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THE PARTICIPATION OF THE UNITY AND PROGRESS PARTY  
IN THE STOCKHOLM INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST CONFERENCE OF 1917

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The history of the Unity and Progress Party (Association) is not only interesting in itself, but, due to its international connections spread over three continents over a period of more than twenty five years, also for historians in areas very indirectly related to it.

Only a few studies are available on the relations of the UPP with the workers and trade union movement. The studies by Tunaya, Tuncay, Haupt, Baydar, Dumont and, recently, Gulmez, Hanioglu and above all, Toprak, have contributed considerably to our understanding of this topic, although there remain many open questions. Certain related areas remain almost completely unexplored. For example, we know of the relations of the UPP with the international socialist movement only through oblique references in various general works.

In this short paper, I will address myself to some controversial aspects of the participation of the UPP in the International Stockholm Conference, and try to clarify certain points on the basis of new archival material. It is to be hoped that similar monographic studies will help shed light on the attitudes of the UPP with respect to the workers' and trade union movement at home and abroad.

The international socialist movement, not having been able to do anything to prevent the outbreak of the First World War, sought, after 1916, to field certain peace initiatives. The initiative undertaken by the representatives of the socialist parties of the neutral countries (the Dutch-Scandinavian Committee) with the later addition of Soviet representatives, for the convention of an international peace conference in Stockholm, is the most outstanding of its kind. The preparations went on essentially from May to November of 1917. The aim of the conference was conceived as uniting the parties (and their various factions, where these existed) of the II. International around mutually acceptable conditions for peace, which they would subsequently endeavor to convince their respective governments to endorse. Because of a series of complex reasons that remain outside the scope of this paper, the preparations ended in failure.

Nevertheless, these preparations went down in history as an arena where the mainstream left movements of the post-war era put forward and discussed their programs.

In a few works on the history of the UPP per se, and in biographical works on some of its prominent leaders, it is mentioned that the UPP has participated in one way or another in the Stockholm Conference. One of the most detailed references is to be found in the chapter on Huseyinzade Ali (Turan), of Turkiye'de Cagdas Dusunce Tarihi (History of Contemporary Thought in Turkey) by Hilmi Ziya Ulken. According to Ulken, "... [Huseyinzade Ali] was sent, in 1917, together with Akil Muhtar and Nesim Muslih to the International Socialist Congress in Stockholm. ... On the 14th of July, he participated in the ... conference in the name of Turkey. He entered a discussion with Rossanof on the national question."(1) Ulken then goes on to give an extensive quotation from what he claims H. Ali said on this occasion.

Other studies which approach the subject from a different angle, namely the history of the workers' movement, provide some clues as to the motivation and modality of the participation of certain prominent UPP members in a socialist conference. Soviet historian Snurov confines himself to the internal dynamics of such a move:

"The government held that since war united all classes, there should be an end to class struggle. To this end, the class organizations and associations of the proletariat were disbanded. However, soon the Young Turks once more needed the support and sympathy of the workers and had to make up to them. They organized various national workers' associations. A bourgeois-police "socialist party" was founded, in which capitalists, lawyers, even generals were members. In the year 1917, this "socialist" bourgeoisie and their guards wanted to participate in the International Socialist Congress in Stockholm, as the Turkish Socialist Party. The Grand Vizier Talat Pasha even ordered the Directorate of Security to prepare for this occasion a special rubber stamp inscribed as "Turkish Socialist Party." In the name of Turkish workers and socialists, two Turkish and one German university professors were sent to Sweden. These "delegates" were turned away from the conference in disgrace..."(2)

Notwithstanding differences over the dates and the names of the participants, Tuncay and Harris share the point of view that foreign policy considerations were paramount in the participation of the UPP in the Stockholm Conference. Harris claims:

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"Hoping to forestall condemnation by the International Socialist Bureau, whose Armenian section was already strongly lobbying for dissolution of the Ottoman Empire after the war should end, they permitted some "tame" professors who claimed to represent a revived "Socialist Party" to go to the International Socialist Conference at Stockholm in 1917. At the initial sessions in the spring, Medical School Professor Dr. Huseyinzade Ali, Law Faculty Professor Nissim Mazliyah and Dr. Akil Muhtar, represented Turkey. When the Conference reconvened in August, Nissim Mazliyah returned, this time with Salah Cimcoz. But their efforts were in vain. Though they presented a note to the Conference ... the Conference refused to accept them as delegates.... On their return to Istanbul, this "tame" socialist experiment disintegrated. Not until the end of the First World War would this ferment again be able to break surface."(3)

Leaving aside the confusion arising from disregarding the fact that the preparations for the Conference never got off the ground, i.e., that the Conference never actually convened, the minutes of the Organizing Committee do not wholly corroborate the above claims. The documents of the Organizing Committee reveal that, on the 13th of July two delegates from Turkey have made oral depositions on the basic principles on which peace should be founded and on international conventions.(4) In a mimeographed text titled, "Conference Socialiste Internationale de Stockholm: Programme deposee par les Partis," a somewhat different version of the events is given. According to this text the Dutch-Scandinavian Committee received, on the 12th of July, "a delegation from workers' organizations in Turkey for the purpose of getting information." The summary of the interview titled "Turkish Socialists" informs us that, "...two socialists arrived with the purpose of seeking admission to the Conference and affiliating the Turkish socialists with the International Socialist Bureau." The summary contains the views of this delegation on the question of the Straits and the Armenian question.(5) The press release dated 19 July 1917 of the International Socialist Bureau also mentions 12th of July as the date of this meeting. Moreover, the press release states that, "the Turkish delegation declared to be representing socialist workers' groups [in Turkey] and demanded its affiliation to the International Socialist Bureau as the Turkish sub-section of the Turco-Armenian section.(6) In all these conference documents, there is mention of only two delegates (Prof. Huseyinzade Ali and the member of parliament N. Masliyah Efendi).

The minutes of the preparatory meetings for the Stockholm Conference unfortunately are far from being complete or systematic; a lot of them are in hardly legible longhand. In the minutes of the Dutch-Scandinavian Committee dated 12th July, there are notes of an interview with these two delegates, which,

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besides some of the issues covered in the published texts of the oral depositions and the summary and press release cited above, also touch upon others. According to the minutes of this interview, taken down by Engberg, at the very beginning of the interview, the General Secretary of the International Socialist Bureau, Huysmans mentions the intention of a section of the "Ottoman Party" to take part in the Conference and adds that this is a particular question that has to be settled. At the end of the same set of minutes in German, Huysmans demands the necessary documents "so that the Turkish comrades may participate in the General Conference."(7) In the minutes of the same meeting, taken down by Huysmans in French, it is to be understood that Troelstra had to explain that the application of the Turkish delegation for participation in the Conference had to be handled by the Committee, whereas their application for the affiliation to the International Socialist Bureau had to go through the Bureau.(8) We thus learn that there are two applications in question - one for participation in the Conference, the other for membership in the International.

In the archives of the ISB, I found one telegram and two letters having bearing on this point. The telegram sent from the Pera postoffice to H. Mueller (representative of the Social Democratic Party of Germany to the Stockholm Conference) is signed by Asaf, MP from Van; Atif, MP from Ankara; Naci, MP from Trabzon; Rasim, MP from Sivas; Dr. Asim, MP from Amasya; Ethem, Director of the Bureau of Guilds ("Corporations"); Cemal, General Secretary of the Boatmen's Guild; Ferit, General Secretary of the Porters' Guild; Emin, General Secretary of the Dairy Guild; Haci Mesut, General Secretary of the Coachmen's Guild; Sami, General Secretary of the Bakers' Guild; Haydar Galip, General Secretary of the Grocers' Guild. The text of the telegram is below:

"We, the undersigned, declare that we have delegated Dr. Huseyinzade Ali Bey and Nesim Masliyah Efendi to participate in our name in the socialist congress which will be held soon in Stockholm."(9)

The first of the above mentioned letters, (both of which bear the dateline of Stockholm, 7 July), expresses the demand to participate in the Stockholm Conference:

"The Stockholm Conference  
Dutch-Scandinavian Socialist Committee  
14 Upplandsgatan - Stockholm

"Sirs,

"The undersigned, Nessim Masliyah, member of the Ottoman Parliament, and Hussein Ali Bey, professor of the University of Turkey, delegates of the Turkish party of the Ottoman socialist section [of the ISB] wish to take part in the Socialist Conference of Stockholm, ask the Dutch-Scandinavian Committee to be so kind as to take care of the necessary formalities with respect to their

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admission to the said Conference, and wish to be received seperately before the convocation of the General Conference.

"With our best regards,

"N. Masliah Pr. Dr. Hussein Ali"(10)

The second letter, signed by the same two persons, is addressed directly to the ISB, and voices a demand interesting from the point of view of the relations between the International and Turkey:

"The undersigned, Nessim Masliah, member of the Ottoman Parliament and Hussein Ali Bey, professor at the University of Turkey, delegates of the Guilds ["Organisations Corporatives"] in the Ottoman Empire (Unions of Workers, Bakers, Boatmen, Porters and others) are honored to present themselves to the International as representatives of the Turkish party of the Ottoman socialist section, recognized by the ISB by virtue of its decision dated 9 June 1907.

"The undersigned thank the ISB for their kind consideration.

"With our best regards,.."(11)

These documents show that the UPP would like to avail themselves of a decision of the ISB taken upon the acceptance of the Armenian socialists and later, in 1909, the Socialist Workers' Federation of Salonica to the International, to the effect that various ethnical sub-sections may be seperately affiliated with the International until such time that an overall Ottoman section is formed.

We now know that neither of the applications - albeit perhaps for different reasons - were successful.

In none of the documents of the Stockholm Conference in the ISB Archives in Holland or in Belgium, have I been able to find any evidence that the application for participation in the Conference was considered by the Committee in question. No further information is to be found either in the Archive of Labour Relations in Stockholm or the daily Social-Demokraten (12), although the Stockholm police records and other newspapers, notably the pro-German ones which might contain more information, remain to be reviewed.

We may conclude from the material at hand that the Turkish delegation consisting of the two persons named above, was heard by the Organising Committee, as were the delegations from the minority groups of some European Parties and delegations from various Asian and African Countries. Since the Conference never

actually convened, however, we believe that the question of admission or rejection of the delegation never became a matter of practical importance.

In a letter from Huysmans to Debreux , dated 2 Feb. 1917 (13), that is, at the earliest stages of the Conference preparations, it is mentioned that from the Ottoman Empire only three Armenian delegates would be participating, representing the only ethnical sub-section remaining after Salonica became part of Greece. Indeed, an Armenian delegate, Zorian, has actively took part in all the official sessions as a fully accredited delegate of the Dashnakzoutian Party. The same person was received by the Organizing Committee on the 26th of June and presented a report titled "Memorandum of the Revolutionary Armenian Federation,"(14) exposing the Genocide and bitterly attacking the UPP.

If other persons besides Huseyinzade Ali and Nesim Masliyah actually came to Stockholm purporting to represent the Ottoman socialists, their participation in the Conference preparations has been purely informal. Although a certain Rossanov, mentioned by Ulken as the interlocutor of H. Ali, is a member of the Russian delegation, and later also member of the Dutch-Scandinavian-Russian Committee, there does not seem to have been any official occasion for a discussion on the national question between the two. Moreover, there is no mention of a separate, earlier visit in May, beside the visit already mentioned above, during which the interview on the 12th of July must have taken place.

It is well known that the UPP, especially after the collapse of the Russian front following the February Revolution and the surprise - and effective - submarine campaign launched by Germany, sought a series of international contacts in an effort to arrange less disastrous conditions for peace than had seemed possible up to then. The fact that such a person as Huseyinzade Ali, one of the most prominent founders of the UPP and a leading ideologue of Turkish (15), should be sent to Europe at this moment is very significant in itself. That H. Ali was a member of the Turkish-Tartar delegation sent to Europe two years previously, to defend the rights of Turkish-Tartar Moslems in Russia(16) shows that the UPP attached sufficient importance to participation in the Stockholm Conference to risk the unmasking of H. Ali as a delegate of the "Turkish Socialist Party." An alternative or complementary factor could have been the quest of an ally in the Socialist Movement for the aftermath of the war, and to be able to secure better conditions of peace, as was the case with the governments of many colonies or semi-colonies at this stage. It may be observed that the Young Turks had for long been aware of such a possible ground for a common understanding and even alliance in certain areas, as exemplified, for instance, by the impressions gathered by Ahmet Riza at the 1900 Congress of the International.(17)

An interesting explanation regarding the UPP quest for participation in the Stockholm Conference is that it came about upon the prompting of the Austro-Hungarian statesman Czernin. According to the memoirs of Benesz, Czernin influenced not only the social-democrats in his own country, but also the Tchechoslovakian and Serbian social-democratic parties; moreover it was upon his suggestion that the UPP had the "Turkish Socialist Party" founded, which subsequently sought admission to the Stockholm Conference and the International.(18)

To be able to decide whether this foray had anything to do with purported attempts on the part of the UPP to enter into separate peace talks with the Entente countries (19) we need to know many more details.

On the other hand, it could be the subject of an interesting study to determine whether similar attempts at participation by the delegations from India, Egypt and the "Muslim Delegations" from Morocco, The Caucasus, India, Tripoli and Benghazi, Tunisia and Algeria and Turkestan, and the organization of a the Moslem Conference in Stockholm in November of the same year(20) had anything in common with the UPP enterprise.

Regarding membership in the International, clearly a matter to be decided on more rigorous grounds than mere participation in the Conference, it is clear that the UPP's efforts were futile. As can be seen from the examples of the admission of the Salonica Federation, or the application of Hasan Riza's group (21), it was out of the question that this matter could be decided without consultation with and consent of all interested parties. It was only three years later, in November 1920, and under very special conditions, that the Turkish Socialist Party of Huseyin Hilmi was admitted by the Secretariat as a full member of the Workers' and Socialist International.(22) This interesting point will be treated in a separate publication.

It is well known that the so called workers' organizations mentioned in the above cited applications letters are nothing but militant grass roots organizations of the UPP headed by the renowned Kara Kemal.(23) All workers' organizations had already been closed down by the UPP by 1912 at the latest.

The fact that a delegation under the guise of "Turkish socialists" were sent to participate in an international conference and to seek membership in the International, nevertheless remains remarkable in its own right. In this way, the precedent was set for the founding, a few years later, of an official Communist Party by the Kemalists and their attempt to establish relations with the Third International. However, even in this respect of establishing contact with the communists, UPP leaders had a lead on the Kemalists of one year, viz. their

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contacts in Berlin, Moscow and Baku. It may be observed once more in this example, that the Kemalism as an ideological, political line inherited a lot from the UPP.

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It is a pleasure to acknowledge several interesting discussions with Prof. Mete Tuncay .

#### FOOTNOTES

1. H. Ziya Ulken, Türkiye'de Çağdaş Düşünce Tarihi (History of Contemporary Thought in Turkey), Vol1, Istanbul 1966, p.428, 437-38.
2. Snurov, Türkiye Proleteriyasi (Turkish Proletariat), Istanbul 1973, p.40.
3. M. Tuncay, Türkiye'de Sol Akımlar 1908-1925 (Left Movements in Turkey) Ankara 1978, p.69-70. George Harris, Origins of Communism in Turkey, Stanford, Cal., 1967, p31-32. Both writers cite Avram Galanti, Türkler ve Yahudiler:Tarihi ve Siyasi Tetkik (Turks and Jews: A Historical and Political Investigation) Istanbul, 1947, 2nd ed., p.91.
4. Comité Organisateur de la Conférence Socialiste Internationale de Stockholm, Stockholm, Stockholm, 1918, p. xiv-xv, 365-367.
5. Conférence Socialiste Internationale de Stockholm: Programmes déposés par les Partis, n.p. 1917, mimeographed, p.123, 127-128; IISH, Coll.II. Int., D 240.
6. Communiqué à la Presse, 19 Juillet 1917, Archives C. Huysmans (ACH), Notes and Communications about Stockholm, July 1917, III.



7. This session of the ISB was attended by Huysmans, Troelstra, Mueller, and Engberg. Archives C.Huysmans, Notes and Communications about Stockholm, July 1917, II; and also, International Institute of Social History(IISH), BSI Collection.

8. "Turquie, Jeudi, 12 Juillet 1917" minutes by C. Huysmans, ACH, Notes and Communications about Stockholm, July 1917, II.

9. Telegramm to M. Hermelin Mueller, ACH, I 608 B/3.

10. From Masliyah, Ali to Conference de Stockholm, ACH, I 608 B/4,5.

11. From Masliyah, Ali, to Bureau Socialiste Internationale, ACH, I 608 B/6,7.

12. Private communication from Dr. M. Grass, Arbetarroerelsens Arkiv, Stockholm.

13. From Huysmans to Debœux, 2 Feb. 1977, ACH, St Cor II/1d.

14. Comite Organisateur Stockholm, ~~Op.cit.~~ p. 14-15, 261-286. See also, IISH, BSI 48, Minutes of the interview with Zorian.

15. "Turan, Huseyinzade Ali", Türk Ansiklopedisi, Vol. , P. 1-2; M. Sukru Hanioğlu, Bir Siyasi Orgüt Olarak Osmanli Ittihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti ve Jon Türklük (1889-1902) (The Ottoman Union and Progress Association and the Young Turk Movement as a political organization), Istanbul, 1986, p. 113,176. E.J. Zuercher, Milli Mucadelede Ittihatçilik (UPP in the National Liberation Struggle) Istanbul 1987, p.144-145.

16. Francois Georgeon, Türk Milliyetçiliginin Kokenleri, Yusuf Akcura 1876-1935 (Origins of Turkish Nationalism) Ankara 1986, p. 99-100.

17. Serif Mardin, Jon Turklerin Siyasi Fikirleri 1895-1908 (The Political Thought of Young Turks) Istanbul 1983, p153-154.

18. Edvard Benezs, Der Aufstand der Nationen, Berlin 1928, p.294-295.

19. F.G. Weber, Eagles on the Crescent, Ithaca 1970, p. 134-136,153-155,208 and M.Ragip Esatli, Ittihat ve Terakki (UPP), in: S. Aksin, Jon Turkler ve Ittihat Terakki (Young Turks and the UPP) Istanbul 1987, p.294, passim.

20. Comite Organisateur, Op.cit., p.368-408, and also "Federation Republicaine Touranienne," Arbetarroerelsens Arkiv, Sammlung Hollandisch-skandinavisches Komitee. V. 1 and "Moslem Conference in Stockholm", Brotherhood, Vol.1, No.1, Istambol, Fateh, 1289 (Jan. 1918).

21. From C. Huysmans to Red. Droschak, ACH, I 608 A/3; From C. Huysmans to Daschnakzoutian, 24.9.1913, ACH, Turquie 10944 and C.H. to Federation Socialiste, Nahum, ACH, I 608 A/61. See also, H. Riza's letters to C. Huysmans, ACH, Turquie 10944, 11240.

22. From Huseyin Hilmi to C. Huysmans, 25 Oct. 1920, ACH, I 608 C/14a; From C. Huysmans to Parti Socialiste de Turquie, I 608 C/17; From C. Huysmans to different sections of the International, I 608 C/18,19a.

23. S. Aksin, Op. cit., p.278-279; Talat Pasa, Talat Pasa'nin Anilari (Memoirs of Talat Pasha) Istanbul 1987, p.47; M. Tuncay, Op. cit., p. 73; Z. Toprak, Turkiye'de "Milli iktisat" 1908-1918 (National Economy in Turkey) Ankara 1982, p. 401.

24. The relations of the UFP or its members with the International after 1917 is an interesting topic in itself. A study drawing upon archive material is presently in progress.

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