

## FOREWORD

Fifteen years ago, in the Introduction of my book on the early history of the Turkish Left, I made a distinction between "political" and "administrative" (i.e., non-political) periods in our contemporary life. According to this conception, 1908-1925 is a "political" period (except the five years from 1913 to 1918) and 1925-1945, an "administrative" one. I can now add that in 1945 a new "political" period began, with "administrative" interludes in 1960, 1971 and 1980. —

In that Introduction, I said about the first of these political periods that it witnessed some leftist movements. Yet they were relatively unimportant in the general context of politics in Turkey.

They almost never reached the dimensions of popular movements and were confined to some small intellectual circles. If the interpretation given here is not wide off the mark, the revolutionary forward leaps with the proclamation of the Second Constitutional Epoch and the Republic, beyond the possibilities of the infra-structure, have originated from an inspiration to the western way of life founded upon capitalist industrialism. As for the early left-wing movements which had no effective social base, they have in fact done nothing else but to support this tendency. And as the leftists always pushed those in power to go further than they were prepared to, there is nothing to be surprised about the suppressive attitude of governments towards them, and their joining into a general freedom struggle against the governments.

At the onset of this paper, I can say that such in fact is my final verdict on the destiny of Marxism in Turkey, not only for its early stage when it enjoyed a relative freedom of expression, but also for its whole course so far. I want, at the expense of boring you further, to translate the following remarks with which I concluded the same study.

The Turkish Left between the years 1908-1925, from the viewpoint of the struggle for political power, has apparently been a small and insignificant movement. What renders this subject worthy of study, besides satisfying a purely historical curiosity, is the attempt undertaken on the intellectual plane. Our first leftists, revising the socialist theory so as to fit it to the realities of Turkey, have taught us through these practice-oriented labors of theirs, many things about the formation of politics in this country. But it is obvious that they have both failed in approaching their

long-term objectives and what they have envisaged for the short-term (i.e. to prevent Turkey from taking a route leading to the establishment of bourgeois capitalism based on private property). It is possible to explain these failures by saying that the leaders of the leftist movement, even if they made sound analyses, were mistaken in their tactical decisions. However, there may be a deeper reason of this situation. Could it be that the leftist theory [meaning Marxism, of course] is so alien to the structure of the Turkish society that no matter how rational one can go about, it renders a behavior loyal to its dogmas, meaningless and an attitude ready to revision, useless? The best reply to this question can be supplied by the Turkish Left that is developing today.

In a later edition, I added a short postscript to the above-quoted paragraph:

After ten years, when I reread these last lines of my book, I suspected if I had posed a question devoid of reality, only in order to make a pretty finale. But whether a certain theory is suitable to a given social structure, is not an empty or a purely verbal question. Yet, the experience of the last decade does not seem to have brought a reply to this problem. During this period, interesting developments took place which confused us a lot. Some features of the socialist program spread to non-leftist circles. But the Left itself divided into many fractions. Most important of all, a movement which desired to take a short-cut route to power, cherishing a set of seemingly leftist demands, but also utilising Kemalist supports and methods, created a pretext for a counter-reaction. It was sensed that there were some participants in this movement from the Left itself. The share and nature of various provocations in the events of the 12th of March [1971] period, will only be understood in the future. Today, our leftist movements evaluating the experiences of other socialist countries such as the Soviet Union and China and applying the results of these evaluations to Turkey's conditions, constitute irreconcilable fractions which consider one another as the arch enemy. I am of opinion that this situation reflects an optical failure which leads to misjudgement on both sides. Furthermore, most of the mistaken evaluations do not seem to be essentially novel. This fact contributes to the importance of knowing the history of the Left in our country.

Before proceeding into a chronological account of Marxism in Turkey, I would like to point out that acquaintance with Marxism in the 19th century Ottoman Empire first began among the minorities: Balkanic peoples, Armenians,<sup>1</sup> and Jews. (The reason for this should be obvious: Ottoman minority members were economically and culturally better off than their Turkish compatriots, and with the exception

of the Jews, were all engaged in struggles of national liberation.) The first mention of Marxism and the Internationale in the Turkish press was in connection with the news of the Paris Commune in 1871.

### Marxism in Turkey from 1908 to 1925

In the Second Constitutional Period which can be regarded as the beginning of the Turkish bourgeois-democratic revolution, various socialist parties and periodicals appeared. Socialist Hilmi and his Ishtirak was the most famous of these. But they on the whole did not represent a real contact with Marxism; let alone creatively thinking in the framework of this theory, even their level of understanding of socialism was rather shallow. Yet, the declared aim of Hilmi's party for instance, was to better the political and social conditions of the people and through the international collaboration of workers to transform all capitalist societies into a common and collective single unit. The internationalism of Hilmi's party was also reflected in the periodical organs that appeared after Ishtirak - by a motto deriving from Victor Hugo's "avoir pour patrie le monde et pour nation l'humanité" (his foreword to the play Les Burgraves). It is significant that the same party sought a rapprochement with Islam and tried to represent socialism as an application of the Islamic principles of social justice. This party in its pre-First World War life, though frequently referred to the "working class", did not succeed to recruit many members for its support. (Later, during the Armistice when it became a mass organisation, this was not due to its flirtation with Islam, but to its functioning as a labor union.) The leader of Hilmi's Ottoman Socialist Party's Paris filiale, Dr. Refik Nevzat, was presumably the first Turk who acquired a decent knowledge of Marxism. As a curiosity, in passing, I can mention an Ottoman admiral who was enrolled into Keir Hardie's Independent Labour Party; but judging from the letters he wrote to Hardie, he had no genuine consciousness about the problems of socialism.

Before the Balkan Wars, a world-wide known socialist theoretician by the pen-name of Parvus arrived in Turkey. His real name was Alexander Israel Helphand; he was a Russian Jew who had become a member of the short-lived St. Petersburg Soviet

during the 1905 Revolution. He had influenced Trotsky in formulating the famous Permanent Revolution theory.<sup>2</sup> Parvus was ostensibly a correspondent for the Social Democratic German press in the Ottoman Empire. But he engaged in the arms trade and became very rich. He also collaborated with the German General Staff. He was to advise them in Spring 1917 to transfer Lenin and other Bolshevik leaders from Switzerland to Petrograd in a sealed train. But what interests us here, is not the dirty hands of that bright brain (as Lenin was to tell him in a letter, when he refused Parvus' offer to help, after the Russian Revolution was accomplished). As a marxist thinker Parvus was exclusively concerned with the economic exploitation mechanism of western imperialism over Turkey. His particular target was the Ottoman Public Debts which had by this time evolved into a huge organization having direct access to many state revenues. Parvus taught economic nationalism to the Young Turks.

I would also like to mention here, an attempt of the Union and Progress Party government to participate in the abortive Stockholm Conference of International Socialists in 1917 by sending some trustworthy intellectuals in order to enlist some leftist support for Turkey. But the false Turkish socialist delegation was refused admission. Nevertheless, the Union and Progress Party did have a real left wing. It was hardly marxist and rather aimed for reasons of economic nationalism, at the creation of a national bourgeoisie through state capitalism according to the Bismarckian model, calling it however, "socialisme d'État."

The left wing of the party has influenced the Union and Progress government to encourage the establishment of limited companies and organisations of producers' cooperatives etc. The trying conditions of the War had prevented the government to adopt a sharper economic and social policy in the lines suggested by this wing. During the Armistice, top Unionist leaders were dispersed between Germany, Russia, Switzerland and Italy; yet there were some who stayed in Istanbul and those who joined forces with Ankara. Those who went to exile in Germany and Russia thought to utilise from the continuing prestige of the Turks over other Moslem countries. Talât Paşa who was in Germany toyed with the idea of securing British support in return of enlisting Moslem peoples against the Soviet

Union. Enver Paşa who had gone to Russia, on the contrary, offered the Bolshevics the support of all Moslems against British imperialism. The envisaged Pan-Islamist tactics of the two leaders were diametrically opposite, yet their ultimate purpose was the same — to get foreign aid for Turkey. Both fractions then endorsed the left wing's search for a social program that would suit the needs of the country. Several organisational designs have emerged from this search: Mesâî was an articulated social democratic program; another program was drawn for Enver Paşa's attempted People's Soviets Party; yet another program devised by Kör Ali İhsan Bey found its way to Ankara to exert a populist influence on the leaders of the national struggle there. No matter how far all these ideological instruments wanted to go, they all shared an inherent anti-Bolshevism.

The Anatolian Left of the year 1920 is closely related to these Unionist strivings. In all the fractions of the Left in Anatolia, there is a marked endeavor to reach a synthesis between Islam and Communism, a reluctance towards internationalism and a stress against imperialist transgressions. such as the Green Army Society, the parliamentary People's Group (Halk Zümresi), the official Turkish Communist Party and the Turkish People's Communist Party,

One intellectually interesting point is the advocacy of functional or professional representation instead of the classic territorial election system, by the parliamentary People's Group. Apparently, this was not an imitation of the Sorelian theories or fascist practices, but the outcome of a fundamentally democratic desire to make the popular masses directly vocal. Still, in the background of this notion, one suspects the existence of a solidaristic view of society which should prevent cleavages between classes.

The story of Mustafa Kemal Paşa's (Atatürk) increasing discomfort at the growth of the Green Army Society and its parliamentary People's Group, his encouragement of the creation of a loyal TCP in order to divide this movement and the reaction of the People's CP is too detailed to deal with here.

Apart from the old Unionist Left and its Anatolian offshoots, there was a Turkish Bolshevick called Mustafa Suphi who had as a liberal sought refuge

in Tsarist Russia in 1913 and had been kept as a civilian P.O.W. after the outbreak of the World War. While he was a sociologist and even anti-socialist before, he became a convinced Marxist in Russia. Suphi was always a nationalist teacher with a sense of the importance of the cohesive bonds of Moslem internationalism. (One ought to remember that the term used in Turkish to denote nation, millet, originally meant -and in Arabic still does- religion!) After his conversion to Marxism, he succeeded in forming a small Turkish Communist organization in Soviet lands, combining some Turkish P.O.W.s with some local Turkic people.

Before dwelling on Suphi's Marxism, I want to touch briefly upon a program published in Anatolia in 1920 by a branch of his organization, the secret TCP, which widely differs from other native productions. This is a document of 25 articles, entitled as the General Statues. The party calls itself Bolshevik and follows the Russian Soviet model of organization for the liberation of all the oppressed nations and classes from the domination of capitalism and imperialism. It advocates the establishment of a dictatorship of the proletariat as a provisional government, banning bourgeoisie and the expropriator class to take part in the elections. The property rights are to be abolished and large scale nationalisations are to be carried out. The radicalism of the party also requires secularization. They want to annul the political frontiers and customs between Turkey and other socialist countries. This seems to be a highly utopian platform, especially when it is considered in the general context of Turkey in 1920. Yet, the party equally opposing Istanbul and Ankara governments makes no concessions to feasibility and thus, is a first pure-bred example of Communism in Turkey.

Suphi has organized in Russia in 1918, under the auspices of the People's Commissariat of Nationalities (headed by Stalin) a circle of Turkish Left Socialists (which gradually evolved into the TCP) and has himself represented this organization at the first Congress of the Comintern in Moscow (March 1919).<sup>3</sup> The speech he made there is famous for its anti-imperialist flavor:

Comrades, as is known, if the head of French-English capitalism

resides in Europe, its trunk spreads to the wide regions of Asia. The urgent task for us Turkish Socialists is to uproot capitalism from the East.

Suphi for two years engaged in organizational activities for Moslem Communists in Crimea, Turkestan and finally Azerbaidjan, meanwhile kept contacts with Turkish Communists in Anatolia.

The Congress of Eastern Nations which convened in the beginning of September 1920 in Baku, is largely the outcome of Suphi's efforts. From the viewpoint of Turkish Marxism, another meeting which immediately followed this Congress in Baku, is more important. On the 10th of September 1920, 74 representatives of 15 organizations of Turkish Communists united and founded a single TCP. The same congress adopted a program and statutes for this creation.

The first program of the TCP, starts with a general analysis of the world situation. It describes the development of finance capitalism and the international effects of that process on semi-colonial countries such as Turkey and Iran and directly colonial countries such as India. The growth of capital into its monopolistic stage, though represent the highest degree of material wealth, seems to have lost its original civilising power. As for the oppressed classes of all humanity, they have realized the treachery of those Second International socialists who mixing sociology with revolutionary socialism, hand over the proletarians to the bourgeois supremacy. Yet, in the victory of communism, slogans of brotherhood, unity and justice among individuals as well as nations will be realized through the abolishment of property which is not a right anyway, but a superstition.

Bourgeois democracy has made a beginning in Turkey, but the class struggle is still in its primitive phase of development. Presently, there is a coalition of poor classes with the appropriating petit-bourgeoisie, against the assaults of foreign capitalism, their common foe.

The Turkish Communist Party in full conviction that the conditions for a social revolution all over the world has now ripened, acts as the pioneer of industrial and agricultural workers towards final victory. Whereas absolutist

regimes and constitutional governments which pretend to be democratic, yet serve the oppressors, the Soviet republic is the best suited type of provisional government for the transition from capitalism to socialism.

TCP considers religion a communal matter and adopts the principle of freedom of conscience. Yet it undertakes to fight against superstitions which create animosity and hatred among human beings. For nationalities, TCP supports the idea of free federation of various peoples.

In economics TCP aims at the collectivisation of all natural resources and the means of production. It desires a centrally planned economy and the formation of cooperatives. Labor unions who during bourgeois governments should be organizations to defend workers' rights are expected to undertake productive functions as soon as the social revolution is carried out. The party trusts that the needed technological apparatus will be supplied by the European and American unions.

The measures to be adopted by the TCP concerning rural economics are as follows:

- The party is for large scale production, hence it will transfer modern big private farms to state management;
- The party encourages pooling together of farmers' communes;
- Unused lands will be distributed to organized farm workers;
- Organic and mechanic farming implements are also to be given to those who need them;
- The state is also to provide modernization techniques and agricultural credit;
- The party seeks to gain the political support of the rural proletariat.

One of the major targets of the TCP is the group of intermediate traders who are to be replaced by consumers' cooperatives. All banks are to be nationalised and operated as people's enterprises. The party takes definite measures against parasitic bidders at the stock exchanges and the speculators.

The TCP envisages a future society where all taxes will be abolished, but until that is constructed, progressive taxation ought to be employed on the propertied classes.

The party hands over the luxurious houses of the capitalists to the use of the poor workers. It does its best to supply the urban and rural laborer and farmer families with new housing. It operates cheap, but decent general eating places. The workers are guaranteed acceptable laboring conditions. The party takes all the required measures for purposes of public health and hygiene. It struggles against alcoholism, prostitution, gambling and narcotic drugs.

The TCP is against the very existence of all armies and their oppressive activities, yet until the conflict between the rich and the poor classes, imperialist powers and colonial countries is resolved, it supports the organization of red armies in defense of revolutionary workers and farmers all over the world. There has to be political inspectors attached to military commanders. Police work in cities and villages are to be given over to militia organizations.

Revolutionary people's tribunals are to replace all existing law-courts. New legislation is to be promulgated to meet the needs of the oppressed masses.

The TCP defends the socialisation and wide propagation of education and culture. Schools are considered as institutions where a new workers' generation is to be trained to apply in the future all the principles of communism. Free and compulsory education for all boys and girls until they are 17 years of age, introduction of methods to make the students get used to collective living, labor schools providing youngsters with working-life experience, kindergartens to save mothers from household slavery and to enable them to take part in production, night courses for adults to teach them how to read and write and to give a political education, creation of people's libraries and universities, informalisation of education by doing away with redundant ceremonies traditionally combined with teaching, scout organizations, operation of mobile libraries are among the cultural plans of the TCP.

There is little originality in this program and Suphi was mainly a man of action, an organizer, rather <sup>than</sup> being a theoretician. The presidium elected in the First Congress of the TCP with Suphi as its chairman, after some correspondence with Mustafa Kemal Paşa, finally decided to move into Anatolia. A proof of Suphi's continuing nationalism is to be found in one of the letters he wrote to Ankara. In fact, Suphi says in a letter (co-signed by Ethem Nejat), sent to Mustafa Kemal Paşa from Baku in November 1920, that the successful expedition of the Turkish Eastern Army was explained by the TCP as being essentially a punitive operation against the Dashnak government which acted in collaboration with the Entente powers. He assures Mustafa Kemal Paşa that this propaganda was well received by the public opinion, even the Armenian Communist press justified the Turkish action — so that the usual accusations about our barbarism did not occur this time. Suphi further requests him to prevent any incidents which can be interpreted as an Armenian massacre that would raise the Russian and European proletariat against the Turkish operation.

The tragic end of Suphi and his friends (is well known; but who had given the order to murder them still remains a mystery. at January 28/29, 1921 I, for one, believe that it was the Commander of the Eastern Army, Kâzım Karabekir Paşa plotting with the local ex-Unionist notables, and not Mustafa Kemal Paşa who only wanted their extradition.

All the fractions of the Anatolian Left are suppressed in Spring 1921 as a concession for the London Conference convening to revise the treaty of Sèvres, yet after its failure, some of them were revived later in the same year in connection with Frunze's visit to Ankara. They were banned again in summer 1922. But the definite suppression of communism in Turkey (including Istanbul) took place only in 1925 after the Maintenance of Order Act.

The most intellectually stimulating socialist movement in the early history of the Turkish Left, was the one that flourished around the journal Aydınlık (clarity). This movement was a merger of a group of students and trainees who were in Germany during the Great War (hence, falsely known as Spartakists) with two prominent young thinkers: French educated Şefik Hüsnü

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(Değner) an MD (specialist in Neurology) and Sadrettin Celâl (Antel) a teacher and pedagogist. They were both sons of <sup>the so called</sup> good families -- one's father was a civilian paşa from Selânik, the other's was an ex-minister of Justice. This group first continued a journal called Kurtuluş (liberation) which had already started in Berlin and then published Aydınlık. They also organized a "Turkish Workers' and Farmers' Socialist Party." (Early in the career of this circle, some of its members went to Ankara to join Mustafa Kemal Paşa; most of them were appointed to high positions.)

Here, I want to summarize Dr. Şefik Hüsnü's Marxian analysis on Turkey, as it appeared in his various Aydınlık articles. According to him, in Turkey until the Tanzimat period, politics had abnormally dominated economy. Then two sorts of bourgeoisie has begun to emerge in big cities, one developing out of notable families and the other, from the chiefs of the army and the administration. Parallel to them, a class corresponding to petite bourgeoisie was born in villages and small towns. There were also agricultural and urban workers. Yet the urban workers who have led the struggle and set an example to other classes in Europe for the <sup>improvement</sup> betterment of class relations lack in Turkey due to their being unorganized the necessary consciousness for this task. Organization ~~is~~ the gist of the matter. Turkey cannot afford to <sup>stay</sup> stay beyond the world-wide social revolution. The emergent proletarian revolution everywhere, will result in the creation of a single-classed (or classless) society through the abolishment of private individual property and the socialisation of natural richness. There will be three steps in this process:

1. The phase of taking over the political power. There can be no rules and methods for this step, yet destructiveness, individual corruption and unnecessary violence ought to be avoided and prevented.
2. Suppression of the reaction that will inevitably come from the former privileged classes and the erection of a governmental structure that can educate the people to live in a proper ideal society. This important stage is likely to last in <sup>long</sup> countries such as ours, where there is a mixture of feudalism and primitive capitalism. Dr. Şefik Hüsnü significantly supposes here that

urban proletariat can establish its rule in Turkey in the short-run; this view however, will have to be radically changed during the next few years.

### 3. Realisation of the end and creation of communist society.

Aydınlık circle has supported Mustafa Kemal Paşa with many articles and after the abolition of the sultanate, expressed its hopes that this political revolution will be completed with a social revolution based on common production and property. But this was nothing else than wishful-thinking and Aydınlık was soon to receive a severe blow from the nationalists. The political organ of the Aydınlık circle, TWFSF, by now became<sup>a</sup> secretly affiliated member of the Comintern. It tried to get organised among the labor unions and to participate actively in the general elections after the military victory. But many of its members were arrested in 1923 on conspiratorial high-treason charges, in connection with a First of May declaration they issued. These persons managed to get acquitted through some procedural rule; but the Left was warned that it would not be tolerated by the emerging régime.

Dr. Şefik Hüsnü's one of the more important articles in Aydınlık was written on the occasion of this arrest. "Currents of Socialism and Turkey" starts with a classification of contemporary political ideas into two groups: those of the bourgeoisie and those of the proletariat. The latter can be divided into three: Anarchism (or rather, Anarcho-Syndicalism), Socialism, and Communism. As it is impossible to speak about the first current for the present-day Turkey, he dwells at length on the distinction between Socialism and Communism. After giving an account of the historical process that divided them, Dr. Şefik Hüsnü concludes that the vital disputes between these two currents in Europe have no value whatsoever for Turkey. The capital is almost exclusively in foreign hands. The level of industrial development is very low and the class struggle is far from being acute. Therefore, division into two factions separately striving for social revolution ought to be out of question for us. Yet, there are classes and a class struggle in Turkey. But due to the numerical weakness of the capitalist bourgeoisie and the overwhelming majority of the workers and peasants, this usually takes the form of a national struggle between foreign capitalists

and their satellites, the local notables and the native rich. The present popular government deriving its power from national sovereignty should be a government of work and workers. Further steps in socialism can only be expected after the development of industry under such a government.

I find this analysis very interesting, because it reflects the view of the pre-1925 TCP. According to this conception, Ankara is not a bourgeois government that ought to be fought against, but a kind of people's government which is open to a coalition of lower classes. In ten years, when some deviants from the TCP defended an ideological line in the journal Kadro, they were supposing more or less the same things. Thus, it was in fact not these "deviationists" but the party-line that had changed in the mean-time; and perhaps the nature of the Ankara government also.

In the summer of 1923, Dr. Vedat Nedim (Tör), the economist, who was <sup>to be</sup> one of the future Kadro writers and later, an aesthetic advisor for private banks' artistic activities, wrote in Aydınlık that if the political independence newly secured through a military victory is not supplemented with economic independence, the blood shed for this purpose will be a sin, a crime against the nation and the humanity at large.

Aydınlık opposed the proclamation of the republic, rightly fearing that it would be an imitation of the class dominated republics of Europe and America. But this was not a dispute with names only. According to Dr. Şefik Hüsnü, there would be no harm in calling the new state "Popular Republic of Turkey," provided it does not follow western bourgeois models by creating a ruler without a dynasty. Beginning from the proclamation of the Turkish Republic, Aydınlık gradually saw in the People's Party in power, a representative of class domination and discarded its previous hopes of permeating the government for the adoption of a social policy.

The last dozen issues of Aydınlık are more openly pro-Soviet and they more frequently refer to Marxist theory. An article by Dr. Şefik Hüsnü that appeared in February 1924, criticizes <sup>the</sup> social reformers <sup>in power</sup> for their utopian thinking: modernisation attempts at the level of super-structure are bound to remain

superficial and useless. Industrialisation should necessitate changes in social institutions. Planned economic growth should be emphasized, instead of toying with ideas of educational reform and changes in the marriage law for instance, which are nothing else than details. Still, Aydınlık circle supported the ruling party against the so-called Progressivist (Terakkiperver) opposition when it <sup>seemed to</sup> challenge the abolition of the caliphate, the exile of the members of the Ottoman dynasty and back religious reaction. Yet, this was no more than a family quarrel between two wings of the bourgeoisie.

Aydınlık is severely criticised in the Fifth Congress of the Comintern for its collaboration line with national capitalism. Manuilsky, a Ukrainian delegate, accused Aydınlık to follow the social patriotic ideology of the Second International. The Turks defended their position by claiming that they had only supported revolutionary nationalism. They admitted however, that there were a few among their numbers who had backed measures of state and municipal socialism; but by now, this deviation was rectified.

Dr. Şefik Hüsnü in his last Aydınlık article distinguishes the financial capitalism of the bourgeoisie in big comprador cities, from the petite bourgeoisie of the provincial Anatolia who are aspiring to become an industrial bourgeoisie. The first stratum of the capitalists represent a laissez faire attitude, but the second demands a protectionist policy. The ruling People's Party has a tendency to go with the provincial Anatolian petite bourgeoisie. Yet for lack of capital accumulation, it is unconceivable for this group to create a national industry. They will by the logic of necessity have to beg foreign capital. This will result in a conciliation of two groups of capitalists at the expense of the toiling masses.

The Maintenance of Order Law, accepted on the pretext of a large scale Kurdish rising in the East, in early 1925, became a major turning point in the course of recent Turkish history. The new authoritarian government effectively suppressed the Marxist activities also, in spite of their giving full support to the government, as they considered it their duty to side with progressive bourgeoisie against a feudal reaction. The trial and condemnation of the leftist leaders, pushed Marxism to the underground.

Aydınlık, together with a special periodical organ issued by the same circle addressing to the workers, Orak Çekiç (sickle and hammer) was banned by the government in a general wave of press prohibitions. 38 members of the circle were arrested in May, because of a May Day declaration they published. Some of the top leaders such as Dr. Şefik Hüsnü had already escaped to avoid arrest. The Ankara Independence Tribunal subsequently sentenced most of these leftists to 7 and 10 years of imprisonment and those who had fled were sentenced in absentia to 15 years. However, all leftist convicts were released in a year and a half, due to a modification in the Penal Code.

This early period of Turkish Marxism exhibits two sorts of ideological approach to social problems: one that attempted at a conciliation with Islam and the other that refused to take such an attitude. (Yet even in Aydınlık circle, considerations of respect for people's beliefs have necessitated a sympathy with popular religion as distinct from the dogmas of orthodoxy.)

The turning point of 1924 put an end to the hopes of pushing the Ankara government to a path of non-capitalistic development. Hereafter, we shall witness in the TCP vis a vis the Ankara government, the classical approach of Communist parties against bourgeois governments.

#### Marxism in Turkey from 1925 to 1945

Shortly before the beginning of an oppressive era with the Maintenance of Order Law, the Third Congress of the TCP has met in Istanbul. Little is known about this meeting which presumably discussed the new party line condemning the Kemalists as tools of the bourgeoisie. But the change thus effected was neither abrupt nor final. Some members still clung to their former opinions. Dr. Vedat Nedim, who began to guide the party organization as one of the few leaders that were not arrested and yet stayed in the country, was in fact one such a non-submissive figure. His rule over the underground party is later dubbed as the Menshevik period. However this does not <sup>directly</sup> imply a theoretical tendency of believing in the inevitability of passing through a bourgeois-capitalist phase before aspiring to socialism. It rather means adherence to a loose organizational model, the so-called pointed system, instead of the

strictly disciplined Bolshevik type. Dr. Şefik Hüsnü and his friends abroad invited Vedat Nedim to a conference in Vienna in 1926 to determine the future activities. The agreement reached there, did not work smoothly in practice. Şevket Süreyya (Aydemir) after his release from the prison joined Vedat Nedim in the party administration. They did not obey the directives from abroad. Finally, Vedat Nedim informed upon Dr. Şefik Hüsnü who had returned to Turkey in cognito. A crowded arrest of Communists followed. The 1927 trial in the civilian Istanbul Court resulted with light sentences (3 or 4 months) for 30 outstanding TCP members.<sup>4</sup>

Let me hasten to add that during the years between 1925 and 1936 occasional news in the daily press of distributed hand-bills and leaflets and subsequent arrests of trials of Communists became something of a routine. But all these little influenced the Turkish society if at all.

After the incidence of 1927, the right-wing left the party. Many of those who parted company with the TCP at this juncture will join forces in 1932-34 to publish the Kadro journal in order to forge a statist ideology for the ruling single party.

The year 1929 represented in the evolution of the TCP, an effort to reorganize and reorientate it on a line in accordance with the general Comintern policy. There was a left-wing opposition to the Central Committee under the direction of Dr. Şefik Hüsnü.<sup>5</sup> Nâzım Hikmet, the poet, was prominent in this left-wing which convened a secret meeting in Pavli, a tiny island off the Asiatic suburban coast of Istanbul, We know little about the contents of this movement, save that it was called a "Trotskite-police opposition" by the Central Committee, after an arbitration ruling of the Comintern in favor of of the faction in power. There appeared two anonymous letters in Die Fahne des

Kommunismus (flag), the journal of the German Communist Party's Left opposition by their comrades in Turkey.<sup>6</sup> Thereafter, this opposition was duly purged from the party and its members continued an independent existence. One suspects that there was little ground (theoretical or practical), especially for the branding of this group as a left opposition. But, such a development had taken place in Soviet Union, so -as well as elsewhere- it had to be imitated in Turkey too.

A new program is accepted for the TCP in 1929. An English translation of it can be found in Ivar Spector's Soviet Union and the Muslim World (p. 111 ff.), from a Soviet booklet entitled "Program Documents of the Communist Parties of the East" which in turn gives a Russian translation of the 57 articulated Turkish text that originally appeared in the illegal periodical İnkılâp Yolu (way of the revolution).<sup>7</sup> Until recently, we were unable to see the Turkish text and had to refer to it through these Russian and English translations. <sup>2 saw</sup> Now I possess a copy of the 4th printing issued in 1936 as a tiny booklet. This must be a revised edition (in all likelihood partly modified in the 4th Congress of 1932 and the General Plenum of 1934, both of which secretly met in Istanbul). It is composed of 58 articles in two sections. In the first section, after an Introduction, articles are grouped under seven headings: Struggle against ~~Imperialism~~ Imperialism, The Working Class, Peasantry, Economic and Financial Problems, General Education, Youth, and Women's Movement. The second section on the "Tasks of the Workers' and Peasants' Government" is much shorter. There is nothing novel in this program. It is a typical standard Communist document following the Comintern model.

Starting from the early 1920s, some Turks went to Moscow to study at KUTV (Kommunisticheski Universitet Trudi Vostoka = Communist University of the Toilers of the East).<sup>8</sup> This was far from being a university in the usual sense. It was more of a propaganda school. There were all kinds of students, ranging from workers who let alone speak Russian, could barely read and write in their own languages, to students who had a good cultural background. This odd composition existed among the Turks also. Some of the early graduates of KUTV were intellectuals like Şevket Süreyya, Nâzım Hikmet, Valâ Nurettin, İsmail Hüsrev (Tökin: another future Kadro ideologist), etc. and Laz İsmail (İ.Bilen, the present First Secretary of the illegal TCP). Their taking an active part in the TCP after they came back home, placed the party under a stricter control of the Comintern. Indeed, the TCP was a "Section of the Communist International" like all others. But as time went on, personality conflicts came to the fore. Leadership struggles in this small organization caused unbridgable rifts. Even

after the right and left purges, polemics against the deviants were continued. In the Foreword of the 1936 edition of the party program, Nâzım Hikmet and his friends are called "the hirelings of the Kemalist bourgeoisie, loyal servants of the police, enemies of the workers and the toiling popular masses of Turkey." This must be considered to be a curious attitude, as from the ~~1936~~<sup>Seventh</sup> (and the last) Congress of the Comintern (1935) onwards, the creation of anti-fascist popular fronts everywhere was accepted as a general policy. Yet Turkish Communists did not stop their internal feuds. But 1936 represents the last active year of the party; from then onwards, the TCP activities were reduced to a minimum and the members were encouraged to participate in popular organizations and contribute to the pro-democratic press. During the Second World War years a little freedom was recognized to the left-liberal intellectuals to maintain an equilibrium between various tendencies. (Some pro-Nazi activities were also tolerated until Stalingrad.) But the contents of the publications then considered to be leftist are surprisingly moderate for our contemporary eyes. For instance, an urge for urbanization to modernise the country was thought to be a left stand, as it contradicted the prevalent idyllic myths about the village life.

At the end of the war, there was a Turkish daily (Tan) which defended a pro-Soviet foreign policy for Turkey. The government secretly organized a massive student riot to destroy its printing presses and pretended that this was a spontaneous reaction on the part of the nationalist youth.

#### Marxism in Turkey from 1946 to 1960

Transition to a multi-party democracy in Turkey have improved the situation of the Left very slightly. Though it wanted to legalize itself through several attempts at founding parties, there were strict limits recognised for political activities and Marxism of all shades was clearly beyond them. Hence, the Left continued to be illegal. It succeeded however, to organize a little among the intellectuals and especially the university students. Some large scale arrests put the whole leadership in prison. The most important of such actions taken against them was the trial of the 167s in the ~~1960~~<sup>5</sup> Martial Law

Tribunal at the year 1952 which resulted in heavy sentences for many underground party members including the veteran Dr. Şefik Hüsnü Değmer (after serving his time in jail, he died in 1959 in an Anatolian town where he was banished). During this period, the emphasis was on foreign policy. TCP vehemently opposed Turkey's taking part in the Korean War and her entry to NATO. It also disapproved the economic integration of Turkey to the Capitalist camp. Marxists tried to portray this as a betrayal of Atatürk's statist autarchical conception. But both of the major parties, the Democratic Party which had won power in 1950 and the Republican People's Party that had been the opposition, shared on the contrary, an assumption to the effect that Turkey could survive as an independent nation only if she sided with the West.

Meanwhile, the members of the TCP in immigration in Moscow had suffered severe purges at the late 30s and during the 40s. After the war, the party was revived there. But it did not function in any significant manner, except serving as a loyal voter of the CPSU in international meetings. This observation continues to be largely true about the party abroad even now. It tries to uphold the national independence of Turkey vis à vis western powers, but with the pretext of proletarian internationalism, it slavishly follows the Moscow line.

~~★~~ Marxism in Turkey from 1960 to 1980

Republican People's Party during its ten years of parliamentary opposition (1950-60), emphasized the statist dimension of the Kemalist legacy and advocated central economic planning against the more (economically) liberal-minded Democratic Party — though in practice DP differed little from its predecessor and rival. RPP developed more in a leftist direction after the coup d'état of 1960. Throughout the score of years to the present, "social justice" became a favorite theme in public discourse. A weekly journal, Yön (direction) was quite important in propagating such leftist ideas. Its editor, Doğan Avcıoğlu, a French educated socialist. His understanding of Marxism is rather instrumentalist. This permitted him to search allies in the ranks of the RPP and the radical army officers for an ideological front anti-imperialist

✧ Social conditions at that time helped such an intellectual coalition to materialize. One positive effect of the partial slide of the RPP to the Left was the breaking of taboos about socialism. At least for three decades there was no public discussion of Turkey's problems with Marxist concepts. Even abstract theoretical works were not allowed to appear. Ideas of socialism and communism had come to be viewed as treason. A whole generation was barred from getting acquainted with leftist literature. During 1960s and 1970s Marxist classics were translated into Turkish; gradually periodicals began to be published trying both to inform Turkish readers about the developments of socialist ideas abroad and submitting analyses of the problems of this country from varying Marxist perspectives. Yet, a tendency to favor the simplistic and dogmatic panaceas was clearly discernible among the Turkish sympathizers of socialism. Borrowed action programs were usually preferred to those attempts at dealing with Turkish problems without imitating a ready-made model. This phenomenon can be explained perhaps with reference to Islamic traditions. In fact, Atatürk's positivistic conception of secularisation could be interpreted from a structural viewpoint as a Second Islam: the unity of truth (with "science" replacing "theology"), the moral right of those who possess this truth to impose it on the others, redundancy of doubt and wavering etc. Such features characterise many of the Turkish socialist currents of the 1960s and 1970s also, deserving to be designated as a Third Islam.

abroad and non-capitalist at home. <sup>\*</sup>Indeed, socialism was accepted as a neo-Kemalism by many intellectuals (especially teachers) during the 1960s. Even if some of them can be suspected to adopt this attitude for reasons of expediency, there were others who took it earnestly. Then they were faced with the same dilemma of Kemalists, being alienated from the popular masses on whose benefit and behalf they wanted to act. One enterprise to overcome this gap, was to win the favor of the people by appealing them through religion. <sup>the</sup> This was not a new idea, but now it was articulated consciously on populist lines in the model of the 19th century Russia. One of their champions translated Dostoyevsky's Pushkin Speech to serve as a correct example of approach to people's established beliefs. Yet, this adventure remained as an unfulfilled intellectual dream when its originators came to realise the internal contradictions such an attempt would inevitably raise.

Another fashionable ideological move was to explain the course of Turkish history in terms of Asiatic mode of production, instead of the transition of feudalism <sup>into</sup> a capitalist stage. Inspired by some French Marxists researching Moslem and Eastern countries, two professors of Economics in Istanbul University (Sencer Divitçioğlu and İdris Küçükömer) claimed unapplicability of the usual Marxist evolutionary scheme to Turkey. The Asiatic mode of production theory in Turkey was also thought as a device to overcome the neo-Kemalist difficulties in the path of socialism, without necessarily repudiating the validity of Marxism elsewhere, indeed using Marx's own permission.<sup>9</sup> A kind of populism and peculiarity could be based on this theory, as it stressed the particularity of Turkey. If we accept that our social structure is of a sui generis character incomparable to western Europe, then we need not to follow the same path towards socialism with those countries who had evolved into capitalism from a feudal past. Whether the Ottomans were really feudal or not, did not weigh as much as the practical implications in the discussions that surrounded this issue. There was a lot of confusion: What was the feudal model? (Even, what was a model?) Was there a universal pattern that fitted western Europe as well as Japan, for example? Were not the Byzantines and the Seldjukites feudal? When

we speak of the Ottoman Empire, what period of its <sup>600 years'</sup> history and which regions of its vast domains should we focus on? Were there homogenous relations of production in the classical 16th century all over the Empire? The evidence is to the contrary: Balkans and the Kurdish East at least were always feudal. By the beginning of the 19th century even the Anatolian core was doubtlessly feudal. Such considerations were not taken to be important and a school of intellectuals and artists came into being to uphold the Asiatic theory. At the bottom of it, there was an inherent idealisation of the Ottoman system stressing its uniqueness. Some novelists and film-makers elaborated on this line, while some leftist politicians utilised it in rendering a target for their activities the authoritarian features of the Benevolent State conception that was involved in this theory. Aybar, the president of the Turkish Workers' Party was one of these politicians.

The Turkish Workers' Party was originally founded by some labor unionists. It developed towards the Left, after electing Mehmet Ali Aybar to its presidency in early 1962. Aybar was an associate professor of International Law from Istanbul University who had been obliged to drop his academic career for engagement in left-wing politics. This party succeeded to win 15 seats at the 1965 general elections. But optimistic prospects of a growing socialist party led to premature leadership struggles. At this juncture, some people cherishing ideas of "extra-parliamentary opposition" challenged the conventional tactics of the TWP. They were also showing a keen interest in Mao's theories. But Aybar lost his position in the party due to attacks from the opposite wing, when he openly blamed Soviet Union for the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. After him, TWP became more of a classical Marxist-Leninist party. The Chinese-oriented fractions partly left on their accord and partly expelled. TWP always condemned terrorist inclinations among the leftist university students. Young men and women of these tendencies united out of the party in a federative structure called Dev Genç (literally meaning Giant Young, shortened from Devrimci Gençlik = Revolutionary Youth). A year before the army intervention of 12th March 1971, splintering leftist movements began to increase at an unbelievable rate.

There were fractions of all shades ranging from the pro-Soviet and pro-Chinese to the Trotskites and to those that followed the Albanian line. Yet the bigger organizations were not identifiable with such a single inspiration. They all accused one another for being "revisionists". Some of the sharper groups resorted to bank robberies and armed resistance to the police. Then the 12th of March period came that lasted for more than two years, as a strong reaction to all these and to the more liberal Left. Wholesale arrests followed.<sup>10</sup> The military backed government, at one point took hostages from the intellectuals as if they were organisationally related to terrorists. The Constitutional Court outlawed the TWP for espousing the rights of the sizeable Kurdish minority in the East.

I do not want to discuss the developments after the return to normalcy in 1973. Incidents of the nearer years are still too fresh to be analyzed objectively. It should suffice for me to say that terrorism is fundamentally an un-Marxist activity and to the extent that some leftist circles engaged in terrorism they were acting against the prescriptions of the theory.

Footnotes :

Almost no references are given for the "Foreword" and the section on "Marxism in Turkey from 1908 to 1925," as all the information submitted here, derive from my book in Turkish: Türkiye'de Sol Akımlar 1908-1925 (Ankara: Bilgi Publishing House, 1978), 3rd enlarged edition, 556 pp.

<sup>1</sup> See for example, F.Engels' Preface to the English edition of 1888 of the Communist Manifesto: "An Armenian translation, which was to be published in Constantinople some months ago, did not see the light, I am told, because the publisher was afraid of bringing out a book with the name Marx on it, while the translator declined to call it his own production."

<sup>2</sup> Trotsky, after nearly two decades was to come to Turkey and live there -mostly in Büyükdada/Prinkipo- for over four years, exactly as Parvus did. But from 1915 onwards they had definitely parted friendship. For Parvus see Z.A.B.Zemand and W.B.Scharlau, The Merchant of Revolution (London: Oxford Univ.Press, 1965); Trotsky's "Obituary to a living friend" is mentioned in I.Deutscher, The Prophet Armed p. 219.

<sup>3</sup> I obtained photocopies of 19 issues of Yeni Dünya, a Turkish language newspaper Suphi published in Moscow and Crimea during 1918-1919 (later in Turkestan and Baku), which I intend to publish in full transliteration as soon as the political atmosphere will be more conducive to the appearance of such material in Turkey.

<sup>4</sup> The press reports of this important trial is compiled (in Latin transcription from the Arabic lettered originals) in a book by Miss Jülide Ergüder: 1927 Komünist Tevkifatı: İstanbul Ağır Ceza Mahkemesindeki Duruşma (Birikim, 1978), introduced by myself. As the juridical archives are since then burnt down in a fire, this is all one can find about the proceedings.

5 Dr. Şefik Hüsnü Değmer, using the pseudonym "Ferdi" has participated in the 6th, 7th and 8th Enlarged Plenums of the Executive Committee of the Communist International during the years 1926 and 1927. Subsequently, in the Sixth Congress (1928) he was elected to ECCI and in the Seventh Congress (1935) to the International Control Commission. See Biographical Dictionary of the Comintern, prepared by Branko Lazitch, in collaboration with Milorad M. Drachkovitch (Hoover, 1973). In between the two World Congresses he headed for a while the West European Bureau. He was arrested in Berlin in connection with the Reichstag Fire and he spent 6 months in Nazi jails.

6 "Die Lage in der Türkei" (Situation in Turkey), Nr. 26 (19. Juli 1929), pp. 203-4 & "Brief türkischer Genossen" (Letter of Turkish Comrades), Nr. 35 (20. Sept. 1929), p. 277.

7 The illegal periodical literature of the TCP is extremely difficult to find. Here are the names of some, which I have been able to detect:

İnkılâp Yolu: Marxist Leninist political review. Issued in dual numbers, 1930-1932.

Bolşevik: Newspaper (August 10, 1930).

Orak Çekir: Central organ, 1936.

Kızıl (red) İstanbul: Organ of the provincial committee, 1934-1935.

8 KUTV was founded by the CPSU in April 21, 1921 to train cadres for the Eastern Soviet Republics; soon students from the Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean were included. In 1923 Soviet and Foreign sections were separated.

<sup>9</sup> Karl Marx (and Friedrich Engels, for that matter) has written nothing of a theoretical character about Turkey. His journalistic articles (and those of Engels) that appeared originally in the New York Daily Tribune and subsequently collected by his daughter and son-in-law (the Avelings) under the title of Eastern Question (London, 1897) are mainly concerned with the events around the Crimean War. Marx in general is severely critical of the Liberal anti-Turkish tradition and he usually sides with the Conservative anti-Russian and pro-Turkish attitude.

Though Marx and Engels have never studied Turkey in the light of their standard theory; there is at least one indication that they considered it not as an exception to five-staged schema of growth (which gained wide currency during the Stalin era in the USSR), let alone be an example of the Asiatic mode of production. Indeed, in an editorial that appeared in the New York Daily Tribune on April 11, 1853 (in the section about Nationalities in Turkey, written in fact by Engels) we read the following (as I am retranslating from the Turkish version, the wording may not be exactly like the original, and the underlinings are mine):

Turks can hardly be defined as the ruling class of Turkey, for the class relations are as confused as the relations between the races. The Turk according to situation and circumstance is either a laborer, a farmer, a small property owner, a trader, a feudal lord at the lowest, the most barbarian level of feudality, a civil servant or a soldier; yet no matter where he is placed among these various positions, he belongs to a privileged religion and nationality....

<sup>10</sup> Even I was arrested in 1971 for translating some excerpts of Marx's 1844 manuscripts from a compilation of Thomas Bottomore, the English sociologist. I stayed in jail for ten weeks and then got acquitted. But I was under the threat of the standard seven-and-a-half years imprisonment for spreading Communist propaganda through the printed media.

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<sup>2</sup> 'To have the world for one's country, and humanity for one's nation,' from the Foreword to Hugo's Les Burgraves.

<sup>3</sup> The Turkish Socialist Party (the old Ottoman SP was dubbed Turkish SP after its resurrection in February 1919) of Hüseyin Hilmi, organised successful strikes at Tannig Factories, Dockyards and Tramways in spring 1920. The party became powerful especially among Transport workers. There are rumors to the effect that Hilmi was secretly supported by the British Occupation Forces against the French companies who held concessions for operating most of Istanbul's transportation lines. It is even suggested in Tim Harrington Looks Back (London: John Murray, 1940), that the French may have been responsible for Hilmi's mysterious murder soon afterwards.

<sup>4</sup> Socialist ideas had penetrated Turkey early in the century through westernized individuals. As a curiosity, one could mention the case of an Ottoman admiral (retired) who joined Keir Hardie's Independent Labor Party; though judging by his letters to Hardie, he had no genuine understanding of the problems of socialism.

<sup>5</sup> Parvus had influenced Trotsky in formulating the famous theory of the permanent revolution. Parvus also collaborated with the German General Staff. He was to advise them to transfer Lenin and other Bolshevik leaders from Switzerland to Petrograd in a sealed train in the spring of 1917.

Trotsky, after nearly two decades was to come to Turkey and live there -mostly in Büyükdada/Prinkipo- for over four years, exactly as Parvus did. But from 1915 onwards they had definitely parted friendship. For Parvus see Z.A.B. Zeman and W.B.Scharlau, The Merchant of Revolution (London: Oxford Univ.Press, 1965); Trotsky's 'Obituary to a living friend' is mentioned in I.Deutscher, The Prophet Armed, p. 219.

<sup>6</sup> For this conference see G.D.H. Cole, A History of Socialist Thought, vol. IV, part I, p. 46 ff. For the Turkish participation see G.S. Harris, Origins of Communism in Turkey, pp. 31-32.

The Turkish delegates were Nisim Mazliyah, a Jewish Lawyer, ranking high at the Union and Progress Party; Dr. Âkil Muhtar, a Turkish MD and academician; and Prof. Hüseyinzade Ali, a Pan-Turanist Azerbaidjani. A Soviet source gives the following information about the socialist party they supposedly represented: "A bourgeois-police 'Socialist Party' was organised by the Union and Progress. Capitalists, lawyers and even generals became members. They wanted to participate into the International Socialist Congress in Stockholm at 1917, under the name of TSP. Talât Paşa, the grand vizier ordered the Security director the preparation of a special seal on the party's name." A.Şnurov, Türkiye'de Kapitalistleşme ve Sınıf Kavgaları (Transition to Capitalism and Class Struggles in Turkey - Turkish translation), p. 41. This venture is also reported in a contemporary Armenian source which relates the joint decision of the Dashnak and Hınchak parties to combat against its danger. See Fethi Tevetoğlu, Türkiye'de Sosyalist ve Komünist Faaliyetler (Socialist and Communist Activities in Turkey), p. 53.

<sup>7</sup> I obtained photocopies of 19 issues of Yeni Dünya, a Turkish language newspaper Suphi published in Moscow and Crimea during 1918-1919 (later in Turkestan and Baku), which I intend to publish in full transliteration as soon as the political atmosphere will be more conducive to the appearance of such material in Turkey.

<sup>8</sup> The identity of the person who had given the order for their assassination still remains a mystery. I personally believe it was the Commander of the Eastern Army, Kazım Karabekir Paşa, and not Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk) who only <sup>n</sup>wanted their extradition.

<sup>9</sup> Aydınlık, together with the periodical organ issued by the same circle addressing to the working class, Orak-Çekiç (sickle and hammer) was banned by the government in a general wave of press prohibitions. 38 members of the circle were arrested in May, because of a May Day declaration they published. Some of the top leaders such as Dr. Şefik Hüsnü had already escaped abroad to avoid arrest. The Ankara Independence Tribunal subsequently sentenced most of these leftists to 7 and 10 years of imprisonment and those who had fled were sentenced in absentia to 15 years. However, all leftist convicts were released in a year and a half, due to a modification in the Penal Code.

<sup>10</sup> The press reports of this important trial is compiled (in Latin <sup>n</sup>transcript from the Arabic lettered originals) in a book by Ms. Jülide Ergüder: 1927 Komünist Tevkifatı; İstanbul Ağır Ceza Mahkemesindeki Duruşma (Birikim, 1978), introduced by myself. As the juridical archives were since then burnt down in a fire, this is all one can find about the proceedings.

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<sup>12</sup> 'Die Lage in der Türkei' (Situation in Turkey), Nr. 26 (19 Juli 1929), pp.203-4 and 'Brief türkischer Genossen' (Letter of Turkish Comrades), Nr. 35 (20 September 1929), p. 277.

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<sup>14</sup> KUTV was founded by the CPSU in 21st April 1921 to train cadres for the Eastern Soviet Republics; soon students from the Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean were included. In 1923 Soviet and Foreign sections were separated.

<sup>15</sup> This has to be qualified in several ways. First of all the titles chosen for translation were the less sophisticated and more provocative ones. Those books dealing with serious philosophical problems or difficult economic analyses were prone to be overlooked, because they demanded a deeper culture. How could they be understood apart from their historical context to which the novices of socialism had no desire to be initiated? Then, few of the translators were really capable to cope with their texts. They made many mistakes due their being inexperienced non-professionals. Furthermore, some consciously took liberties with the books they translated, and 'corrected' them according to their lines, without bothering to indicate the modifications they made. Also some translators for fear of juridical persecution, automatically substituted 'socialism' wherever 'communism' was mentioned, thus often created confusion between these concepts. So far, about the rendering of Marxist classics into Turkish. As for the actual consumption of

the translated works, another grim observation is due. They are bought and placed on book-shelves in private homes, but seldom read, let alone fully grasped. They are venerated like holy books. In their stead, vulgarisations like George Politzer's texts for the Workers' University in France before the Second World War were being read by students and staff members alike. Later on, especially in Maoist circles memorizing techniques spread. The result was the replacement of Marxian analysis with slogans and quotations cited more often than not appropriately.

<sup>16</sup> Comtean positivism was surely atheistic, but the Religion of Humanity attempted to be created by its founder on the organizational model of the Catholic Church, had retained all the features of a usual revelational creed. The New Ottomans and the Young Turks of the late 19th and early 20th centuries were fascinated by positivism through Freemasonry. They believed that it was very progressive and they did not discern its basic similarity with the religion they blamed for preventing the advancement into modernity. In fact, positivism was much more conservative than it looked.

<sup>17</sup> I do not regard Marxism to be inherently dogmatic as positivism is; but it can be rendered into a dogmatism as many other libertarian ideologies have been. Marxism in fact have been transformed into a 'state religion' in those countries where Communist parties are in power. Marxist parties in other countries who follow their lead are often torn between loyalty to them and to the theory itself. Only where a Marxist party is strong enough to challenge the leadership of an external center, the full potential of Marxism to keep abreast with all kinds of current problems can be observed.

<sup>18</sup> Karl Marx (and Friedrich Engels, for that matter) has written nothing of a theoretical character about Turkey. His journalistic articles (and those of Engels) that appeared originally in the New York Daily Tribune and subsequently collected by his daughter and son-in-law (the Avelings) under the title of Eastern Question (London, 1897) are mainly concerned with the events around the Crimean War. Marx in general is severely critical of the Liberal anti-Turkish tradition and he usually sides with the Conservative anti-Russian and pro-Turkish attitude.

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<sup>19</sup> A recent application of this theory to Turkish history (largely drawing from Prof. Küçükömer's 1969 book, Düzenin Yabancılaşması: Batılama (Alienation of the Order; Westernization) is to be seen in Ali Gevgilili's Yükseliş ve Düşüş (Rise and Fall - İstanbul, 1981), pp. 4-6:

"The six-hundred-years-old Turkish Ottoman sovereignty differs in various respects from oriental societies as well as from classical western societies. Ottoman society was founded on the support of the Anatolian peasant's reaction who was striving to stay free against the Byzantine Empire, then in the process of transition to a feudal order. The founders of the Ottoman system offered to the Anatolian population a solution drawn from oriental and Islamic traditions; Land would not be subject to personal property.

The Ottoman Sultan, i.e. the public authority who represented a tolerant version of oriental despotism was the sole owner of the whole arable land. For private individuals, only usage benefits (usis fructi) existed. This became a very important historical factor allowing the large peasant masses to behave more freely in comparison to western feudalism, both during the Ottoman and the Turkish Republican periods; Ottoman central society undertook to realize the organization of the land. Establishment and functioning of the order was above all a question of resources. Therefore, another dominant social force was bound to appear who would appropriate the value created from the land and render the state bureaucracy into a very important instrument. This stratum composed of civilian or military state functionaries was different from western civilian bureaucracy at the disposal of the economic system. In contradistinction to the western civilian bureaucracy, the Ottoman state bureaucracy had a very peculiar social status, able to exert control on the whole economy. Sometimes it acted as if it was a ruling class enjoying extensive powers possessing all means of production though it did not.

The Ottoman economic system which was situated at the junction of the East-West land trade routes and had reaped at its early period important shares from the world commerce, due to new international geographical discoveries, began to shake at its most vulnerable foundations. Eastern trade started over the Oceans afar from the Ottoman lands. As a result, the Turkish economy became progressively deprived of the external surplus value gained through mediation in foreign trade. This epoch also represented the reaching of the Ottoman expansion in Middle East, North Africa and Mid-Europe to its ultimate frontiers. Foodstuff required by

millions of people living in the vast Ottoman realm, could no longer be provided by the agriculture under public ownership because of the diminishing results tendency in production.

This phase and its aftermath in the Ottoman society is a period both of stagnation and fall, and of social and economic anarchy. Western Europe wished to make Turkey gradually a market and a depot of raw materials. Internally too, the first funds which began to accumulate through rising contraband trade desired to transform themselves into an agricultural and commercial capital. The historical state structure became once again an impediment to development. The dominant forces of the system prevented the evolution of capitalistic production relation for fear of losing their active stati, yet they failed to bring about better solutions instead of the developments they stopped."

20 The TWP polled at these elections 3 o/o of the total votes (276.000 out of 9.300.000). At the partial Senate elections of 1966 (21 provinces) it polled 3,2 o/o (79.000 out of 2.472.000) and of 1968 (22 provinces) 4,7 o/o (143.700 out of 3.067.000). This continuously rising ratios devlined to 2,7 o/o (243.600 votes out of 9.086.000) at the 1969 general elections and the proportional representation with the national remainder having been changed, this resulted in electing only 2 of the 450 members of the Assembly.

21 Even I was arrested in 1971 for translating some exerpts of Marx's 1844 manuscripts from a compilation of Thomas Bottomore, the English sociologist. I stayed in jail for ten weeks and then got acquitted. But I was under the threat of the standard seven-and-a-half years imprisonment for spreading Communist propaganda through the printed media.