

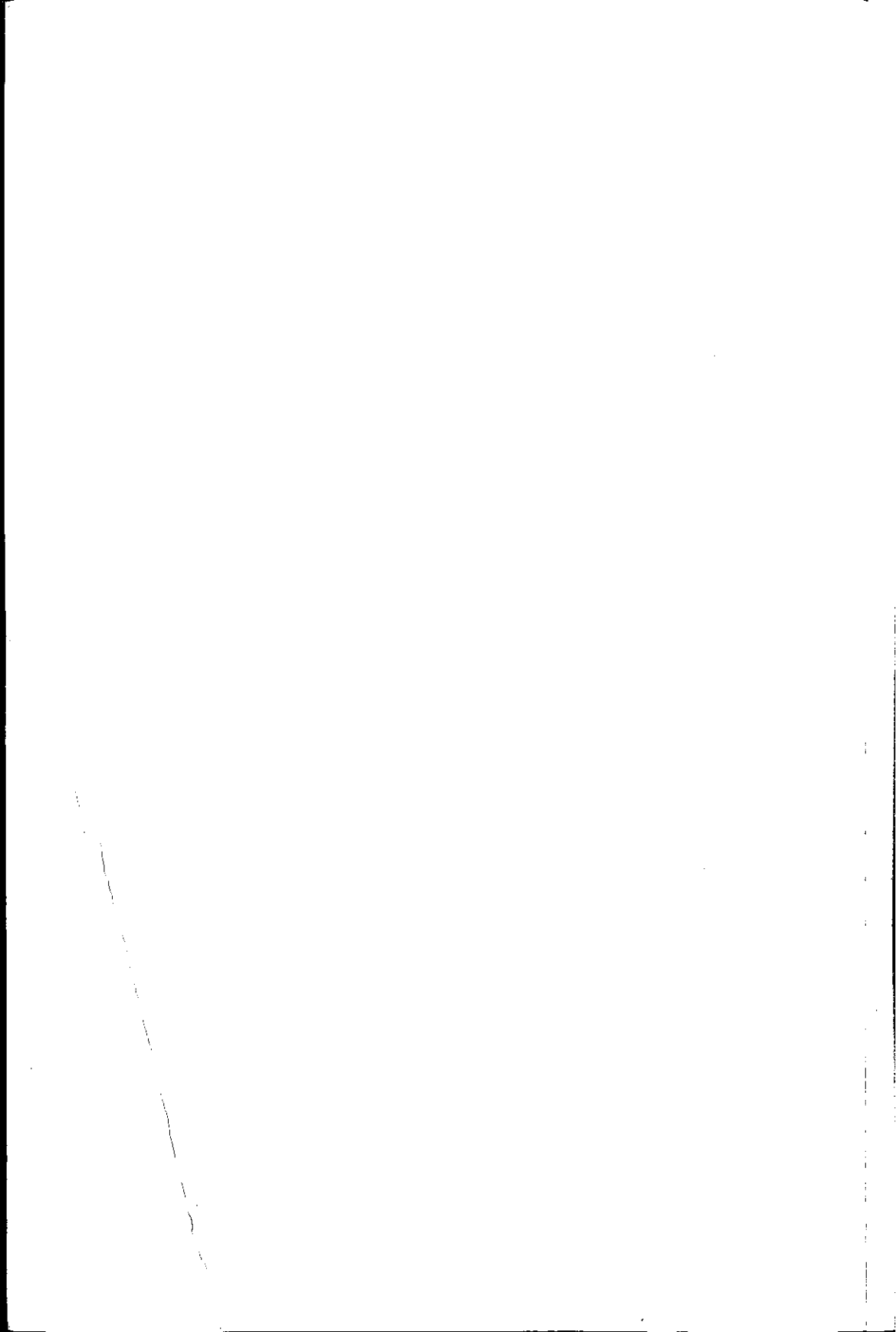
# Political Islam in Turkey and Women's Organizations

YEŞİM ARAT



Turkish Economic and  
Social Research Foundation

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**Political Islam in  
Turkey and  
Women's  
Organizations**

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Yapım

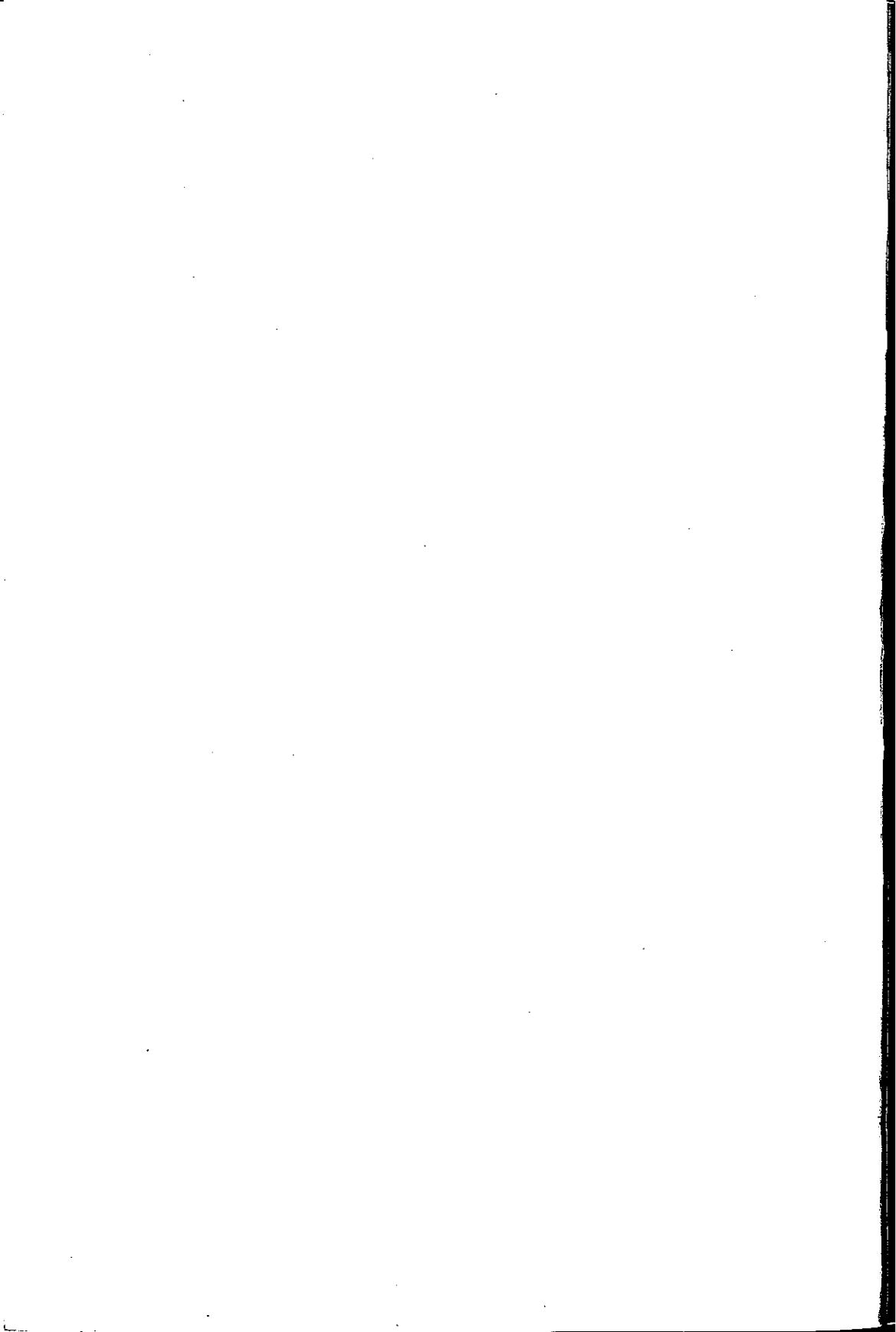
MAVİ GRAFİK

Basım

Egemen Matbaası

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## ÖZET

“Siyasal İslam ve Kadın Örgütlenmesi” konulu Tesev projesi İslami kesimde en yoğun ve başarılı biçimde örgütlenen Refah Partisi Hanım Komisyonları üzerinde odaklanmıştır. Refah Partisi Hanım Komisyonları başarılı çalışmaları nedeni ile basına sık sık yansımış fakat gereğince araştırılmamış bir kadın örgütüdür. Kadınlar, Cumhuriyet tarihinde benzerine rastlanmayan bir biçimde Refah Partisi Hanımlar komisyonu çatısı altında toplanmış, alt ve orta sınıf ev kadınlarını siyasal alana seçmen ve militan olarak taşımışlardır.

Proje bu başarılı siyasallaşma sürecinin nedenlerini araştırmıştır. Projeye esas teşkil eden veriler öncelikle derinlemesine mülakat yolu ile toplanmıştır. Ayrıca parti yayınlarından, broşür ve programlarından yararlanılmış, geniş bir gazete, dergi taraması yapılmıştır.

Türkiye çapında il, ilçe, mahalle ve sandık düzeyinde yaygın ve hiyerarşik bir örgütlenme gerçekleştiren Refah Partisi hanım komisyonları modern halkla ilişkiler metodları ile eğitilerek çalışmalarını sürdürmüşlerdir. Aynı zamanda hanım komisyonları üyeleri geleneksel kültüre özgü toplumsallaşma biçimlerini kendi amaçları için kullanmışlardır. Doğum, sünnet, nişan, düğün kutlamaları, kabul günleri, hasta ve taziye ziyaretleri gibi gelenekleri, kandil kutlamaları, Kuran ve Mevlut okumaları gibi dini gelenekleri kullanarak kadınlarla sıkı kişisel bağlar geliştirmişler, bu yoğun sosyal ilişkiler ağı çerçevesinde kadınları bağlı buldukları ve en güvende hisset-

tikleri ev ortamında siyasete çekmişlerdir. Bu süreçde görünüşte siyasal olmayan bir siyasallaşma biçimi söz konusudur.

Toplumsal ilişkiler çerçevesinde siyasallaşan kadınlar, dini gereksinimlerinden bağımsız, somut, bireysel gereksinimlerine karşılık buldukları için partiye bağlanmışlardır. Kadınlar yadsınan eğitim görme, ev dışında toplumsal alanda faaliyet gösterme, sosyal çevrelerini genişletme ihtiyaçlarını Hanım Komisyonları çerçevesinde gidermişlerdir.

Refah Partisi Hanım Komisyonları faaliyetlerini esas teşkilatca kesin bir biçimde belirlenmiş bir alanda şekillendirebilmişlerdir. Kadınlar, Partinin Merkez Karar organlarında yer alamamış, büyük bir özveri ile çalıştıkları partilerinin geleceği konusunda söz sahibi olamamışlardır; İslami ideolojinin kolayca özgürlüklerini kısıtlayıcı bir biçimde kullanılabilineceğini bu güç kazanma ve yeni deneyimler edinme sürecinde göz ardı etmişlerdir.

Refah Partisi Hanımlar Komisyonu deneyimi ev kadınlarının kitleler halinde siyasallaşmaya hazır olduğunu göstermiştir. Bu deneyim siyasal partilerin kadınların dini duygulardan bağımsız, gereksinimleri olduğuna ve kadınların siyasal gücünün göz ardı edilemeyeceğine işaret eder.



# POLITICAL ISLAM IN TURKEY AND WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

## INTRODUCTION

The project was originally designed to study "women's organizations affiliated with Refah and other Islamist women's associations which function as NGOs" (Project proposal "Political Islam in Turkey", p. 8). The aim was to study "the worldviews and perceptions of women's position in society that guide organizational activity, the aims to be pursued and the activities that are undertaken" (Project proposal "Political Islam in Turkey", p. 8).

We began our research after the military declared Islam as the foremost threat to the security of the state and after Refah Partisi, the Welfare Party (WP) which was the most vibrant and powerful focus of Islamist activity was closed by a Constitutional Court decision. This was a period when the Islamist felt threatened and defensive. As we proceeded with our research, we discovered that we could not reach Muslim women's organizations or NGOs. We tried formal means and contacted İstanbul Regional Headquarter of Foundations

and the Bureau of Associations at the İstanbul Security Department as well as informal connections. They were either dissipated or dormant. We were denied interviews by the few we could locate. We decided to present the scant information we could find on Islamist women's associations as an appendix. Our focus, instead, has been on women activists and women's organization of Refah, the Welfare Party. We tried to follow up on how the women were organizing within the newly founded Fazilet (Virtue) Party which was a continuation of Refah, as well.

Women's organization and activism in the Welfare Party was an unprecedented phenomenon. No other party in Turkey could boast of a similar membership of women. Women of the Welfare Party registered close to a million members in about 6 years. Welfare Party men claimed that women were instrumental in persuading many husbands to register with the party<sup>1</sup>. The women's organizations were perhaps the most dynamic unit of the party, visible in all its rallies, meetings and activities (Çakır, 1995, p. 244). The press duly recognized the activism of the organization with captions such as "The dynamo of the Welfare Party in the elections are women" (*Cumhuriyet*, February 17, 1994), "Welfare Party women are the most industrious" (*Milliyet*, December 29, 1993) "Ladies of the Welfare Party are like bees" (*Milli Gazete*, February 16, 1994) and referred the the president of the İstanbul organization as "The Welfare Party woman who carried Tayyip to the Mayoralty" (*Hürriyet*, March 30, 1994). Today, other parties are trying to adopt similar methods of mobilizing women to draw votes. (*Yeni Yüzyıl*, September 25, 1998)

Even outside the Turkish context, the intensity and extent of Refah women activists' engagement in politics was striking. Women

have been known to support conservative causes (for example the New Right in the United States) and actively engage in Islamist movements (such as the Iranian Revolution). However, in the Turkish context, there was an Islamist political party in a secular democratic polity through which women engaged in politics. The women helped carry the party which was a marginal one in the late 1980s to power, as the larger coalition partner of the government, in 1995.

Even though much has been written on the Welfare Party in general and the significance of Islamist revival it has helped to usher in the Turkish political scene (Toprak, 1984, 1991; Birtek and Toprak, 1993; Mardin, 1981, 1989; Göle, 1991, 1997; Sarıbay, 1985; Heper, 1997; Çakır, 1994; Cizre Sakalhoğlu, 1996; Turan, 1991; Yavuz, 1997), its women activists and the Ladies's Commission of the party have not been studied to date. Journalists and reporters, not merely those of the Welfare Party ranks, have shown due interest and reported on the visible activism of the Welfare Party women. (Sevindi, October 12, 15, 1996 *Yeni Yüzyıl*; Güver and Bilgin, November 30, 1998 *Yeni Yüzyıl*, Sevindi, 1998). However, there has been no systematic attempt to examine Welfare Party Ladies's Commission or Refah Partisi Hanımlar Komisyonu as they have been called in Turkish. The organization remained a mystery.

## **THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESIS**

Our central focus in this project is on women's political mobilization through the Welfare Party Ladies's Commission. We were interested to study how women mobilized other women into politics so successfully. It has long been argued that women lacked interest in politics. Even though feminist literature has clearly contested the

claim and argued that women were more involved and interested in politics than the orthodox political scientists assumed, (Finifter, 1996 ) women have not been militant activists in large numbers within the party ranks. The Turkish case was no different. Under these circumstances, we aim to explain the political mobilization of women through the Welfare Party. How and why did women became involved with the party? How could women be drawn into politics on the ranks of the Welfare Party? What kept them there? In our attempt to respond to these questions, we hypothesized that women were mobilized into politics through a process of seemingly "apolitical" politicization. Both those who took part in party organization and others who were recruited as members were politicized in the social context of personalistic networks which they preseved in the political domain. The Welfare Party ladies successfully tapped the traditional medium of socialization and politicized it. In this process, religion was an important tool of popular mobilization that other parties could not benefit from.

Those who worked as party activists shared the goal of societal transformation that the party promised. They remained as committed militants because they derived personal/ individual satisfaction from the solidarity, comradeship and patriotism that their common engagement delivered above and beyond the emotional satisfaction of religious observance.

## **METHOD**

The data for this project was compiled from published material and in-depth interviews. We reviewed articles and books on Islam and the Welfare Party in Turkey. We surveyed journals and newspapers, particularly *Milli Gazete* that was closely linked to the Welfare Party

for those years (1994-1995) when the incidence of reporting on the Women's Commissions seemed to be higher. In this report, we mostly used our interviews with women activists, publications of the party and our survey of *Milli Gazete*. Because the party had been closed with a Constitutional Court decision, and the Virtue Party was newly being instituted, there was no organizational locus through which we could acquire a systematic collection of material published by the Welfare Party. We gathered Welfare Party documents and brochures through people, some party members, others colleagues and students who had acquired these papers before the party was closed. Despite our numerous attempts to engage them in our research, and despite their promises, party leaders in Ankara who had been in charge of party organization did not respond to us.

Intensive interviews carried out with party members were a critical source of our data. A total of twenty five interviews, nineteen with women and five with men were conducted. We contacted the people we interviewed through the snow ball method. Sibel Eraslan who headed the İstanbul Women's Commission of the party between 1989-1994 and Ruşen Çakır who is an expert on the Welfare Party and Islamic movement in Turkey were our initial contacts. We followed their lead and tried to get more contacts through the people we interviewed. We were able to interview fifteen women activists of the Welfare Party out of a forty we tried to reach. An interview was carried out with (an ex Welfare Party activist) the president of Milli Gençlik Vakfı Kadın Komisyonu, National Youth Foundation Women's Commission which was a critical foundation in cultivating young Welfare Party sympathizers among women.

Among those who declined to give us an interview, some responded immediately, others expressed their desire to consult their

colleagues and declined after the consultation. The desire for consultation reflected the importance of these women's ties to their community and the importance of communal perceptions in their lives. Even though those who gave us interviews were very congenial and willingly accepted the interviews because they felt that this was an opportunity for them to make themselves better understood by the non-Islamist groups, there was apparent skepticism of our enterprise as was reflected by the large number of refusals. Because we had to carry some of our interviews during summer, some could not be located as they had left the city for the summer.

Even though the Virtue Party was only in the process of institutionalizing its main organs, we approached its women members, because we wanted to follow up on the women's organization in the aftermath of Refah. We interviewed the three women (out of five) who were appointed to the administrative bodies of the central party organization (two in Merkez Karar ve Yürütme Kurulu 'MKYK', Central Decision and Executive Council, the other in Parti Meclisi, the Consultative Party Council) and one of whom was also given the task to institutionalize the women's organization.

Within the party, women's commissions were closely tied to the central organs that were occupied by men. In order to gain a perspective on women's organizations and reach other women through men, we interviewed five men who had been in important administrative positions within the party.

We carried our interviews mostly in İstanbul, three in Ankara and one in Bursa. In these three cities, we were able to interview the presidents of the Welfare Party Provincial Ladies's Commissions. Others interviewed were either presidents of district organizations or those responsible from different branches of the ladies's commis-

sions in the party. We interviewed Tayyip Erdoğan, the ex-President of the Welfare Party İstanbul Organization, the İstanbul mayor who was convicted of divisive religious propaganda and who had been the single most important figure in initiating and institutionalizing the women's commissions in the party. The other men interviewed included an other ex-president of the party's İstanbul organization who later became a member of the Parliament, a member responsible from organizational unit of the İstanbul branch, a president of a district branch who we were urged led an exemplary supportive relation with the ladies commission of his district, a member of the İstanbul executive council of the party who was also a consultant to Tayyip Erdoğan as well as a columnist in *Milli Gazete*.

Among the women interviewed, Sibel Eraslan of the Welfare Party and Nazlı Ilıcak of the Virtue Party unequivocally conveyed to us that the interviews could be public and allowed us to record them. Others felt that if they remained anonymous, we could have more intimate dialogues (which we preferred to have), while some others asked us to use our judgments regarding publicity. There were a few interviews we could not tape. We have chosen to respect anonymity at large and focus on the sociological/political aspects of our interviews. Men did not mind to have their names revealed but we did not focus on their interviews in our report. Our aim in the interviews which lasted about three hours was to explore the experiences of women in the commissions and generate hypotheses that could shed light on our questions regarding the success and the limitations of the women's political mobilization through the women's commissions. We did not aim to prove a hypothesis.

## ORGANIZATION OF THE LADIES' COMMISSIONS

### a. Evolution of the Ladies's commissions:

#### Welfare Party and Women

The Welfare Party which sees itself to be an outgrowth of the National Order (Milli Nizam Partisi) National Salvation Party (Milli Selamet Partisi) formation formally prescribed to a worldview where women were expected to uphold their traditional roles and remain invisible in the public realm. The program of the National Salvation Party did not have any reference to women per se. The issue of the "Protection of the Family" (*Program of the National Salvation Party*, p. 9) was discussed in the party program, but even then, rights of the heads of families and parents, not the mothers or women, were mentioned (*Program of the National Salvation Party*, p. 9, art. 21, 22). The Program of the Welfare Party, similiarly did not have any reference to women. Like the National Salvation Party before it, the Welfare Party included a discussion of the family in its program without any reference to women (*Program of the Welfare Party*, p.8)

The need to consider women seriously began to be felt after the 1987 elections. The idea of organizing women within the party organization and trying to reach other women was most closely associated with Tayyip Erdoğan who was at the time head of the Welfare Party İstanbul organization. The project was not adopted without opposition. The more conservatives within the party argued that women's place was the home and that it was inappropriate to expect women to work within the party ranks. The opposition was contained and in 1989, women close to the Welfare Party circles, close friends and relatives of the men in the administrative organs of the



party began to be educated to form the women's commissions. Those who continued to be displeased insisted that Tayyip Erdoğan who personally educated the first group of women to form the commissions should turn his back towards the head scarved ladies as he lectured to them. The 1990 Work Schedule of the Welfare Party İstanbul organization explicitly and very urgently called attention to the need to increase the activities of the party towards women. In a section called "Deficiencies" which was placed right after the introduction, it was stated that "the insufficiency of our work related to ladies is acknowledged by all members of our organization, and among those issues that need to be addressed and solved urgently, it ranks first." (*Refah Partisi İstanbul İl Teşkilatı 1990 Yılı Çalışma Programı*, p. 6).

### **b. Organization of the Ladies' Commissions**

Because the 1981 Constitution prohibited the parties from organizing Women's Branches, women's organization within the party was carried out as a commission activity that was tied to the Public Relations branch of the party. Even though we did meet women who did not like the name Ladies and did not understand why the commissions were called ladies' and not women's commissions, an interviewee approvingly narrated to us the explanation of a male party official: not all women could become ladies; however the Welfare Party believed that all women were actually ladies. The preference for the word "ladies" rather than "women" reflected the high esteem the party held women in. Those who objected to the word, pointed that there was a divisive, class bias associated with the word "hanımlar" ("ladies") as opposed to "women" which was more encompassing. These responses reflected the respect for lower

class sensibilities that those in critical positions within the ladies commissions had.

In theory, the ladies' commission was one of the commissions tied to the public relations branch of the party. For example in the Ankara Provincial Organization of the party it was one of seven (*Refah Partisi Ankara İl Teşkilatı 1993 Yılı Çalışma Programı*, p. 18-21). The other six were the Youth Commission, Professional Associations Commission, Workers' Commission, Civil Servants' Commission, Retired People's Commission, Handicapped People' Commission. In İstanbul, it was one of eleven which included local administration, education, research, human rights, environment and health commissions besides those Ankara had (*Refah Partisi İstanbul İl Teşkilatı 1993 Yılı Çalışma Programı*, p. 34-39). Even though formally the Ladies' Commissions ranked as significant as a Commission for the Handicapped, in reality they had a unique position within the party establishment with an organization parallel to that of the central party organs.

The goals of the Ladies's Commissions were listed as follows:

- a. insuring the institutionalization and effectiveness of ladies's commissions in the context of provincial and district level organizations.
- b. with the participation of the provincial and district level "ladies' commissions", organizing "enlarged monthly consultative meetings".
- c. organizing seminars, conferances, panels, symposiums and the like concerning ladies's problems at the provincial or district levels.
- d. preparing propositions that present the Milli Görüş (National Vision) solutions concerning ladies's problems.

- e. insuring the increase of ladies' membership.
- f. organizing fairs, plays and fashion shows directed towards ladies.
- g. insuring the participation of women with oratory powers in the propoganda work of the party. (*Refah Partisi İstanbul İl Teşkilatı 1993 Yılı Çalışma Programı*, p. 34)

Ladies commissions were vertically organized and horizontally tied to the central organs of the party. In Ankara, there was the Presidency of the Welfare Party Ladies Commission (RP Hanımlar Komisyonu Genel Başkanlığı). Under her office were the Ladies Commissions organized at the province level (İl Teşkilatları) which were loosely overseen by regional supervisors (Bölge Teşkilatları). Under the provincial level organizations were the district organizations (İlçe Teşkilatları); under the district organizations were at times the belde, county organizations (Belde Teşkilatları) and in most places quarter (Mahalle) organizations, and under them were the ballot box (Sandık) organizations. At every organizational level, the ladies commissions were horizontally tied to the relevant central party organization.<sup>2</sup> At every province and district level of the main organization, there was a representative at the administrative council who was responsible from the ladies's commissions. Members of the Ladies Commissions at the provinces and Presidents of the ladies' commissions at the district organizations were invited to attend the monthly enlarged council meetings (divan) of the central party organization. (*Refah Partisi İstanbul İl Teşkilatı 1993 Yılı Çalışma Programı*, p. 15)

The organizational structure of the ladies commissioned paralleled that of the central party organization. Those commissions in provinces with larger urban areas designated as metropolitan centers

such as İstanbul and Ankara had 25 members and 25 auxiliary members constituting a total of 50 members, including the president and the vice president (*RP Teşkilat Rehberi*, 1996, p. 14; *Refah Partisi Ankara İl Teşkilatı 1993 Yılı Çalışma Programı*, p. 20). These 25 members and their auxiliaries were responsible from 25 different units<sup>3</sup>: 1. presidency, 2. organization, 3. electoral work, 4. propoganda, 5. public relations, 6. local administration coordination, 7. foreign relations, 8. economic and social issues, 9. secretariat, 10. accountant, 11. financial issues, 12. education, 13. orators, 14. youth, 15. professional associations, 16. personel, 17. manager, 18. information processing, 19. planning and research, 20. press and publications, 21. professional chambers, 22. trade unions, 23. non-governmental organizations, 24. social and cultural activities, 25. documentation and archives. These 50 members constituted the administrative council (yönetim kurulu), which met every week to discuss their plan of action, program the activities of the commission and evaluate what was done.

A group of 9 from this council was the executive council (icra kurulu), which was responsible not merely for running the daily or hourly planned activities of the commission, but also steering the course of action which would be taken in the administrative council meetings. Members of the executive council included those responsible from organization, electoral works, propoganda, public relations, local administration, secretariat, economic and social issues, education, youth as well as the president of the provincial organization. The executive council met weekly as well. In smaller provinces, the commissions and hence the administrative councils included 30 members 7 of whom constituted the executive council.

At the district level, when the population was less than 50,000, the ladies commissions were composed of 15 members. In districts

of metropolitan provinces with a population of more than 50,000, 15 members and 15 auxiliary members, a total of 30 members constituted the ladies commissions (*RP Teşkilat Rehberi*, 1996, p. 44; *Refah Partisi Ankara İl Teşkilatı 1993 Yılı Çalışma Programı*, p. 20). Similar to the provincial organization, the district organizations had their administrative councils which included all their members and executive councils with 7 members. Besides their own weekly meetings, the district organizations met at the province level monthly with the provincial ladies commission.

At the "mahalle" or quarter level, the ladies commissions, similar to the organization at the central party structure was composed of a 14 members consultative assembly. Besides their weekly meetings, every month they met at the district level with the district organizations. At the level of the ballot box, (*sandık teşkilatı*), there were 5 members including one chief observer, (*başmüşahit*) and four observers, (*müşahit*).

This elaborate organizational structure was adopted by the Welfare Party Ladies Commissions throughout the country. We have been told that by the end of 1996, ladies commissions had been organized in all the 79 provinces of the country, if not in all the districts, quarters or the ballot boxes. In metropolitan areas of İstanbul and Ankara, the presidents of the provincial organizations prided themselves of organizing even at the apartment level.

Responsibilities of these organizational branches and units were elaborately and clearly defined by the party. The work schedule of the İstanbul Party Organization used an imperative mood and underlined, in its preface, the principles which were expected to guide organizational activity:

- Do not provoke hatred, provoke love
- Do not make things difficult, make them easy

- Do not be fearsome, be a deliverer of good news
- Do not be judgemental, be forgiving
- Extend greetings, there is grace in greetings

These parsimonious dictates of public relations were forcefully communicated to the activists who were to take part in the party organization ( *Refah Partisi İstanbul İl Teşkilatı 1993 Yılı Çalışma Programı*, p. 7). A similar message was given through the Ankara organization ( *Refah Partisi Ankara İl Teşkilatı 1993 Yılı Çalışma Programı*, p. 7). The responsibilities of individual units within the organizational structure were as clearly and elaborately articulated. In describing the responsibilities of the organizational unit of the party within the province, the İstanbul organization stated what a good organization required. For example, it had to employ qualified personelle, all the functionaries had to be educated regarding their duties, there had to be a unity of belief and thought among the members, the members had to have affection for each other, it had to be organized in a hierarchic manner ( *Refah Partisi İstanbul İl Teşkilatı 1993 Yılı Çalışma Programı*, p. 12). The booklet further elaborated the principles of organizations beyond what was stated in the preface. It explained that the organization should be built by people who have independent businesses and can spare their productive time to the administrative or executive councils and that the well being of the members of the organization should be taken seriously and the fact that they are a family should not be forgotten ( *Refah Partisi İstanbul İl Teşkilatı 1993 Yılı Çalışma Programı*, p. 13-14). The party was careful to propagate the public relations guidelines which made its propaganda activities so successful. Finally, the formal structure of an executive or an administrative council meeting was dictated to the prospective organizers: *Agenda*

- opening and roll call
- current issues
- issues which require consultation
- issues which require decision
- preparation of the agenda of the administrative committee
- programming the activities
- supervising the activities
- wishes and hopes
- closing ( *Refah Partisi İstanbul İl Teşkilatı 1993 Yılı Çalışma Programı*, p. 15)

The party organization was keen to educate the members with a particular ethos and identity. Public relations or communications techniques and psychological tips which reverberated the organizational guidelines presented earlier in the brochure were elaborated and reiterated when the propaganda unit of the organization was described. Propaganda work

- a. had to communicate love
- b. should neither repel nor discriminate
- c. had to be convincing
- d. had to convey the truth about the party
- e. had to make things easier and not difficult
- f. had to make others love not hate
- g. had to use a soft language and avoid roughness
- h. had to be a messenger of good news not fear ( *Refah Partisi İstanbul İl Teşkilatı 1993 Yılı Çalışma Programı*, p.24)

Themes of positive thinking and conciliatory approach to prospective constituents were reinforced throughout the brochure which the party functionaries were socialized into. Our interviews attested to the commitment of the women leaders to these guidelines at least at the discourse level as we shall discuss later.

### **ACTIVITIES OF THE LADIES' COMMISSIONS**

Within their tightly structured organizations, ladies commissions carried out their activities. Even though there were twenty five different functional units in the administrative councils of the metropolitan commissions, the activities of the ladies's commissions mostly revolved around "party organization" "propoganda" and "public relations" units represented in the executive councils. Education of the recruited members and orators who would work in the party ranks was also an important unit of activity.

Organizational activities involved institutionalizing the elaborate party machinery at different administrative levels of the polity. The metropolitan province of İstanbul where we carried out most of our research was divided into 32 districts (ilçe), 37 counties (belde), 863 quarters/villages where there were 18,125 ballot boxes by 1997 (*İstanbul 6. Olağan İl Kongresi Faaliyet Raporu*, p. 12). According to the ladies commission report prepared for August 1997, the party was institutionalized in all districts of İstanbul and in 24 counties (when there were a total of 35 counties). There were 472 representatives and 500 second representatives in all quarters (mahalle) of the province. 1490 chiefobservers (başmüşahit) and 2137 observers (müşahit) were given the responsibility of overseeing the ballot boxes. ("İstanbul İl Hanımlar Komisyonu Çalışma Raporu", unpublished report prepared by Handan Bayer, 03.09. 1997). Progress



report presented to the 6th Congress of the Party Provincial Organization stated that the women members increased from 158,287 to 377,888 between 1995 and 1997 (*İstanbul 6. Olağan İl Kongresi Faaliyet Raporu*, p. 35). The total membership, according to the same report, increased from 676,337 to 1,072,333 (*İstanbul 6. Olağan İl Kongresi Faaliyet Raporu*, p. 13). Women members thus constituted about a third of the party membership in İstanbul<sup>4</sup>.

The Propaganda activities aimed to communicate the ideology, goals and principles of the party to its constituents. The party expected the functionaries to propagate its worldview as well as the solutions to national, international and local problems it offered. They were advised to engage in a series of activities and use various means which included, informal chats organized at homes, person to person talks, called "point" visits (*nokta ziyaretleri*) where a person targeted as a potential ally is visited with prior appointment by a group of one to three party members, video shows, cassette recorder sessions, indoor meetings, panels, conferences, forums, debates, letters and greeting cards, souvenirs, small gifts, commemoration days, social services, telephone networks, trips and similar activities in order to propagate the party ideology.

Different from the propaganda activities, the Public Relations activities aimed to cultivate relations with and extend ties to different social groups and secondary associations. Similar to propaganda activities, public relations activities emphasized developing links above and beyond an attempt to explain what the party stood for. Visits to hospitals, celebrations of weddings, births, offering condolences, and paying curtesy visits, engaging in social activities and heeding attention to the problems of individuals and associations, including political parties, administrators, professional associations,

schools or unions, were the means of carrying out public relations activities.

Besides the propaganda and public relations activities, ladies commissions were expected to offer education to their members who worked in the party organization. A primary responsibility of the commissions was to educate their activists about the principles which guided party activities, the organization of the party machinery to which they belonged and the party ideology, National Order (Milli Görüş) they were expected to propagate. However, educational courses or conferences provided by the commissions covered a broader range of subjects aimed at members or the constituency at large; they included current political problems, human rights, concepts of independence and freedom, election laws, public relations, human psychology, and the environment.

Work done by the Ladies Commissions were punctually reported to higher levels of party machinery in writing. Every month the presidents of the district level ladies commissions reported to the province level ladies commissions as well as the district level of the central party organization. Similarly, the presidents of the provincial level ladies commissions reported to the representative responsible for ladies commissions at the province level of the central party organization. These reports included not merely the form distributed by the party organization, but also a written assessment of the monthly activities. The written assessments ranked the districts according to their success in organizing different types of propaganda, public relations or educational activity they carried out. For example in a report for the month of March 1992 prepared by the male representative of the ladies commissions to the İstanbul central party organization, we learn that Ümraniye, Gazi Osman Paşa and Bakırköy

ranked first second and third in recruiting new members by recruiting 238, 170 and 110 women respectively (unpublished report, courtesy of Sadık Albayrak, p. 2). In organizing educational seminars, the rank order changed to Üsküdar, Pendik and Kartal with 182, 10 and 9 seminars organized respectively and so on for different categories of ladies commission activity. The same report also cited which districts could not recruit any members and which districts failed to turn in their reports. A comparison was made with the accomplishments of the previous month of February and it was reported that February had been a more successful month. We learn from the same report that letters of merit were awarded to those districts that were most successful during the year 1991. The report also cited in detail women's contributions to the Campaign to help Bosnia which was initiated by the İstanbul Party organization. The reference to a gold bracelet, 4 gold chains, 7 pairs of earrings, 1 Maşallah (given to newborn babies) gives us an idea of the nature of personal commitment the members felt to the party and the Bosnian campaign it initiated.

Activities of the ladies commissions were carried out with small funds collected from membership dues or the activities that the commissions themselves generated. Women did not have the funds that the main organization had. Large sums of money that the newly emerging Muslim bourgeoisie had did not directly effect the activities of the commissions. Even though women themselves could raise the money they needed to undertake their activities, they did rely on the central organization to rent cars and auditoriums and borrow videos.

The Progress Report presented to the 6th Congress of the Party cites the following list of activities carried out by the ladies commissions between 1995-1997 in İstanbul:

Members recruited:	219,601
Educational Seminars:	3465
Conferences:	1572
Video:	1564
Home Chats:	14,231
Weddings:	2656
Engagements, circumcisions:	750
Condolence visits:	4215
Visits for newborns:	3740
Visits to artisans:	6325
Point (nokta) visits:	156,415
Visits to the sick:	12,625
Tea chats:	18,628
Visits to hospitals:	12,325
Courses to acquire skills:	1,600
Picnics:	310
Visits to schools:	760
Theaters:	210
Fairs (kermes):	75
Surveys (tarama):	22,460
Indoor meetings:	326
Quarter's Consultative Council:	471
People reached:	1,226,575

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(translated from *İstanbul 6. Olağan İl Kongresi Faaliyet Raporu*, p.35)

Activities of Ladies Commissions received frequent recognition from *Milli Gazete* which had organic ties to the party. The newspaper reported on the conferences, panels, visits to hospitals and state officials, educational seminars, social services, social activities including fashion shows, commemoration or celebration activities of the various ladies commissions in the country<sup>5</sup>. The fact that Halise Çiftçi, president of the Ankara organization, one of the most

successful ladies commission presidents at the province level, was on the staff of *Milli Gazete* facilitated the flow of information between the ladies commissions and the newspaper. Most of the news items were self-congratulating and uncritical reflections on work done; however one could see the wide spectrum within which the commissions defined their activities. For example, the visits organized by the Public Relations branches included not merely, hospitals, victims of flood and social service institutions, but also visits to the Social Democratic Populist Party minister responsible for Women and the Family, or a visit to the Afghan Embassy (*Milli Gazete*, 22 October, 1995), a visit by Sakarya Ladies' Commission to the Association of War Veterans (Muharip Gaziler Derneği) (*Milli Gazete*, 26 October 1993), a visit to Foundation for the Protection of Mothers of the Martyrs (Zübeyde Hanım Şehit Analarını Korumu Vakfı) a foundation initiated by the True Path Party (Doğru Yol Partisi) (*Milli Gazete*, October 23, 1994).

Even though most of the public forums or discussions initiated by Ladies Commissions seemed to be directly aiming at party propaganda, some were more sophisticated. Conferences organized included those on human rights, carried out on the Human Rights Day by the Ankara Ladies Commission (*Milli Gazete*, 21 December, 1994) and another initiated by the Sarıyer district of İstanbul. In Ankara, guests who spoke included the Presidents of Ankara and İstanbul Ladies Commissions and representatives from Mazlum-Der, Bosnian Solidarity Association and Human Rights Association. Beyond the issue of the right to wear headscarves in public institutions, rights of Bosnians, Chechenians, Afghans, Palestinians and Southeast Anatolians surfaced in the presentations. The rights of Muslims rather than human rights in general were the main subjects of discussion; observance of Islam as a cure to the resolution of the

problem of human rights abrogations was underlined. It is an interesting foreboding that the representative from the Human Rights Association suggested "yesterday, DEP (the pro Kurdish Democratic Party) was closed, today the closing of the Welfare Party is in the agenda. Unless we raise our voice to these acts, we condemn ourselves to moral pressure" (*Milli Gazete*, 21 December, 1994) By and large, women we interviewed were uncomfortable if not apologetic about their party's lack of support for DEP; however only a few of our interviewees explicitly denounced their party's collaboration in the expulsion of the DEP representatives from the parliament, even though they all condemned the closing of their party.

In İstanbul, the Sarıyer commission could bring together even a broader spectrum of participants which included a member of the Republican People's Party, (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi) lecturers from Boğaziçi and Marmara Universities, feminists from radical women's groups, a member of the Turkey's Association of Disabled, journalists as well as representatives from Mazlum-Der and the Human Rights Association.

Educational seminars were given on a wide range of issues. Male party elites played an active role in those seminars which introduced the party to the activists. Seminar organized by Welfare Party Central Ladies Commission in Ankara to train functionaries who served in ladies commissions countrywide was attended by about three hundred women (*Milli Gazete*, 26 October, 1993) Top level Party cadres, including the president (Necmettin Erbakan), president responsible from Public Relations (Şevket Kazan), the president responsible from Electoral Works (Rıza Ulucak), president responsible from propaganda (Recai Kutan) and president responsible from the Organization (Ahmet Tekdal) addressed women briefing them about the principles of their respective duties and the party line

prior to the local elections. President of the Ladies Commissions Süheyla Kebapçioğlu herself went on tours to give seminars in different provinces (*Milli Gazete*, 21 August, 1994) explaining the principles and guidelines of their organizational work which the main party organizations propagate. She also elaborated on the role of women in society and in Islam to her constituency which we shall discuss later.

Another topic that was of particular importance in educating party functionaries above and beyond organizational principles and norms involved the training of powerful orators. All the women interviewed underlined the critical role women orators played in their organizations. Concerning the organization of a 45 hour training on oratory techniques, Ayşe Şahin, who was the president of the education unit of the provincial organization in Ankara explained that their aim in organizing the course was "to train women who could best communicate their feelings and thoughts, divulge the secret talents in us and learn to speak effectively in front of different groups of people" (*Milli Gazete*, 20 March, 1995). Professionals and specialists from the "secular" ranks were called upon to improve women's diction, and teach them oratory techniques.

## **WOMEN IN THE ORGANIZATION**

The intense activism which took place within the elaborate Welfare Party structure was carried out by a group of religiously mobilized very dedicated, industrious women. In this section, we aim to show the range of backgrounds among the women who carried out these tasks. Because of the size and nature of our sample determined by snowballing, we merely intent to point to the variety that exist in the process of women's engagement in the Welfare Party.

Most of the 15 women interviewed had presided the party organization at either the province (4 of them) or the district level (9). The few others (2) had presided different administrative units within the commission, such as "organization" or "propaganda". All the "presidents" had worked at different units within their commissions, before they presided their respective organizations. Among those we interviewed, 8 women had university degrees; three of them were lawyers, two dentists, one a Ph.D in Turkish literature, one a pharmacologist, another a graduate of divinity school. With the exception of two women, all had attended secular schools. The high proportion of university graduates among those interviewed could be due to the snowballing method used to draw our sample. The people we asked for connections might have preferred to link us up with more educated women of the commissions. However, it is still noteworthy that there was an incidence of highly educated women in the higher echelons of the ladies commissions in the metropolitan provinces. All the women interviewed were married and had children.

#### **A. SCHOOL AS A SITE OF ISLAMIST INFLUENCE**

About a third of the women in our sample were influenced by their Muslim friends, usually at school, and became interested in Islam. 3 out of 5 were at the university when they were attracted by Islam and covered their heads either after they finished school or during their school years. E.S. thinks that the way she was drawn into the party ranks was not a conscious act. E. was at law school, when she leaned towards Islam and covered her head, during her third year. Her father was an army officer. The family traditionally supported Republican People's Party and they were all fervent advocates of the center left charismatic leader, Bülent Ecevit. E. was disturbed by the



way female graduates of Prayer Leader Training Schools in her class were treated and denied entrance to their exams by the university officials. As a law student who was particularly sensitive to justice, she protested on their behalf. A few women with heads covered and a few others who supported them would gather in front of the university entrance among whom E. struck out as a vocal advocate of the covered students. When their protests came to no avail, she decided to write a letter to Ecevit whom she believed could alleviate the situation. She wrote more than one letter, and received no response. When Erbakan visited the campus and promised to resolve the headscarf issue if they came to power, it was a revelation and relief to E. She had always been interested in mysticism and Eastern philosophies and as the daughter of an officer she had been a nationalist; but when the works of Muslim intellectuals like Ali Bulaç, İsmet Özel and Abdulrahman Dilipak began to appear in 1986, she was particularly excited by their writings and realized that "nationalism which had inspired her till then was not enough". She was proud that now there were some Turks who could contribute to the literature on Islam. In 1987, she covered her head. A year later, she graduated from law school. Because her head was covered, she could not be easily employed. She could not take her bar exams in İstanbul. She could not be a court lawyer, she could not work for government. A year after her graduation, she made a hasty marriage to an Islamist man. At a time when she felt like an alienated housewife, with little opportunity for anything else, the Welfare Party organization in İstanbul proposed that she work in their ranks. Her husband was working for them and they knew E. had been an articulate supporter of the cause of covered women; they very much would like her to join their organization. She did. She found herself working intensely for the party organization because she did not

have an alternative. Secular institutions of the Republic could not accommodate the covered woman so the party organization was a life saver for E. to realize her potential and make use of her professional training.

The story of Ç.H. who was also drawn into Islamist ranks at law school was more dramatic. She had to give a serious fight against her family and within her marriage which precipitated a serious decline in status and economic well being. Ç. was the youngest daughter of a "dava vekili" (a person admitted to practice law and to conduct litigation in courts of smaller towns) whom she characterized as a first generation Kemalist as well as a supporter of Democrat Party, (Demokrat Parti). The elder sisters were both teachers; one an elementary school teacher, the other a high school math teacher. The father expected the youngest one to become a court lawyer. Before his retirement, he had been prohibited from practicing law in his district, because lawyers with law degrees had moved in which deeply disappointed him. He had high hopes for his youngest daughter who finished high school as the first of her class to offer him vicarious satisfaction with a law degree. Ç. decided to cover her hair after she became good friends with a Muslim woman who was covered at law school in Ankara. This friend was a role model, kind, intelligent, someone Ç. would like to emulate. Ç. bitterly disappointed her family when she decided to cover her hair and seemingly closed all doors of public recognition and success. She bought her first headscarf and the subsequent ones with the money she saved from her allowance for transportation. She would walk an hour in rain and snow to save money for her scarf. In response to the distressed reaction of her family, Ç. began hiding her headscarf. Her mother burned the headscarves she found in Ç.'s handbag by throwing them into the stove. Ç. continued to walk, save money, and hide

her scarves from her family. She wanted a pardesü (a long, wide coat) so badly, that her friend brought her one that a relative had given away which Ç. recalled as so ugly, so unfitting and yet so precious for her.

Ç. married hastily to an Islamist to avoid living with her parents where her scarves were burned. Her husband was a graduate of a veterinary school. Soon after her marriage, she was thrown from law school because of her headscarf and homebound. Her husband did not allow her to step out of the house by herself. Worse still, he did not work for about 8-8.5 years. With a son to look after, Ç. had to work at home, at times packaging sugar, at times making decorative paintings which the husband sold at the outdoor market to earn the family income. When a friend asked if she would teach at Quranic course, she learned the Quran in one week to be able to teach it to others. That week, she had the Quran in one hand, the spoon in the other, because she still had to cook for the family. She found a job at an Islamist women's magazine, and later in *Milli Gazete* which was situated right across the Welfare Party Ladies's Commission. When the commission asked her to join their ranks, her husband had also found a job, he agreed to her joining the party and she willingly accepted.

Ç.A. who was also influenced by Islam in school did not experience the decline in status Ç.H. did because Ç.A. was a dentist who could earn her living in private practice. Ç.A. also had a serious confrontation with her parents. She was also a very bright student, one of the top three in her class at the established secular, Republican Erenköy Kız Lisesi. Ironically, in this secular institution, her history teacher was the religious role model who left his Islamist imprint on her. He served as a model of a correct upright, moral person who

had faith. His daughters covered their heads. When Ç. decided to cover her hair after graduation from high school and when she was attending school of dentistry, her mother gave a big fight to change her daughter's mind about the headscarf. The mother, president of a bank branch and a supporter of Ecevit, claimed pejoratively that only a mufti or a pastor would marry her in the way she dressed herself, pointing to the decrease in status she believed her daughter would have as a consequence of her decision. Ç. married an Islamist activist who was a graduate of international Relations Department from Marmara University. As a dentist, she could be a partner in private practice with a male Islamist dentist and earn her living. It was Ç. herself who offered to help some of her friends at the party organization before the elections and eventually found herself in the midst of party organization.

## **B. PUBLIC RELATIONS AND THE PARTY AS A CATALYST OF RECRUITMENT**

Besides those who were influenced from friends or role models at school, there were others who joined the Islamist ranks because of the help they received from the party. At least three people, two of whom were in Germany, appreciated the assistance and the engaging activities of the party. B.A. had to go to Germany to have her sick husband treated. The couple was welcomed by the National Outlook organization in Germany which lavishly extended its financial and psychological help. B.A. insisted that the people associated with the association did not refrain from any assistance they could extend. They visited the couple in the hospital after work, paid for the hospital expenses the couple could not pay, they rented a flat for the couple to recuperate after they were disposed from the hospital

and looked after them. B.A. promised to herself that after her return to the country, she would work for these people. She said that she did not witness the humanity "these people" exhibited anywhere else in the world. She was not one of them, as her use of the term "these people" underlines but she willfully chose to belong to their group.

M.H. had a similar story. She went to Switzerland as a guest worker after she graduated from Nişantaşı Kız Lisesi and got married. There she met the National Outlook organization. She began participating in their activities in her words "as an individual with a social need even though she was not in the political arena then". For example, her children began taking Turkish and religion lessons. She explained that the Turks who came as workers lacked knowledge on health, on consumption, on their rights; they needed education and culture. Gradually, she increased her activities within the organization which culminated in a very active social life and in her becoming the president of the National Outlook women's commissions in Switzerland. After their return to Turkey she volunteered to work for the party. She was not a person, which almost all women interviewed emphasized, who could be satisfied by exchanging recipes for deserts to be offered at tea parties. Her work in the party ranks was like attending a school. She said that perhaps she was not a university graduate, but she felt herself educated like a university graduate thanks to the political work she did.

### **C. TRADITIONAL FAMILIES AND ISLAMIST RECRUITMENT**

Finally, more than a third of the women we interviewed, and as we were told by the interviewees, most of the women who worked in

the party ranks came from traditional, and religious families and were already prone to influence by Islamist callings. Among this group, some had fathers who had worked for National Salvation Party and others had husbands who were in the Welfare Party organization. A few of the women we could consider in this category attended local Quranic courses; one was a graduate of Prayer Leader Training School. We were told that graduates of these schools did work in larger numbers in the party organization. Many of these traditionally religious women who were recruited to the party organization were very young in age. They began working for the party after they graduated from high school at the age of 17 or 18. Their families would not consider sending them to universities; working for a party which respected religion was an opportunity to keep themselves occupied in a legitimate vocation. The party thus tapped the traditional religious proclivities of the population and politicized them.

#### **NATURE OF PARTY WORK: SACRIFICE AND FULFILLMENT**

All the women interviewed, without exception underlined that they worked in the party ranks for "God's sake" (Allah rızası için). This was a very critical difference between those who worked in other parties and a critical explanation of the nature of the tremendous work women undertook in the party ranks.

Religion was the most effective means of political mobilization which could prompt intense sacrifice and commitment from the people who believed in the cause and the party they believed to be promoting this cause. In the case of women, "working for God's sake" meant that they did not expect any mundane rewards such as elec-

tive or appointive office in return for their work. All insisted and were proud that they did not expect any worldly rewards. This attitude was critical because it relieved the central party organs from recognizing women's work in material terms. Women received immense satisfaction from the work they shouldered for the party, such that they could afford to contain further desires for authority and recognition within the party hierarchy.

Many of our interviewees related stories of material sacrifice women made for the party. Those we interviewed had saved from the allowances their husbands gave or used their skills in cooking and knitting to generate funds for the party. However there were also cases when the opportunity cost of working for the party were higher. One of the orators in a lower class district in Ankara realized that she had to attend a meeting the next day and there was no money at home for her to take the bus to be able to attend the meeting. There was only money to buy bread for the next day. She woke up at night and made bread so that the next day she could use the money for bread to be able to attend the meeting (*Milli Gazete*, July 7, 1995, December 15, 1995). Similar stories of women giving up their engagement rings or selling their shanty houses circulated among the interviewees.

"Working for God's sake", women worked very hard. Many women we interviewed explained that they placed party work before "themselves", their families and children. C.A. said that she would work till midnight and at times, there would be a week before she saw her son. She would come to the house like a guest. Others explained how they would drag their children to party meetings and demonstrations. One of them explained how she believed God would protect her children while she was working for the party and

neglected them in the process. Almost all told us how they normally cooked at night so that there would be food ready, when they returned from party work next day in the afternoon. Women interviewed worked full time, at times 9 to 9, when they were in the party organization.

Working for God's sake did not preclude women from getting immense personal satisfaction from the work they did quite independent of any spiritual or material rewards. Having conducted series of intensive interviews earlier with women politicians, including parliamentarians and municipality council members of different cohorts and feminist activists of different persuasions, we were taken aback with the unmitigated fulfillment these political activists derived from their political work. Without exception, all women interviewed recalled their political activism with pleasure. Y.E. said that "it was a very beautiful work"; for A.M. the Ladies' Commission was an exceptional place and their activities were exceptional, very beautiful. For Ç.H., working for the party and being very successful, as she was, was a means of claiming back the status she lost after she covered her hair and began moving into the Islamist ranks. She explained, "we all proved something; we gained status; we had been kicked around; Ç.H. had covered her hair, was condemned to house arrest and could not do anything right. But this (party work) was a path for us. It was a path for us to prove ourselves to ourselves. It was wonderful to be a person who was needed. I did see many marriages begin improving when women began working in the party". Ç.H. continued to relate that her marriage and her status within her marriage also improved as she became more and more engaged in the party work. Her husband who had not allowed her to leave the house when they were first married recognized her autonomy and authority. M.H. felt that her work in the



party allowed her to educate herself. She met many different people; today she could knock the door of a parliamentarian and contact him, ask a favor from him, invite him to her daughter's wedding; this was a great success for her. Her party membership gave her an identity like a press identity card.

Perhaps it was this sense of fulfillment which explained members or leaders of the ladies commissions from pursuing higher levels of public office within the party organization. However some of the most successful leaders did seek public recognition in return for their work in the party ranks. When Sibel Eraslan, who was the president of the İstanbul province or "the Welfare Party woman who carried Tayyip to the position of the Mayor" as she was named by the press (*Hürriyet*, March 30, 1994) sought public office after Tayyip Erdoğan became the Mayor of İstanbul, She was refused. Soon after, Sibel Eraslan and the women she worked with in İstanbul were to be replaced by a different cadre of women (*Pazartesi*, September 1995, p. 2-5; Benton, 1995), more subservient to the central organs of the party than Eraslan's group had been.

After the party was closed, when the Virtue Party was being founded, the old cadres were decidedly left out of the new Ladies Commissions. Women who were given the responsibility to institutionalize the new Virtue Party commissions did consult the previous women leaders. However, the old cadres were purposefully left out of active engagement. The most successful women who were so dismissed had in fact informally kept on making their weekly meetings. They protested to themselves that it was an unfair reward for their accomplishments. One woman said that she felt "like a mother separated from her children".

## **RECRUITMENT OF OTHER WOMEN: FROM THE PERSONAL INTO THE POLITICAL**

Women activists working for the party with zealous commitment recruited other women as members and as co-workers. In a quarter or a district where the party organization was newly being founded, those women who were given the task to institutionalize the party first contacted the people from the party circles. They approached the wives of the male elites from the central party organs. Then they began inquiring into the social fabric of the district and getting to know who was who. They made a special effort to develop social friendships with women who were well liked and respected in the community and who were regarded as natural leaders concerned about the community, helping those in need. As E.S. explained, they tried to locate the Perihan Ablas of the area, the heroine of a television series depicting the life in a middle class neighborhood in İstanbul. They would ask the Perihan Abla if she would organize a tea party and invite her friends, so that they could be introduced to the neighborhood. The tea party would then be reciprocated in an other friend's house. These social gathering provided the backbone of ladies' commissions' mobilizational activity in a new quarter. It was crucial not to frighten women with an alienating political discourse or with religious propaganda. Instead the activists aimed to keep the political activity within the confines of the social. In an interview with one of the women who had presided the İstanbul organization, when we happened to use the word "örgüt" in reference to the Ladies Commissions, a word which literally means organization, but has been commonly used in reference to the militant leftist associations, she was most disturbed. She corrected us that there was no "örgüt" around, that the word "örgüt" brought shivers down her spine and connoted the violence prone Marxist Communist organi-

zations which had victimized the youth; instead they had familial relationships with people in their districts, networks of religiously guided moral women who gathered to share their views. The social relationships which were thus carefully cultivated with interpersonal emotional linkages were then moved into the political domain after enough confidence had been built.

In these networks, party ideology or leadership were of secondary importance. One of the presidents of the İstanbul organization explained, "It was not Erbakan, it was us who endeared the women to the party and for whom they came to the party". Women related to their constituencies with a civility that the latter could not find anywhere else. In a society where civility was gradually disappearing, the newly migrant marginals of the city appreciated the civility that the Welfare Party ladies personally extended.

One of the presidents of the Kadıköy commission, a large and central, district of İstanbul explained how they typically toured in neighborhoods they were responsible from: Usually there would be four or five representatives and the president herself to tour and contact the families in the designed neighborhood. The group would knock the door of every flat apartment by apartment. Two women would begin from the top floor, the other two from the ground floor and the president would pick the remaining floors. They would knock a door, and ask the lady who opened the door (it was during day time and so it was usually a lady) what she thought of the Welfare Party. Next question would be if she would consider or depending on her previous response "ever consider" voting for the Welfare Party. If the answer was a no, they would ask what she thought was wrong with the party and what the party should or should not do. There would be many who did not have strong feel-

ings against the party in which case the representatives would ask if they could enlist her as a member. The first reaction would usually be a no or a why. Then the representatives would explain why they wanted to make her a member and why it would be advantageous for her to become a member. There would be three important reasons. First, the party would like to forecast how many votes it would get. Second, the party would like to develop organic links with its voters. Third, and perhaps most important from the perspective of the prospective member, the party would like to help its members; if the member was in need of anything, they would want to extend help. This help could be material or moral. It could be extended in cases of sickness, death or births and weddings as the situation demanded. It could be the provision of health or child care services or contributions to their daughters' dowries. This help was generated locally among the women who worked in the party ranks and it was a continuation of the local "imece" (collaboration) tradition of collaborative work the women were familiar to.

Those women who did not want to become members but who nevertheless seemed amenable to persuasion would be noted by the activists. Commission ladies would work on such cases with particular care. They would make the so called "nokta ziyaretleri", pre-arranged visits where commissions' ladies would visit the specified woman on a one to one basis. At times, two representatives would try to get an appointment and express their wish to be invited for coffee by those women they had marked as prone to influence. Over coffee, they would sometimes only socialize and develop friendships. After such friendships were secured, the topic of membership to the party would be reintroduced.

Local rites and traditions which had their roots in Turkish reli-

gious/cultural setting were very critical in the activities of the ladies' commissions. Particularly when the commissions could not arrange for social visits or home chats, they would benefit from the opportunities for social contact that traditional customs provided. Traditional readings of the Quran particularly in holy evenings, such as kandils were always occasions the ladies commissions capitalized on. During the Mevlud kandils, they helped the neighbors organize the chanting of the Nativity Poem, Mevlud written by Süleyman Çelebi depicting the birth of the Prophet. When there were funerals, some families wanted to have the whole Quran read or Yasin, the thirty sixth Sura of the Quran read for forty times and again the ladies commissions were ready to organize the services. Their fame in certain districts spread such that even some famous singers and stars approached them to have the Quran recited in their own homes. Even the so called "secular" middle class groups within the bourgeoisie, the bureaucracy or the intellectuals did observe the vestiges of such traditions such as the reading of the Quran after the funerals and they were too divorced from religious observances to carry these activities from within their ideological communities in which case the Welfare Party groups offered services and established contacts. Organization and provision of such religious services were taken very seriously by the commissions, because these contexts could serve as access points in their mobilizational activities. Friendships began developing in these contexts and they could thus get opportunities to prove how faithful, committed and caring their community was and draw other women into their circles.

Besides strictly religious traditions and rites, secular traditions women observed were also very useful to begin enlarging Ladies' Commissions circles. There were the traditional "kabul günleri" (reception days) organized by women among friends and neighbors

on a regular basis. These tea parties where women gathered weekly, or biweekly or monthly were an important network of information and solidarity which could be coopted by the Welfare ladies. Similarly the more recent organization of "altın günleri" (gold days), when the traditional "kabul günleri" caught up with the demands and needs of consumption society as women gathered funds in their "kabul günleri", bought a gold coin amongst them to be given to each one of them taking turns. In other words, recently "kabul günleri" began serving the needs of generating local capital with women's savings. The Commissions' ladies began attending these networks and introducing political issues such as inflation and corruption and lack of local services which were essential problems in women's daily private lives. Thus, the Welfare ladies could tap what was political in the private realm of women and transfer it as such into the explicitly political domain. They had discovered the feminist dictum that "the private is political" intuitively and carried it into the heart of orthodox political institution of the party. As such, they had discovered the medium in which women felt comfortable and moved women into politics within that social medium. Thus they had tapped the traditional texture of the polity and politicized it as other women had not been able to do.

## **DIVERSITY AND RECRUITMENT**

In their mobilizational activity, the ladies commissions were very careful to recognize the needs and demands of the local context. Despite its hierarchic, disciplined structure, the party encouraged flexibility among its branches at different levels of organization. Different district organizations were careful to respond to different socio-economic and cultural realities of their locality. In metropolitan cities, the party had began organizing from the outskirts of the

city towards the center, capitalizing on a discourse of victimization and the promise of justice. The outskirts were shanty town areas where there were new migrants. In İstanbul, in the newly established poor neighborhoods of migrants like for example Bağcılar, the ladies would be careful to talk about lack of services, communicate their awareness of material needs, roads not built, schools not opened, health clinics unavailable whereas in a "richer" (as one interviewee described it) district like Fatih issues of morality such as prevention of alcohol and the prohibition of prostitution that the party promised would be discussed. In Caddebostan which was part of Kadıköy district, organizing a fashion show of Islamic dress in the famous casino Maxim could draw women who were not members merely because they would be curious to come to the casino and the fashion show. Once there, the non-member woman would develop sympathies, would hear a few words about their work which the commission could then build upon. In İstanbul, Çatalca, Yalova, Şile and Kadıköy districts where people were settled in needs and values had been particularly difficult to penetrate into, whereas the poor shanty town areas that harbored victims of migration and change where values and moralities were in flux had been especially prone to the influence of the commission ladies (as had been the case for the party in general).

In Ankara, similar attention was paid to differences between districts. For example, commission activities and discourse in Çankaya would be very different from those in the poorer newly developed areas such as Yahyalar or Çantep. In Çankaya, as the president of the provincial organization described it, "people were fed and clad". There one could talk about economic policies, the inflation rate, issues of human rights and bring in statistics and examples from abroad which the people in Yahyalar would not even listen.

It was not merely what was said that had to be different but also, mannerism and dress. The commission knew that in Çankaya celebration of secular holidays such as the New Year was more customary and they arranged their Public Relations celebrations accordingly. The orator who went to a house in Çankaya to celebrate a Mother's Day would dress in a suit more like the way the majority dressed in the district rather than a "pardesü" let alone a "çarşaf". Her headscarf would be smaller and less obtrusive. She would greet with a "merhaba" (hello) or "iyi günler" (good day), rather than "selamünaleyküm" (let God's grace be on you) which would be used among the more traditional/ religious groups in greeting one another.

Those interviewees who had experiences in other areas of Turkey besides the metropolitan centers explained that sensitivity to local as well as temporal problems was a must that they observed all over Turkey. E.S. recalled having to talk in Nevşehir about the problems of South East Anatolian border closing, because the Turkish truck drivers were detained at the borders and there was a large constituency of their wives who needed consolation. A dramatic example of different priorities the commissions worked around could be observed in the Black Sea region. In Bulancak, the Ladies Commissions of the party organized a campaign where 6500 signatures were gathered in support of a petition which protested the Russian prostitutes for undermining the family life in the region. The president of the commission in Bulancak, Adile Gündoğdu, whose picture with eye glasses and a çarşaf was printed in the first page of *Milli Gazete* argued that now the parliamentarians had to show the same sensitivity to the issue they showed if they wanted to preserve family life in the Black Sea region (*Milli Gazete*, December 13, 1993). In the province of Trabzon, there was a similar campaign



where the president of the ladies commission who was similarly photographed in a *çarşaf* explained that they had gathered 20,000 signatures in their province which they would present to the governor and planned to take it to Tansu Çiller who was at the time the woman Prime Minister of Turkey (*Milli Gazete*, December 13, 1993). The commissions organized political meetings where they put up posters which protested the Russian prostitutes, "Otel-Motel-Aids" (hotel =motel=Aids), "Turizm değil rezalet" ( It is not tourism rather scandal) (Beller-Hann, 1995, pp. 225-226).

Activist work undertaken in different parts of the country was different not merely in terms of the issues addressed and the flexibility of discourse the different commissions adopted, but also in the relative autonomy women activists had as women in the public sphere. Even though we did not have the opportunity to investigate a variety of provincial organizations, those who did have the experience of working in the East underlined that the conditions were much more confining for women. M.H. who knew the commissions in Diyarbakır, Bitlis and Van argued that "there was no problem in İstanbul but in the East the woman could not walk out without her man beside her, she could not enter into public places, attend seminars, and meetings without her husband's permission. These taboos and criterias were not undermined. But thank God, in İstanbul we undermined them." It is understandable that women in metropolitan areas be more independent than their counterparts in the East, at least because traditions still have a stronger hold in the region.

In short, religiously motivated, intensely committed women recruited other women by accepting them as they were in their private social realms and appealing to their priorities. Serious limits were set to this process of politicization both because of the reli-

gious ideology women ultimately used in their mission and the hierarchy which this ideology legitimized within the party ranks which kept women outside the decision making organs of the party. Women's activity was carried out "for God's sake" and contained within a social boundary which prevented women from seeking rights in their own name or challenging the highly authoritarian and hierarchic structure of the party which did not share power with women at the higher decision making levels.

## **VIEWS ON ISLAM AND WOMEN**

Our interviewees who had worked with deep commitment and unswerving clarity of purpose in the party ranks were less clear about their views on women in Islam and the relationship of their party or themselves to question of women's rights. Their responses exhibited ambivalences, ambiguities and contradictions. They had thought less about the issue than they did on how to work for the party.

In our interviews, we asked the opinions of our interviewees on the question of women's rights in Islam. We proposed the argument that women's rights in Islam on issues of polygamy, divorce, court witnessing or inheritance were biased against women; Islam encouraged the traditional division of labor between men and women which restricted women's options. To these arguments, Welfare women responded, as could be expected, defensively; however their approaches to the issue varied.

One common response was to deny the inequalitarian nature of these rights. Many Islamist thinkers have argued that men and women are equal before God but that there exists a complementarity in division of labor between them which the uninitiated mistak-

only consider as unequalitarian treatment. The responses we received were similar: the women emphasized that being responsible from different tasks was not unfair. When they were reminded that these tasks were differently valued and the tasks women were responsible from lacked the power and prestige men's had, we were reminded that before God, they were of equal worth. Only the believer could understand the justice and fairness of this division of labor and these particular laws. Ultimately, arguments of equal worth of a rational paradigm would move into the radically different paradigm of religious belief.

B.H. who was a most active militant defended the Islamist division of labor between men and women. She argued that even though she was responsible from housekeeping, cooking and looking after the children, her husband was responsible from their financial maintenance. This was a contract. She never shopped, her husband brought the food and the grocery and gave her a weekly allowance which he increased when he thought was right. She never asked for an increase, she never asked for clothes. He would take her and their two children before Bayrams or when the new season arrived to a particular Muslim shopping center and tell them to choose what they would within certain limits. When she wanted to have an appliance or some expensive gadget for the house, she did express the need which he would not accept immediately. In B.H.'s works, "beni terbiye eder" (he would humble/ educate her); but eventually it would be bought. Her will would prevail in the end. She was not socialized to be an unsatiable consumer and she had trained herself to be happy with what her husband gave her in material terms. She believed this was a liberating bargain for her, leaving her with the freedom to do what she wanted to do, after she fulfilled her duties towards her husband and the family.

B.H. was proud that because she did not have the responsibility of earning money for the house, tending to the telephone bill, the electricity bill, she could pursue her interest, do what she wanted to do, prove herself in the public realm of the party. She thought other women were not, in her words, as "free" as she was to do what they wanted to do and leave the house at 9 am and come back at 5 pm. "Why should she want to have this burden when she could be more free this way?" was her question. In turn, she was not like other women who minded handing a glass of water to their husbands or ironing their shirts when they wanted.

B.H. endorsed the traditional division of labor in the family at the same time as she insisted on her right to pursue a public life. When we talked about her children's response to her work for the party, she explained to us that they did not like it. She worked for the party despite their disapproval. She defended her choice to her children by explaining to them that it was her *right*. She had looked after them all these years (they were both in high school) educated herself all these years (she had a Ph.D. in Turkish language and literature) and what would she do "sitting" at home. It was neither fair nor functional for her with her credentials and achievements to be just a housewife. The accommodation of these two potentially conflicting worldviews in the life of B.H. was striking. She defended the Islamist division of labor as vehemently as she defended her need to prove herself in the public domain and "use" her education for a public good. We suggested that the traditional division of labor which meant financial dependence of women on men could give men the power to curtail the freedom women could have in the public sphere which was such a source of satisfaction for her as well as others; however our suggestion was irrelevant for her.

Ironically, B.H. was one of those women who did acknowledge there were limits to how far women could have power within their party. She did realize that despite their hard work, women had no say in central decision making organs of the party. When the new Virtue Party organization was being founded, no one asked their opinion about who the central party organization should appoint as the president of the provincial party organization. When we suggested that perhaps women did not have the financial clout men had within the party, a suggestion which was made by a male member we interviewed, she did admit this could be a consideration. In retrospect, a defense of a traditional division of labor propagated through Islam coexisted, despite potential contradictions, together with a liberal political concept of individualism where human beings realize themselves in the public arena.

A similar tension was apparent in the response of G.S. Unlike B.H., G.S. came from a conservative religious family, where she had studied Islamic intellectuals and thinkers under her father's guidance. Perhaps because she was more knowledgeable in Islam, and a lawyer trained to defend her causes, she defended women's rights in Islam in a most consistent fashion. She argued that the problem was due to decontextualizing rights associated with women and picking on them selectively. The woman was not responsible to earn her living or that of the family; since she was not expected to look after the family, it was only fair that the men who had to look after the family would get twice the women's share in inheritance; furthermore in a family where the wife got half his brother's share, the husband would get twice his own sister's share which would mean that the family as a unit would have a share of inheritance similar to the one it would have had had women received an equal share (assuming the woman and the man come from families of similar wealth). A simi-

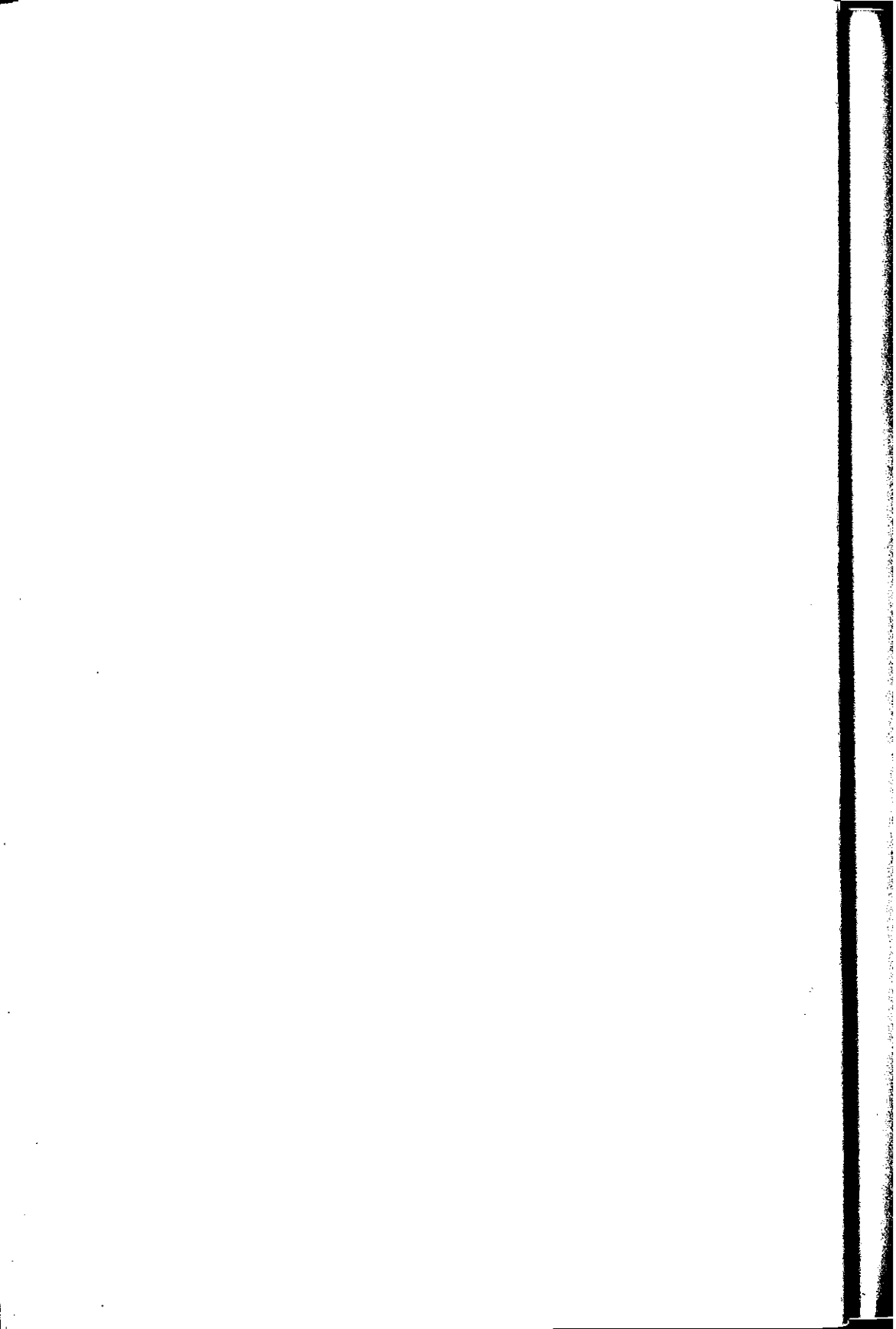
lar argument could be given regarding witnessing; unilateral divorce was not as easy as the secularist made it to be; similarly polygamy was allowed strictly under certain rules which would be difficult to fulfill. She insisted that she believed in religion because she did and covered herself because God wanted it, but if we wanted some functional causes they were there as well if we considered the system as a whole. Strikingly, further on in the interview, G.S. explained how she believed women should work outside the house. She was an educated person, and it was very difficult for an educated person to stay at home. She believed that women were victimized and that they had to make themselves accepted. Her earlier insistence in the sanctity and fairness of Islamic prescriptions for women assumed a non individualistic approach to rights which would be realized within the family unit as a whole. Even though a woman as an individual might not have as big a share of inheritance as her brother, the family she belonged would have a similar share to that of her brother's family which was important. However her later observances reflected her regard for the woman as an individual with a need to prove herself within her family as such.

Others were much less concerned about what Islam had to say on women. They believed in God and Islam as ethically and morally impeccable which meant that whatever was deemed to be decreed concerning women whether it was polygamy or unilateral divorce by men had to be right. It was not an issue that they felt they had to think about at length, because they had faith that God would know best. Others had empirical arguments. Some even thought that arguing how their party leaders and most of their community led monogamous lives could prove that Islam did not encourage polygamy.

Some of those who had a stronger secular training and back-

ground thought that such restrictions on women's rights were really irrelevant to religious belief at this day and age. These women argued that times had changed and that noone wanted to have polygamous marriages or unilateral divorce and that these were exaggerations that the so called laicists used to denigrate Islam. Given the relative lack of power within the decision making organs of the party, it was striking that these women had the faith their male leaders thought like they did and would continue to think alike regarding women's rights. Clearly women did not exhibit the strength to change a radically different perception male leaders could well have.

It was interesting that even these women who gave contextual arguments regarding women's rights in Islam insisted on headscarf as a decree of God. When we suggested that if Islamist groups prevailed, as they worked to have them prevail, women could be reminded that unilateral divorce etc were also decrees of God which had to be enacted. Their answer was that something like that would not happen. What made this particular answer more ironic was that the women with less conservative more secular backgrounds happened to be the ones who were more keenly aware that they were denied sharing power with men at the central organs of the party. As women who had experience of this denial, one would expect that they be concerned about the probable implications of monopoly of power which could be difficult to undermine in contexts where they sought their legitimacy with a reference to religion.





## SUMMARY

**B**ased on our research we can make the following generalizations and conclusions about the Welfare Party

Ladies Commissions:

1. Ladies Commissions were organized in all provinces of the country with a structure which paralleled that of the central party organs. They were expected to be similarly organized at district, quarter and the ballot box levels even though this particular institutionalization had not been completed by the time the party closed. In large metropolitan areas of İstanbul and Ankara, they were organized in all districts of their provinces and most of the institutionalization at the quarter and the ballot box level were completed.
2. The ladies commissions were hierarchically organized within themselves and hierarchically tied to the central party at every level of their organization. The organic links between the party structure and the commissions insured that the ladies organized under the directives and by the principles of the central party organs. The central party organs educated and closely guided the functionaries who were responsible from institutionalizing the ladies commissions; however the commissions were quite autonomous in organizing the activities they engaged in. They

worked with a budget they generated from membership contributions and relied on the main party organs for the provision of cars, videos or advance money to rent conference halls etc.. The large sums of money which have allegedly been funneled to the party organs did not have a visible impact on the activities of ladies commissions. Nevertheless they were able to generate funds to distribute tokens, small presents, and help the needy in their communities.

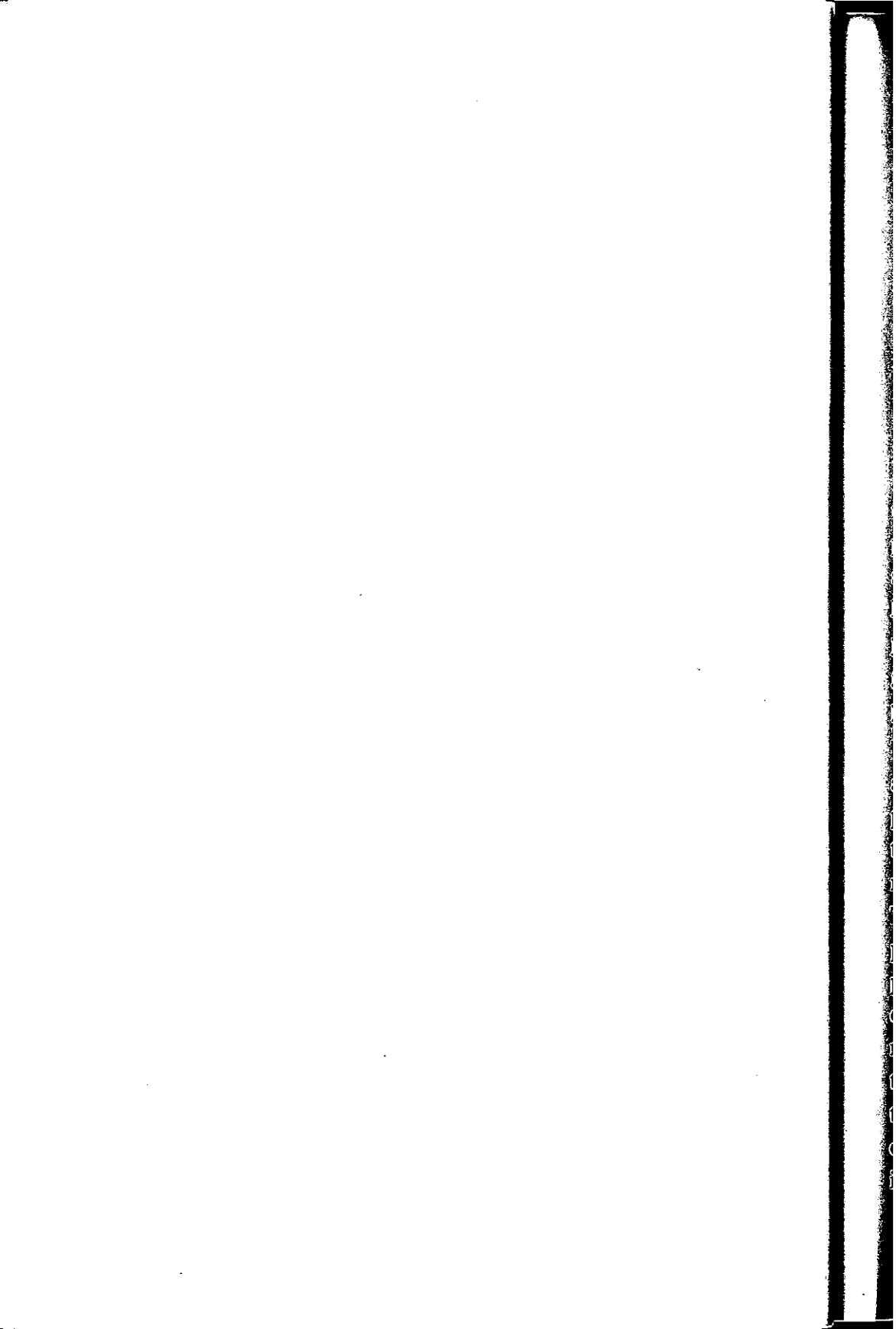
3. Under the guidance of the central party organs, the women worked with a sure grasp of interpersonal skills and public relations methods. Our interviewees intimately knew the demands and needs of areas in which they organized. The flexibility of the Islamist discourse the party used was critical in adapting to different needs depending on circumstances and geographically, economically, politically and culturally different interests that characterized the large span over which the commissions successfully mobilized.
4. The commissions accepted the women they mobilized as they were without necessarily asking them to change their views. Unlike many educated, secular women or some feminists they accepted their constituency with their traditional beliefs, private concerns and needs for socialization. It was in this social milieu of housewives that the party workers attracted their members.
5. Recognition of their constituency involved recognition of the needs and aspirations of the women they mobilized. The commissions were successful in mobilizing other women because as party workers, they discovered the potential for public involvement in a group of housewives who had the time and energy to channel outside their homes. They recognized that women

aspired to be educated and publicly recognized. The housewife received satisfaction from becoming one of the twenty five presidents of the different organizational units of the provincial or district level organization and being recognized as such by her husband as well as friends.

5. In this process, they reactivated and endowed the traditional communal networks and means of socialization such as kabul günleri and home visits with a new meaning or function. They helped revitalize the religious rites such as celebration of kandils or the reading of the Quran after funerals which had become part of the cultural heritage of the people and channeled their potential for socialization into politicization. In other words, they tapped the religious/cultural fabric of the country which primarily women are expected to propagate and channeled it into political support.
6. Our interviewees were fulfilled with the work they did for the party. For many of those we interviewed even though choosing to lead a more religious life with a headcover meant cultivation of new friendships and finding inner peace, it was also accompanied with public alienation and distancing from family and friends. Many options of self realization through public involvement were closed to them. It was particularly painful when these women were highly educated and socialized to engage in public life. Working in the party ranks, gave them the chance to fulfill themselves and their desires for public recognition. It was their only avenue for prestige and regaining of lost status. Those who came from more traditional families gained the chance to move beyond the private realm and discover the public realm.

7. Because they were fulfilled with the work they did, most of them did not pursue higher political office or engagement in the central decision making organs of party. Those who did seek higher office or those who wanted to have their opinions recognized were disappointed with the party which nevertheless did not taint the satisfaction they got from their activist work.
8. Our interviewees were inspired by religious ideology. However they were also brought up in a secular context and educated in secular schools. As such, they had to accommodate two fundamentally different paradigms in their lives. The intensity with which they pursued their militant activism served their secular drive to prove themselves to themselves despite the religious source of their inspiration. On the other hand, as committed believers, they readily defended religious dictates which were difficult to reconcile with secular concepts of justice and fairness especially those regarding women. As women party workers, we expected them to have a more consensual stance on Islamist decrees concerning women. We discovered that despite their staunch defense of a vague Islam, their views varied immensely. Some pointed to the importance of changing times and demands of circumstances, others insisted that what the Quran decreed (if the decree could be agreed upon) was misinterpreted, while still others explained why the Quranic dictates were fair if they could be practiced as a whole. What was most striking was the coexistence of these different defenses of Islamic laws with reference to women together with secular drives for proving themselves.
9. Our interviewees allegedly worked for the sake of God, to promote the common good. They worked without pay, without

material profit, gave priority to their party work despite the Islamist prescriptions regarding the priority of their familial responsibilities. Ironically, this selfless commitment to the party could be most successful because of these women could realize themselves and fulfill their needs for public recognition through this work. As they denied themselves material gain and worldly positions of power, they found personal satisfaction from the successful pursuit of their religiously defined goals. The tension between the individual and the community was resolved as they gained individual satisfaction and realized themselves in pursuit of the so called "common good" defined by the party.



## CONCLUSION

The Ladies Commissions were very successful organizations. They were successful not merely because they mobilized a mass of women for their party, but also because they provided an opportunity space in which marginalized women could seek empowerment. There are lessons to be drawn from the way the ladies approached other women and recognized their needs in the process of political mobilization. They did what many secular groups did not do as they reached to women who were left out of the political space.

However, ultimately, the Ladies Commissions severely defined and restricted how far women could seek empowerment through political life. The women in the commissions curbed their aspirations for higher office and power or were expected to curb such aspirations within the patriarchal structure of the party organization. They were not expected to participate in the central decision making powers of the party, because there was a clear hierarchy within the party ranks and the commissions ranked lower than the central party organs to which they were horizontally and vertically linked; the religious teachings and morality women endorsed helped legitimize the hierarchical structure of the party. Because the party was believed to be propagating a religiously sanctified world view, women who obeyed the party hierarchy (which curtailed their power) were serving God. Women's docility which was legitimized with a reference

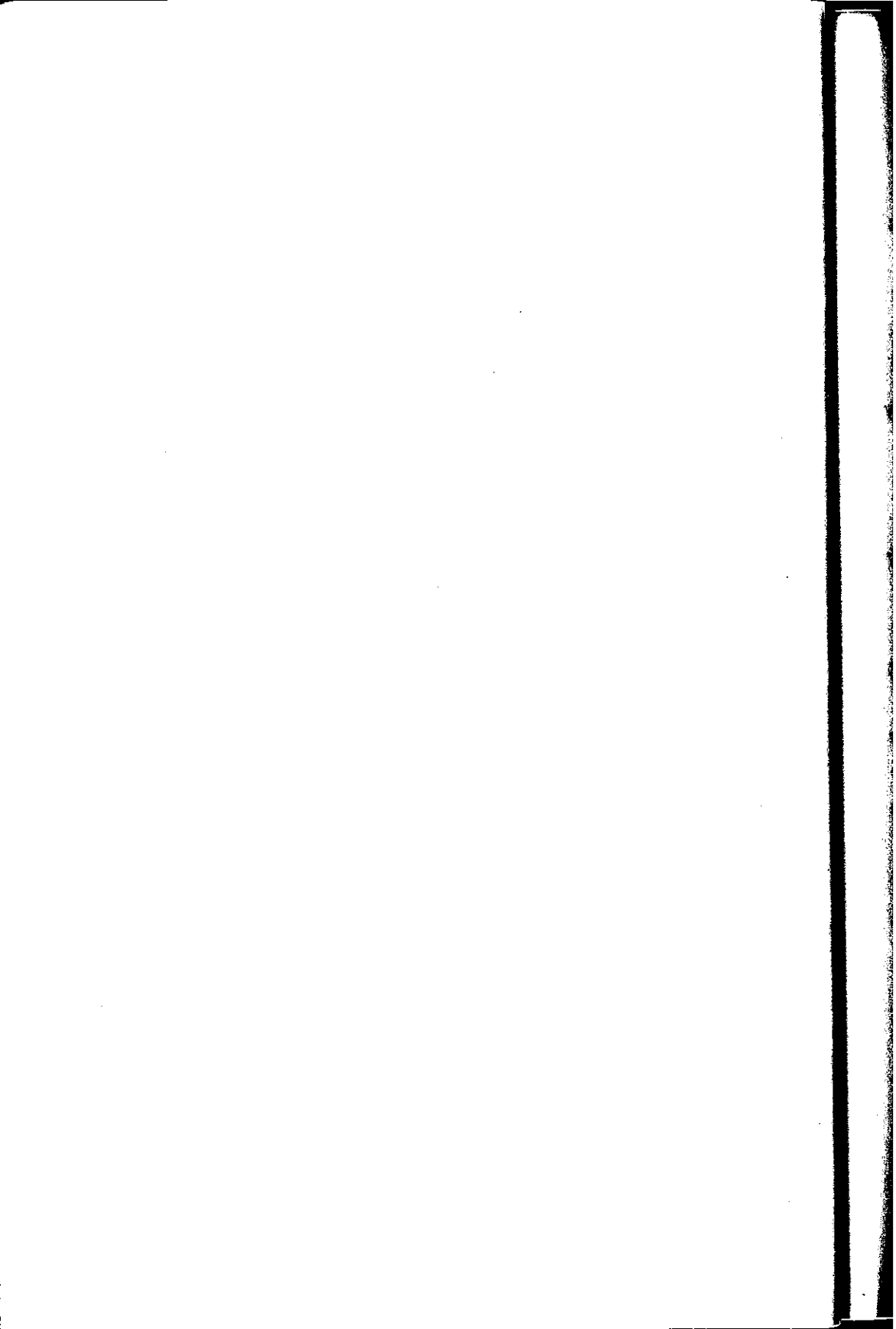
to religious service (“Allah rızası için çalışmak” work for God’s sake) was in mundane terms an asset the party leadership could benefit from in pursuit of their interest for power. As in all instances when religion was used in the political realm, authority, discrimination and monopoly of power could easily be justified with a reference to God (we are using our power to promote God’s will) by those who happened to occupy positions of power.

Yet, lessons can be drawn from the experiences of the Ladies Commissions. The Commissions have discovered that women are waiting to be politicized in masses. Political parties need to give more serious attention to women who are ready to be politicized in pursuit of their self interest. Political ideologies have to accommodate the diversity of women’s needs and demands. Islam has been very functional in accommodating diversity and secular ideologies have to meet this need. Finally, politicians need to recognize that the spread of religious ideology has taken place, not by force, but rather with an appeal to women’s mundane needs. Those who justifiably criticize the use of religion for political purposes also need to recognize that they can win adherents only by an appeal to interests and needs. In the case of Welfare Party Women’s Commissions, the road to interests has passed through the hearts as well as minds of women. They can be diverted only with a stronger appeal to hearts and minds.



## Notes

- 1 For example Tayyip Erdoğan and Ekrem Erdem were among those who expressed these views in the interviews we had with them.
- 2 see *RP Teşkilat Rehberi*, Ekim 1996 for further details. Sibel Eraslan and Cemal Özdemir helped clarify the organizational structure of the ladies' commissions for me.
- 3 These 25 units exhibited slight changes over time. We adapted this particular organizational schema from the information provided by the interviewees and the *Teşkilat Rehberi Refah Partisi Yeni Bir Dünya*, October 1996.
- 4 We have been told that the highest number of women members were registered in İstanbul. Ankara followed with about 250,000 women members by the time the party closed.
- 5 See the Appendix on *Milli Gazete*.



# APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

## PERSONAL QUESTIONS

- Could you tell us about yourself?
- Where were you born?
- Who were your parents?
- What were their occupations?
- Which schools did you attend?
- Are you married?
- What is your husband's profession?
- When and how did you develop your interest in Islam?
- Did some people or institutions evoke your interest?
- When did you become involved with the Welfare Party?
- Were there people or institutions that effected you in your decisions to work for the party?
- Why did you begin working for the party?
- Did you like working for the party? Why?
- Who educated you in the party?
- How were you educated?

## **ORGANIZATION OF THE LADIES COMMISSIONS**

- Could you tell me about the organization of the Ladies' Commissions?
- How many provinces did you have branches in?
- What units were important in the organization?
- How were these units tied to one another?
- Would you receive criticism from the upper ranks of the party hierarchy?
- How frequently? On what issues?
- How did you receive this criticism?
- How autonomous from or dependent on the Central Party Organs were the Ladies Commissions ?
- Which decisions or what issues did the central organs shape?
- Do you have any background information about the founding of the Ladies Commissions?
- How far did the political cleavages within the Welfare Party get reflected to the Ladies Commissions?
- Who decided on the agenda or the division of labor within the ladies commissions?
- Did you have relations with other Islamist organizations or groups? At what level and with what frequency were these relations carried out?

## **ACTIVITIES**

- What activities did you engage in as an organization?
- How did you carry out these activities?
- What subjects were introduced in the home visits or private gatherings? What did you tell these people you visited?

- What were the differences between commissions organized in different provinces or districts?
- What were the video shows on?
- What were the topics you introduced in your public relations activities?
- Could you give us some information about your educational programs? What subjects did they cover?
- Who attended these programs?
- Who helped you in your educational programs?
- What did you teach the party functionaries?
- How did the women activists find the time to engage in these activities?
- How could you be so successful in extending your organizations in such a short time?
- What do you think were the factors which made you successful?

## **MEMBERS**

- How many members did you have in the organization you worked in (at the province or the district level) ?
- How could we get some reliable data on membership ?
- Did all the members pay their dues?
- In what provinces/ or districts were you more successful in recruiting new members? What do you think were the reasons?
- Who were your members (housewives/ old people/young people/wives of Welfare Party men) ? Did they follow Islamist

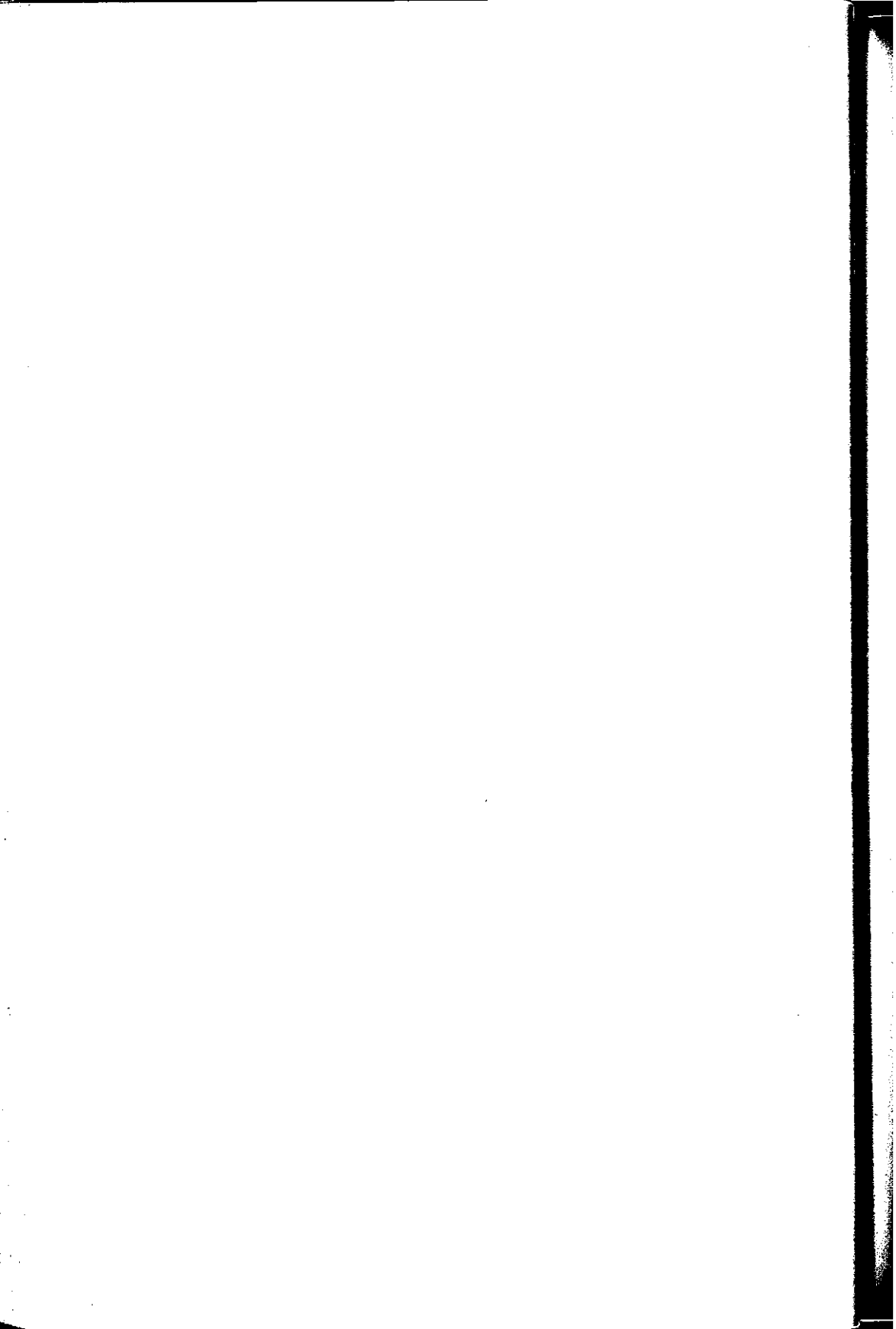
publications or televisions? Did you initiate them to the Islamist media ? What were some regional differences in membership?

- Were your members women with headscarves? Did they cover their heads after they became members of the Welfare Party?
- How did you convince women who were not interested in the Welfare party to become members?
- Why do you think women became members of the party?
- What were the attitudes of the husbands towards these women?
- Were the women who became members usually those whose husbands voted for the Welfare Party?
- Did women get permission or inform their husbands when they registered with the party?
- Were there problems when the husband of the women you registered did not approve of the party or the membership?
- Do you think there were women who influenced their husbands to become members?
- What were the advantages of the Ladies' Commissions to the Central Party organizations in recruiting new members and working for the party in general?
- What were the disadvantages?

## **VIEWS**

- Do you think you live as a good Muslim should ? (do you follow the requirements of Islam like five daily prayers and fasting etc?)
- Do you think you can give a Muslim identity to your children?

- How did your work with the party effect your children?
- It has been argued that Islamic rules regarding marriage, divorce, inheritance, and witnessing in court are biased in favor of men, that is, inequalitarian? What do you think on this issue?
- It is argued that Islam promotes the traditional division of labor between men and women. What do you think on this issue?
- Do you think the Party reflected the Islamist position on women's issues?
- What do you think about women covering their head? Claims are made that it is a control mechanism over women and her sexuality.
- What do you think about women's electoral rights, especially for being elected to office?
- What do you think about violence toward women?
- What do you think about the traditional division of labor between men and women, particularly as it pertains to women? Should women work outside home?
- What do you think the Republican reforms brought to Turkey? Could certain reforms be carried out differently? What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of these reforms?











# WELFARE PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE LADIES' COMMISSION PROGRESS REPORT

Between.....199.....199.....

## A-ORGANIZATIONAL & EDUCATIONAL REPORT

ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITIES					EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES			
Ladies' Commission (L.C.) # of Provinces Institutionalized	L.C. # of Provinces not Institutionalized	L.C. # of Districts Institutionalized	L.C. # of Districts not Institutionalized	L.C. # of Counties Institutionalized	IF EDUCATION GIVEN			
					Name of Province	Date	# of Participants	# of Provinces Educated

## B- LADIES' COMMISSION PROGRESS REPORTS

1 ADANA	23 ELAZIĞ	45 MANISA	67 ZONGULDAK
2 ADIYAMAN	24 ERZINCAN	46 K.MARAŞ	68 AKSARAY
3 AFYON	25 ERZURUM	47 MARDIN	69 BAYBURT
4 AĞRI	26 GSKİŞEHİR	48 MUĞLA	70 KARAMAN
5 AMASYA	27 GAZİANTEP	49 MUŞ	71 KIRIKALE
6 ANKARA	28 GİRSEUN	50 NEVŞEHİR	72 BATMAN
7 ANTALYA	29 GÜMÜŞHANE	51 NİĞDE	73 ŞIRNAK
8 ARTVIN	30 HAKKARİ	52 ORDU	74 BARTIN
9 AYDIN	31 HATAY	53 RİZE	75 ARDAHAN
10 BALIKESİR	32 İSPARTA	54 SAKARYA	76 İÇİR
11 BİLEÇİK	33 İÇEL	55 SAMSUN	77 YALOVA
12 BİNGÖL	34 İSTANBUL	56 SİRT	78 KARABÜK
13 BİTLİS	35 İZMİR	57 SİNOP	79 KİLİS
14 BOLU	36 KARS	58 SIVAS	TOTAL
15 BURDUR	37 KASTAMONU	59 TEKİRDAĞ	..... PROVINCE
16 BURSA	38 KAYSERİ	60 TOKAT	
17 ÇANAKKALE	39 KIRIKLARELİ	61 TRABZON	
18 ÇANKIRI	40 KIRŞEHİR	62 TUNCELİ	
19 ÇORUM	41 KOCAELİ	63 SÜRPA	
20 DENİZLİ	42 KONYA	64 UŞAK	
21 DİYARBAKIR	43 KÜTAHYA	65 VAN	
22 EDİRNE	44 MALATYA	66 YOZGAT	
Ladies' Commission Progress Report		Reporter	
# of Provinces Reported	# of Provinces not Reported	Name Surname	Signature

## C- ACTIVITIES

Registered Members		M.G.* # of Subscribers		Representative (Rep.)		2nd Rep.		Head Observer		Observer		Visits		Other Activities	
This Month	Total #	This Month	Total #	Total Goal	Total Proc.	Total Goal	Total Proc.	Total Goal	Total Proc.	Total Goal	Total Proc.	Total #	Total Part.	Total #	Total Part.
Home Chat		Seminar		Conference Panel		Theater Activities		Video Show		Fair		Engagement Wedding		Edu. of Orators	
Total #	Total Participants (Part.)	Total #	Total Part.	Total #	Total Part.	Total #	Total Part.	Total #	Total Part.	Total #	Total Part.	Total #	Total Part.	Total #	Total Part.

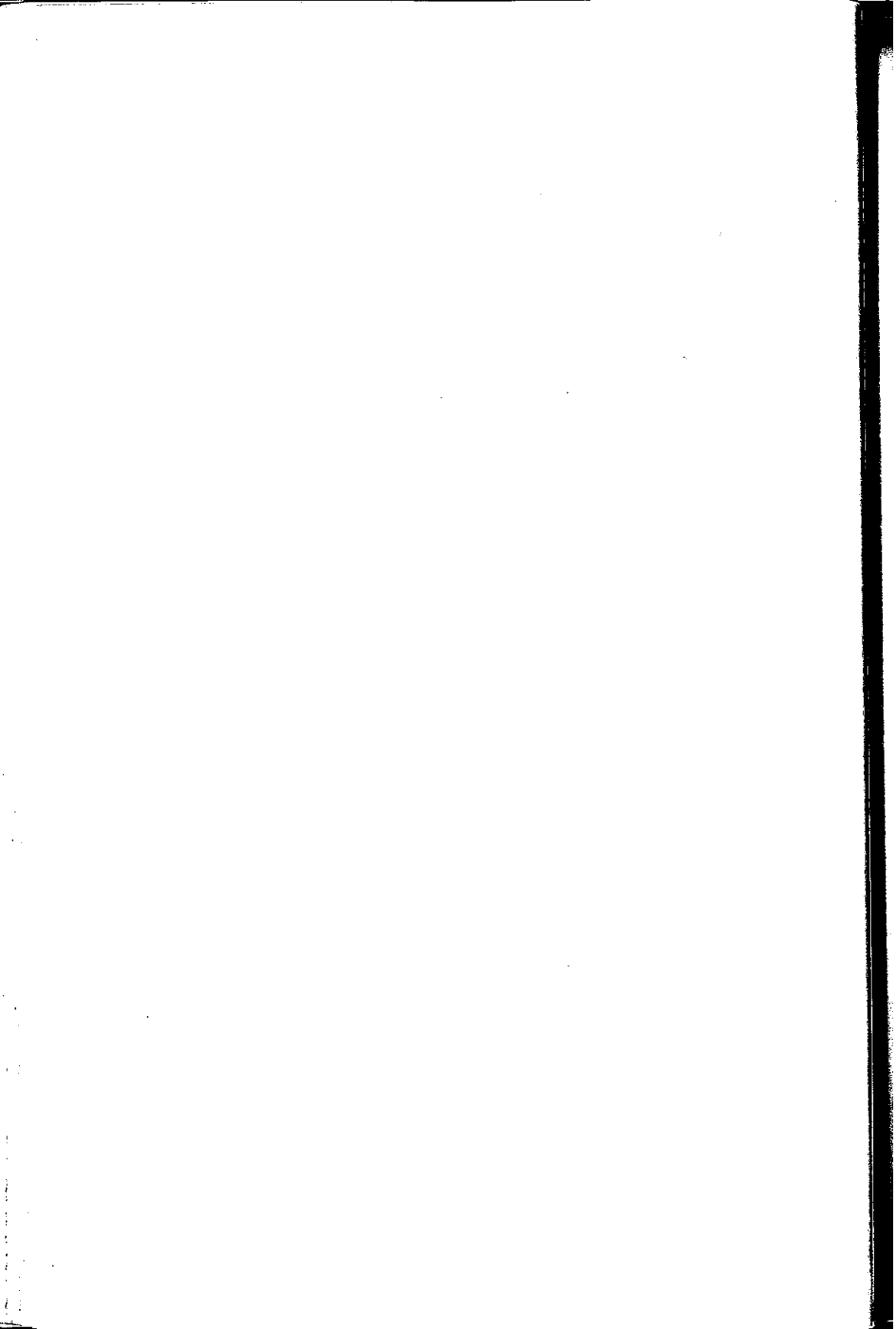
\* : Milli Gazete

WELFARE PARTY ..... PROVINCIAL ORGANIZATION

MEMBERS

.../199..

No:	Responsibility	Name/Surname	Father's Name	Birthdate & Place	Profession	Address
1	President (Pres.)					
2	Pres. Responsible for Organization					
3	Pres. Responsible for Electoral Works					
4	Pres. Responsible for Propaganda					
5	Pres. Responsible for Inter-Party & Public Relations					
6	Pres. Responsible for Local Administration					
7	Pres. Responsible for Economic & Social Issues					
8	Pres. Responsible for Education					
9	Pres. Responsible for Financial Issues					
10	Pres. Responsible for Foreign Relations					
11	Secretary of the Provincial Organization					
12	Representative for Organizational Education & Supervision					
13	Representative for Ladies Commission					
14	Representative for Youth Commission					
15	Pres. for Coordination of Electoral Works					
16	Representative for Press & Publication Activities					
17	Representative for Social & Cultural Activities					
18	Representative for Professional Associations					
19	2nd Representative for Relations with Voluntary Associations					
20	Representative for Supervision of Local Adm. & Education					
21	Representative for Planning & Research					
22	Representative for Personnel					
23	Accountant for the Provincial Organization					
24	Representative for Education of Orators					
25	Representative for Data Processing					



## APPENDIX C: ISLAMIST WOMEN'S ASSOCIATIONS AND FOUNDATIONS

We identified two major platforms, "Gökkuşığı İstanbul Kadın Platformu" (The Rainbow İstanbul Women's Platform) in İstanbul and "Başkent Kadın Platformu" (The Capital' Women's Platform) in Ankara to which various Islamist women's associations, foundations or women's committees in Islamist foundations and Islamist groups belonged. The Rainbow Platform was founded in 1994 (Çayır, 1997) and the Capital one in 1995 ("Başkent Kadın Platformu, 'Habitat II Kent Zirvesi Etkinlikleri'", 1996). The United Nations Development Program contract signed by the Turkish government in 1993 regarding the cultivation of relations between NGOs and the state which would be facilitated through the Directorate on the Status and Problems of Women provided the legal framework within which these platforms were encouraged. Similar platforms (which we could not reach) were formed in Bursa, Kayseri, Konya, Antalya and Diyarbakır among Islamist women (Çayır, 1997).

## **THE RAINBOW İSTANBUL WOMEN'S PLATFORM:**

As stated in their brochure Rainbow Women's Platform gathered "all women's association who carried the love of Mevlana and spoke with the language of Yunus" together. They stated their goals as follows:

- To gather women's associations which operated in different fields
- By establishing a common ground for action, to realize what women's associations could not do one by one
- To be in contact with organizations within and outside the country
- To follow developments concerning women and family and take initiatives to support the family
- To play an active role in decision making concerning the future of women and family within Turkey and the world
- To follow the media and take the necessary initiatives in related issues
- To establish a visual and written documents archive
- To have the voice of the platform heard through the media
- To have scientific research carried out in related fields ("Gökkuşuğu İstanbul Kadın Platformu", brochure, nd).

The platform organized meetings to define common problems, organized women's professional groups, raised money by organizing cultural activities, established contacts with women's associations in Anatolia, developed contacts with the Directorate General on Women's Status and Problems in Ankara and established a network with them, sent representatives to international congresses that were of interest to women including the 1995 UN Fourth World



Conference on Women, Beijing, established a documentary archive and extended help to Bosnian women ("Gökuşağı İstanbul Kadın Platformu", brochure, nd).

Their member organizations were as follows:

### **Women's Foundations**

- Hanımlar Eğitim ve Kültür Vakfı
- Şefkat Vakfı

### **Subsidiary Organizations in Foundations**

- Tarih İslam Araştırma Vakfı Hanımlar Komisyonu
- İslam Medeniyeti Vakfı Hanımlar Komisyonu
- Hırka-ı Şerif Vakfı Hanımlar Komisyonu
- Birlik Vakfı Hanımlar Komisyonu
- Hayat Sağlık ve Sosyal Hizmetler Vakfı Hanımlar Komisyonu
- Dayanışma Vakfı Hanımlar Komisyon
- Araştırma Kültür Vakfı Hanımlar Komisyonu
- Osmanlılar İlim ve İrfan Vakfı Aile Encümeni
- Elif Eğitim Hizmetleri Vakfı Hanımlar Komisyonu
- Türk Edebiyatı Vakfı Hanımlar Komisyonu
- Yeni Asya Eğitim ve Kültür Vakfı Hanımlar Komisyonu

### **Women's Associations**

- Hanımlar İlim ve Kültür Derneği
- Dost Hanımlar Derneği

- Hale Hanımlar Derneđi
- Çađrı Hanımlar İlim ve Kùltür Derneđi
- Kadıköy İHL Mezunları Derneđi
- Gureba-i Müslimin Derneđi

### **Subsidiary Organizations in Associations**

- Mazlum Der Hanımlar Komisyonu
- Anadolu Aydınlar Ocađı Hanımlar Komisyonu

### **Initiative Groups**

- Radyo, TV Girişim Grubu
- Yuvalar Birliđi Girişim Grubu
- Hazar Grubu
- Nil Girişim Grubu
- Proje Üretim Girişim Grubu

### **Yuvam Hanımlar Kulübü**

- Kartal Anadolu İHL Anneler Birliđi
- Feza Kùltür Grubu
- Temel Eđitim Girişim Grubu
- Sonbahar Girişim Grubu
- Bizim Çizgi Girişim Grubu
- Kadın Kimliđi Girişim Grubu
- Eđitimciler Girişim Grubu
- Eđitime Katkı Girişim Grubu
- Akmed Girişim Grubu
- Çalışan Kadına Destek Grubu

— Gelincik Kulübü

— Bizim Aile Girişim Grubu (“Gökkuşuğu İstanbul Kadın Platformu”, brochure, nd)

Rainbow Platform was not active during the period we carried out our research. Both Kenan Çayır who had worked on the platform and some members informed us that it was disintegrating. “Hanımlar Eğitim ve Kültür Vakfı” which we had been informed as the most active anchor foundation of the platform denied our numerous attempts to interview them. In a written statement, we were told that they were an apolitical NGO and that consulting political women’s associations would be in our better interest. We had similar responses from the few member associations we could locate. This very resistance to public visibility reveals that the members of the platform were not inclined to reach larger groups and be recognized as such.

The only representative who gave us an interview was from the Headscarf Commission of Mazlum Der (İnsan Hakları ve Mazlumlar için Dayanışma Derneği/Solidarity Association for Human Rights and the Oppressed). Mazlum Der was an organization which aimed to provide economic, legal or political help to Muslims in need, especially those of Kurdish origin. Even though The Rainbow Platform’s brochure listed the Ladies Commission of Mazlum Der as their member, the representative of the Headscarf Commission argued that there was no ladies commission besides them. The Headscarf Commission included male members as well and organized activities concerning the headscarf issue and gave moral and legal support to students who had headscarves.

## **THE CAPITAL WOMEN'S PLATFORM**

The Capital Women's Platform defined their goals in their brochures as follows:

- To diagnose the current status and problems of women and provide alternative, theoretical and practical solutions which would develop their political, legal, psychological, social and economic being.
- To promote dialogue, communication and solidarity between women to contribute to human happiness, to bring together women of different groups and work in pursuit of common interests.
- To engage in activities in pursuit of the humanitarian, religious and moral values of society.
- To protect the mind, religion, race, life and property of human beings; to engage in activities for the appreciation and protection of the universe and nature in relation to the purpose for which they have been created. ("Başkent Kadın Platformu, 'Habitat II Kent Zirvesi Etkinlikleri'", 1996, p.1-2)

The platform extended help to Bosnian women and children in Ankara, supported the Southeast Anatolian campaign of Mazlum-Der, organized a panel with The Turkish Religious Foundation on "Muslim Woman's Identity in Changing Turkey", participated in the First Eurasian Women's Cooperation Group Meeting, organized a panel discussion in Manisa on "Contemporary Problems of Muslim Women" and participated in the Habitat II conference by organizing various panels ("Başkent Kadın Platformu, 'Habitat II Kent Zirvesi Etkinlikleri'", 1996, p.2).

**Their member organizations were as follows:**

- Araştırma ve Kültür Vakfı
- Anadolu Eğitim, Kültür ve Bilim Vakfı
- Bosna Hersek Kültür ve Dayanışma Derneği
- Hukukçular Birliği Vakfı
- Muradiye Eğitim ve Kültür Vakfı
- İnsan Hakları ve Mazlumlar için Dayanışma Derneği
- Sosyal Güvenlik ve Eğitim Vakfı
- Fatma Zehra İlim, Kültür ve Dayanışma Derneği
- Birra Girişim Grubu
- Eğitimciler Girişim Grubu
- Oya Girişim Grubu
- Sosyologlar Girişim Grubu
- Tefekkür Girişim Grubu
- Turkuaz Girişim Grubu (“Başkent Kadın Platformu, ‘Habitat II Kent Zirvesi Etkinlikleri’”, 1996, p.1)

Serap Şahiner who responded to our questions in writing about the Capital Women’s Platform, explained that the platform developed out of a campaign to help Chechenians. When the campaign became a success and was topped off with a letter from Dudayev who explained how he cried and prayed God as he watched the video cassette showing the Ankara women contributing with their engagement rings etc., the women gained the self confidence to collaborate with other women and initiated the platform.

**MİLLİ GENÇLİK VAKFI HANIM KOMİSYONU**

Besides these two major platforms, Milli Gençlik Vakfı Hanım Komisyonu (National Youth Foundation Ladies Commission) was

the most important organization which helped propagate Islamist values and worldview. The National Youth Foundation operated since 1975 as a well organized institution which was critical in mobilizing support for the Welfare Party. According to the information we received from the President of The National Youth Foundation Ladies Commissions in İstanbul, the ladies were organized in 60 provinces. In İstanbul, there were representatives of the organization in 16 districts which had bureaus even at the quarter levels. At the province level, weekly executive meetings and monthly meetings with the district organizations were held.

The Ladies Commissions engaged in social service and public relations activities like many other women's groups did. They organized seminars and panel discussions, fairs where women brought the food they had cooked, offered courses on computers and information processing, calligraphy, embroidery and sewing. Depending on local demand, they organized math, science or language courses, including English and Arabic. They had contacts with faculty members in Divinity faculties whom they could ask to offer courses in Arabic.

Perhaps most critically, the Ladies Commissions gave scholarships to needy university students. They offered boarding houses where these students could stay and the commissions extended their care concerning the welfare and personal well being of these students. The ladies tried to raise money themselves with their own activities, but they also sought money from the well to do members of their community. They also channelled alms giving prescribed by Islam, a custom that is widely practiced even among the "secular" groups into the education and upkeep of the poor students.

## APPENDIX D:

### SURVEY OF *MILLİ GAZETE*

#### Associations

- 28.05.1992 “Hanımlar için yeni bir adres: Hanımlar kültür sanat merkezi”.
- 20.07.1993 “Çiller’e Sivas sorusu”.
- 04.09.1993 “MGV’den kermes”.
- 07.01.1994 “Başörtüsü mağdurları MGV’de”.
- 14.01.1994 “Maksadımız yeryüzü mazlumları için bir sığınak olmak”.
- 29.01.1994 “MGV’li hanımların Sakarya tanışması”.
- 20.03.1994 “Bursalı hanımlara bravo...”.
- 05.11.1994 “Başörtüsü yasağı ilkelliktir!”.
- 20.03.1995 “Hanımlar komisyonu üye rekortmeni”.
- 04.07.1995 “Kahta MGV hanımlar komisyonu’ndan kermes”.
- 17.07.1995 “Sivas ayakta”.
- 17.07.1995 “Kim bu zalimler?”.
- 20.07.1995 “Sivas’ta yeni senaryo”.
- 22.07.1995 “Sivas’ta insan hakları ihlal edildi”.
- 26.07.1995 “Gökkuşuğu İstanbul kadın platformu Sivas’taki başörtüsü olayını kınadı. ‘Çiller göreve’”.

- 01.08.1995 "Türbanı düşünün tavsiyesi".  
11.09.1995 "MGV'li hanımlardan sergi".  
18.09.1995 "MGV'li hanımlar".  
03.10.1995 "Gökkuşuğu İstanbul kadın platformu".  
20.11.1995 "Plan medeniyeti vakfı hanım komisyonu başkanı Selva Özelbas 'Bilgi kaynağından alınmalı' ".  
01.03.1997 "MGV'li hanımlar 'eğitim'i konuşuyor".

### **Commemorations**

- 28.01.1990 "Cihad ve şehadetle kadın olmak".  
06.10.1994 "4 Aralık'ta Keçiören 'Refah' diyecek".  
20.03.1995 "RP Ankara il hanımlar komisyonu'ndan muhteşem bir Çeçenistan belgeseli 'Çeçenistan'la dayanışma günü' ".  
27.03.1995 "Hanımlar belediyeler bayramını kutluyor".  
29.03.1995 "İstanbul hanımlar komisyonu RP'li belediyelerin 1. yıl dönümünü kutladı".  
02.05.1995 "Hanımlara, 'Sevgi ve Kardeşlik günü' ".  
02.06.1995 "Sibel Eraslan: Erbakan Hocam dünyayı titretti".  
10.11.1995 "Tekirdağ RP'de coşkulu gün".

### **Conferences / Panels / Public Speeches**

- 21.12.1994 "İnsan, ancak 'haklarıyla' insandır".  
22.11.1993 "RP'li hanımların İzmir çıkartması".  
22.11.1993 "Ege'li hanımların ortaya koyduğu gerçek".  
20.12.1993 "Hanımların yeri Refah".  
22.12.1993 "Hanımlardan 'zulmü telin' günü".  
23.12.1993 "Kayseri'de görülmemiş coşku".



- 10.01.1994 "RP, sistemin alternatifidir".
- 11.01.1994 "Devlet emanetlerimize sahip çıkmadı".
- 16.01.1994 "Hanımlardan RP'ye büyük ilgi".
- 28.01.1994 "Anayasa milletin özüyle bağdaşmıyor".
- 26.04.1994 "Kadınlar 27 Mart zaferini konuştu".
- 04.10.1994 "RP'li hanımlar yeniden atakta".
- 16.10.1994 "Hanımlardan kutlama".
- 03.11.1994 "Halkımız hizmete susamış".
- 13.12.1994 "En büyük ihlalcı devlet".
- 07.01.1995 "Hanımlara büyük iş düşüyor".
- 17.01.1995 "Hanımlar komisyonu'nu programına ilgi büyüktü".
- 14.04.1995 "Ankara il hanımlar komisyonu: 'Elbette Sanat' ".
- 15.04.1995 "Hanımlar gerçek sanattan yana".
- 27.04.1995 "Erdogan: İstanbul'u tarihiyle yaşanılır hale getireceğiz".
- 29.04.1995 "Refah'lı hanımların konferansı miting gibiydi: Kırıkka-  
le'de Refah patlaması".
- 15.06.1995 "İktidara yürüyoruz".
- 24.06.1995 "Hanımlara adil düzen konferansı".
- 25.06.1995 "Erbakan: Din düşmanlığı yapıyorlar".
- 23.07.1995 "Başörtülü avukatların sesini duyun?".
- 02.09.1995 "RP genel merkez hanımlar komisyonu genel başkanı Niğ-  
de'de".
- 17.10.1995 "Refah Partisi iktidara yürüyor".
- 08.11.1995 "Akhisarlı bacılar seçim için ayakta".
- 10.12.1995 "İktidar yakındır".
- 18.12.1995 "Bayburt'ta çok özel bir gün".
- 23.12.1995 "RP iktidarıyla tüm insanların gönlüne muhabbet saçaca-  
ğız".

- 23.12.1995 "RP Ankara il hanımlar komisyonu başkanı Halise Çiftçi: Oyunuzu RP'ye verin boşa gitmesin".
- 29.12.1995 "Artık Refah vakti geldi".
- 03.01.1996 "İsparta RP'de iki konuk".

### **Donations**

- 04.03.1991 "Ankaralı hanımların ramazan hareketi".
- 28.01.1995 "Erzurumlu hanımların faydalı toplantıları".
- 29.03.1995 "Fakir hastalara ücretsiz bakım".
- 15.12.1995 "Onlar hiç böyle sevmediler ki".

### **Educational Seminars**

- 24.08.1994 "Balıkesirli bacılar çok faal".
- 20.03.1995 "RP Ankara il hanım komisyonu'ndan 'Güzel ve Etkili' kursu".
- 12.05.1995 "RP'li hanımlar atakta".
- 07.07.1995 "Refah'ın Dersleri".
- 27.06.1998 "RP il hanımlar komisyonu istişare ve eğitim seminerleri".

### **Election Campaigns**

- 26.10.1993 "Hanımlar iktidar sözü verdiler".
- 21.11.1994 "Beşik sallayan eller şimdi iktidarı sallıyor".
- 04.08.1995 "Siyasette kadından son Sivas hadisesine".
- 01.12.1995 "RP'li hanımlar: Haksızlık yok".
- 01.12.1995 "Haksızlık yapılmadı".
- 08.12.1995 "Bizler Refah'ın birer neferiyiz".
- 09.12.1995 "RP'li hanımlar mermi taşıyor".

- 26.12.1995 “RP’li hanımların medyaya cevapları muhteşem oldu”.
- 08.01.1996 “Kadınlar ve siyasi partiler”.
- 20.01.1996 “Sizler 20. Asrın Nene Hatun’larısınız”.

### **Executive Meetings of the Ladies’ Commissions**

- 11.11.1993 “RP’li hanımların Sakarya’daki çalışması meyvelerini veriyor”.
- 07.12.1993 “Süheyla Kebapçioğlu: Kadınlarımız kurtuluşu Refah’ta görüyor”.
- 16.12.1993 “Hanımlardan seçim startı”.
- 21.04.1994 “RP hanımlar komisyonu genel başkanı Kebapçioğlu: Şimdi daha çok çalışma zamanı”.
- 05.05.1994 “RP il hanım komisyonları Ankara’da toplandı: Hedef 1 milyon üye”.
- 12.07.1994 “Marmara Bölgesi hanım komisyonları toplantısı yapıldı”.
- 17.12.1994 “RP hanım komisyonları toplandı”.
- 18.03.1995 “RP hanımlar komisyonu toplandı”.
- 26.04.1995 “RP’li hanımlar toplandı”.
- 19.05.1995 “RP’li hanımlar Kayseri’de toplanıyor”.
- 09.07.1995 “RP’li hanımların Karadeniz toplantısı”.
- 22.07.1995 “Hanımlar ordusu Ordu’da. RP’li hanımların karadeniz mın-tıka toplantısı yapıldı”.
- 06.08.1995 “RP’li hanımlardan ummalı çalışması”.
- 20.08.1995 “Hanımların il divan toplantısı”.
- 01.09.1995 “RP genel merkez hanımlar komisyonu doğu çıkartması”.
- 01.10.1995 “RP’li hanımlar seçime hazır”.
- 09.11.1995 “Halise Çiftçi: ‘Seçime çok az kaldı, gafil avlanmayalım’ ”.
- 05.12.1995 “Hanımlar karınca gibi”.

### **Interviews with Women Leaders**

- 15.11.1993 "Nermin Erbakan: 'Refah iktidarında dertler bitecek'".
- 18.03.1994 "RP Türkiye hanımlar komisyonları başkanı Kebapçioğlu: 'İnsanlar arasındaki sevgiyi yok etmeyelim'".
- 08.08.1994 "Kebapçioğlu: 'Kadın ve erkek birbirinin tamamlayıcısıdır'".
- 09.10.1994 "Urbiye Soner: 'RP dışındaki hiçbir parti zahmet edip Doğu'ya aday göndermesin'".
- 24.11.1994 "Refah Partisi hanımlar komisyonu genel başkanı Leman Aksay: 'Tek yumruk olursak tüm güçlükleri yeneriz'".
- 20.03.1995 "RP'li hanımlardan birlik beraberlik çağrısı".
- 23.07.1995 "Sivas olaylarına tepkiler artıyor: Bu zulüm bitsin".

### **Progress Reports on Ladies' Commissions**

- 18.11.1993 "RP konya hanımlar komisyonu çalışmalarını yoğunlaştırdı".
- 10.02.1994 "Refahlı hanımlar seçim için kolları sıvadı".
- 21.02.1994 "Antalyalı hanımlar hızlı çalışıyorlar".
- 08.05.1994 "Bacılarımıza minnettarız".
- 27.10.1994 "Karamanlı hanımlar doludizgin".
- 16.01.1995 "RP'li hanımlardan hasta ziyareti".
- 19.03.1995 "RP'li hanımlar durmak bilmiyor".
- 16.09.1995 "Ankara hanımlar komisyonu çalışmaları".
- 10.10.1995 "RP'li hanımlar komisyonu başkanları tam gaz".
- 14.11.1995 "RP'li hanımlar seçime hazırlanıyor".

### **Social Activities**

- 13.11.1993 "Erkeklerin yapamadığını Refahlı hanımlar yapacak".

- 11.05.1993 "Kocaelili hanımların örnek organizasyonu".
- 19.07.1993 "RP hanımlar komisyonu'ndan aşure günü".
- 02.12.1993 "Karadenizli kadınlar fuhuşa karşı savaş açtı".
- 01.01.1994 "Kimsesi olmayanlar artık yalnız değil...".
- 17.02.1994 "RP'li hanımlar boş durmuyor".
- 02.03.1994 "Refahlı hanımlar Bosna için kermes düzenledi".
- 26.06.1994 "RP hanımlar komisyonu'nda tanışma ve dostluk çayı".
- 12.07.1994 "Sakaryalı hanımlardan kermes...".
- 27.10.1994 "RP Yıldırım hanımlar komisyonu'ndan örnek davranış".
- 01.11.1994 " 'Geçmişten Bugüne' konulu Ankara turu".
- 04.12.1994 "Balıkesirli hanımların örnek çalışmaları göz dolduruyor".
- 04.03.1995 "RP'li hanımlardan yoğun program".
- 22.03.1995 "Trabzon Refah Partisi il hanım komisyonu çalışmalarıyla birçok belediyeyi geçti".
- 03.05.1995 "RP Ankara il hanımlar komisyonu'ndan Anadolu esintileri".
- 11.06.1995 "RP'li hanımlar gece gündüz çalışıyorlar".
- 26.08.1995 "Radyolar önemli bir boşluğu doldurmuştur".
- 04.09.1995 "Her zaman çok seslilikten yanayız".
- 01.11.1995 "RP'li hanımlar görev başında".
- 11.11.1995 "RP'li hanımlardan seçime katkı".
- 13.01.1996 "RP'li hanımlardan başarı yemeği".
- 27.01.1996 "Tek başına kadınlar için çalışacağız".

### **Visits**

- 03.04.1993 "Geçmiş olsun kardeşim".
- 26.10.1993 "RP Sakarya hanımlar komisyonu'na iade-i ziyaret".

- 09.01.1994 “Erbakan’dan hanımlar komisyon’una destek”.
- 02.10.1994 “Sivas hanımlar komisyonu’ndan çocuk esirgeme kurumu’na ziyaret”.
- 23.10.1994 “Refah Partili hanımlardan şehit ailelerine destek...”.
- 05.11.1994 “Hastane ziyaretine engel.”
- 11.04.1995 “RP Beykoz hanımlar komisyonu’ndan anlamlı ziyaret”.
- 02.05.1995 “RP’li hanımlardan Diyanet’e ziyaret”.
- 14.07.1995 “RP İstanbul hanımlar komisyonundan ziyaret”.
- 17.07.1995 “RP’li hanımlardan felaketzedelere yardım”.
- 17.07.1995 “RP’li hanımlar mazlumların yanında”.
- 22.10.1995 “RP’li hanımlardan Afganistan büyükelçiliğine ziyaret”.
- 02.11.1995 “Refah Partili hanımlardan hastane ziyareti”.
- 12.11.1995 “RP’li hanımlardan gazetemize ziyaret”.

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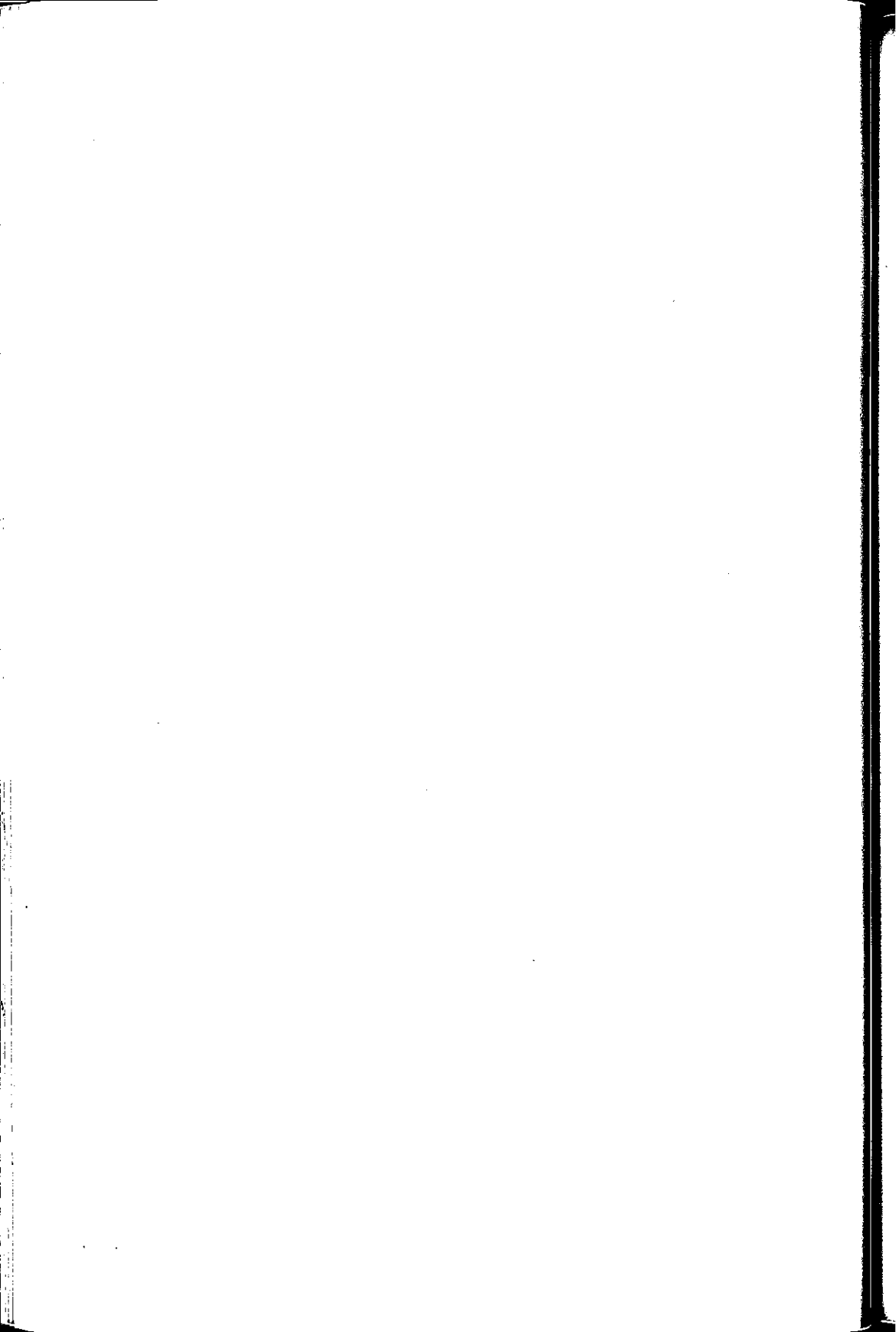
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