

6 December 1965

Dear Mete Bey,

I share your enthusiasm for our common subject, and will be pleased to keep you informed of my progress. I will send you under separate cover a copy of the first draft of my introduction, which sets out in general the scope and conclusions of my work. This is still somewhat tentative as I have not quite finished a complete draft of the text. In any event I would appreciate your comments.

To deal with the question that you posed: I do not agree entirely with your point of view -- though our differences are in degree more than in kind. For example, I still accord greater weight to the threat from Ethem and his Çeteler than you appear to; and I also consider the possibility of Communists dominating the Çeteler as greater than you would appear to do.

On the other hand, to me the "Bolshevik-Menshevik" distinction seems correct as you use it, at least in general. Certainly the more important "muneverler" in the party (Şevket Sureyya Aydemir, Nedim Tor, for example) were far better Mensheviks than Bolsheviks. I'm not so sure about figures like Hacıoglu Salih and Şefik Husnu Deymer. Perhaps I have been corrupted by the professional "Communist hunters," but I still find the course of these men more "revolutionary" hence Bolshevik than that of many of the others in the Communist movement. I would be interested in hearing your opinion on these two men. For both of these two, I have not been able to find out much of their backgrounds. I assume that Şefik Husnu was in Germany with Ethem Nejat when Kurtulus was started. Is this true? Can you tell me anything about his life and views before he turned up in Istanbul as a founder of the Turkiye İşçi ve Köylü Sosyalist Partisi? Perhaps if you would tell me where to find the Berlin and other issues of the Istanbul Kurtulus, I could also fill in my knowledge of his activities during the first few years in Istanbul as well.

To get back to your question, it seems to me that there is more to be said about Communism in Turkey than the Bolshevik-Menshevik distinction. I was particularly struck by the debt of many "Communists" to Turkish nationalist thinking. The "national Communist" heresy apparently plagued the Turkish party consistently, although in the end I would place Şefik Husnu and Nazim Hikmet squarely in Moscow's camp. In fact, the minutes of the various Congresses of the Comintern lead me to believe that the problem of how to handle the "national Communist" problem was the central preoccupation of Moscow in handling the Turkish party in 1921-1923. After 1923, however, Moscow seems to have been able to establish more control over the Turkish party in Istanbul. Moscow thus saw to it that Aydinlik, for example, took the proper stance toward Trotsky.

If this view is correct, the increasing faithfulness to Moscow of the Aydinlik group coincided with the return of Şevket Sureyya and Vedat Nedim Tor. While these two were certainly not revolutionaries, at least in this period they reflected the thinking of the Soviet Communist Party. At this period, the "nationalist" strain in Şevket Sureyya seems to have been overshadowed by his enthusiasm for the "International" Communist movement. Yet undoubtedly some of his earlier nationalist outlook remained. For me, it was the existence of this underlying "nationalist" base which allowed Atatürk to drain off the "intellectual" elements of the TKP to serve as the ideologists of the Kemalist movement in the 1930's.

I have a few specific problems with which I would appreciate your help. Tarik Tunaya in his Siyasi Partiler reports (P. 532) that Rauf Orbay banned Communist propaganda in Turkey in July 1922. This point puzzles me, as I can not find any kanun etc. relating to this. Can you tell me what sort of action, if any, was taken at this time?

I am also looking for information about Ziyetullah Nevşirvan. Was he the author "Zenun" (which I take to stand for the initials "Z.N.") who wrote in 28-29 kanunusani about Ethem' Nejat's work in Istanbul? In any event, did Nevşirvan come originally from Russia and when did he arrive in Istanbul?

Another person whose movements I have not been able to trace sufficiently is Ahmet Cevat Emre. He left Istanbul at some point toward the end(?) of 1919 -- I would like to know more precisely when-- and was in Batum by 14 January 1920. He apparently remained in the Caucasus at least until 2 April 1921, when he wrote his famous letter to Pavlovich. He also had articles in some of the ~~issues~~ issues of Aydinlik in the same year. Were these sent from Baku or did he actually return to Istanbul toward the middle of 1921?

I note that Nazim Hikmet's poems were published in Aydinlik while Nazim Hikmet was still in Moscow. Do you know how this was accomplished?

Finally, I have not yet been able to get a copy of Yon #83 of 30 Ekim 1964 which has an article by Tefvik Ruştu Aras on the resmi Komunist Partisi's application to the Comintern for membership. I would like to get a microfilm of this article. Could you have it done for me?

By the way, if you have not seen it, you might be interested in the article entitled "Communists and Socialists in Turkey" by Hasan Celal in the Italian-language periodical Corrispondenza Socialista, No. 6 (Rome, June 1965), pages 302-309. It is a general survey with nothing very startling, but it was obviously written with considerable reliance on Soviet sources as well as Tunaya and other Turkish documentation.

I hope this is of some use to you.

Yours,

George Hains

P.S.

It seems to me that Tunaya, Jaschke etc. have confused Salih Zeki (former Zor kaymakam) and Baytar Hacıoğlu Salih (a binbaşı, and head of Ankara veterinary hospital). It was the latter, not the former that was associated with Arif ruç and Şerif Manatov in founding the TKP in June 1920. Now Jaschke in Welt des Islams, Band 20, 1938, pp. 135-136, prints a declaration of the Türkiye Halk İstirakiyyun Partisi against the Ankara government signed by Hacıoğlu Salih who is called "Secretary General of the Peoples Communist Party of Turkey and Chairman of the Delegation to the 3rd Congress of the Comintern"-- this congress took place in July 1921. But Hacıoğlu Salih was safely in prison from January 1921 until 29 Sept. 1921. Do you know anything more about this declaration?