective is the fact that the conditions in Anatolia have never improved since the Jelali Revolts and the people of Anatolia have never benefited from the state (Avcıoğlu, 1974, p.913). Amidst the challenging backdrop of the country's material conditions and the struggle for the development of capitalism, people were primarily motivated by a deep sense of desperation to protect their homeland. Their utmost concern was safeguarding their agricultural land, a vital source of survival. Consequently, under such trying circumstances, organizing and fostering political consciousness were not the foremost priorities of the populace. Avcıoğlu recognized the significance of this observation for his approach. The origins of this idea extend beyond the context of underdeveloped capitalism, finding relevance in various other examples.

Considering Avcıoğlu as the only one responsible for the left's problem can also be accepted as another problematic approach. Before the initial interpretation of Avcıoğlu and the Yön-Devrim Movement (YDM), the conditions of Turkey in terms of the situation of the classes and the political conditions are necessary points to be debated. While criticizing the YDM as a whole, rather than the class formation of the movement's members, their approach to the classes might be considered the

determining factor to define it. An instance of that critique was delivered by one of the essential and unique figures of the Marxist theory in Turkey: Hikmet Kıvılcımlı. He argues that the YDM was formed in an atmosphere reminiscent of the “*kapıkulu*” (professional, standing troops serving the Ottoman sultans) (Kıvılcımlı, 2014, p.49), criticizing the movement for its intellectual elitism and noting that 96.5% of its members were intellectuals who failed to mobilize social classes (Kıvılcımlı, 2014, p.50). This approach can lead to many misinterpretations of any movement or political figure that claims to be revolutionary.

Even Marx and Engels can be considered non-revolutionaries due to their class occupation or approach towards the political parties in their time. The main argument is the necessity of the political party's approach to class conflicts rather than the members of the classes (Molyneux, 2015, p.26). Ironically, Avcıoğlu himself also criticized the Workers' Party of Turkey (TİP) in the same manner and blamed the party for not paying attention to the force of the youth too (Avcıoğlu, 1996c). Being a "movement of intellectuals" might not be regarded as a point of falsification. Instead, one should analyze the approach of intellectuals or movements to class issues. This sort of idea might be detected in the approaches of almost every political figure due to the lively circumstances of the 1960s. Otherwise, condemning any movement for not being one of them will be crude. As a common ground, this sort of critique might be found in the ideas of many different names, such as Kıvılcımlı as well (Kıvılcımlı, 2014). It can be said that this period between 1960-1971 was when almost every movement struggled to find its organic roots among the people and led various debates. This thesis explores the complex and contested relationship between intellectuals and the working class during a particular historical period, as the connection remains an ongoing topic of debate.

Overall, it can be asserted that the disconnect between the intellectual sphere and the working class can be attributed to a reciprocal relationship influenced by the development of class movements. However, it is crucial not to overlook the oppression endured by the working class, which served as a significant factor in this outcome. Nonetheless, this issue cannot solely be attributed to inherent weakness. The repression faced by the working class represents another critical aspect of the so-called historical predicament within the Turkish left. Consequently, the limited progress of the working class, influenced by diverse factors, has had a profound

impact on the relationship between the class and its intellectuals. Rather than viewing Avcıoğlu solely as an intellectual representative of the class, this thesis delves into a broader problem that has shaped the entire history of the left.

The 1970s saw a shift in the mainstream political currents, with the rise of social democracy and the radicalization and isolation of Avcıoğlu (Özdemir, 2000). The victory of the Justice Party (AP) in the 1965 elections led the YDM and Avcıoğlu to search for alternatives beyond parliamentary politics (Akkurt, 2020). For example, Avcıoğlu (1965c) saw the 1965 elections as a challenging phase for socialism because of the AP's victory. The AP won 52.9% of the vote in that election (Lewis, 2021). Avcıoğlu (1970f) argued that “*cici demokrasi*” (sweet democracy) was the political reflection of neocolonialism, believing that general suffrage served the reactionary classes in Turkey by giving them the opportunity to manipulate the masses (Avcıoğlu, 1976). He described slum areas as tools used by conservative coalitions to continue their oppression in elections (Avcıoğlu, 1976a).

Avcıoğlu argued that democracy and the multi-party system were valuable tools for the capitalist classes to consolidate their rule in Turkey (Avcıoğlu, 1976, p.520). He pointed out that the propaganda surrounding the rule of law and human rights since 1946 was designed to create favourable conditions for the exploiting classes in the country (Avcıoğlu, 1976, p.521). After the hopeful political environment of the early 1960s in Turkey, Avcıoğlu examined various historical events and drew conclusions about the results. He argued that the socialist movements that emerged during this period were hindered by the elections and the multi-party system. Instead of facilitating class-based politics, these institutions were obstacles that needed to be overcome. Avcıoğlu maintained this negative view of the legal and political environment in many different areas of politics. Indeed, such an approach was not entirely new to him. The beginning of this story can be found at the very beginning of his political career: his disputes over the 1961 Constitution showed the first signs of his approach. This tendency began as early as 1962, before the 1965 elections (Avcıoğlu, 1962g). One of the key problems with intellectuals is their ability to overcome the chronic class struggles. It is nearly impossible to answer this question affirmatively because these struggles are rooted in the class system. Unless these problems are solved at the practical level, intellectuals will always be limited. Intellectuals are expected to interpret the material world, but they cannot bring about

change on their own. Avcıoğlu realized the limitations of seeking solutions to class struggles through intellectuals in the early stages. The political processes in Turkey, despite the achievements of the Workers' Party of Turkey (TİP) in this period, also influenced Avcıoğlu's view in a negative way. In the 1970s, Avcıoğlu abandoned all democratic tools. In short, Avcıoğlu's ideas became increasingly radical, especially on the subject of revolution, after the failures of the time. This led to a distancing between Avcıoğlu and the working class. Following the early 1960s, there was a significant increase in the working-class population in Turkey, accompanied by numerous struggles related to unemployment, poor working conditions, and low wages (Şişmanov, 1990). This period also witnessed the emergence of many strikes and uprisings in various cities and regions across Turkey (Şişmanov, 1990, p. 196).

Avcıoğlu acknowledged that after the May 27 coup, a form of united opposition bloc had taken shape, so it is important not to view the entire history of the working class in Turkey through a pessimistic lens. Overcoming the immaturity of the past could not happen overnight. As the voice of the working class grew louder in the 1960s, Avcıoğlu and the Yön-Devrim Movement (YDM) recognized their potential. The notion of a united opposition bloc can be considered one of their central ideas. Beyond their affirmative stance toward the working class, they primarily regarded this issue as the struggle of progressive forces in Turkey. As emphasized earlier, this idea did not materialize suddenly; rather, it reflected the preceding conditions in the country.

#### **4.4. Strikes and Organizational Issues**

Strikes and trade unions are essential tools for the organization of the working class and can be seen as milestones in the development of class consciousness. They have also taken on different meanings throughout the history of the working class. For example, some strikes have not been motivated by opposition to employer exploitation but by other factors. Still, such struggles cannot be fully understood without considering the broader context of the emergence of the working class.

##### **4.4.1.Strikes**

It is essential to gain a comprehensive understanding of the conditions prevailing before the 1960s, particularly during the formative years of the Republic and in the

subsequent period. Examining various sources that shed light on the challenges faced by the working class and the active role played by the State in those times can provide valuable insights into this complex historical context. First, strikes are a device for defending and demanding the rights of the working class used by the state. Rather than presenting the working class' claims, strikes between 1923 and 1932 were used to nationalize foreign capital (Güzel, 2016, p.181). After completing it, the prohibition of strikes judicially for a long time between 1936 and 1961 (Güzel, 2016) shows the political stance of the State. It was even supported by the local bourgeoisie against the foreign owners of the capital (Güzel, 2016, p.182). Perceiving strikes solely as a tool for nationalization and restricting support to those directed against foreign capital had detrimental effects on strikes as a means of working-class expression. During the occupation era, particularly in Istanbul, workers attempted to challenge this perspective and expressed their support for the national struggle by engaging in strikes (Çavdar, 2005). Particularly through strikes targeting enterprises operated by foreign capitalists, the working class in Istanbul endeavoured to lend support to the national struggle in Anatolia (Çavdar, 2005). Consequently, the primary objective of these actions was directly aligned with an anti-imperialist agenda. Instead of directing their demands and collective power against the bourgeoisie in general, their main focus was on resisting the "foreign bourgeoisie." These experiences are essential for understanding the country's historical conditions. In subsequent periods, even before the full development of working-class consciousness, the significance of strikes became somewhat obscured, weakening the effectiveness of strikes as a means of collective action.

“National economy” policies influenced that approach and protected against any threat, especially to class politics. After 1923, one of the most significant goals was to organize a so-called domestic and national bourgeoisie with the means of the state (Boratav, 2013). The etatism of the founding era reflected the state's interference in the capital formation of the private sector rather than a leftist understanding (Zürcher, 1998). Thus, the reformulations of various theses by intellectuals like Avcıoğlu were not simply repetitions of previous principles but were an attempt to rectify etatism.

In building the so-called modern working class, mass strikes played an initial but somehow limited role in building class consciousness. That was not the only way to

do it, but it was considered one of the necessities. Voices in the socialist or communist camps were oppressed by the state during the same period (Güzel, 2016). Strikes in the foundational era had problematic points in themselves, and due to the influence of the state on the strikes, their meaning changed at specific points. Many of the workers concerned with the objectives of the strikes participated in them, which led to cooperation around these strikes (Güzel, 2016). As such, affirmative points might be found regarding the impacts of the strikes on the working class.

Between 1923 and 1960, the Turkish working class struggled to establish class consciousness in many ways. Trade unions and numerous strikes were prime instances of this problem. According to Güzel (2016), the common point of the strikes between 1923 and 1960 was that the strikes were organized by the working class autonomously, apart from the trade unions or any working-class organization. Trade unions mainly allied with the state rather than the working class, negatively affecting the working class (Güzel, 2016, p.183). Aside from the working class's organizational problems in Turkey, the organizations themselves were ineffective in carrying the flag of any support for the class. Trade unions' function in terms of social solidarity rather than political demands, legal constraints on trade unions, and a low number of union members (Güzel, 2016, p.165) impacted their role and influence in Turkey as not the sole but potentially helpful instrument of the working class.

The characteristics of the labour force and trade union conditions were correlated, which was one of the key reasons for the previous analyses. Seasonal labourers with peasant backgrounds and the high turnover of labour power were also impediments to the development of class consciousness. Although working-class organization continued until the 1960s, neither the Democrat Party nor the Republican People's Party allowed people to organize in accordance with their class interests. Ironically, the DP took a gamble in the elections by promising the right to strike, but its approach was essentially the same as the CHP's (Zürcher, 1998).

#### **4.4.2. Organizations**

Much more serious socialist or leftist organizations brought themselves into the political foreground in relatively late years, between 1908 and 1913 (Kürkçü, 1988).

Compared to Europe, organizational concerns were debated and experienced in the early twentieth century. There were many reasons for that delayed appearance in the Ottoman Empire. Along with material conditions, the state itself was repressive towards any uprising. While latency may be taken as a lack of movement in class politics, it can be explained by efficiency rather than the existence of the activity. The 20th century can be seen as the beginning of the capitalist awakening. As the first examples of the industries were organized by the Ottoman Empire, the emergence of a national bourgeoisie would be realized by the state again later.

Industrial organizations in Istanbul primarily focused on meeting the needs of the army (Aydođanođlu, 2010) rather than functioning as entrepreneurial ventures. Interference from various quarters aimed to stifle any potential progress at every stage of union development. In 1946, the establishment of the so-called "Labor Office" was intended to exert control over union activities in Turkey (Aydođanođlu, 2010), the period under the Democrat Party (DP) government posed challenges for socialists. The very term "working class" was perceived as a "communist tactic" by some deputies (Çavdar, 2005). Moreover, this stance against class-based politics was shared by unionists (Çavdar, 2005).

The establishment of the Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions (TÜRK-İŞ) in 1952 did not fundamentally deviate from previous attempts. TÜRK-İŞ served as a tool to dilute the core principles of union movements with a nationalist and anti-communist stance (Aydođanođlu, 2010). It perpetuated a form of controlled unionism under its banner. At the institutional level, until the late 1960s, unionism remained subject to control. The founding of the Confederation of Revolutionary Trade Unions of Turkey (DİSK) in 1967 marked a reaction to the preceding conditions (Çavdar, 2005). It could be argued that voices opposing controlled unionism began to gain prominence towards the end of the 1960s.

The 1960s witnessed a surge in unionism and organizational activities in Turkey. This period marked the zenith of mass mobilization, influenced by historical events. It can be argued that, in addition to class politics, this era in Turkey represented the formative phase of socialist-oriented organizations in contrast to previous periods. DİSK, in this context, emerged as a response to these challenges and shifted the focus towards class-based politics. It also signified the development of class

consciousness in Turkey. DİSK's significance extended beyond its name; it was pivotal in identifying and addressing the demands of the working class. Unlike TÜRK-İŞ, the primary distinction of DİSK lay in its perception of workers as a class rather than merely a collective of individuals (Güzel, 2016).

Even though it was mentioned as a "problem of mindset" (Akşin, 2008), industrialization cannot be understood solely in terms of intellectual domains. The development and shaping of the history of the working class are inextricably linked to its material foundation and political economy. To assess the phenomena that emerged on the political foreground, their strengths and weaknesses must be identified. According to Marxist theory, intellectuals cannot form a class independent of the classes; rather, they embody the classes' interests, thoughts, and contradictions. The history of intellectuals, especially leftists, must, therefore, be understood in light of the organizational challenges in Turkey, and the 1960s can be seen as the root of the rise of class politics. Intellectuals were also influenced by these events. Avcıoğlu, for instance, evaluated this progress positively, yet the progress was ignored. His comments on the 1965 elections suggest a kind of apathy towards the signs of the working class's development. In this respect, the radicalization of his ideas had already begun.

#### **4.5. A Decade of Start Over**

The 1960s witnessed a profound transformation in various aspects of Turkish society. This transformative period encompassed not only changes in legal institutions and the constitution but also significant shifts within classes, the demands of the working class, and superstructural bodies. In stark contrast to the preceding decade, dominated by the Democrat Party (DP) and the foundational era, the political landscape became markedly more dynamic. Alongside the Communist Party of Turkey (TKP), which had previously served as a prominent example, the 1960s presented an opportunity for the left to embark on a renewed journey. Following the dissolution of the TKP, the left in Turkey gradually severed its ties with the Communist International (Comintern). Consequently, the influence of the Comintern ceased to be a determining factor in the left's policies within the country.

As an obstacle to forming its own political agendas, the relationship with the Comintern was another crucial problem for TKP and, as a result, for the left in

Turkey before the 1960s (Başkaya, 2011). This was not a total rupture from the past; perhaps the most controversial issue of the Turkish left, its relationship with Kemalism, followed it in this decade as well. In its new decade, the Comintern's loss of power on the left might be considered another factor of the shift. Various voices emerged from the leftist currents. Actors on the left found a chance to form a theoretical basement in terms of the socialist future of Turkey. This was neither a pure rupture from the Soviet's effect nor an utterly independent search. Three main currents of the Turkish left in the 1960s (Şener, 2015) did not bring purely unique theories. The currents that emerged in the 1960s were classified differently by the authors according to their approach to the issue of economic development (Sertel, 1969, p.178). This problem, the way of development in Turkey, was not merely a matter of discussion for the YDM and Avcıoğlu. In a decade, the hegemony of capitalism was questioned and opposed in different parts of the world; Turkey experienced a battle of different ideas due to its history with capitalism as a development method (Sertel, 1969). The search for a so-called new development method was not an unprecedented debate in the global context. Turkey had to experience a change of government to be involved in this discussion, and capitalism was already adopted in the early 1960s; thus, a rise against capitalism at both intellectual and practical levels was ordinary in that era.

The conditions in which they interacted influenced their approach. Unlike in Europe, claims and theories of the working class would come into contact with the anti-imperialism concept and the theme of the War of Independence. As mentioned by Aydınoğlu (2011, p.15), except for Europe and Russia, communist parties all over the world were somehow connected with national liberation movements and due to the lack of material conditions and thus the lack of so-called proletarian culture, currents in the 1960s in Turkey had more unusual motifs than the 19th-century working-class movements in Europe. Several other countries share almost identical features. Besides the weak background of the socialist movements in the 1960s, the left worldwide also began to retrogress (Başkaya, 2007). The currents in the 1960s in Turkey and Europe should also not be confused. The rise of the new left and the current based on the development ideas in Turkey might be considered only in terms of simultaneousness. While the left around the world was going through a change in class politics, a chance was found to reach the masses in terms of class politics like

never before in the history of Turkey. After the shift experienced by the left in the world, the class itself would be up for debate. The so-called new left would be the primary current, especially in the 1960s. Anti-imperialism was always a fact that remained a significant part of the left in Turkey. From the beginning to the 1960s, emphasis on anti-imperialism also determined the discourse. A sort of inner anti-imperialist essence and a relationship with Kemalism might also be detected in many political figures of the left in Turkey (Şahin, 2019). Even after the 1960s, this inner essence can be found as well as in the previous period, but after the second half of the 1960s, socialism was another determinant factor in the youth movements (Şahin, 2019).

Some recent works have interpreted the period as a discontinuity, especially in terms of the developing class consciousness of the working class. This approach ignores the material conditions that existed before the 1960s, and it assumes that the 1960s were sufficiently developed for social transformation. According to this approach, which is shared by some recent authors such as Atılgan (2020), intellectuals are the ready actors of the political sphere who can transform the class consciousness. However, this development is more of a process than a leap. Between 1960 and 1980, leftist currents began to mobilize socialist ideas in various ways. The YDM was one of the most significant leftist currents of this period.

The 1960s were the only decade in which the Turkish left had a chance to develop into a political force and movement (Aydınöğlü, 2011). This was not a fresh start for the left in Turkey, but it was a period of unprecedented opportunities to mobilize the masses and make a significant impact. Aydınöğlü (2011) identifies the years between 1960 and 1968 as the period of the formation of the Turkish working class. This period was also marked by a number of other unique developments that would never be repeated. To understand Avcıoğlu and the Yön-Devrim Movement's rejection of the top-down approach to socialism, we must also consider the development of the working class. After all, the working class is the central protagonist of Marxism. The approach of socialist intellectuals in the 1960s cannot be explained solely by the intellectual mindset of the past.

As the intellectuals cannot form a class in history, their good and evil sides will reflect the class struggles. Also, depending on the advancement of the working class,

the composition of intellectuals will shift. Without these elaborations, Avcıoğlu and other parties of the 1960s socialist movement cannot be analyzed, or at the very least, cannot be accused of simply not being socialists or of seeking a so-called Turkish way of socialism. Political alterations were thus crucial for wider elaborations of Avcıoğlu and the YDM. Despite previous attempts by the communist and socialist currents until the 1960s, that phase did not witness an organized labour party that even won more than a chair in elections. The journal *Yön* as a periodical was another initial instance of the traditional media that was able to reach the masses. It was one of the most outstanding publications of the 1960s, perhaps the first among others like *Ant* and *Türk Solu* (Şener, 2015, p.79). Such publications were important regarding the rise of the left in Turkey.

The May 27 coup was initially viewed with a degree of optimism. Given the claims and promises it brought, some saw it as a progressive development. Furthermore, as previously discussed, the period following 1960 provided an opportunity for leftist currents to operate within the legal political sphere. This coup presented an encouraging prospect for achieving a “non-capitalist way of development,” even for the Communist Party of Turkey (TKP) (Akdere & Karadeniz, 1996, p. 213). Despite all the optimistic approaches to the coup, even Avcıoğlu himself regarded the coup as a simple and unfinished endeavour (Avcıoğlu, 1971, p.145). While not an ardent supporter of the coup, he saw it as a means to draw attention to social issues—he believed the masses could now become more vocal (Avcıoğlu. 1962b).

Another helpful piece of information to comprehend the view of the YDM on the Constitution of 1961 and the rights and freedoms, especially on social and economic rights, can be found in Soysal’s work. Freedoms and rights provided in this Constitution resulted from the global progression on understanding social democracy and the outcome of the disputes shortly after 27 May 1960 instead of the intense demands from the grassroots mobilizations until the 1960s (Soysal, 1997, p.68). The interpretations of the practical experiences of the view of the YDM might be easily detected in terms of the underdevelopment and the force of the social movements.

After a decade, Avcıoğlu was complaining about the coup. Moreover, he also pointed out that capitalism rapidly grew due to its exploitation (Avcıoğlu, 1971, p.144). After that analysis, almost the summary of all the claims can be detected. While explaining

the solutions for capitalist exploitation, according to him, ideas on these issues began to spread from intellectuals to the masses (Avcıoğlu, 1971, p.144). Consequently, his approach after a decade, despite the discourse regarding the importance of a revolutionary party and the significance of the working class in revolutionary alteration, would remain distant from the coup. Nevertheless, at the same time, it would carry the same defects as before.

As previously mentioned, Avcıoğlu critically assessed the deficiencies in the initial stages of the coup, particularly in terms of establishing organic relations with the different social classes. Simultaneously, he acknowledged that the roots of the problem stemmed from within the class itself. In one of his works, Avcıoğlu cited Bischoff's ideas to emphasize that even the most ambitious endeavours cannot be achieved on their own without the requisite material conditions (Avcıoğlu, 1971, p.144). By highlighting the significance of material conditions, he linked the failure of the coup to the immaturity of class consciousness. Avcıoğlu was cognizant of the inefficacy of the coup; however, his assessment was rooted in a distinct Marxist approach that viewed it not merely as a superficial attempt at rapid change (Akdere & Karadeniz, 1996). Instead, he perceived it as a mutual inadequacy, attributing shortcomings to both the material conditions, often associated with the progressive classes, and the agents responsible for orchestrating the transformative action.

In the 1960s, the concept of the National Democratic Revolution gained popularity, and Avcıoğlu was just one proponent of this idea. It aimed to achieve development without relying on capitalism, serving as a pathway to socialism while avoiding the challenges associated with capitalist development (Hilav & Naci, 1967, p.95). During this decade, socialism took on different meanings compared to its manifestations in Eastern Europe. Instead of viewing socialism solely as a means to emancipate the working class, it was also seen as a strategy for rapid development in underdeveloped countries. This perspective led to various complexities. Concerning organizational matters, issues such as fostering class consciousness, mobilizing socialist ideals among the masses, and recognizing socialism as a development strategy raised significant concerns for Avcıoğlu and the YDM, given their approach to the working class, as discussed below. Representatives of such currents in the 1960s shared several crucial issues regarding the organization of the classes, especially the working class. The common problem was their approach towards the

working class. Changes that would lead to the socialist revolution were somehow shared among the progressive group. Any opportunity for the working class to revolutionize was not directly accepted. Rather than admitting the working class as the initial subject of the change, a group of vanguards were responsible for shaping the opportunity for the “weak” working class. This contradiction was the first vital issue of that idea. Thus, the emancipation of the working class was firstly determined by the termination of the anti-feudal and anti-imperialist forces of the national revolution. Then, in determined circumstances, the working class would find a chance to raise their voices.

The 1960s was a decade of awakening, and Avcıoğlu embraced Marxism and Kemalism in his efforts to understand and transform Turkish society. Avcıoğlu (1966b) argued that Marxism was the most important tool for understanding history, especially Turkish history and that the social structures and distortions of Marxism were one of the reasons for higher education's backwardness. Avcıoğlu (1969) also saw Kemalism as a progressive approach to enlighten the masses after the Ottoman Empire and to end feudal remnants, but he also viewed it as incomplete. Avcıoğlu (1969) attributed Kemalism's failure to historical circumstances that led the Kemalist Revolution to cooperate with feudal actors (Avcıoğlu, 1971). Besides being the foundational doctrine of Turkey, for Avcıoğlu, Kemalism represents an idea of total independence and a leap toward civilization. In his opinion, Kemalism cannot be fully understood as an anti-imperialist doctrine; it represents an apparatus of modernization and a stance against colonial policies. According to Avcıoğlu (1962e), socialism cannot be realized under different flags. Thus, total economic independence is necessary. Avcıoğlu's early writings attempted to reconcile socialism and Kemalism, interpreting socialism as a natural outcome of Kemalist principles (Avcıoğlu, 1962e). However, his ideas would later evolve, and he would ultimately reject this interpretation.

The 1960s in Turkey marked a unique period when leftist movements could openly engage in legal and political activities. However, the primary contradiction of this era had its roots in its early stages. In essence, the initial emergence of relative freedom in the 1960s led many to misinterpret the situation. After years of leftist oppression under the governments of the Democratic Party (DP) and the Republican People's Party (CHP), the 1960 coup against the DP was seen by some as a potential

transformation led by the military in service of the Republic. Alternatively, there was a belief that the army, due to its role in the coup, would facilitate further progress in Turkey. This perspective, occasionally shared by Avcıoğlu, caused intellectuals who still had faith in the army or anticipated its intervention to misunderstand the prevailing circumstances. A key factor behind this misconception was that the DP's rule had become increasingly authoritarian and stifled any opposition voices.

The DP's rule was considered a weak and ineffective government in its final years (Eroğul, 2017). As a result, the army intervened against a government that was already on the verge of collapse. While there is much debate about the reasons for the intervention, it is more insightful to examine why the army intervened than to dwell on how it happened. If the movements in Turkey had been strong enough to shape and change the conditions, the army's role in the decade would have been much less significant.

However, as we can see, the army was able to intervene instead of the working-class forces. It is important to distinguish the essence and purpose of these two actions. The revolutionary actions of the working class require a multiplicity of elements, unlike the army's intervention, and therefore cannot be compared in this sense. The May 27 coup only changed the name of the government, not the class dynamics. The bourgeoisie remained the ruling class, and only the executors of the system were replaced (Eroğul, 2017). This is consistent with one of the most critical analyses of the modern state in the Communist Manifesto: "The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie" (Marx & Engels, 1969). Another crucial factor is the conditions surrounding the working class. For any meaningful change to occur, the working class must be prepared to take revolutionary action. However, the conditions on May 27, 1960, and after were not sufficient for this. In other words, after the collapse of the DP, the working class in Turkey had not developed enough or been conscious enough to control the system (Eroğul, 2017). The meaning of this coup might be found in different areas, too. On the 27th of May 1960, instead of witnessing fundamental changes in the conditions and relationships between social classes, the only modifications made pertained to the replacement of executive figures, yielding minimal progressive outcomes (Eroğul, 2017). Yurtsever (2020) argues that the Yön-Devrim Movement's essential problem was its different understanding of the May 27 coup. Rather than seeing it as

a mere change in government executives, the movement viewed it as a fresh start. This coup was seen favourably not only by the YDM and Avcıoğlu but also by many other leftists, which suggests that the movements and leftists of this era failed to analyze the coup's essence correctly. Contrary to class-based views, the army's role was not examined critically. This misinterpretation or misunderstanding may have been rooted in historical events. The lack of strong socialist movements in previous decades may have also shaped the views of intellectuals. The anti-imperialist essence of these views is another essential factor to consider. Additionally, the army's role as the country's defender weakened opposition to it.

#### **4.6. Concluding Remarks**

This thesis argues that Avcıoğlu's view of the underdeveloped working class in Turkey was a key component of his political vision. The Yön-Devrim Movement's approach to the working class was also a decisive factor in its political stance in the 1960s (Kahraman, 2011; Ulus, 2016). These two approaches were closely intertwined. The movement's assessment of the weakness of the working class in Turkey led them to view the military as a more effective vehicle for their political goals.

The significance of the working-class conditions in Turkey extends beyond mere observation. When examining the position of intellectuals and the movement regarding class politics, we often fail to take an additional critical step. During the 1960s, intellectuals, notably Doğan Avcıoğlu, have faced criticism for their problematic and, at times, seemingly absent connection with the working class. However, in retrospect, the development of working-class consciousness in Turkey encountered various challenges, partly owing to the influence of the anti-imperialist movement within the country and the constructive relationships among leftist actors who shared this perspective. Additionally, underdevelopment was not just an economic dilemma but also an ideological problem for socialist theory. This is because socialists, and consequently socialism itself, had limited opportunities to confront their own shortcomings until the 1960s.

Furthermore, it is possible that 1960 was too late to overcome the problems that had already emerged or were emerging in this decade. Therefore, intellectuals, while debating their role and qualifications, should not ignore the initial dialectical process.

If intellectuals are in some way a reflection of material conditions, then these conditions must be resolved first. The YDM and Avcıoğlu may have made theoretical and practical mistakes, but a specific movement or intellectual should not be seen as the root of the inherent contradictions of the left in Turkey. Instead, we need to pay attention to the other side of the issue. While the YDM and Avcıoğlu represented a hesitation between Marxism and Kemalism (Atılın, 2020), the other side of this problem has been almost completely ignored. The absence of the working class is unthinkable, but inherent contradictions cannot be resolved without questioning the roots of the flaws in both material experiences and intellectual realms.

Examining the material conditions and Avcıoğlu's research on the same subjects can serve as valuable guides for shedding light on intellectual-class duality. The chapter aims to delve into the essential history of the working classes in Turkey, demonstrating how these historical conditions have influenced the perspectives of intellectuals in the country. While evaluating Avcıoğlu's ideas, many scholars have focused solely on his intellectual contributions and have either classified him as a traditional intellectual or placed him somewhere in the spectrum between traditional and organic intellectuals. However, without tracing the roots of not only his ideas but also the broader intellectual wave that influenced figures like Avcıoğlu, it is challenging to resolve the question of the intellectual's role. The essence of Avcıoğlu's ideas is discussed in the context of an attempt to uncover the actual material experiences that predominantly shaped his viewpoint.

Undoubtedly, the position adopted by Avcıoğlu and others like him posed a significant challenge in the history of the left in Turkey. While there may be legitimate points of contention regarding Avcıoğlu's ideological stance, it can be argued that his conception of the working class and his political outlook mirrored the quest undertaken by intellectuals in the 1960s. This quest primarily revolved around establishing a connection with the working class, which constituted the vibrant heart of the class movements in Turkey during that time.

The debates and contributions of Avcıoğlu cannot be reduced to a mere intellectual odyssey. Instead, they represent a reflection of both the shortcomings and efforts of intellectuals during that era. Avcıoğlu has often been criticized primarily for this

aspect of his ideological stance. However, in this paper, the problematic facets of Avcıoğlu's ideas regarding the relationship between intellectuals and classes are viewed as a fundamental issue within the Turkish left. Indeed, the left in Turkey encountered a unique example of the challenge of connecting intellectuals with the working class due to unprecedented mass mobilization. The evolving landscape of class politics prompted debates about the role of intellectuals and the dynamics of their relationship with the working class. Avcıoğlu's stance can be seen as a valuable case study in the context of the evolving struggle for class consciousness. We should recognize that Avcıoğlu's approach cannot be considered the root problem of the Turkish left for the subsequent decades. The experiences in the following decades, especially after 1971, can be viewed as the starting point of the left's stagnation. In the quest to identify intellectual errors, these later experiences should be taken into account alongside the problematic influences of figures like Avcıoğlu and similar ideological stances.

A certain coordination and parallelism are apparent between the advancement of class consciousness in Turkey and the ideas espoused by intellectuals like Avcıoğlu. Until the 1970s, extensive discussions were held regarding the electoral and cognitive progression of the working class, as well as the development of material conditions within the country. Particularly during the period of radicalization following 1971, both factions refined their ideologies, leading to converging outcomes. Similar analyses can be applied to the pre-1960s period.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

Doğan Avcıoğlu and the Yön-Devrim Movement made a significant impact on their period by tackling contentious topics such as socialism, independence, and progress. These topics were not only intellectually challenging but also illegal until this period. Doğan Avcıoğlu and the YDM were crucial actors in Turkey's “awakening period” (1960-1980), leading debates about the core tenets of socialist ideology as part of a more significant movement of third-world countries seeking alternative paths to global capitalism in the wake of World War II and the Cold War. It was important that they explored alternative paths regardless of one's accomplishments or qualifications.

Doğan Avcıoğlu was a leading figure in leftist Kemalism and a proponent of a Turkish approach to socialism. His work and the movement he inspired should be understood, along with the challenges of seeking worldwide relevance. He was perhaps the most crucial figure in leftist currents not only in the 1960s but also in the 1970s. Kemalism and the left found a more significant opportunity to be articulated harmoniously during this period than ever before. It was also the most visible period in which the left had an ideological, intellectual, and practical impact on Turkish history, associated with the left's awakening in Turkey.

Avcıoğlu's views cannot be reduced to simple support for military action. His thinking is rooted in the concept of an incomplete revolution and the weakness of the working class. Beyond different interpretations of Avcıoğlu and related perspectives, the question of the subject of history was crucial to the development of the Turkish left. Class movements in the later Ottoman Empire faced various challenges, but even during the most difficult times, the working class sought to raise its voice and engage in class politics for the future of the country. However, during these periods, the connection between intellectuals and the working class faced material constraints. Another crucial dimension for the analysis is the period in which Avcıoğlu lived. The

Republican period was considered the most dynamic phase in terms of class politics and mass mobilization. In line with this view, this paper argues that these decades constituted the most important era for the development of socialist theory. When discussing the failure of the Kemalist revolution, Avcıoğlu emphasized the mobilization of ideas and the exclusion of the working class and peasantry. Another critical point that should not be overlooked is Avcıoğlu's view that the Turkish working class lacked the revolutionary force necessary to achieve socialism due to its underdeveloped material conditions. In that sense, the working class was still a class in itself rather than a class for itself. He was not entirely wrong, as the left experienced a major awakening in the 1960s. However, the roots of class politics were most clearly reflected in Avcıoğlu's ideas. He argued that the underdeveloped situation was primarily due to imperialism or external forces. As a result of his analysis of the coalition of conservative forces that oppressed the lower classes, Avcıoğlu proposed a type of alliance between different classes and layers of society.

Despite being widely criticized, Avcıoğlu sought an alternative to capitalist development in response to the failures of both the single-party era and DP hegemony. As a result, Avcıoğlu and his movement became one of the most debated political actors of the time. Due to his problematic relationship with previous governments and his debatable stance in the 1960s, his approach reflected a search for answers. His worldview confronted everyone from communists to liberals. Avcıoğlu also made significant efforts to rewrite Turkish history. In terms of understanding history, he did not simply view Marxism as a source of development theory but as a way to understand and analyze Turkish history. In this respect, Avcıoğlu diverged from previous movements, such as the Kadro Movement, in his view of Kemalism. Rather than theorizing Kemalism, he used it as a source of opposition. Kemalism may be considered a reason for different understandings of Turkish historical development. Avcıoğlu's idea of the subject of change was also influenced by Kemalism, particularly the role of other strata and the military.

To understand the circumstances that influenced the history of the working class, a brief explanation of material development in the late Ottoman Empire and early Republican period is provided. While the central claims do not rely solely on the stagnation of capitalist development, capitalism in late Ottoman history laid the foundation for the future differences and defects of not only capitalism but also its

"gravediggers." Instead of debating whether capitalism emerged, it is more helpful to focus on the issues that carried over into the Republican era and their effects on class relations. This does not mean that the way capitalism emerged is insignificant. Avcıoğlu and the YDM's thoughts were shaped by their approach to the conditions of the working class. Only in this context can his political stance on organizational issues, such as establishing a revolutionary party (Avcıoğlu, 1971), be understood. Despite his emphasis on the revolutionary party, he did not join or establish any political party.

Analyzing the history of the working class in Turkey can help us understand the circumstances of the 1960s and the legacy of previous historical events. This approach can also help us to better understand Avcıoğlu's thoughts and the idea of socialism in Turkey. The idea of socialism in the 1960s cannot be seen as a spontaneous uprising. Its flaws and positive aspects were both influenced by the past and the global context. Before condemning Avcıoğlu's thoughts, we must consider the conditions of the working class and the development of capitalism in Turkey. We must also recognize that Avcıoğlu's world of thought was not simply a product of the incompleteness of the Turkish intellectual legacy. It also reflected the insufficiency and pacification of class movements in previous periods of Turkish history.

To fully appreciate Avcıoğlu's thoughts, his standing in terms of class politics should be determined, but ideas have no material power of their own; hence, practical powers are required to realize the ideas.

Ideas can never lead beyond an old-world order but only beyond the ideas of the old-world order. Ideas cannot carry out anything at all. In order to carry out ideas, men are needed who can exert practical force. (Engels & Marx, 1975)

In a decade characterized by the rise of the left, Avcıoğlu was not the only intellectual attempting a socialist perspective. However, the significance of his views and political attitude stems mainly from the conditions that began or peaked in the 1960s. The political views of Avcıoğlu are noteworthy since they are one of the first instances of such mobilization in this decade. Neither the YDM nor Avcıoğlu can be identified as the pioneers of Turkish socialist speech or policy. The relationship between the class and the intellectual was contrary to the previous periods. The ideas

of Avcıoğlu and the approach of the YDM can be comprehended as the threshold for Marxism in Turkey and any ideology that aims to mobilize the masses. According to prior explanations, intellectuals are not the only ones responsible or the perpetrators of the organization of the working class. Intellectuals should thus be considered in a limited sense to analyze the material conditions. Otherwise, the main criticism towards the intellectuals would be valid for that approach. They cannot be the only ones responsible for the struggle of the classes. The thresholds that represent the limits of the decade's ideologies must somehow be overcome in the ideological sense.

As “thinkers”, intellectuals may only try to deal with the problems at the level of ideological strata and may also solve the issues in terms of ideas due to their relationship with the ideology itself (Marx & Engels, 1968). Accepting the idea as the source of material circumstances could be another difficulty with this approach to the function and duty of intellectuals (Marx & Engels, 1968). Avcıoğlu was an intellectual conscious of the historical development process through material forces rather than ideologies. Unlike previous attempts, such as the Kadro Movement or the *Forum* journal, Avcıoğlu and the YDM were fresh pages in the 1960s. The preceding stages' viewpoints transcended in that decade. Nonetheless, this process cannot be accomplished without the force of material changes. Avcıoğlu and the YDM failed to realize their political agenda due to their approach to the subject of history, so overcoming the previous understanding could not be completed, and Avcıoğlu and the movement he represented carried multiple meanings and outcomes.

While representing a departure from previous views of Kemalism as an essential foundation ideology, it is also regarded as a basis for the movement's progressive ideals. Unlike others, affirmative connections between Kemalism and socialist thought were openly attempted in this decade, in addition to the influence of socialist ideas. This link stemmed mainly from the presence of imperialism and the country's struggle against it. The working class and people in general must deal with the consequences of imperialism somehow. The inextricable relationship between the left and the anti-imperialist struggle was visible in the approaches of practically every movement in the 1960s, although an affirmative approach could not be terminated in terms of Marxism. Aside from his position in class politics, one of the significant reasons for Avcıoğlu's failure to actualize his ideals might be attributed to

organizational issues. The disconnect from the working class may have been influenced by earlier material circumstances, but it can also be seen as a fundamental failure on Avcıoğlu's part to further refine his ideas following the period of the *Yön* journal.

In some ways, Avcıoğlu's realm of thought mirrored suppressed and pacified class struggles. Avcıoğlu can only be fully understood if we take into consideration this broader context; otherwise, his legacy might be reduced to the writings of a solitary intellectual amidst the backdrop of a burgeoning socialist movement in Turkey. In this reciprocal relationship between the material world and the thoughts, unfortunately, the ideas of Avcıoğlu were subjected to much criticism. Despite his differences in opinion, the role of intellectuals cannot be underestimated regarding the constitution of the working class. Besides the material conditions and the struggles, the exchange of opinions and the building of the working-class theory must be completed. Intellectuals might also be considered a necessity (Karabel, 1976). For the struggle in the ideological arena, not solely his efforts but the Yön-Devrim Movement may be accepted as a new page in the oppositional bloc in Turkey.

He was a complete intellectual who explored various political views, but his political career was affected by the main issue he mentioned and highlighted. The concept of the working class's immaturity and the challenge of the socialist organization might be two of the critical causes for his failures in terms of transformation. That became an issue for the YDM as well as Avcıoğlu. While analyzing the fundamental problems of the material conditions of Turkey, the movement and Avcıoğlu remained “unorganized”. Avcıoğlu's approach might also be recognised as one of the primary causes of that organizational difficulty. The first of them was about his view of the subject of history. Rather than emphasizing the working class as a crucial actor in history, he formulated “*zinde kuvvetler*”, which refers to the combined forces of the different strata involving different groups and classes of Turkey, such as intellectuals, army officers, the youth, and the working class. No political party was therefore needed to organize specifically the working class. Avcıoğlu was aware of the importance of a revolutionary political party and the classes in his writings (Avcıoğlu, 1971), but after 1970, that was all in theory instead of practice. In that sense, the conditions in the 1960s might be misinterpreted by him. This period was a

time of re-establishment of the socialist theory and class politics in Turkey. In a tempestuous phase of history, Avcıoğlu and the intellectuals in the YDM could not overcome the defects mentioned before, though they were classified as a threshold in many aspects because of that as well. Even for the socialist theory, the affirmative approach to the army had to be terminated, not solely on the ideological level but on the practical experiences. The YDM and Avcıoğlu represented an instance of that problem. Still, Avcıoğlu and the YDM also played a positive role in breaking the mould of socialist discourse in Turkey and spreading socialist ideas among the people. They are, therefore, considered a progressive current of the 1960s (Sertel, 1969, p.290).

Avcıoğlu's views were interpreted and examined as if he were one of the primary causes of the socialist movement's failure. Such a notion originated from a perspective such as “from intellectual to class” rather than “from class to intellectual.” His emphasis on the underdevelopment of the working class is also a fundamental shortcoming of his theoretical framework. Prior to the 1960s, it was a widely acknowledged reality rather than a matter of opinion that the working class and socialist movement in Turkey were relatively immature. To gain a deeper understanding of Avcıoğlu, especially regarding his views on the working class and socialism, and to approach his philosophy and political stance, it is crucial to examine the material circumstances or the real-world context that gave rise to his ideas. This question is central to comprehending both Avcıoğlu and the perspectives surrounding him.

The approach outlined above is essential for understanding not only Avcıoğlu's thoughts but also the history of the left in Turkey. While historical materialism is a useful tool for analyzing and interpreting events in other parts of the world, it is not enough to understand the Turkish left. We must also consider the conditions of the working class and the ideas of intellectuals like Avcıoğlu. Avcıoğlu's ideas and his own role as an intellectual must be evaluated in the context of the conditions before and after the 1960s. Without considering the maturity of the working class, we cannot fully understand Avcıoğlu or the history of the left in Turkey. The ideas of the left have changed and evolved over time, depending on the conditions. In the 1960s, Avcıoğlu was a representative of this change and the search for new ways to mobilize the masses and build class consciousness. We should not see this as a

failure of the Turkish working class or a misunderstanding of Avcıoğlu. It was simply a dialectical relationship between the classes and intellectuals. Avcıoğlu's intellectual efforts were valuable for understanding the conditions of Turkey and for understanding the challenges that all intellectuals face.

Representatives of progressive currents in the 1960s shared several key concerns about the organization of classes, especially the working class. One of their common problems was their approach to the working class. While the duty of completing the socialist revolution was shared among the progressive group, some movements, such as the Yön-Devrim Movement, did not directly acknowledge the working class's potential to revolutionize. Instead of seeing the working class as the primary agent of change, these movements placed the responsibility on a vanguard group to create opportunities for the "weak" working class. This was one of the most important issues in Avcıoğlu's political thought. He argued that the emancipation of the working class would only be possible after a national democratic revolution had overthrown the feudal and imperialist forces. Once the material conditions were ripe, the working class would have the opportunity to raise its voice. However, it is important to remember that the shortcomings of the intellectuals' political positions in the 1960s reflected the previous material conditions. It would be a mistake to analyze a political figure solely on an ideological level without considering the dialectical relationship between the concrete and the ideal. In the case of Avcıoğlu and the YDM, we can find both approaches in a range of works, but without organization, they ultimately failed to achieve their goals. Avcıoğlu and the YDM provide a valuable example of the importance of the intellectual-class relationship, although we must once again emphasize the dialectical relationship from class to intellectual.

Another significant concern revolved around the notion of spontaneity, which can be examined through the lens of attitudes towards the May 27 Coup. While some individuals viewed the shifts in rights and responsibilities as the inception of an independent rebellion against capitalism, the crux of the matter remained intricately linked to organizational challenges. This represented the concept's second critical drawback. Clearly, relative freedom and progress under democracy would not naturally foster autonomous resistance to capitalism.

In the end, Avcıoğlu, as a political figure, failed in mobilizing the masses, or more accurately, did not prioritize such mobilization. Instead, he endeavoured to incorporate the progressive elements of Kemalist ideology into the realm of working-class concerns. The efforts of Avcıoğlu and his movement highlighted a vital lesson: effecting substantial changes in material conditions would prove virtually impossible without establishing organic connections between intellectuals or any other group. One of the most significant takeaways for Turkish Marxist literature and the history of the left emerged from the leftist interpretation of Kemalism in the 1960s. While seeking potential commonalities between Kemalism and Marxism, Avcıoğlu and the movement faltered at the critical juncture of their envisioned transformation. The issue of organization stemmed from a fundamental analysis of the underdeveloped conditions surrounding class movements in Turkey.

In conclusion, movements and ideas cannot emerge out of anything without any basis in the past, and addressing the shortcomings inherited from the past can prove to be a formidable task. Therefore, it is essential to acknowledge that Avcıoğlu and the Yön-Devrim Movement had inherent limitations in their approach to advancing leftist currents in Turkey, yet this should not be assessed via a deterministic judgment. The remedy for such limitations can only be achieved through the collective efforts of the masses and material or practical actions. Intellectuals and movement leaders can only play a secondary role in this context.

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## APPENDICES

### A: TURKISH SUMMARY/ TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Bu tezin konusu olarak Türkiye’de sadece 1960’lı yıllarda değil günümüzde dahi hala daha tartışılmakta olan bir aydının görüşleri seçildi, Doğan Avcıoğlu (1926-1983). Niteliği tartışmaya açık olmakla birlikte 1960’lı yıllarda başlayan değişim arayışının bir örneği olarak Yön-Devrim Hareketi ve Avcıoğlu günümüzde de tartışmalara konu olmaktadır. Ancak eserlerinin teker teker incelenmesi yerine tezin odak noktası olan aydın-sınıf ikilemine en uygun kavramlar ve bölümler seçilmeye çalışıldı. Türkiye, 1960’larda uzun süredir bastırılmış ve yeraltında kalmak zorunda olan sosyalist dalganın yeniden ya da daha doğrusu ilk defa bu denli yükselişine şahit olmuştu. Bu tez açısından Türkiye’nin siyasal geçmişi bakımından 1960 yılı çok önemli bir dönüm noktası olarak kabul edilmektedir. Bu yıllardaki en çok ses getiren hareketlerden biri olarak kabul edilen *Yön Hareketi* kendisinden sonraki dönem için geride birçok tartışma bırakmış ve siyasi kariyerini cevapların yanında birçok soru ile 1967 yılında sonlandırmıştır. 1960 sonrasındaki yirmi yıl boyunca ülkede birçok ses yükselcek birçoğu da ya yok edilecek ya da yok olacaktır. Avcıoğlu ise bilinçli olarak kendisine ikinci yolu seçmiştir ancak ilkinden de payını almıştır. Özellikle 12 Mart Muhtırası ardından aslında kendisinin düşüncelerinde de hep önem arz eden “ordu” bu kez muhalif her türlü sesin bastırılmasında rol oynamıştır.

Ancak, 1960’lı yıllarda yalnızca Türkiye’de değil dünyanın birçok yerinde de sosyalizmin belli başlı yorumlarına rastlamak mümkündür. Türkiye’de ise bu tartışma tam da 27 Mayıs askeri müdahalesinin ardından gelen ve yerli ya da yabancı literatürün neredeyse tamamının üzerinde anlaşmış olduğu görece özgürlük ortamında ortaya çıktı. Belki tüm bu anlatılanların temelinde siyasi hareketlerin deneyimlediği özgürlüğün bu yolla ortaya çıkmaya başlamış olması nedeniyle 27 Mayıs’a karşı bir iyimserlik hâkimdir. İşte tüm bu iyimser bakış Avcıoğlu’nun eserlerinde de kendisini gösterecektir. Ancak Avcıoğlu basit bir darbe sevici yahut ordu hayranı olarak değerlendirilemez. Türkiye tarihinin en komple aydınlarından

biri olan bu isim, sosyalizm, işçi sınıfı, Marksizm gibi kavramlarla detaylıca tanışmasını üniversite eğitimi için gitmiş olduğu Fransa’da gerçekleştirmiştir. Bu açıdan Pierre Mendes ve Fransız İhtilali düşünürlerinin Avcıoğlu üzerindeki etkisi de göz ardı edilmemelidir (Macar, 2021; Özdemir, 2000, s.13). *Türklerin Tarihi* gibi eserlerinde ise Marksist tarih anlayışından bahsederek o tarihe kadar görülmemiş tarih yazımı denemelerine de imza atmış bir aydındır.

Avcıoğlu’nun düşüncelerine bir bütün olarak bakıldığında tarihin değiştirici/devrimci öznesi olarak karşımıza asıl olarak kendisi tarafından “zinde kuvvetler” olarak adlandırılan özne ya da diğer bir söyleyişle blok çıkmaktadır. Bu blok içinde ordu, aydınlar, öğretmenler, işçi sınıfı ve gençlik gibi toplumun farklı sınıflarından ziyade farklı grupları yer almaktadır. Avcıoğlu’nun özellikle *Devrim Üzerine* gibi eserlerinde özellikle devrimci bir partinin gerekliliği, 27 Mayıs’ın yarım ve eksik bir devrim olduğu, halkın demokratik ve kendi yönetimi olmadan değişimin olamayacağı gibi düşüncelerine rastlamak mümkündür. Ancak ne Avcıoğlu ne de Yön ve Devrim Hareketleri siyasi kariyerlerini herhangi bir devrimci parti kuramadan ya da buna dâhil olamadan bitirmek zorunda kalacaklardır. Avcıoğlu ile Yön ve Devrim Hareketlerinin örgütsüzlüğü kendilerine yöneltilen temel eleştiri noktalarından bir başkasıdır (Atılğan, 2020; Küçük, 1988; Yurtsever, 2020)

Avcıoğlu tek başına, zamandan ve mekândan bağımsız, Türkiye’deki sınıf hareketleri ve bu hareketlerin geçmişinden bağımsız olarak da değerlendirilemez. Ancak Türkiye’de aydınlar bu gibi özellikleri ile eleştirilirken ki Avcıoğlu da hakkında bu eleştirinin sıkça yapıldığı aydınlardan biridir, onlara olan yaklaşım eleştirilenin tam tersi haldedir. Bu tez yukarıda bahsedilen noktada diğer eserlerden ve tezlerden ayrılmaktadır. Avcıoğlu’nu, eserlerini ve düşüncelerini bu bağlam üzerinden incelemekle beraber Türkiye işçi sınıfı hareketinin gidişatı ve 1960’larda tam manasıyla kitleselleşmesi konusu ile karşılıklı bir bağlantı içerisinde düşünceleri anlamaya ve anlatmaya çalışır. 1960’lı yıllar Türkiye’de solun ilk kez bu çapta kitleselleşebildiği, kendisine sınıfla daha net bağlar kurmaya başlayabileceği yıllar olarak kabul edilebilir. Türkiye’de sol hareketin en önemli atılımlarının yapıldığı dönem olarak görülürken aslında köklü mirasın da temelleri atılmaya çalışılmıştır (Aydınoglu, 2011; Savran, 2022). Aksi halde var olan ve köklü mirasın ardından gelen aydın şeklinde yaklaşılsa Avcıoğlu’nun düşüncesinde sosyalist anlayıştan yalnızca uzak değil ona aykırı nüveler de bulunabilir. Ancak bir aydın olarak

kendisinin içinde bulunduğu dönem öyle ya da böyle Avcıoğlu'nun düşüncelerini temelden etkilemiştir. Avcıoğlu 1960'larda son derece popüler olmasına rağmen, dönemin siyasi düşüncelerini kendi başına şekillendirmiş bir isim yahut şekillendiren hareketlerin öncü ismi olarak değerlendirilemez. Gerek kendisinin gerekse özellikle Yön Dergisi'nin o dönem içerisinde hem siyasi tartışmalara hem de toplumun siyasete olan alakasına açık bir etkisinin olduğu kabul edilebilir ancak bu yine de onların Türkiye'nin hem 1960 öncesi hem de sonrası koşullarının bir ürünü olduğu gerçeğini değiştirmeyecektir. Dikkat edilmesi gereken nokta, Türkiye'nin 1960'lı yıllara temellendirilebilmiş, kitleselleşmiş ve örgütlü bir sol hareket ile girip giremediğinin tespitidir. Aksi halde sadece Avcıoğlu'ndan değil, dönemin başat sol hareketlerine mensup tüm aydınlarından bir nevi sıçrama bekleniyor olacaktır. Avcıoğlu işte tam da bu dönemde, yani Türkiye'de siyasal hareketliliğin en canlı dönemlerinde arayış içinde olan bir aydındır. Tezde de Avcıoğlu'nun siyasi düşünceleri bu temel üzerinden ele alınmaya çalışılmıştır.

Nitekim sol, 1960'lı yıllara geldiğinde dünyanın farklı yerlerinde de değişimlerden geçmekte; Marx, Engels ve Lenin gibi isimlerin etkileri kalıcı olmakla birlikte Sovyet Sosyalist Cumhuriyetler Birliği'nin etkisi ve az gelişmiş ülkelerde kalkınma düşüncesi düşünceleri ile birlikte bağlamı bu noktalara konumlanmaktadır. Yukarıda bahsedildiği üzere ortaya "sosyalizmler" çıkmakta birçok sosyalist deneyim yaşanmaktadır (Glaser & Walker, 2007). Diğer taraftan Hobsbawm (2012) sosyalizm ve kalkınma ikiliği konusu da unutulmamalıdır. Sosyalist ekonomi ve kalkınma düşünceleri 20'nci yüzyılın erken aşamalarında başlamış olup özünü Marx'ın düşüncelerinden tam olarak almamaktadır (Hobsbawm, 2012, s.8). Nitekim Marx'ın da sosyalist kalkınma konusunda net ve somut tasarıları yoktur, temelde Marx'ın bu nevi bir kaygısı da bulunmamaktadır (Hobsbawm, 2012, s.8). Ancak Marx'ın bu konuda hiçbir fikri olmadığı anlamına gelmemelidir. Tezde işaret edilen mühim noktalardan biri de sosyalist kalkınma düşüncesinin 1960'lı yıllardaki şeklinden ziyade özü olarak kabul edilebilir. Temelini Marx'ın düşüncelerinden ziyade gününün politik ihtiyaçlarından alan bu görüş aydınlar tarafından benimsendiği takdirde birçok sorunu da kendisi beraberinde getirecektir. Bu tezin konusu bağlamında ele alındığında köklü sol gelenekleri eksik kalan ya da bastırılmış ülkeler açısından yukarıda bahsedilen ikilik aydınların Marksizm ile olan ilişkileri açısından birçok tartışmanın kapısını da açacaktır. Öte yandan Türkiye Cumhuriyet Halk

Partisi'nin (CHP) tek parti dönemini atlatmış ardından gelen Demokrat Parti'nin (DP) 27 Mayıs 1960 darbesi ile sonlanan siyasi hayatına kadar baskısı altında kalmıştır. Bahsedilen bu dönemler Türkiye'de solun diğer bir anlatımla kitleselleşmekte zorlandığı, bunun ötesinde var olmakta önemli sorunlar yaşadığı dönemlerdir. Komintern'in siyasi kaygılar nedeniyle yalnız bırakması da sebeplerden biri olmak üzere Türkiye Komünist Partisi (TKP) yeraltı dışında örgütlenecek pek fazla alan bulamamıştır. Ayrıca devletin tevkifatları da zaten nefes almakta zorlanan bu örgütü kitlesizliğe doğru itmek görevini yerine getirmiştir. Hâlihazırda köklü bir örgütlenme ve sınıf hareketi geçmişi sorgulanmaya açık olan topraklarda, solun tarihi TKP üzerinden akmaya çalışırken fazlasıyla hayati kesintilere uğramak zorunda kalmıştır.

Ancak yine bu Türkiye'de sınıf hareketinin ve bilincinin olmadığı anlamına gelmemektedir. Sol, 1960 yılına son derece kan kaybetmiş biçimde gelmiş olmakla birlikte, Avcıoğlu'nun da birçok yazısında ısrarla değindiği üzere halk, yani işçi sınıfı ve köylüler, komprador ve eşraf sınıfın peşinden gitmiştir. Yani halk DP'yi seçmiştir. Ancak 1960 yılından sonra da birden çok kez Adalet Partisi'ni seçecektir ki bu teze göre de Avcıoğlu'nun sınıf hareketine karşı ümidinin kaybolduğu temel noktalardan biridir. Bu tarihsel gelişmeler aydın-sınıf arasındaki kopukluğunun Avcıoğlu bakımından ortaya çıktığı keskin noktalardan biri olarak kabul edilmelidir. Zaten, Avcıoğlu CHP'den de ümitle bahsetmemekte, yöneticilerine karşı eleştirilerini her fırsatta dile getirmektedir.

Öyle ki, Avcıoğlu solun hem dışarıdan gelen etkilerinden hem de içeride hâlihazırda var olan sıkıntılarından etkilenmektedir. Aslında bunlar, bir etkiden çok Avcıoğlu'nun düşüncelerini yaratan koşulların bizzat kendisidir. Zaten aksini düşünmek, düşüncenin maddi dünyayı şekillendirdiğine kadar varacak olan tartışmanın fitilini ateşleyecektir. Yani Avcıoğlu, sanılanın aksine sol açısından iyimser olmayan bir siyasal ortamda Marksizm-Kemalizm ikilisini kendisine temel olarak seçmiştir. İddia edilenlerin aksine 1960'lı yıllar solun Türkiye'deki oluşum yılları olmakla birlikte özünde bir embriyonun gelişim dönemidir. Bu açıdan bakıldığı zaman Avcıoğlu ve Yön Hareketi'nin işte bu gelişim aşamasında ortaya çıktığı ve kitle ile olan kopuk bağların sadece kendilerine özgü olmadığı anlaşılabilir. Sol-Kemalizm'in akla gelen ilk isimlerinden biri olan Avcıoğlu bu tezde aynı zamanda aydın-sınıf ilişkisinin en net derslerinin sadece Kemalizm açısından değil,

aynı zamanda sosyalist düşünce anlamında da çıkarılabileceği bir isim olarak kabul etmektedir.

Marksizm, sosyalizm, Kemalizm, sol-Kemalizm, devrim, ordu gibi yabancı literatürde yan yana neredeyse görülmeyecek olan kavramlar 1960'lı yılların Türkiye'sinde birlikte ve aynı düzeyde tartışmalar içinde yer almaya başlamıştır. Ancak bu tartışmaların temel noktalarından bir başkası da işçi sınıfının henüz yeteri kadar gelişmemiş olduğudur. Avcıoğlu birden çok eserinde bu düşünceyi somut olarak destekleyen birçok analizle dile getirmiştir. *Osmanlı'nın Düzeni* gibi eserlerinde devletin özellikle son döneminde imzalanan birçok anlaşma ülkenin sömürgeleşme hikâyesinin başlangıcı olarak kabul edilmiştir. Avcıoğlu, işçi sınıfı ile alakalı görüşlerini sınıfların yokluğu üzerinden kurmamıştır. Aksine, sınıfların gelişimi ve hareketleri temelinden ele alarak belli çıkarımlarda bulunmuştur. Bu sebeple Avcıoğlu, sınıf temelli anlayışın reddedildiği bir aydın olarak değil aksine kendisine miras kalan koşullar içinde farklı yollar arayan bir aydın olarak kabul edilmelidir.

Tezin ilgilendiği temel noktalardan biri olarak işçi sınıfının zayıflığı/gelişmemişliği düşüncesi birçok farklı siyasi olaydan meydana gelmektedir. Türkiye'de kapitalizmin ithal bir ürün olarak Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun son dönemlerinde emperyalist devletlerce, ülkedeki yabancı sermayenin ortaya çıkardığı bir sistem olarak anlaşılması (Avcıoğlu, 1976, 1976a; Sencer, 1969) körü körüne olmasa dahi yalnızca işçi sınıfına olan yaklaşımı ve sınıfın kendisi ile kurulacak bağı etkilememiş hareketleri ve aydınların siyasi hayatları açısından da kader tayin edici bir nitelik taşımıştır. Ancak işçi sınıfının oluşumu ve bu sınıfın bilincinin gelişimi açısından sanayileşme ile kurulan doğrudan bağ ise sorgulanmaya son derece açıktır (Çetinkaya, 2015). Bu açılardan bakıldığında Avcıoğlu'nun düşünceleri kendiliğinden var olmadığı gibi yalnızca kendisi tarafından da temsil edilmemektedir. Türkiye'de 1960'lı yılların siyasi atmosferi sosyalizmden işçi sınıfına birçok farklı kavram ve alanda kendine özgü denebilecek kadar olmasa da maddi koşulların getirdiği birçok farklılığı da içinde taşımaya devam etmiştir. Bunların aşılması yahut yeniden yorumlanması günümüzde de önem arz etmektedir. Tüm bu tartışmalar yalnızca entelektüel arayışlar olarak değerlendirilmemelidir, bu tezin özellikle nitelendirdiği sol ideolojilerin ve hareketlerin uyanış dönemi olan 1960'lı yıllar ülke açısından bugün dahi tamamıyla çözümlenmeye muhtaç

tartışmalar içermektedir. Ancak oldukça temel ve basit görünen bir yöntem ısrarla atlanmaya devam edilmektedir. Öyle ki, tüm bu anlatılanların çözümleneceği yer aydınların ya da fikir insanlarının zihinleri değil, sınıf mücadelelerinin bizzat kendisidir. Bu sebepten ileri gelir ki, geçmiş dönemin figürlerinin ifade ettikleri somut arka planlar her ne içerikte olursa olsunlar günümüz şartlarında daha fazla aydınlatılmaya muhtaçtırlar.

Yukarıda bahsedildiği üzere Avcıoğlu'nun beklentilerinin aksine her dönemde kendisinin tabiri ile tutucu güçler halk tarafından seçilmeye devam etmiştir. Özüne bakıldığı zaman Avcıoğlu'nun demokrasi konusundaki görüşleri, sahip olduğu bu "kötümserliğin" temel nedenlerinden biri olarak kabul edilebilir. Avcıoğlu gün geçtikçe meclisin bir çözüm odağı olabileceği düşüncesinden uzaklaşmaya başlamış ve günün sonunda aslında 1969 yılında Devrim Dergisi'ne varan bir çizgiye kadar ilerlemiştir. Diğer yandan, 1960'lı yılların temel niteliği, sosyalist ve sınıf hareketinin uyanışı sırasında siyaset sahnesinde yer almaları bu düşüncenin temellendirilebileceği bir başka noktadır. Ancak yine de uyanış yıllarında aydınların bu yaklaşımları aşırp işçi sınıfı ile organik bağlar kurması ya da daha doğru bir deyişle sınıfın entelektüelleriyle bağ kurabilmesi gerekmektedir. Avcıoğlu örneğine bakıldığında bu nokta son derece eleştiriye açık kalmakla birlikte tartışmaya işçi sınıfı hareketinin niteliği sorunu dâhil olmaktadır. Tezde çerçevesi çizilmeye çalışıldığı üzere Türkiye'de 1960'lı yıllara yalnızca aydınlar değil sınıf hareketi de birçok eksikliği ya da diğer bir söyleyişle farklılığı ile gelmiştir. Bu bakımdan düşüncelerin gelişiminin temelindeki diyalektik unutulmamalıdır. Ayrıca sınıfın oluşumu ve gelişimi ile aydınların konumu arasındaki doğrudan bağlantı da göz ardı edilmemelidir.

Avcıoğlu'nun düşüncelerinin incelenmesi açısından birçok kavram seçilerek farklı başlıklar altında incelenmeye çalışılmıştır. Ancak bu başlıkların her biri tek başına yüz yıldan fazla süredir siyasi alanda var olan kavramlar olması neticesinde Avcıoğlu ve 1960'lar kapsamında incelenmeye gayret gösterilmiştir. Marksizm'in en temel kavramı olan sınıf ve sınıf mücadelesi Avcıoğlu'nun gözünden incelendiğinde yukarıda anlatılan temel noktalar kavranmadan tam olarak anlaşılamayacaktır. Sınıfa olan bakışı, özünü sınıf düşüncesinden alan bir yaklaşımı nihayetinde temelden etkileyecektir. Fakat sosyalist kalkınma düşüncesinin temel kaygıları ve sahip olduğu özellikler de unutulmamalıdır (Hobsbawm, 2012). Avcıoğlu'nun Marksizm'e olan

yaklaşımı her zaman eleştiri konusu olmuştur ancak temel aldığı noktalar da en az Avcıoğlu'nun Marksizm'i kadar tartışmalı öğeler barındırmaktadır. Bu açıdan Avcıoğlu kadar, Avcıoğlu'nun dâhil olduğu tartışma ve kavramlar da Marksizm açısından incelemeye açık noktalardır.

Ancak bir diğer nokta ise Kemalizm'den ileri gelmektedir. Avcıoğlu'nun günümüzde sol-Kemalizm kavramının temsilci isimlerinden biri olarak anılması da dikkate alındığında, düşünce dünyasına en büyük etkilerden birini yaptığı açıktır. Fakat Avcıoğlu'nun Marksizm anlayışı ve Kemalizm'e olan yaklaşımının karşılıklı olarak birbirini etkilediği de anlatılmaya çalışılmıştır. Kemalizm açısından dikkat edilmesi gereken temel noktalardan biri de yine sınıfa olan bakış üzerinde yarattığı etki ve bu nedenle de tarihin öznesi hakkında sahip olunan görüşü başından itibaren bulandırıyor olmasıdır. Öyle ki, tarihin öznesinin ortaya çıkışı ancak belli öncülerin kendisine uygun bir ortam yaratması sonucu gerçekleşebileceği fikri neticesinde zinde kuvvetler, ancak değiştirici güç olarak ise ordu ortaya çıkmaktadır. Avcıoğlu görüşlerinin diğer temel noktası olarak bunu almaktadır. Ancak yine ve yeniden vurgulanması gereken taraf işçi sınıfının içinde bulunduğu gelişmişlik ya da gelişmemişlik düzeyine ve maddi koşullara karşı sahip olunan yaklaşımdır. Bu açıdan incelenerek Avcıoğlu'nun siyasi görüşlerinin sadece tepeden bakan bir aydın tavrından gelmediği anlatılmaya çalışılmıştır.

Bununla birlikte, solun ve Kemalizm'in yan yana bulunduğu ilk hareket Yön değildir. 1960'lı yıllardan önce Kadro Hareketi ile Türkiye'de siyasal hayata sol ve Kemalizm'in birlikte dillendirilmeye başlandığı düşünceler dâhil olmuştur. Ancak Yön Hareketi ve doğal olarak Avcıoğlu tüm diğer hareketlerden kesin çizgiler ile ayrılmayı başarmıştır. Tezde (Atılğan, 2020; Çiçek 2016; Küçük 1988) gösterildiği üzere gerek Forum Dergisi'nden gerekse Kadro Hareketi'nden çok temel ve kesin noktalarla ayrılmaktadır. Öncelikle Yön bir çıkar yol aramakta ancak bunu gerçekleştirmeye çalışırken temel talebini değişimin kendisinde bulmaktadır; öte yandan Forum gibi dergiler ise düzen değişikliğini değil iyileştirmelerini hedef almaktadırlar (Atılğan, 2020). Kadro ise temel olarak Kemalizm'i doktrin haline getirme amacıyla olmasından ötürü Avcıoğlu ile Yön ve Devrim Hareketlerinin duruşunda hayli uzaktır. Avcıoğlu ile Yön ve Devrim Hareketleri düzenin kökten, maddi koşulları ile birlikte değişimini savunurken bahsedilen diğerleri sınırlı reformlar çerçevesinde aslında düzenin hiçbir zaman karşısına geçememektedirler.

Diğer taraftan Yön Hareketi, Hikmet Kıvılcımlı'nın da eleştirilerine maruz kalmaktan kurtulamamışlardır. Kıvılcımlı “yöncüleri”, kapı-kulu akımı içinde şekillenmiş olmakla ve içlerinde gerçekten sınıf nüvesi barındırmamakla ve neredeyse tamamının aydınlardan oluşması nedeniyle eleştirmektedir (Kıvılcımlı, 2014, pp.49-50). Ancak benzer bir eleştiriyi de Avcıoğlu ilerleyen zamanda Türkiye İşçi Partisi ile olan tartışmalarda o gruba karşı kullanacaktır (Avcıoğlu, 1966c). Öyle ki incelenen bu dönemde, sınıf kompozisyonu üzerinden gerçekleştirilen yaklaşımın birçok aydın tarafından karşısındaki aydın grubuna ya da partiye yöneltildiği görülebilir. Bu araştırmanın temel konusu ve kaygısını aslında dönemin aydınları ve siyasi liderleri arasındaki tartışmalar da perçinlemektedir. Sınıfa ulaşmak yahut sınıftan gelmek gibi iki temel sorunun 1960-1971 dönemi hareketlerinin neredeyse tamamı tarafından deneyimlendiği açıktır. Her birinin ise diğerini sınıf kompozisyonu üzerinden eleştirmesi ise aslında her hareketin kendi içinde ya da dışında sınıf ile olan bağlarının sorunlu olmasından ileri geldiğini gösterir. İşte yalnızca Avcıoğlu'na özgü olmayan bu problem dönemin hareketlerinin ve partilerinin neredeyse tümünde görülebilir. “Sınıftan aydına” yahut “aydından sınıfa” gibi ikircikli bir bakış açısının Türkiye’de aydına olan bakışta her an ortaya çıkabileceğinin ve hatta günümüzde bu araştırmanın da konusu olan aydınlardan birinin bahsedilen bu tartışmanın odağı olduğu gösterilmeye çalışılmıştır.

Özüne bakıldığı zaman Avcıoğlu 1960’lı yılların muhalif seslerinden biri olmayı başarabilmiştir. Kendisinin tavrı yalnızca düzene değil, düzen içinde aslında olumlu bakılan 27 Mayıs müdahalesinin karşısında dahi olmuştur. 27 Mayıs’ı tamamlanmayan ve de kolay bir çaba olarak görmektedir (Avcıoğlu, 1971). Bu noktada Avcıoğlu'nun üst-yapısal reformlarla köklü bir değişim ve gelişim elde edilmeyeceğinin farkında olduğu da ileri sürülebilir.

1960’lı yılların sınıf hareketlerinin uyanış dönemi olduğu daha önce de vurgulanmıştı. Ancak hem 1960 öncesi hem de sonrasındaki dönem içindeki sınıf hareketlerinin grevler ve örgütlenmeler de göz önünde bulundurularak özü anlaşılmalı çalışıldı. Öncelikle Osmanlı toplumundaki sınıf hareketsizliği ve köylülüğün taşıdığı sorunlar (Ergil, 1974) yalnızca bu döneme değil gelecekteki sınıf mobilizasyonlarına etkisini temelden gösterdi. Bu bakımdan din ve kültürün insanlar üzerindeki etkisi, Avrupa ülkeleri başta olmak üzere yabancı aktörlerin İmparatorluk üzerinden baskısı gibi birçok neden Türkiye’de yalnızca işçi sınıfının oluşum ve

gelişimini değil burjuvazinin bir sınıf hareketi olarak kendiliğinden doğuşuna da etkileri olmuştur (Ergil, 1974). Ayrıca Avcıoğlu da Balta Limanı Anlaşması'ndan başlayarak İmparatorluk ekonomisinin kalkınma ve gelişiminin sekteye uğradığını vurgulamıştır (Avcıoğlu, 2013). İmparatorluk batılılaşma yerine sömürgeleşme yolunda adımlar atmış olmakla da eleştirildi (Avcıoğlu, 2013).

Buna ek olarak, Türkiye'de anti-emperyalist söylemin önemi de yukarıda anlatılanlar da göz önünde bulundurulduğunda sosyalizm içine eklenebilmesi ile hiç de yabancı durmamaktadır. Ayrıca dünyanın Avrupa ve Rusya kesimleri haricinde komünist partilerin ulusal kurtuluş mücadelelerinin tarafları ya da destekleyicisi oldukları açıktır (Aydınöglu, 2011). Türkiye örneğinde ise bir taraftan Komintern'in baskı ve yalnız bırakma politikası diğer taraftan ise anti-emperyalist nüveler buldukları Kemalizm'i tamamen dışlayamamaları komünist-sosyalist hareketin gelecekte de taşıyacağı sorunlardan biri olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu gibi nedenler ve işçi sınıfı bilinci ve kültürünün sekteye uğraması sonuç olarak 19'uncu yüzyıl Avrupa işçi hareketlerinden farklı birçok motifin Türkiye'de işçi sınıfı bilinci içinde uyanmasına sebep olmuştur. Tezin temel amaçlarından biri olarak, Avcıoğlu'nun düşüncelerindeki sosyalist anlamda birçok sorunun geçmişten 1960'lı yıllara taşınmış olduğu sergilenmeye çalışılmıştır.

Türkiye'de maddi koşulların özellikle yetersizliği nedeniyle dönüşümün sınıflar yerine 19'uncu yüzyılda çeşitli ittifaklar tarafından görev edinilmiş olması da dikkate değer noktalardan biri olarak işaret edilmiştir (Somay, 2007). Nitekim sanayileşmenin daha çok ordunun ihtiyaçlarını karşılamak neticesinde ortaya çıkmış olması da (Aydoğanöglu, 2010) maddi koşulların ciddi anlamda dönüşümden uzak ve hatta potansiyel sahibi olmadığı bir diğer işareti olarak ortaya konmuştur. Ayrıca sendika hareketlerinin çeşitli yükselişleri ve denemeleri de gerek 1946 gerekse 1952'de kurulan yön değiştirici örgütlerle engellenmeye devam etmiştir. Tek-parti dönemi yanında DP hükümeti döneminde de grevler genel olarak örgütsüz ve işçilerin kendi gayretleri ile örgütleyebildiği eylemler olarak kalmışlardır (Güzel, 2016). Bunun tek nedeni işçi sınıfının henüz gelişimini tamamlayamamış olan politik bilincinden ileri gelmemektedir, dönemin iktidarları isimleri her ne olursa olsun işçi sınıfının her türlü eylemini bastırmıştır. Sınıf hareketlerinin az gelişmiş olduğu düşüncesi aynı zamanda Kemalizm ile dirsek temasına devam etmektedir. Halkçılık anlayışının öyle ya da böyle benzer şekilde Avcıoğlu tarafından da benimsenmesi,

Avcıođlu tarafından sosyalizm ile birlikte sınıfsız bir toplum kurma yolundaki yegâne araç olarak kabulünden de gelmektedir (Avcıođlu, 1962c).

Türkiye işçi sınıfının tarihine ilişkin çıkarımlar, 1960'lardaki koşulları ve önceki tarihsel olaylardan ne tür noktaların miras kaldığını değerlendirmek için seçilmiştir. Bu bağlamda incelenirse Avcıođlu'nun düşünceleri daha net anlaşılabilir ve ancak bu şekilde tasarlanan sosyalizm fikri daha iyi aydınlatılabilir. 1960'lardaki sosyalizm düşüncesi herhangi bir geçmişe sahip olmayan, kendiliğinden bir ayaklanma olarak değerlendirilemez. Bu hareketin ve 1960'lı yıllardaki mobilizasyonun hem kusurları hem de olumlu noktaları geçmişteki birçok sorundan ortaya çıktı ve küresel bağlamdan da fazlasıyla etkilendi. Avcıođlu'nun düşüncelerine yapılan eleştirilerin önce işçi sınıfının içinde bulunduğu durumu ve kapitalizmin gelişimini göz önünde bulundurması gerekiyor. Avcıođlu'nun fikirleri, yalnızca Türkiye'deki sosyalist entelektüel mirasın eksikliğiyle yahut gelişmemişliği ile basitçe özetlenemez. Çünkü onun düşünce dünyası, Türkiye'nin önceki dönemlerindeki sınıf hareketlerinin yetersizliğini ve pasifize edilmesini de temsil ediyor. Ayrıca daha önce de belirtildiği gibi Avcıođlu'nun düşüncelerinin anlaşılabilmesi için onun sınıf siyaseti karşısındaki duruşunun tespit edilmesi gerekmektedir. Öte yandan, bu tezde defalarca vurgulandığı üzere fikirlerin kendi başarılarına herhangi bir maddi güçleri yoktur. Bu nedenle, fikirleri gerçekleştirmek için maddi ve pratik güçler gereklidir (Engels & Marx, 1974). Bunu gerçekleştirecek olan da sınıfın kendisinden başkası olamayacaktır.

Yine de Avcıođlu'nun düşüncelerine, günümüzde sosyalist hareketin başarısızlığının ana nedenlerinden biri olarak yaklaşıldı ve inceleme konusu oldu. Ama bu fikir, "sınıftan aydına" değil, "aydından sınıfa" gibi bir yaklaşımdan doğmaktadır. İşçi sınıfının geri kalmışlık koşullarına yaptığı vurgu aslında teorisinin temel zayıflığı olarak da değerlendirilebilse de, işçi sınıfının ve sosyalist hareketin yeteri kadar olgunlaşmamış olması, 1960'lı yıllara kadar bir iddiadan çok bir gerçeklikti. Teori, maddi koşulların ya da gerçekliğin bir yansımasıysa, Avcıođlu'nun teorisini ve bu türden politik yaklaşımını oluşturan maddi koşulların ne olduğu sorusu değer arz etmektedir. Hem Avcıođlu'nun özellikle işçi sınıfı ve sosyalizm açısından düşüncelerinin anlaşılmasında hem de temsil etmiş olduğu hareket de dâhil olmak üzere 1960'lı yıllarda aydınların siyasi duruşunun tahlili açısından ise hayati önem taşımaya devam ediyor.

1960'lardaki siyasal akımlar, sınıfların, özellikle de işçi sınıfının örgütlenmesi açısından çok önemli sorunları da bilinçli yahut bilinçsiz olarak paylaştılar. Tümünün ortak sorunun işçi sınıfına olan yaklaşımları olduğu kabul edilebilir ya da başka bir deyişle işçi sınıfının, tarihin öznesi rolündeki yerinin belirlenmesi olarak da anlaşılabilir. Dönemin siyasal akımları sosyalist devrimi gerçekleştirme görevini temelde işçi sınıfına bırakmaklar birlikte bu görev “ilerici gruplar” ile bir şekilde paylaştırıldı. Bunun temel nedeni ise gerek CHP gerekse DP döneminde sınıf hareketlerinin tek başlarına güçsüz ve daha kırılabilir kalabileceği düşüncesi ile tüm ezilenlerin aynı cephede birleşmesi düşüncesinden de ileri gelmektedir. Ancak Yön ve Devrim Hareketleri gibi bazı akımlar tarafından ise işçi sınıfının doğrudan devrim için tam anlamıyla imkân/gücü olmadığı da kabul görmekteydi. İşçi sınıfının değişimin önde gelen öznesi olarak kabul etmek yerine, bir grup öncü tarafından “zayıf” işçi sınıfı adına bir devrim fırsatını şekillendirme görevi üstlenilmekteydi. Bu, özellikle Avcıoğlu'nun düşünce dünyasının hayati hatalara neden olan temel noktalarından biriydi. İşçi sınıfının kurtuluşu ulusal devrimin, feodal ve emperyalist güçleri tasfiyesinin sonrasına bırakıldı. Ardından, tamamlanan koşullarda, işçi sınıfının mobilizasyon ve sesini yükseltme fırsatı bulabileceği planlanmıştı. Ancak unutulmamalıdır ki, bu aydınların 1960'lı yıllardaki siyasi duruşlarında taşıdıkları kusurlar, önceki maddi koşulların yansımalarıdır. Somut ile fikir arasındaki diyalektik göz ardı edilirse, bir siyasi figürün salt ideolojik düzeyde analiz edilmesi maddi pratiklerin olduğundan farklı anlamlar taşımalarına neden olacaktır. Bu, özellikle Avcıoğlu ile Yön-Devrim Hareketi örneğinde, her iki yaklaşıma da birçok eleştirel tutumda rastlanabilir. Ancak örgütlenmeden uzak duran yaklaşımları nedeniyle ne yazık ki Avcıoğlu ile Yön ve Devrim hareketi devrim ve değişim konusunda planlananın aksine başarısızlıkları yaşamak durumunda kaldı. Böylece yalnızca Kemalizm açısından değil sosyalist düşünce için de son derece değerli bir örnek olarak Avcıoğlu ile Yön ve Devrim hareketi, aydın-sınıf ilişkisinin en can alıcı noktalarından birini kendi siyasi yaşamları pahasına kanıtladı ama yukarıda da bahsedildiği gibi sınıftan aydına olan bu diyalektik ilişkinin de altının çizilmesi gerekiyor.

Netice olarak, Avcıoğlu, 1960'lı yılların en önemli siyasi bir figürlerinde biri olsa da, kitleleri örgütlemeyi başaramadı, belki farklı bir bakış açısı ile bunu gerçekleştirmek amacını tam olarak da taşımadı. Ancak, Yön Dergisi gibi 1960'lı yılların en çok

okunan dergilerinden birinin taşıyabileceği potansiyele rağmen bunun gerçekleştirilememiş olması da dikkate değer noktalardan biridir. Yine de Avcıoğlu özelinde Kemalizm'in ilerici yanları işçi sınıfının çıkarları ile birleştirilmeye çalışıldı. Ancak temel olarak, hem Avcıoğlu'nun hem de Yön ve Devrim Hareketi'nin çabaları, aydınlar arasında organik bağlar olmadan, maddi koşulların aydınlar aracılığıyla değiştirilmesinin ya da bunun denenmesinin neredeyse imkânsız olduğunu gösterdi. 1960'larda Kemalizm'in solcu olarak adlandırılan yorumundan Türkiye'deki Marksist literatür ve tarih için en değerli derslerden biri çıkarılabilmektedir. Avcıoğlu ile Yön ve Devrim Hareketi, Kemalizm ile Marksizm arasındaki olası müspet bağları bulmaya çalışırken, planladıkları değişimin en hayati adımında başarısız oldular. Yine de bu durum, Türkiye'deki sınıf hareketlerine ilişkin olgunlaşmamış pratik koşullar analizinden kaynaklanıyordu.

Yukarıda açıklandığı üzere, işçi sınıfının gelişimi ve Türkiye'de kapitalizmin oluşumu analizleri aslında Avcıoğlu gibi aydınların sınıflar arasındaki konumunu az ya da çok göstermektedir. Ancak tüm bu anlatılanlara rağmen Avcıoğlu, 1960'lı yıllarda Türkiye bağlamında sosyalizm ve sosyalizmle alakalı kavramların mobilizasyonu anlamında göz ardı edilemeyecek bir niteliğe sahiptir. İçerikten bağımsız olarak, Yön Dergisi başta olmak üzere, ülkede farklı bir sesin, aynı zamanda geçmişten öyle ya da böyle kopuşun imzası Avcıoğlu temsilinde dönem aydınlarında görülebilir. Bu bakımdan kavramsallaştırmaya çalışılanlar o dönemde aşılmasa yahut aynı kanalda mobilize edilemese dahi Türkiye işçi sınıfı ve aydınlarının arasındaki ilişkinin solun uyanış döneminde kurulmaya çalışıldığı, sonucu ne olursa olsun sol düşüncenin bugünü için de çok mühim dersleri içerdiği açıktır. Ancak, aydınlar ideolojilerin deneyimledikleri sorunları aşabilecek temel aktörler olarak anlaşılmalıdır. Bunun gerçekleştirilebilmesi yine sadece maddi pratikler düzeyinde sınıfın kendisi tarafından gerçekleştirilebilecektir; aydınlar ise bu durumda ancak ve ancak tâli roller oynayabilecektir.

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**TEZİN TÜRÜ / DEGREE:** **Yüksek Lisans** / Master  **Doktora** / PhD

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