CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT IN RURAL TURKEY
–A CASE STUDY–

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INTRODUCTION

The topic of this paper deals with one of the efforts developing countries are undertaking with various degrees of efficiency in order to overcome impediments in the process of socio-economic development: rural cooperatives.

To start with I should like to clarify what I mean by the concept "development". To my understanding the concepts "development" or "modernization" or "progress" refer directly to the increasing domination of man over his social as well as natural environment and the increasing democratization of social life as an outcome: that is, the realization of those ideals of freedom, equality, public interest ... at ever increasing extents.

When looked at in relation with economic activities this same process of development means growing rationalization and productivity in agricultural sector so as to enable non-agricultural activities. Thus development means, in actual life, the expansion of non-agricultural avtivities such as industry, exchange, health, education, transportation-communication, arts and science along with agricultural production.

And the final goal of this process is to achieve greater human prosperity historically defined.

The cooperative movement can be considered as a part of this socio-economic change process sharing the same motive and orientation which is the realization of democratic ideals in society. In the third world countries cooperative movement is emerging at a period when the interactions between urban and rural areas as well as those between advanced and backward technologies reach such great dimensions never

experienced before in history. It is also emerging in these countries within a social structure with important contradictions in its basic elements; that is at a transitional period in social structures.

It is my view that the successes and failures of the cooperative movement in developing countries can only be properly explained within this context. Because a cooperative is an enterprise formed by persons associating with a definite common purpose –relating to either production, consumption, credit, marketing, housing, a.s.o., or to several of these–, governed by the rules of democracy, aiming at materializing and increasing the interests of its members as well as those of the whole society. In present-day societies –particularly in those which are developed and industrialized-it is almost impossible to understand social and economic reality without considering cooperatives. In such societies cooperatives are so much developed and expanded that one can call them "co-operative democracies".

TRADITIONAL RURAL LIFE

We need not go here into a detailed description of rural life in developing countries. Suffice it to remind the basic traits of their rural structure: backward technology, low productivity, overdivided lands, selfsufficient character of agricultural production carried out in households, low income and savings levels, a very unbalanced distribution of resources and incomes within a feudal-like power-structure, illiteracy and low level of education, poor health conditions and high birth and death rates, although the latter is decreasing, causing the well known fact of population explosion.

The rural population which covers a proportion from 60 % to 80 % or more of the total population in these countries are living in small communities named village. These human settlements display a great degree of dispersiveness, isolation and seclusion, un-coordinated and non-integrated with the society at large. In other words the scale of society in these countries has not yet grown to the extents found in a modern, industrial society. The following definition for these rural settlements thus holds valid: A village is a small community whose population varies between a few dozens to a few hundreds of households, having very little and poorly coordinated common interests with the larger society, showing strong tendency of autonomy towards it, living closer to natural rather than social environment and heavily influenced and dependent to this natural environment.

DYNAMICS OF SOCIAL CHANGE

Again we need not go into a detailed explanation of internal and external dynamics of social change in these societies. We should remind ourselves, however, that it is due to the internal and external dynamics of change that nonagricultural activities develop in these societies; and within the interactions of this process agricultural sector enters the process of modernization implying integration with the larger society and increase in productivity. This process starts and develop most easily in those rural areas where cash crops are the main products. In fact those villages producing mainly such crops as cotton, tobacco, citrus fruits, tea, olive and olive-oil, opium, fish and other sea-foods, a.s.o., necessarily come into close contacts with the larger society and with the world at large. Because most of the cash crops they produce consist a majority of exports of these countries. Thus a cotton, or tobacco, or tea producer is necessarily finding himself in such objective conditions as to question the order of the society and of the international community and to take part in the formation and running of this order. Thus he develops political perceptions, knowledge, attitudes, organizations and leadership, all proper to a participant culture. In a word he is going through a process of depeasantization and becoming a modern farmer, rational and conscious in his behaviour.

It is in these cash-crop areas that the cooperatives achieve the highest possible rate of progress under the present circumstances.

On the other hand it is a well known fact that socio-economic change is not a smooth process with no contradictions and antagonisms, simply because the traditional elements-here I include some of the external elements as well, such as colonialism and colonial behaviours from the outside world-continue to exist even if in decreasing proportions.

I propose to study the cooperative movement in rural Turkey within such a context. In fact as we shall see later in this paper the cooperative movement in rural Turkey show many imprints of the contradictions between the new and the old elements of social structure.

RURAL STRUCTURES IN TURKEY

Nearly two thirds of the fourty millions total population in Turkey is at present living in rural areas. This rural population is scattered in more than 60.000 small settlements called villages. In 1973 only 30 % of them had a road connection to the administrative and economic centers. Only 10 % have electricity. 80 % of the village households use

draft animals (mainly oxen) in cultivating the lands. 40 % do not use any fertilizers. 30 % do not have any hygienic drinking water supply.

Income distribution is very unbalanced and the savings capacity of the great majority is very low or even nil. 80 % of the rural households do not have enough land, controlling only 25 % of the total cultivable lands. 90 % get 50 % of the total agricultural incomes while 10 % take the other 50 %.

Over 50 % of the rural population is illiterate; this proportion raises up to 77 % for female rural population. Nutrition is very unbalanced being mainly based on wheat and other cereals. Child death rate is around 200 %0 per year.

Only 9.6 % of the total farmers are able to make any capital savings and 3 % of them are big landowners. 80 % are given less than 2.000 Tl. bank credits yearly, 17.5 % between 2.000–10.000 Tl. Bank credits exceeding 10.000 Tl. are given only to 3 % of the farmers who are again big landlords. As a result more than half of the bank credits given to the agricultural sector are used for comsumption rather than production and investment purposes. 50 % of the farmers have to borrow from the moneylenders or big landlords to be often paid in crops of the next harvest. This way they can get only half the market price or so for their crops.

RURAL COOPERATIVES

The first important steps in the history of the cooperative movement in Turkey were taken by the Constitutional Law of 1961 and the Law of Cooperatives enacted in 1969. Article 51 of the present Turkish Constitutional Law charges the State and the Government with the duty of supporting and developing the cooperative enterprises. The Law of Cooperatives imposes on the Government the obligations of Supporting cooperatives with necessary credits and giving them grants. Due to these legislative enactments rural cooperatives also multiplied rapidly.

Almost all of these cooperatives are occupied in the fields of sales, credits and production, in the order of their respective importance. They are mostly formed and show their greatest efficiency in regions where such products as cotton, hazel-nut, olive and olive-oil, tea, sugar beet, mohair, fish, etc. are produced in large quantities. These areas cover only about 15 % of the total rural population. Consumption cooperatives, housing cooperatives and cooperatives with other

specific purposes do not exist in rural areas in any important number worth mentioning.

What is more important, the greatest majority of these rural cooperatives are formed under the guidance and dominant role of the Government. They are not real grass-root organizations realized by the peasant farmers themselves. The sales and the credit cooperatives, the eldest and relatively speaking the most active ones in rural areas, are particularly in the status of Government agencies. We must at once make it clear however that the Government supports to these cooperatives have never been to the extent of enabling them to achieve the socio-economic development of rural areas, a fact reflecting the class-character of the political and economic power in the society. This can easily be detected from the figures about the distribution of bank credits in agricultural sector mentioned above. Besides, the few grass-root cooperatives, the real democratic ones receive still less support and encouragement from the Government, our case study showing a typical example of this situation. In short we can say that there has been no consistently positive Government policies concerning cooperatives in general and rural cooperatives in particular. The cooperative policies of the Governments representing rather the interests of the big landlords, merchants and moneylenders have up to the present time been such that they neither killed nor healed the cooperatives. Particularly the bulk of the bank credits, the blood of the economy and society, is granted to big-landowners, big commercial and industrial entrepreneurs and to the moneylenders and merchants.

Beginning from 1965 a new type of rural cooperatives came into existence and proliferated very rapidly. They are named Village Development Cooperatives and are by their statutes multi-purpose cooperatives aiming at developing agricultural production, marketing and credit conditions as well as socio-economic modernization of the village communities. In less than ten years' time span they numbered as many as 5.000. However the basic motive of this speedy increase has not been so much "community development" as to enjoy priority in sending unemployed peasant members to Germany and other Western European countries as manual labor. Because the Government assigns priority quotas to cooperatives in sending unemployed manpower to Europe. Its efforts to provide the Village Development Cooperatives with sufficient credits and other technical aids are however at a very unsatisfactory level.

To summerize, besides the unsuitable socio-economic conditions of rural communities, the Governments have not been quite enthousiastic

in helping the rural cooperative enterprises; their credit policies, in particular, have never been profitable to cooperatives.

There is a great potential, however, particularly in cash-crop producing areas, for the cooperatives to develop, providing that general economic and financial policies are appropriately designed. Only then can the rural cooperatives materialize their socio-economic goals which are:

— to increase the production, to provide members with sufficient production inputs under more adequate conditions, and to lower the costs,

— to materialize a productive and well organized marketing system,

— to raise the income levels and the living standards of the members,

— to meet the members' needs for social security and to provide them with aid in cases of illness and accidents,

— to elevate the educational level of the members and to develop in them the consciousness of social solidarity,

— to protect the members against the various pressures from the social, economic and political power centers; that is, to protect them against the pressures of the traditional powers such as landlords, middlemen, merchants, etc, and to contribute thus to the development of a democratic political culture and to the democratization of the social structure,

— to contribute to the development of an integrated, solidary, healthy social life.

Number and Field of Activities of Rural Cooperatives in Turkey (1974)

Agricultural Credit Cooperatives	2.043
Agricultural Sales Cooperatives	676
Village Development Cooperatives	5.763
Production and Sales Cooperatives	223
Fish and Sea-foods Cooperatives	172
Tea Producing Cooperatives	78
Soil Preservation and Improvement Coop.	1.139
Animal Raising Cooperatives	325
Sugar-beet Producing Cooperatives	20

No orderly records of the members are kept in these cooperatives.

II. TAŞUCU FISHERMEN'S COOPERATIVE: A CASE STUDY OF COOPERATIVE MOVEMENT IN RURAL AREAS IN TURKEY

Taşucu is a small town situated along the seashore in Southern Anatolia. It is a sub-district center with a seaport. It is connected to the nearby province *Mersin*, and its district *Silifke* with highways. It has a population of about 2.500 people and a municipality.

During the last period of Ottoman Empire Taşucu was a seaport for the export of the agricultural products from Central Anatolia. Caravans of hundreds of camels used to bring here from *Konya* export goods, mainly cereals and animals. This continued –though in decreasing amount– until the end of the World War II when the highway transportation throughout the country began to progress. Again before the Republican Regime Greek merchants used to controle the economy of the town until the Greeks in Anatolia were exchanged with the Turks in Greece between 1923–1927. The majority of the Turks in the town were landless and worked as porters hired by these merchants in warehouses and in loading and evacuating ships. They used to spend much of what they earned at the bars run by the same Greek merchants and returned home penniless.

Only one name –*Hacı Paşa*– is noticed at that time as an economic power in the town's Turkish community. He has received from *Sultan Abdülhamit II* the rank of a civil Pasha by sending him a ship's load of telephone poles as a gift. Thus he controlled one third of the fertile Silifke plain while the remaining two-thirds were already at the hands of Greek merchants. The social segregation between the Greeks and the Turks was so deep that the latter refused to learn such jobs as tailoring, shoemaking, joinery, construction, etc. considering them works of infidels and what is more, they rejected eating shrimp, lobster and even lahos fish for Greeks were eating them.

After the removal of the Greeks from Taşucu Hacı Pasha's family began to controle alone the economic and social life of the town. During the Liberation War while all the Turkish villagers who were capable of using a gun were going to the service Hacı Pasha's sons and other relatives succeeded to stay off the war by holding such jobs of muslim priest (imam) or office servants who were not called into the service. They strengthened their hegemony, as a result.

During the Republican Period there were no important changes in the economic and social conditions of the community in Taşucu until the cooperative movement gave positive results. Only a second family –Hacı Süleyman's family-engaged in commerce, gained lands and began

to be noticed besides the Hacı Pasha's family, though not so much as the latter. The leading persons of this second family, too, have religious titles such as *imam*, *hacı*, and this is very meaningful from the point of the authority and power structure in the town.

ATATÜRK: THE FIRST COOPERATIVE FOUNDER

In 1934 Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish Republic and its first president, made a trip to Taşucu. During his stay Sadık Bey, Hacı Pasha's son welcomed him at his home. Sadık Bey who was a graduate of the French Highschool in Beyrout and was living on the vast lands that he inherited from his father had his wife to take dancing lessons by inviting a Hungarian dancing teacher in preparation for this trip.

Some of the important results of Atatürk's visit to Silifke and Taşucu were the import of modern agricultural techniques and the institution of a credit cooperative. He thought of establishing a farm that would set an example of modern agricultural methods in the region that was in poverty despite very productive lands and suitable climatic conditions. He assigned Sadık Bey (surnamed Taşucu) as his attorney to buy 16.500 décares treasury lands on which a modern farm that could set an example by all means was made real. The development of rice culture and the dissemination of merino sheep and red cows –the speciality of Southern Anatolia– can be mentioned among the contributions of this farm to the agriculture and animal breeding in the region. After the death of Atatürk this farm's lands were distributed to the landless peasants according to his will. Just after he built the farm, Atatürk, acting as a farmer ordered the responsible administrators to organize an agricultural credit cooperative that would supply the villagers with necessary credits for the management and marketing and increase in productivity. Once again acting as an initiator he became the first member of this cooperative and paid a membership fee of 1.500 Tl.

As early as the very start of its lifetime, usurers or middlemen in Taşucu and Silifke made all kinds of accusations to the cooperative, even though it was set up directly by Atatürk's order. Villagers who were encouraged by the governor of Silifke to be members to the cooperative wanted to consult the landlords, merchants and usurers whom they traditionally depended upon. However these people tried to scare them by saying "Should you never be a member of the cooperative! If you did, the Government will even take away the eggs of your hens besides your land." For instance an old villager named Gucur Hamdi had these to say on the subject: "I was called four times to the presence of

the Governor, accompanied by gendarme, to be asked to become a member of the cooperative. In three of these visits I resisted by pretending that I did not have any money to invest in the cooperative, but I became a member during the last call for the fear of gendarme. Later, however, I realized that they were giving us credit, and besides, there was nobody to take our lands or hens away. I saw that cooperative was not harmful; on the contrary it was useful."

A LOCAL LEADER IN COOPERATIVE MOVEMENT

Like other Agricultural Credit Cooperatives the one in Taşucu has not been of any great success. In 1968, however, a new type of cooperative was organized and has been very successful: it is the Taşucu Fishing Cooperative, the most powerful and successful fishing cooperative in all Turkey today. It was founded and has been directed under the leadership of a popular local leader, named A. E. It would be relevent to portray him here because of the crucial importance of his leading and management roles in the success of the cooperative and because of the great share of his socio-economic origin in his positive contributions, an instructive case from the point of view of leadership theory.

He is a member of the most prominent family of Taşucu holding the economic and social power, by being the grandson of Hacı Süleyman (see the historical introduction above) and by being married to the grand-daughter of Hacı Pasha. His father, Büyük İmam (the Grand Priest) was the owner of lands besides shops, warehouses and manufactories of *bulgur* (boiled and beaten wheat) and ham of mutton that was exported. He made commerce of agricultural goods in the surrounding nine villages. These latter were supplying their consumption goods almost only from his shops. 40 to 50 workers used to work in his manufactories and 15 to 20 cattles were daily cut in his ham producing manufactory. *Büyük İmam* was not a person that was complained about and treated coldly like most of the merchants. Besides, he was not a fanatic. He is still today mentioned highly for he supplied peasants with the necessary consumption and production goods on long term credit with no interest and paid the current prices for the products of the peasants when they were paying their depts in kind.

Growing up in very suitable conditions in a family that continuously welcomed guests, Mr.E. took part in several social activities starting from his elementary school years. He was called "father of the poor" because of his aids to his friends in poor conditions. Leaving the school after graduation from junior high school in Silifke, he took the control

of the family trade. He played a leading role in the establishment of a branch of the Agricultural Credit Cooperative in 1956 in Taşucu.

Despite his adequate socio-economic conditions Eyce's first attempt to found a fishing cooperative in 1962 ended in failure. The reason was again the negative propaganda by the brokers, middlemen and small merchants in the town and in Silifke district who had made the small fishermen dependent on themselves by giving them 50 or 100 liras in advance and bought their fish at very low prices. They have told the fishermen "Should you never listen to what Mr.E. says and never become member to a cooperative. It ends up in communism. Then you will not gain even your present profit because the Government will take it away from you."

In the meantime Mersin and Antalya, two cities on the southern coast of Anatolia became more prominent as trade centers and as export seaports. As a result Taşucu ceased to be an export town and its community lost their jobs in the seaport. This led the population whose majority were landless into fishing. But the production equipments which are of vital importance for a productive fishing were seriously lacking. The dynamite which was being used as the only means of production had negative effects of extinction of fish species, recede of fishing and of causing many fishermen to loose their hands, arms, or eyes in accidents.

The economic and financial conditions of these people were very bad. In order to release the psychological tension caused by this troublesome situation they became addicted to liquor. But having no money to buy rakı or wine they used to buy pure alcohol to drink by mixing it with water. They were as poor as to buy cigarettes one by one. One day a few fishermen of this condition decided to come together by forming a union. One of them, İrfan Erdal, told his friends: "Look my friends, the middlemen and the brokers buy the fish that we catch for a very cheap price and they earn much money on our expense every day, where as we are still hungry. Let us form a union in order to stop this situation." The group agreed on the idea and went to a notary in order to form a union. But the noter adviced them to form a co-operative as a union could breat down easily. And he suggested them to meet A.E. who could help them in this area. Mr.E. agreed and they decided to have a meeting of fishermen in a coffehouse in the evening.

According to the regulations at least 30 people had to come together in or der to from a co-operative. Also every member was obliged to pay at least 100 TL.There were 50 or 60 fishermen in the coffehouse but

only 3 of them could put together 100 liras. While everybody was thinking of where to get the money, İrfan Erdal came up with the solution: a new mayor was going to be elected soon in Taşucu and there were three candidates. İrfan Erdal proposed to tell the candidates that they would vote for them if they supplied the capital of the co-operative and provide the capital through this way. The proposal was aggreed upon and it was revealed to the candidates the next day. The candidates paid the membership fees of about 20 fishermen. Some of the remaining members provided money by selling the rugs at home, their daughters' trousseaus and their donkeys.

Based on the decision taken at the meeting the foolowing leaflet was printed for the fishermen:

> A CALL FROM THE TAŞUCU SEAFOODS PRODUCTION, SOLIDARITY AND SALES CO-OPERATIVE:
>
> YOU HAVE SUFFERED FOR YEARS BECAUSE OF THE LACK OF ANY PROTECTION! YOU HAVE WORKED AWAY FROM YOUR HOME DAY AND NIGHT RELENTLESSLY IN RAIN AND STORM AND SOLD YOUR GOODS FOR NOTHING!
>
> YOU HAVE LOST YOUR HEALTH BUT THERE WAS NOBODY TO TAKE CARE OF YOU.YOUR BOAT WAS BROKEN DOWN BUT AGAIN THERE WAS NOBODY TO REPAIR IT.
>
> TAŞUCU SEAFOODS PRODUCTION, SOLIDARITY AND SALES CO-OPERATIVE WILL PUT AN END TO YOUR SUFFERING AND PAIN! OUR CO-OPERATIVE CALLS YOU TO BE A MEMBER.
>
> President of the Founding Board of Administration: A. E.

The subject covered also a wide space in the local newspapers. The group that was against the co-operative started their negative propagandas once again. The founders tried to remove with patience the arising suspicions facing them.

On the 10 th of September 1968 the co-operative started to function. First, a fish market was opened. Because the board of administration did not want to use the present capital until the elections, the president lended the co-operative 1.500 TL as the first circulating capital. The vice-president of the board of administration took over the management of purchases and sales of the co-operative for nothing in return.

The fishermen started to bring their fish to the co-operative. Those who had sold their fish to the broker for 6 liras per kilo sold them now to the co-operative for 10 liras per kilo. Co-operative sold the fish to the consumers for 12 liras per kilo, whereas the brokers used to sell them for 15 liras per kilo. That is, the co-operative paid on the one hand to the fishermen higher prices for their fish and sold the fish to the consu-

mers for cheaper prices. In a week's time the co-operative gained a profit of about 3000 liras and paid back the 1.500 TL borrowed from Mr.E. In 6 months' time the capital of the co-operative reached to about 12.000 TL.

The fishermen vere wery glad about the results, but their production equipments were still inadequate. There were only 3 or 4 boats with oars and two motor boats available. Those who owned a boat used to go out so far as 3 or 4 miles and come back. The rest were using dynamite in catching fish until the foundation of the co-operative. The co-operative forbad the use of dynamite as soon as it was founded and promised the members "when the co-operative becomes stronger we shall provide with production equipments those members who now stop using dynamite." The rapid progress of the co-operative made this promise effective. A large number of fishermen who used dynamite stopped doing so and waited for the progress of the co-operative.

Now we come to the most vital development in the life and the success of the co-operative: the supply of bank credits. In my viev this is the most important single factor determining the low level of development of the rural co-operatives in general. Taşucu co-operative has also met very great difficulties in receiving bank credits. But it was lucky to have as its president a wealthy man who himself was a tradesman enjoying large amounts of credits from the banks. Every time when the co-operative was in need of credits, the banks did not give it to the co-operative, but to the person of its president A. E. as a bussinessman, and very often only after long struggles. He was personally responsible for the refund of the credits taken; the banks did not consider the co-operative as their customer. Clearly this is not an encouraging credit mechanism for co-operatives.

Now let us see how the Taşucu Fishermen's Co-operative could get credit from the Agricultural Bank.

The co-operative asked the bank for credit to meet its members' necessary production expenditures as its capital was gradually increasing with the production dependent on a few boats. At first the Agricultural Bank which gives great amounts of credit to big bussinessmen, landlords and usurers or middlemen refused to give credit to the co-operative on the pretext that it did not have any capacity to refund. The credit was provided thanks to the personal efforts of its president: when the General Directory of the Aggricultural Bank refused the co-operative's request for 100.000 TL of credit, Mr. E. went to Ankara to discuss the problem with the General Director of the Bank.

"The General Director" he tells later "told me that they could not give us any credit because it did not fit with the regulations relating the matter. I told General Director that the reactions of the fishermen would be extremely negative. At least we could exert pressures on the bank by spreading out the rumor that fishermen occupied the Aggricultural Bank because it did not aggree to give them credit. The General Director looked at me for a while and replied: "You seem to be a nice guy, but there are laws in Turkey". To this I replied "But there are also hungry people and you should help us at one point." Then he agreed on providing us with the same credit as the Meat and Fish Association (a state-owned sales association for price regulation) was given by the Bank, and made a phone call to the Bank's agency in Silifke.

"However the second act of the play was performed at the agency of the bank in Silifke, as the local director was not completing the necessary transactions somehow claiming that the cooperative did not have any refund capacity. The next day 20 or 30 fishermen gathered in the coffehouse just across the bank. I went to visit the director. Pointing him the fishermen across the street I told him that their reaction would be quite negative if he did not pay the money that the Bank's General Director ordered him to pay. Then he agreed to sign the cheque. But the bank's accountant insisted, in his turn, on not signing it before he examined the matter thoroughly. The most famous usurer of Silifke, A.B., was sitting beside him. I asked the accountant if he preferred to sign the cheques of usurers rather than those of producers. He was thus compelled to sign the cheque. And they paid us the money the same day." That was a very important day for the people of Taşucu. The fishermen were in a holiday's spirit. They celebrated the allowence of the credit with great enthusiasm as that was the first time in history of the town that poor people were granted bank credit to improve their conditions.

FURTHER SUCCESSES OF THE CO-OPERATIVE

In a rather short time after its foundation, the co-operative had been very efficient in solving the market problem for the fish caught by the members. It was successful in taking credit from the Aggricultural Bank. A third important success was the rent of a fishpond near Taşucu that belonged to the Treasury but was until 1969 rented by private persons coming from Adana. In this case the co-operative was also lucky to enjoy the support of one of its sympathizers who had been the private shauffeur of Atatürk for about 30 years and had established good relations with many influencial politicians as well as higher level

administrators. After his retirement he had settled in Silifke. It is almost only thanks to his personal efforts that the Government agreed on renting the fishpond to the co-operative instead of the private persons.

The Defeat of the Trollers in Taşucu

The year 1970 began with an important struggle against the trollers. There were two trolling motors coming from outside the province and fishing with trolls within the co-operative's areas. The members of the co-operative started an almost armed struggle against them. At the end the trollers were frightened and ran away.

The same year the co-operative opened two more fish markets one in Silifke and the other in Hacı İshaklı village. An efficient marketing system that was directed to exporting fish and other seafoods to other regions of Turkey and foreign countries was set up in 1970.

The year 1971 was also a year of progress in every respect. To summarize, the co-operative proved to be an economic power in the region. In 1968 the fishermen owned neither money nor production equipments. They used to live to the very day. They ate if they found something to eat or slept with empty stomacks. In 1971 however they reached to the position of respected consumers, i.e. they owned purchasing power and enjoyed credits.

Again in 1971 the co-operative purchased two trolling motors for 750.000 TL.These motorboats have been the second important production equipments and income sources of the members. The co-operative paid one third of the cost in advance and the remaining were paid in monthly installments. By signing his personal bussinesman's signature the president of the co-operative, Mr.E. achieved to convince the Bank to accept the monthly bonds.

In order to improve fishing further it is necessary to move towards the open sea fishing. Here lies the importance of the trolling motorboats. The co-operative had forbidden the use of trolls before, but trolling in deep and open sea in certain months of the year and with the necessary knowledge has its place in fishing and even contributes to it. Trolling three miles away from the shore from September 15 th to April 15th increases the production without causing the extinction of fish species.

The day the boats were to arrive Taşucu a ceremony was arranged in which the mayor of Silifke and the representatives of they ministries took part. As the boats were approaching the coast, the district administrator asked the president of the co-operative whether they were na-

med. He said one would be named "Labour" and the other "Bread", in reply.

Another important achievement of the co-operative was the increase in the number of motorboats. While there were only two motorboats and 3 or 4 boats with oars when the co-operative was founded, the number of motorboats reached to 40 in 1971. This progress was, no doubt, due to the rise of the income levels of the members thanks to the co-operative. It is not however enough to increase, the number of motorboats in order to increase the production. Besides, the fishermen need a variety of nets. Special kinds of nets are required for most kinds of fish. Nets of 300, 500, 1000 fishing lines are required to catch abundant fish. However these equipments are beyond the purchasing power of the members and require important amount of credits. Though of limited amount the co-operative could provide net equipments to its members on credit and 15 % cheaper than its market price.

The increase of production equipments increased greatly the fish production in comparison to the past. This brought up the problem of efficient marketing. The first step to be taken was to solve the problem of storage. It is vital to have storage opportunities to protect the producers from the daily fluctuations of prices. It also plays an important role in the trust that members have in the co-operative. One of the members, Ahmet Gençler, had the followings to say about the matter: "In the past the usurers used to pay less when we caught plenty of fish because he knew that they would remain unsold and would spoil in a short time. So we used to sell our fish for 50 piastres or one lira per kilo as we did not have any choice. But now, even if we brought thousand kilos each, the co-operative would buy them all".

The co-operative's board of administration, appreciating the importance of the subject, bought a deepfreeze refrigirator of 15 tons' capacity for 15.500 TL.It is quite significant that the co-operative could afford to buy it easily in 1971 whereas 30 members could save 3000 TL only in 6 months three years ago.

With the aid of refrigirator a more efficient marketing system was achieved on a vider area. Communicating with all the restaurants in the region they vere made known that the co-operative could supply all the fish that they needed at any time. Today these restaurants are buying fish from the co-operative in general.

Besides, the co-operative owns a pick-up to collect the fish from the members and a truck of 4.5 tons to send the excess fish to other pro-

vinces such as İzmir and İskenderun. Also dealers from Ankara regularly come to Taşucu to buy fish and they buy it from the co-operative.

The starting of eel production is another conribution of the co-operative to the fishing in the region. The yearly eel production of about 60 tons have been bringing an income of 300.000 TL yearly to the co-operative.

The progress of the co-operative has continued increasingly in later years. Already in 1972 the capital of the co-operative had reached 900.000 TL.Today it is about 5 millions of TL.This economic progress has surely been reflected in the members' condition as well. The fishermen who could hardly find money to buy bread and even a single cigarette before the co-operative, began to raise their living standarts. While they were talked about as baldırıçıplak (Sansculotte, in the meaning of extreme poverty) in the past, they have reached to the position of respectable customers at the eyes of the region's merchants and tradesmen. Having the opportunity to sell their products for the current price played an important role in this redress. Nail Akdoğan, one of the fishermen, had these to say on the subject: "Before the co-operative we were all in need of bread. The acroba ts (middlemen) used to pay a very cheap price for our fish. Furthermore they would curse on us as we were still in debt to them, we were simply like children in those days. The acrobats in the middle used to suck our blood like an enemy. Now, however, both the co-operative and the fishermen earn money. While in the past, we used to earn 50 TL for 20 kilos of fish, now we earn the same amount for 3 kilos. If a member of our families gets sick nowadays we can take him not only to Ankara, but even to U.S.A. to get the necessary medical treatment".

Another point which has to be mentioned is the aid of the co-operative to the members in cases of death, illness and accidents. Such social security measures taken by the co-operative have led the members to develop greater confidence in the co-operative and the community to have a more positive evaluation of it. Fishermen in Turkey are not covered by insurance. But as long as any member of this co-operative lies ill in bed, the co-operative takes care of him, pays his treatment fees and buys the required medicines. These attitudes have helped the members to be sure of their futures and developed in them a consciousness of partnership and unity.

As the former attempts of the producers to form co-operatives the Fishermen's Co-operative also was met by many pressures of the usurers, middlemen and those public officials who have common in-

terests with them. To understand the rural co-oper ative movement we have to know particularly how the leaders and the members struggled with the successive obstacles.

First of all the co-operative faced with the accusation of being communism which has really become too conventional and this sort of accusations do still go on. However, these slanders that could have some influence on some fishermen at the beginning are not taken seriously by any fishermen any more. It is considered to be worthless by other village and town communities in the region as well and these also are trying to form co-operatives in different production fields, particularly the ones of citrus fruits and peanuts producers have already proved very successfull. Let us listen to what the fisherman Mehmet Yürüsün, who claims to be the most ignorant and the most uncapable man to put two words together has to say with respect to such accusations.: "If somebody would attempt to tell me something against the co-operative and asked me what I gained by being a member, I wouldn't listen to him for even a second. I would tell him that he might say anything but not a word against the co-operative. I would also add "You establish hundred more co-operatives if you dare, I will join them all.' "

Besides these kinds of accusations and negative attitudes of the Governments with respect to such real grass root co-operatives the usurers and middlemen who each had 3 or 4 sons and relatives wanted to demolish the co-operative by using brutal force. However these efforts were not successful either, as the co-operative had come to a position to put its "rowdies" against theirs. This means that the foundation and the progress of the co-operative was, in a way, achieved through struggling against rowdiness.

Because of the limited time we cut short here and omit various sorts of difficulties created by the same pressure groups against the co-operative and its leader, Mr. E.

Another success of the co-operative in social and cultural field was the Fishermen Festivals that it organised twice in Taşucu, bringing together the representatives of all the co-operatives across the nation. During these festivals the economic life of the town gained great dyn amism. Even the children earned money by selling water, toasts etc. The festivals contributed a lot to the development of social solidarity and to the integration of community in the town. Even the women who had not stepped out of their homes before came to follow the events of the festivals. Although recently founded, the co-operative could spend as much as 20.000 TL during the 1969 Fishermen's Festival. Several na-

tional level politicians including Mr.Ecevit and high civil servants were invited and participated in the festivals.

CONCLUSION

In evaluating the success of the Taşucu Fishermen's Co-operative, it is clear from the informations given above that the personal qualities of the leader has had a very great role in this success. Having a person from a socially and economically strong family as its president and leader has been a great chance for the co-operative. It is thanks to his successful leadership that the fishermen were held together and worked in the spirit of co-operation.

Another fortunate coincidence for the co-operative was the fact that Sadık Bey, the former driver of Atatürk and İnönü, having great influence on some higher level public administrators and politicians had devoted himself to the service of the co-operative. His contributions were of vital importance in the renting of the fishpond by the co-operative, in receiving free technical aids from public administration to keep the fishpond in good condition, in defeating the trollers.

The exceptional elements in the leadership structure of the co-operative and the fact that no other successful leaders have emerged from among the members cause some concern with respect to the future of the co-operative. The educational level of fishermen is very low and the training activities of the co-operative are not satisfactory. For instance one of the big motor boats ran aground in January 1975; the other went out of order. In both cases which caused the co-operative to spend more than 75.000 TL for repair there was serious neglect on the part of both the staff and members of the co-operative. Particularly the members have not yet developed the necessary conciousness of identifying their personal interests with those of the co-operative in general. İrfan Erdal, one of the founding group, had these to say on this point: "At the beginning we the members were meeting together once a week. We used to attend the same coffeehouse; we would not send fishermen to other coffeehouses. Now that the fishermen earned some money and are no more in need of 50 or 100 liras the interactions started losening. Some members began to work less than they did before and during the first years of the co-operative. Before the co-operative they had to work very hard as they could get only 50TL for 20 kilos of fish. Now that they are paid 50TL only for 3 kilos of fish they stopped working hard. Instead of going out to sea 3 or 4 times a day as they did before they set out once and several hours later they go to gather. A co-operative

member must be in steady contact with his work as well as his fellow members and leaders".

In short, with the exception of having two successfull leaders which is a rare chance for a co-operative in rural areas, the Taşucu Fishermen's Co-operative has met and is still meeting the same kinds of difficulties and impediments as the rural co-operatives are meeting throughout the country, chief among them being the negative attitude of conservative and reactionary political power against the co-operatives.