

Mete Tunçay
Kuloğlu Sok. 6/4
Çankaya - Ankara
Türkiye

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Prof. Dr. Friedemann Büttner
Arbeitsstelle Politik des Vorderen Orients
Albrechtstr. 36 a
1000 Berlin 41
ALMANYA

Dear Professor Büttner,

I want to be granted a AvHumboldt Stiftung, as you have been informed by my friends in Berlin, Jochen Blaschke and Misket Gizem Gürtürk. I learned with gratitude that you kindly consented to act as my academic advisor, if I get a fellowship.

I prepared the application forms, but before forwarding them, I need a formal confirmation from you about my research project, which will also be an invitation on your part promising to provide me with working facilities in your institution.

I intend to formulate the summary of my proposed research in the application form as follows: "Leftist movements in Turkey during the period 1925-1945; Exploration of the ideological inspiration sources of the Turkish Leftists in Germany; collecting specimens for purposes of analysis and evaluation of illegal literature that were printed in Germany and smuggled into Turkey during late 1920s and early 1930s; making a survey of articles that appeared in the German press pertaining Turkish developments."

I also prepared a more detailed draft description of the work I intend to carry out in Berlin. Please find enclosed a copy of it. I am awaiting your comments and corrections on this text, as well as the official confirmation letter.

May I ask you a question: Do you think that I really need to send copies of all my published works to the AvH Stiftung? I hesitate because (1) they are all in Turkish, (2) even apart from the translations they make a bulky load, (3) some are difficult to replace for me as they have become out of print. I understand that Mr. Blaschke already submitted the AvH Foundation two of my recent books. I have a few offprints of some of my articles. Would it be sufficient if I send them only? I am trying to arrange for a professor in the University to write a Gutachten for me. It would be much easier to ask a fired colleague like myself to do the job.

Thanking you in advance for all the troubles you'll take on my behalf,
I am,
yours truly,

WORK PLAN

The research I intend to do in Germany is part of a large project of my writing an objective account of the history of Turkish Left-wing movements and ideas.

I started working on this subject more than 20 years ago. I made an initial periodization of recent Turkish history as follows:

I. 1908-25 II. 1925-45 III. 1945-60

This division reflects a pendulum movement between democratic (I prefer to use the adjective 'political') and autocratic ('administrative') tendencies in our public life. Although there have been sub-periods within each period with contradictory tendencies, the rough characterization I propose holds true.

I finished the first part of the work long time ago (please see Nr.s 9, 10 and 32 in my publication list) and started to deal with the later parts. I collected material available in Turkish libraries etc. (I even attempted to have an access to archives in Soviet Union for materials concerning TKP - but could not obtain permission.) There are still many missing significant documents which I hope to reach somehow.

During the period of 1925-45, there was a single-party rule in Turkey. Having composed a detailed work on the establishment of this regime (please see Nr. 45 in my publication list), I know well the general atmosphere prevailing in Turkey at that time. From the viewpoint of leftist activities, this period can be divided into fairly equal halves. Throughout the years 1925-36, TKP operated strictly in the underground; but milder shades of socialism were not permitted to express themselves either. Except for an attempt to permeate the ruling Republican People's Party with a statist ideology akin to national socialism (but hardly fascistic), any attempt to raise social criticism became a matter for police inquest. After 1936 (till the end of 1945), the single-party rule continued, but the illegal TKP adhering to the international Popular Front policy reduced its secret work and tried to influence the public opinion through legal media. Hence, research material is relatively more abundant for this sub-period. Much more difficult to explore, are the ten years of the Turkish Left following 1925. I want to concentrate on this decade in Berlin.

Germany may be thought to be an unlikely place to find old left-wing Turkish literature of late 1920s and early 1930s; but I know that in those years many Turkish Communist pamphlets, periodicals etc. were printed in Germany and secretly smuggled into Turkey. Therefore, there is a fairly good chance of detecting such material in Berlin libraries and collections. This is my first reason for doing research in Germany. Secondly, many Turkish Leftists were trained in Germany during the First World War years. And later,

some (like the general secretary of the TKP, Dr. Şefik Hıncal Değner) have lived there as political refugees, until the Nazis came to power. This means, in fact, that they have been inspired by German Socialists and Communists. Most of their international connections were also established in Germany. Thirdly, occasional contributions by Turkish Leftists appeared in left-wing German journals and regular evaluations were made by German Leftists on the situation in Turkey. I must make a survey of the German media for such articles.

My command of German language is rather poor at present. But I expect to learn more in four months at the Goethe Institut. Though the main part of my research will be dealing with texts in Turkish, I shall still need at least a reading knowledge of German.

If I succeed in fulfilling the aforesaid points, completing my present notes, I hope to be able to produce the final manuscript of the second volume of my history of the Turkish Left. In this project, I'll use the same objective approach I applied to my former work. I believe that a historian's duty is first to establish (according to a specific explanatory hypothesis) all relevant events on a documentary basis; and then, to analyse them critically, showing their internal inconsistencies and determining their linkage to the external framework.