

Dönemlendirme

Başlıca Sorun ve Çıkmazlar
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COMMUNIST MOVEMENT IN TURKEY

1920-1936

Periodization

I propose to periodize the history of the Turkish Communist movement in accordance with the general framework of political developments in this country. Thus, the re-proclamation of the Constitution in late Ottoman period (1908) is a suitable beginning for a new "political" era which continued with various fluctuations until the acceptance of the "Maintenance of Order Act" (1925) which was passed by the Grand National Assembly in reaction to a Kurdish rebellion. The following period was characterized by the substitution of "administration" in place of politics. It took twenty years of single-party rule before a transition to multi-party politics could be made. Hence, the history of the Communist movement also is divided into a period from its beginning in 1919 until 1925 and another one from 1925 onwards. During this second span of time, the "decentralization" or "separation" of TKP from the Comintern (1936) constitutes a new turning point. The dissolution of the Comintern (1943) made little impact on the already weak Turkish Communist movement.

Main Problems and Dilemmas of the TKP

Turkey as a backward agricultural country in 20s and 30s had few industrial workers. Moreover with the proclamation of the Republic she underwent rapid social change. Many of the reforms carried into effect by the ruling single-party were close to the hearts of the Communists. All they could criticize was the lack of political freedoms and the absence of a land-reform. (The government was pursuing a modernization policy through education of an urban vanguard and did not concern itself with peasants who continued living in their traditional ways.)

Another factor which inhibited TKP's propaganda against the government was the latter's consistent friendship with Soviet Union. Under these circumstances, activities of Turkish Communists were limited both by the objective conditions and the directives of the KI.

After the separation of the Turkish Party from the KI ("decentralization") in 1936, Turkish representatives who stayed in the SU shared the fate of many others in the purges. Their prosecution continued until Stalin's death. I have no knowledge about their trials (if indeed they had ever been brought before a court), beyond hearsay.

Illegality

TKP has been illegal throughout its history, except for brief periods during the Turco-Greek War when it operated under legal coverage utilizing party names that did not contain the word "Communist". For instance "The Turkish Workers' and Farmers' Socialist Party" (İstanbul, 1919-23) and the "People's İştirakiiyyun (an Arabic word which means "socialist" rather than "communist") Party (Ankara 1920-21 and 1922). (Yet, there was a short-lived "official" TKP established in the National Assembly in 1920!) Hence, a secrecy which surrounded its activities does not allow us to find precise answers for most of the questions we would like to ask about it.

A brief survey of legislation concerning the offense or crime of Communism may be pertinent here. Technically speaking, in 1920s there was no prohibition of Communism in Ottoman/Turkish corpus of laws. After accepted in 1850s continued to be in effect. (This was an adaptation of the Napoleonic French Code of 1810.) The Turkish Law was amended in 1914 to ban (under severe sanctions) publication of articles encouraging the people to disobey the law and order of the state and endanger the discipline and safety of the country or provoke a class of the people to assault another class, or inciting a general meeting to disorder in the same manner.

The Maintenance of Order Act of March 1925 did not contain any material addition to the existing penal limits, it merely empowered the Government with discretionary prevention of anarchy. Following its acceptance, a new amendment for persons who actually provoke people to armed rebellion against the government, incite the people of Turkey to kill one another, in case such a conspiracy materializes (otherwise heavy imprisonment is foreseen). Thus, the element of force is prerequisites, leaving Communistic thought crimes unpunishable.

In mid 1926 a new Turkish Penal Code was promulgated, being an adaptation of the Italian Code of 1889. This piece of legislation, naturally enough, forbade actions forcibly oriented against the "established order" (the state) and still left any kind of "thinking" unprohibited. Only in the Press Law of 1931 communistic instigations were regarded to be criminal; hence "thought" became punishable on condition it was published. In 1936 the notorious articles of 141 and 142 were added to the Penal Code. These contained comprehensive prohibitions, but nevertheless required the crime to include force.

In spite of the looseness of the legal framework summarized above, many a Communist was sentenced to long terms of imprisonment with their reference. Nazım Hikmet the poet, who got the heaviest penalties in 1938 was convicted not for Communistic propaganda or organizational attempts, but for "supposedly" provoking the armed forces to rebellion.

the proclamation of the Republic, the Ottoman Penal Code which was

Sources

Archival sources for the history of the TKP are still inaccessible. Apart from the Comintern archives which are transferred from the Institute of Marxism-Leninism to the newly formed Russian Centre for Preservation and Research of Historical Documents in 1991, the archive of the Turkish section is being held in two separate locations:

1) Documents (whatever remained from the destruction of the main corpus carried on the members of the Central Committee who were killed in Turkey in early 1921 and a few later ones, plus correspondence with the Azerbaycani KP) pertaining to the years before 1926 (that have to do with the "Operation and Propaganda Soviet of the Peoples of the East" -Baku 1920- and ZAKKAYKOM: Transcaucasian Federation) in Tbilisi.

2) Post-1926 documents are (or rather were) preserved within the CC archives of the CPSU. I have been denied permission to work there, on grounds that the material are not classified by the TKP yet. But occasionally Soviet researchers such as R.P. Kornienko have been able to utilize those sources.

Next to archives, the Turkish collection of the Comintern Library is very important. This library has been given over to the CPSU's Academy of Social Sciences. In Moscow, I was told that it does not contain the Turkish collection. So its present whereabouts is a mystery. But finding these material may prove to be crucial. The IISH has signed an agreement with the TKP in early 1992 for the removal of its archive from Moscow to the Institute's premises in Amsterdam. I understand the transaction is pending upon the approval of Russian authorities. Hopefully, in due process the location of the Turkish collection of books and periodicals will also be discovered.

The Turkish Police must have extensive files on Communists. But, Judging from the work of (right-wing) researchers who were ostensibly able to utilize them, one may conclude that they are fragmentary and unclassified. Besides, they are not accessible to objective students. Another possible source can be minutes and exhibits of law court cases against Communist groups and individuals. Recently, some such trial records have reserved for its own exclusive use, some dossiers from 1925. Additionally, a fire in the Palace of Justice in the forties have devastated many documents.

(or were)
are held by the Georgian Party CC Archive
(filial of the late Marxism-Leninism Institute)

been traced. But the State Intelligence Organisation seems to have

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Most of the literature on this subject is in Turkish. I made a classification similar to the following, of relevant works in a paper I presented to an IISH sponsored meeting in Fall 1988 at the Netherlands, on "The Present Situation and Main Problems of Historiography of the Left and Social Thought in Turkey".

I. Foreign authors who have written in other languages than Turkish are either Western or Soviet and Bulgarian researchers.

The first group generally exhibit a hostile attitude, but they are meticulous in details.

George S. Harris, The Origins of Communism in Turkey (Stanford: Hoover Institution Publication, 1967). Also available in Turkish.

Socrates-James Asteriou, "The Third International and the Balkans 1919-1945" Unpublished Ph.D. thesis submitted to the Univ. of California in 1959.

Jacob M. Landau, Radical Politics in Modern Turkey (Leiden: Brill, 1974). Also available in Turkish.

Giacomo Carretto, (Polemics on Kemalism - Fascism - Communism in the 1930s) an article in Italian which appeared in Rome, Storia Contemporanea (September 1977), pp. 489-530. Turkish translation published in Tarih ve Toplum, Nrs. 17, 18 (May and June 1985).

George Haupt and Paul Dumont's collective work prepared in French but published only in Turkish translation : Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Sosyalist Hareketler (Socialist Movements in the Ottoman Empire; this title is misleadingly general, in fact the book is about Jewish Socialism and especially the socialist Federation of Salonica (1)) (İstanbul: Gözlem Yay., 1977)

P. Dumont has also published many articles concerning various aspects of Turkish Left history, such as:

- "La fascination du bolchevisme: Enver Pacha et le parti des soviets populaires." Cahiers du Monde Russe et Sovietique, Oct.-Dec. 1975.
- "Bolchevisme en Orient. Le parti communiste turc de Mustafa Suphi 1918-1921". Cahier du Monde Russe et Sovietique, Jui.-Oct.-Dec. 1977
- "Les organisation socialistes et la progagande communiste a İstanbul pendant l'occupation alliee 1918-1922, Etudes balkanique, Nr. 4, 1977

(1) A recent study in Greek on the same organisation is prepared by the Kentro Marxistikon Ereunon (Marxist Study Center), I Sosialistiki Organosi "Fenterasion" Thessalonikis 1909-1918 (Athens: Ekdoseis "Sugkhroni Epokhi, 1989)

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Gotthard Jaeschke, "Türkei," in Der Weltbolschewismus: Ein internationales Gemeinschaftswerk Über die bolschewistische Würlarbeit und die Umsturzversuche des Komintern in allen Laendern, (Herausg.) Anti-Komintern, bearbeitet Dr. Adolf Ehrt (Berlin-Leipzig: Nebelungen-Verlag GmbH, 1936), pp. 439-443.

- "Kommunismus und Islam im türkischen Befreiungskriege," Die Welt Des Islams, 1961, vol. VI, Nr. 3-4, pp. 203-22.

- "Le role du communisme dans les relations russo turques de 1919 a 1922," Orient, 1963, Nr. 26 pp. 31-44.

Guy Hermet und François Bayart, "Die Kommunistische Partei der Türkei," in H. Timmermann (Herausg.), Die kommunistischen Parteien Südeuropas (Köln: Baden-Baden Nomos V., 1979), Schriftenreihe des Bundesinstituts für ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien. (2)

The writers in the second group (Soviet and Bulgarian) share a tendency to praise the Turkish comrades and criticize the Ankara government; but they have access to material beyond our reach.

M. Pawlowitsch, "Die kommunistische Bewegung in der Türkei," Die kommunistische Internationale, Nr. 17 (1921), pp. 267-71.

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(This author whose real name was Mikhail Lazarevich Veltman (1871-1927) has written quite a few books and articles on the subject in Russian (as renumarated in G. Harris' bibliography) only one of which I'd like to mention here: Revoljutionnaya Turtsia (Moscow 1921) because a partial Turkish translation was printed (in Sarıkamış 1922) under the title Inkılâp Türkiyesi.)

P. Kitaigorodsk, "The Labour Movement in Turkey," The Communist International Nr. 12 (1925), pp. 83-96.

- "The Situation of the Working Class in Turkey" (I know this article from its Turkish translation. It must have appeared in the German-language Inprekorr of 29th Sept. 1927).

A. Shnurov, "Kemalist Revolution and the Turkish Proletariat" in Russian (Moscow 1929). (Again, I know this source only from its Turkish translation.) "Kemalist Devrim ve Türkiye Proleteryası" is the first part of A.Şnurov - Y. Rozaliyev, Türkiye'de Kapitalistleşme ve Sınıf Kavgaları (Capitalisation in Turkey and Class Struggles) (İstanbul: Ant Yay., 1970). Reprinted separately as Türkiye Proleteryası (İstanbul: Yar Yay., 1973). Same translation into Turkish by Güneş Bozkaya.

(2) Of course, general works on international Communism such as the following, also include some information concerning the Turkish party: Jane Degras, The Communist International 1919-1943 Documents (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1956), Royal Institute of International Affaires.

There is a bibliographical article by Mark Pinson covering major Russian treatments of Turkish republican history until 1960s where occasional references to the Communist movement are made: "Turkish Revolution and Reform (1919-1928 in Soviet Historiography," Middle East Journal (Autumn 1963), Vol. 17, Nr. 4, pp. 466-78.

Some more specific titles by newer generations are listed below:

A.D. Noviçev, "Prevraşeniye Osmankoy Imperii vı Palukolonyu (Semi-Colonisation of the Ottoman Empire)," Oçerki Ekonomiki Turtsi do Mirovoy Voynı (Moscow: Academy of Sciences, 1937). Available in Turkish translation as a separate book. Osmanlı İmparatorluğunun Yarı Sömürgeleşmesi (Ankara, Onur Yay., 1979) trans. Nabi Dinçer.

Prof. Noviçev has also written a comprehensive book (in Russian) on Turkish Labour History in the early 1950s; but it was printed only a dozen copies or so and not allowed to be publicized due to a reference to the existence of TKP which the Soviet censors disapproved, as it was not officially recognized by the USSR. He showed me a restricted library copy in Leningrad when I met him in person in 1979.

Y.N. Rozaliev, Industrial Proleteriat of Turkey (I know this book through its Turkish translation). Türkiye Sanayi Proletaryası (İstanbul: Yar Yay., 1974) trans. Güneş Bozkaya.

R.P. Kornienko, Rboçeye Dvijenije vı Turtsii 1918-1963 (Moscow: Nauka, 1965) US Government translation by "US Joint Publications Research Service" (NY: Crowell Collier and MacMillan Inc.)

Mahad Mahmudoğlu Sofiev's unpublished dissertation (Baku, 1965) for doctoral candidacy degree: "1918-1923'ci Yıllarda Türkiye'de Milli Azadlık Mübarezesi Devrinde Marksizm-Leninizm İdeyalarının Yayılması ve Komünizm Harekatı" (The Dissemination of the Ideas of Marxism-Leninism and the Operation of Communism during the Period of National Liberation Struggle in Turkey in the Years of 1918-1923).

Stefan Veliko, a Bulgarian researcher has contributed a number of articles to Etudes Balkaniques, such as the following:

"Participation d'Internationalistes turcs à la defense de la République soviétique hongroise (1919)," (1974, Nr. 1) and

"G. Dimitrov et quelques questions du mouvement ouvrier en Turquie," (1976, Nr. 2).

Finally, the Bulgarian Journalist D. Şişmanov's work, available to me in its Turkish translation: Türkiye İşçi ve Sosyalist Hareketi - Kısa Tarih 1908-1965 (Workers' and Socialist Movement in Turkey - A Short History) (İstanbul: Belge Yay., 1978).

II. **Indigenous sources in Turkish** can be classified under five headings:

1) Hostile Works

- by "Merchants of anti-Communism" such as:

İlhan Darendelioğlu, Türkiye'de Komünizm Hareketleri (Movements of Communism in Turkey), 2 Vols. (İstanbul: 1962-63).

Dr. Fethi Tevetoğlu, Türkiye'de Sosyalist ve Komünist Faaliyetler 1910-1960 (Socialist and Communist Activities in Turkey 1910-60) (Ankara: 1967)

Aclan Sayılğan, Solun 94 Yılı: 1871-1965 (94 Years of the Left) (Ankara: 1968).

- by members of National Intelligence, the Military and the Police such as :

Anonymous (Ret. Gen. Şevki Mutlugil), İçimizdeki Düşman - Türkiye'de Komünizm Tehlikesi var! (The Enemy Inside Us - There is a Danger of Communism in Turkey) (n.p. , n.d.)

Gen. Faruk Güventürk, Komünizm ve Maskeler (Communism and Masks) (İstanbul: Okat Yay., 1968), 2nd ed.

Anonymous, (Adnan Kınay), Türkiye'de Komünizmin Cephe Politikası (The Front Policy of Communism in Turkey) and Türkiye'de Komünist Tekniği (The Communist Technique in Turkey) Emniyet Genel Müdürlüğü Önemli İşler Müdürlüğü Yayınlarından 4, 5 (General Directorate of Security, Section for Important Affairs Publ.)

- by journalistic historians such as:

Feridun Kandemir, Atatürk'ün Kurduğunu Türkiye Komünist Partisi (İstanbul: 1967) (The TKP which Atatürk had arranged to be set up)

Cemal Kutay, Türkiye'de İlk Komünistler (The Earliest Communists in Turkey) (İstanbul: 1956).

- by Conservative professional historians such as:

(Prof. Dr. Akdes Nimet Kurat using the pseudonym of) Dr. Semih Çoruhlu, "İstiklal Savaşında Komünizm Faaliyeti" (Activities of Communism during the War of Independence) a series of 27 installments published in the newspaper Yeni İstanbul in May and July 1966.

Prof. Hikmet Bayur, "M. Suphi ve Milli Mücadeleye El Koymaya Çalışan Başlı Dışarıda Akımlar" (M. Suphi and Currents externally led which tried to dominate the National Struggle) Belleten, organ of the Turkish Historical Society, No. 140 (Oct. 1971).

2) TKP Publications

The few sources that make historical references reflect actual ideological needs and tendencies of their publication date. Hence, their utilization also requires great caution. But, they themselves constitute part of the object of study. (see also "Party Press" below.)

3) Memoirs

İ. Bilen, (Pseudonym of Laz İsmail who carried the party-name Marat) Savaş Dolu Yıllar (Years full with Wars) (London: İşçinin Sesi Pubs., 1978).

Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, Suyu Arayan Adam (The Man in Search of Water) (İstanbul: Remzi K., 1967).

İbrahim Sırrı Topçuoğlu, Savaş Yarası, Anı, 2 vols. (War Wound, Memoir) (İstanbul: 1977-78).

Abidin Nesimi (Fatinoğlu), Türkiye Komünist Partisinde Anılar ve Değerlendirmeler 1909-1949 (Memoirs and Evaluations inside the TKP 1909-47) (İstanbul: Promete Yay., 1979) and Yılların İçinden (Through the Years) (İstanbul: Gözlem Yay., 1977).

Vâlâ Nurettin Vâ-Nû, Bu Dünyadan Nazım Geçti (Nazım Passed from this World) (İstanbul: Remzi K., 1965).

Nazım Hikmet (Ran), Yaşamak Güzel Şey Be Kardeşim (It is Beautiful to Live Brother - French translation appeared under the title Les Romantiques) (İstanbul: Gün Yay., 1967)

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Yaraya Tuz Basmak (Pressing Salt on the Wound) (1978)

Dersaadet'te Sabah Ezanları (Morning Prayer Calls in İstanbul) (1982)

Vedat Türkali, O Karanlıkta Biz (Us in the Darkness) (1988)
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5) Research Works

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Rasih Nuri İleri, Atatürk ve (and) Komünizm (İstanbul: May Yay., 1970) and TKP Gerçeği ve Bilimsellik (TKP Reality and Scientificity) (İstanbul; Anadolu Yay., 1976).

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Genealogy of the TKP

Founded in Baku on, 10th September 1920

Here, I shall mention the names of ten organizations and two dozen persons (in capital letters) as clues for the history of the TKP at the stage of its constitution.

I. Turkish Workers' and Farmers' Party ("Turkish Spartakist" of Berlin 1919) included future prominent Communists such as: ETHEM NEJAT (first Gen. Sec. of TKP, killed in M. Suphi group in 1921 Jan.), (Arap) İSMAİL HAKKI (member of the first CC, also killed in the same group), VEHBİ (Prof. Sarıdal, transferred to Kemalism early in his career), VEDAT NEDİM (Tör, Gen. Sec. in 1925-27; "renegade" thereafter), ALİ CEVDET (Turkish representative in Comintern; spokesman of TKP at the 4th and 5th world congresses; liquidated in 1936).

II. Other intellectuals educated elsewhere in Europe, some of whom belonged to the Social Democratic Party (1919) like Dr. İHSAN (Özger) and SUPHİ NURİ (İleri); others independent of these parties, such as Dr. ŞEFİK HÜSNÜ (Değmer, long-time leader of TKP), SADRETTİN CELAL (Prof. Antel, who deserted the movement after 1935) and HÜSEYİN RAGİP (Baydur, who shifted early to the Kemalist camp and later became ambassador to Moscow and London).

(1918) and the Turkish Socialist Party

These two groups merged to create the Turkish Workers' and Farmers' Socialist Party (İstanbul, September 1919)

III. "Communists from Abroad"

- MUSTAFA SUPHİ (first president of TKP; killed in 1921 Jan., together with his 14 (?) comrades off the Black Sea coast in NE Turkey).
- First WW POWs like İSMAİL HAKKI (from Kayseri, delegate in the 2nd Comintern Congress) and SÜLEYMAN NURİ (delegate in the 3rd Congress).
- Russian subjects of Turkic and Moslem origin sent to Turkey for Agit-prop purposes such as ZİYNETULLAH NUŞİREVAN and SERİF MANATOV.
- (1922 Onwards) KUTV students like ŞEVKET SÜREYYA (Aydemir), NAZİM HİKMET (Ran) and İSMAİL HÜSREV (Tökin).

IV. Left-Wing Union and Progress members.

Some (if not all) were in contact with their fugitive leaders abroad.

A group participated in the creation of the People's Soviet Party, later known as the "Disorganized Party".

Those who were MPs in the GNA established a People's Fraction (Halk Zümresi) which was in effect the parliamentary party for the Green Army Society, out of which the Official (or loyal) TKP was brought into being (Gen. Secr.: HAKKI BEHİÇ - Bayiç), the rest of the MPs (including NAZİM -Resmor-, Gen. Secr. of the Green Army Society) joined forces with the Secret (Anatolian) TKP (leader: SALİH HACIOĞLU, a Veterinarian Major) to establish officially the T. People's Communist (İştirakiyyun) Party in Dec. 1920.

- V. There were also groups of communistically inclined workers such as (Van'lı) KAZİM (Kip); teachers, other indigenous professionals and later students, especially medical students like Dr. HİKMET (Kıvılcımlı) and HASAN ALİ (Ediz).

Membership

Both at the time of its formation and during its subsequent underground life, TKP was mainly composed of intellectuals, most of whom were educated abroad where they had contacted radical ideas and organisations.

We know a little about its working-class members. But it seems that they were mainly refugees from the Balkan countries (including Aegean Islands and Crete) where socialistic workers' movements had already begun. Another reason for this fact may be that these "displaced persons" tended to be more rebellious, innovative, searching and adventurous in comparison to the docile, settled indigenous population.

Among party-member workers, the Gypsies (coming from Greece and Bulgaria) were conspicuous. They were usually employed in tobacco processing plants. They could be classified as lumpenproletariat, who lacked class consciousness and determination. Stable industrial workers were rare in the rank and file of the TKP. Therefore, the story of the Turkish party can only be interesting as an intellectual enterprise.

Aims and Activities

Viewed as a current of ideas, Communism in Turkey exhibits two distinct periods (before and after 1925), with differing functions and potentialities. Until the establishment of the single-party dictatorship, TKP aimed at influencing the newly emergent state ideology with an economic and social programme. In spite of its legal publications which attempted to guide the founders of the Republic to a non-capitalistic path of development, it failed. But in this early period, TKP intellectuals were thinking quite originally. They did not blindly advocate blue-print projects alien to local conditions. They indeed tried to accommodate Marxist principles with prevalent circumstances in Turkey.

After 1925 however, they could no longer aspire to permeate the ruling elite. Yet, in the absence of legal opposition, they were compelled to fill in this vacuum, criticising many acts and steps taken by the Republican government, in their clandestine publications which had a narrow circulation.

Ethnic Composition of the TKP and Nationalism

Socialistic ideas and actions were introduced into the Ottoman Empire by members of the non-Muslim minorities (the official term for these communities was "elements" or "components"): the Armenians, Jews, Bulgarians, Macedonians, Serbians and the Greeks. Some Turks (in the Balkans) participated in their organizations like the "Socialist Federation" of Salonica (1909 - mainly Jewish) and the "Union Internationale de travail" (Istanbul 1920 - mainly Greek). Though all of these groups aspired to establish multi-national associations, only the Jews seem to have been immune from an anti-Turkish bias. The nationalistic inclinations of the rest were fresh and strong. That was valid for the Turks also. During the dissolution process of the empire, many instances can be observed where mutually antagonistic nationalisms of socialist organisations clashed.

In the early 1920s in Istanbul under Allied occupation, there were two rival Marxist workers' organisations, one for (and by) the Greeks and one for (and by) the Turks. Ostensibly both were affiliated with the Profintern and linked to TKP.

A project under my direction, sponsored by the IISH, now well under way, may shed light on some hitherto unknown facts in this general subject. The research is a combined effort by international scholars to study "The Role of Ethnic and Religious Communities in the Emergence and Development of Socialism in Turkey: 1876-1925." Though the span of time is limited to the earlier years of the TKP, we may expect a lot of information to come out as to the inter-ethnic collaboration in its birth.

Ankara Government utilizing an anti-imperialistic discourse, provoked the Turkish workers against their non-Turkish compatriots, especially when competing for the few employment opportunities, accusing them to have acted as collaborators and accomplices of the enemy forces.

Nevertheless, TKP succeeded in maintaining an internationalistic flavour by recruiting many Jewish, Armenian and Greek members (some of which were elevated to the CC). The second man under Laz İsmail (İ. Bilen) during the sixties and seventies, was Aram Pehlivanian, an Armenian. The first, longtime leader of the party was a member of a converso family from Salonica, educated in France; and that may have been a factor for the multi-national appeal of the party throughout most of its history. (Whereas ~~as~~ founder of TKP in Baku, Mustafa Suphi was a fierce nationalist early in his intellectual career and retained such sentiments even after he became a communist.)

As for nationalism vis a vis the Communist International, we must go back to the winter of 1926-27, when Şefik Hüsnü was abroad and Vedat Nedim in charge of the TKP at home, Şevket Süreyya was released from the prison and began to struggle with the Comintern representative (Kitaigorodsky) who tried to force the Turkish section into submission. (Şevket Süreyya was later ousted from the party by Şefik Hüsnü and started a monthly journal, Kadro, which aimed at permeation into the ruling Republican People's Party.) He boasted to me in his old age that his group was the first nationalist opposition in the international Communist movement—much before that Tito. This may have some truth in it. Turkish party members educated in the Soviets during the early years of the revolution seem to be imbued with a subtle Turkish nationalism (perhaps under Sultan Galiev's influence?). Thereafter no one in the party contested the view that the interests of the Comintern (read Russia) were identical with their own.

TKP's General Platform

TKP's stand as reflected in its clandestine publications (production and distribution of which was the main activity of the party) can perhaps be classified as follows:

- Foreign Policy

"Anti-imperialism" was the key-word here. The need to continue a loyal friendship with the Soviet Union was justified as the sole way to maintain independence from world capitalism. The Republican government's acceptance to pay the old Ottoman Debts was criticised as an humiliating submission to the West.

- Inner Politics

Realisation of constitutional rights were demanded which existed only on paper. Also, the amelioration of political mechanisms (such as direct elections, universal suffrage and proportional representation) were stressed. Kemalist repressions against TKP were protested.

- Economy

Distribution of agricultural land belonging to feudal owners, pious foundations etc. together with animals and farming implements to landless peasants without pay was demanded. Another demand was the abolishment of existing monopolies which operated defended instead of exploitation of the poor by excessive taxes.

- Working Conditions

Fair treatment of the workers by their employers was demanded through rises in salaries and their orderly payment - shortening the working day to 8 hours - protection of woman and child labour - organisation of free workers' unions with right to strike.

against the people's interests. Progressive taxation of the rich was

angle of their leaders' intentions, slogans and affiliations.
yet from another

Most of these demands were liberal and not really socialistic! In spite of TKP's critique of the Government's diminishing revolutionary zeal, its certain anti-feudal measures were fully supported. This duality of approach is especially evident in TKP's evaluation of the repressions of Kurdish revolts by the government. According to it, Kurdish rebellions are extremely reactionary; they are toys at the hands of the imperialist powers and contrary to the interests of the people and the revolution, when viewed from the angle, the Kurdish people revolts because of governmental policies depriving national minorities from their rights to live freely, the state's imposition of dictatorial economic and fiscal measures destroying the poor masses and benefiting the rich only. Hence the Kurdish peasantry's following reactionaries is mistaken, but understandable.

Explanation of Its Own Weakness by the TKP

The Turkish representative at the Sixth Comintern Congress protested against Turkey's classification together with the pre-feudal countries like Ethiopia, Libya and Arabia. (This is the last instance when TKP was publicly debated in the Communist International.) He claimed that the Turkish bourgeois revolution had taken the path of capitalism which had already begun developing many years ago. This amounts to a confession of TKP's failure in guiding the new Republican Government to a line of non-capitalistic development. He tried to account the reasons for this by enumerating a series of factors:

1. The scattered existence of the workers and the resulting absence of communications between them.
2. The prevention by the bourgeoisie of their joining forces among themselves.
3. The inability of the TKP in organising the popular masses.
(Indeed, TKP could never reach the hard core of the industrial proletariat to the extent it existed, beyond marginal labourer groups such as the tobaccoists, transport workers and porters)
4. Lack of relation and guidance by the international working class movement.
(This was an accusation directed at the Comintern.)
5. Absence of organisations among the peasantry.
6. Strength and experience of the local bourgeoisie which also enjoyed the support of the Army.
7. The possibility afforded to the success of the Turkish bourgeoisie by international rivalries and contradictions between imperialist powers.

Opposition in the TKP: Resignations, Fractions, Purges

Inner-party struggles are especially important since Turkish Communism carried some significance basically as a current of ideas. Unfortunately, we are not in possession of various party oppositions' platform documents. The official party press endorsed by the Comintern authorities explained these movements by personalities, simply in terms of "treason," calling their protagonists defeatists, renegates, provocateurs, opportunists, Trotskites, petit-bourgeois, police-agents etc. who do not serve the real cause of the proletariat. Many case studies I attempted, prove that such epitaphs were used as mere swearing words without any truth.

at making,

If we do not consider as the first deserters, the surviving members of the Turkish Spartakists' group who had established a Turkish Workers' and Farmers' Party in Berlin in early 1919 and continued it for a while after they returned home (3), the earliest case of leaving TKP is that of İsmail Hüsrev Tökin. (He is still alive, living in İstanbul. I twice interviewed him and videotaped the second interview on 30th July 1989.) He became a member of the T. Halk İştirakiyyun Fırkası at a young age and secretly went to Moscow to study medicine there (1922). He enrolled into KUTV as a lecturer (4). He told me, even before leaving Moscow for Turkey in Spring (?) 1925, he had made up his mind to abandon the party. This was not due to ideological differences, but to the fear resulting from the severe repression of Communists by the Ankara government. Under such circumstances (mass arrests had already begun with the Maintenance of Order Act), he could not cherish any hopes for success of conspiratorial underground work. Indeed, he advised his school-friend Valâ Nureddin (Vâ-Nû) to follow his example, which he did. Tökin, after returning home handed his resignation from the TKP to the acting General Secretary Vedat Nedim (Dr. Tör) (5).

The second important resignation from the TKP, seems to be that of Sadreddin Celal (Prof. Antel 1890-1954), educated as a pedagogist in France, who previously had become a member of the Turkish Socialist Party. (Antel was secretary of the Turkish delegation at the IVth Comintern Congress. (6)) After being sentenced in summer 1925 and serving more than one year in prison, his parting company with the party has also no identifiable ideological excuse, but look as if resultant from considerations of prudence.

ters → (3) This group of a dozen youngmen which was seemingly attracted to Marxism as a way out for the liberation of their country, included future parliamentarians, ministres of state, founders and directors of public banks engaged in large-scale mining and industry (such as Etibank and Sümerbank), Academics and successful private sector entrepreneurs. Upon the recovery of İstanbul by the Nationalists from Allied (Entente) occupation, most of them silently dropped out from leftist political struggle. But they retained their radical world-views, none became anti-Marxist.

(4) A photocopy of the official translation of his KUTV diploma signed by G. Broydo can now be seen in the last edition of my book: vol 2, p. 622.

(5) Kerim Sadi (pseudonym of the late Nevzat Cerrahlar), a younger man than Tökin's peers, who went to study at KUTV was obliged to cut short his stay in Moscow and also left the party. However he continued his free-lance Marxist intellectual career, occasionally collaborating with TKP leaders. He is said to have been in a state of mental disorder, but this is not very convincing; real reasons of his divergence are unknown. *(then)*

→ (6) The manner and motives of departing from the party of Sakallı Celal (Yalnız), an original and eccentric intellectual, who too was a member in that delegation, is also unknowable.

to learn Russian, but stayed on and graduated from that institution in 1924. He took part in the Turkish delegation at the IVth Comintern Congress. After finishing his courses, he continued for one year at KUTV

Antel was followed by Şevket Süreyya (Aydemir 1897-1976), another prisoner during 1925-26, convicted also by the Independence Court, who had sharp discussions with the Comintern representative (Kitaigorodsky) before leaving the party on a national-communist opposition platform.

We are in dark about the motives of separation of two other CC members around 1926-27: Salih Hacıoğlu and Nuri, the electrician, both of whom emigrated to Soviet Union after leaving the party. Whether they were expelled or resigned on their own accord, we do not know.

A major departure from the TKP occurred in Fall 1927, when Vedat Nedim, the acting Gen. Secr. of TKP informed the police upon Dr. Şefik Hüsnü (Değmer 1887-1959), the real leader of the party when he secretly came from abroad to correct the "Menshevik" part-line pursued by Vedat Nedim. In an interview I had with Tör, he had told me that Şefik Hüsnü was exerting pressure on him by letters from his voluntary exile, instigating strikes to be organized by the TKP, against which Tör resisted for the preservation of the party functionnaires newly recruited and recently formed cells which were still very fragile. Tör accused Şefik Hüsnü, for pushing the party into adventurous activities purely for the sake of showing off in his reports to his superiors in Comintern.

While all former members who had resigned kept their Marxist convictions, Vedat Nedim turned not only anti-Bolshevik, but also anti-Marxist. However, this did not prevent him from joining forces with his previous comrades like Tökin and Aydemir for the establishment of an important revisionist monthly journal, published orderly for three years between 1932 and 1934. Kadro was a high-brow periodical aiming at the permeation in the Republican People's Party in power with a view to imbue it with radical, anti-imperialist single-party ideology which owed perhaps more to Leninism than Marxism without wholly discarding it. Besides the journal, Kadro had also a publication series. Aydemir was their chief ideologue and Tökin wrote one of the earliest and perhaps the best analysis of the peasantry question in Turkey. This venture was vehemently reprimanded and attacked by the TKP; though it seems to me that Kadro continued the pre-1925 party-line, whereas the new CC of the party had changed its former evaluation of Kemalism and begun to see it as a tool of the nascent bourgeoisie.

Yet, the most crucial opposition to the CC of the TKP appeared in late 1929 around the famous poet Nazım Hikmet (Ran 1902-1963). After severely criticizing Şefik Hüsnü group for their passivity, when Nazım and his friends were complained against for their misdemeanor to the Comintern, they did not obey its negative arbitration and were duly purged from the party, as proclaimed in the secret press for their "Trotskyite and police opposition."

Nazım Hikmet's group never accepted this verdict passed on it and indeed claimed to be the true TKP. Thus, for nearly twenty years there existed one "official" section of the Comintern and another -unrecognized- alternative party organization. This schism had far reaching repercussions. In the transition to a multi-party system in Turkey after the Second WW, the two rival socialist party attempts reflected this old feud between the CC and Nazım's alternative group. Nazım who had been condemned to 28 years of imprisonment in two consecutive trials at 1938 (one in connection with his supposed contacts with students from the Army Cadet School and the other with the Navy), was only readmitted to the party (CC) towards the end of his sentence, when an international campaign was started for his release.

Nazım's group at first consisted of party workers, besides himself, like Hamdi Şamilof and Ahmet (nicknamed Mussolini). But later on he also collaborated with intellectuals like the poet Nail Vahdeti (Çakırhan -who was to be a famous architect) and Mrs. Sabiha Sertel (a versatile publicist) in producing legal books and periodicals. Besides reciting his poems for commercial recordings he also wrote plays staged in Istanbul Municipality Theater through his friendship with Muhsin Ertuğrul, a Soviet trained director. Especially during his imprisonment in late thirties and throughout the forties, he mentored future novelists Orhan Kemal and Kemal Tahir, A. Kadir the poet and Balaban the painter in jail.

I do not believe that the accusations directed to Nazım Hikmet in early thirties portraying him as a Trotskite (as well as a Kemalist agent) contains any truth. What adds to the importance of such an enquiry was the residence of Trotsky himself in Turkey during that very epoch. (He lived for more than four years in exile in İstanbul from February 1929 onwards.) Now, "Trotskite" can mean one or both of two things: (1) To be attached to the person and organization of Leon Trotsky; (2) To side with the policy of a world-wide revolution resting on the theory of Permanent Revolution, against the policy of "Socialism in One Country" first expounded by Lenin, but practiced by Stalin; hence to oppose national sections of the Comintern from the angle of a leftist extremism.

Nazım was not a Trotskite in either of these senses. Yet Dr. Hikmet Kivilımcımlı (about whom I have more to say below) in his last (and bitterest) book writes that Nazım Hikmet did not, could not and needed not to conceive and assimilate the whole Trotskite ideology; but he was unknowing a "Trotsky" himself with his social and psychological constitution. (Kim Suçlamış? - Who Accused /Letter to Brejnev; İstanbul, 1979, p. 60.)

Kivilımcımlı following the current Comintern phraseology regards Trotskism to be a petit-bourgeois intellectual seesaw which masquerades as if defending the most unchangeable principles in the world and acts in exact contrary. This brings in view a third meaning of the term. Indeed, "Trotskite" was used extensively and loosely in the Communist jargon of the thirties as a booword, denoting collaboration with the police and the fascists, against the Soviet Union and Communist parties affiliated to the Comintern; being a kind of agent-provocateur. This must be the sense in which Nazım and his associates were called "Trotskites" by the TKP.

Yet, we possess some evidence as to the existence of sympathy for Tratsky among Turkish leftists. (In Berlin of 1929, a booklet by Trotsky on "The Real Situation in Russia" was translated into Turkish and printed in Arabic characters recently discarded in Turkey. Plus, an article analysing Turkey and a "Letter from Turkish Comrades" appeared in the Fahne des Kommunismus, organ of the ultra-radical Leninbund, left-wing opposition to German CP.)

In addition to Nazım's opposition, Kerim Sadi also had a reputation of being a Trotskite. Heresay has it that Ali Cevdet (who headed the Turkish delegations at the Vth and VIth Comintern Congresses and stayed in Moscow for many years as the TKP representative) was executed in 1936 for his Trotskite crimes. All these led me to correspond with the late Isaac Deutscher and Pierre Frank (long-time leader of the Fourth International, who served Trotsky as his secretary while in İstanbul) as to the possibility of a Turkish Trotskite organization (branch).

They both denied it and Mr. Frank informed me that were only a few individual Turks among the subscribers to their journal.

An interesting albeit rather ambiguous evaluation of oppositions in the TKP can be found in the writings of an original Marxist thinker who sided with the CC in Nazım's quarrel for the sake of party discipline, in spite of several misgivings he had about Şefik Hüsnü's circle.

[An important dimension in the inner party struggles seems to be trained "up in there" (in Russia, that is) or not. Kıvılcımlı, like Şefik Hüsnü had not gone through the KUTV education; though the latter had at a later date lectured in KUTV. Yet, the bitterest quarrel in the party was between two KUTV products: Nazım Hikmet and Hasan Ali (Ediz). The one person who survived the purges of late 1930s in the Soviet Union and recreated the party under his domination in the sixties, Laz İsmail (better known with his pseudonyms of Marat and İ. Bilen) was also a KUTV graduate.]

Dr. Kıvılcımlı wrote a report to the CC of TKP where he also was a member, while serving one of his many sentences at Elazığ prison (1929-33). This lengthy memorandum is composed of seven books, five of which saw the light when they were printed posthumously by his followers in late seventies.(7) Book 3 ("Stages and Guest in the Party") and 4 (Party and Fraction) contain valuable information for our enquiry. But Kıvılcımlı usually has a very difficult style, here even more darkened as precaution.

(7) TKP'nin Eleştirel Tarihi-Yol [Critical History of TKP-the Road] Book 3: Partide Konaklar ve Konuklar (İstanbul:Kıvılcım Pubs. 1978) This volume also includes Book 1: Genel Düşünceler (General Considerations) and Book 4: Parti ve Fraksiyon (İstanbul: Yol Pubs. 1980)

The book on Stages and Guests is a critical history of four distinguishable consecutive movements in the party. Kivılcımlı unites the "Fifteens" (Mustafa Suphi and his 14 comrades who were killed off the Turkish Black Sea coast in early 1921 while attempting to reach Ankara from Baku where they had established the TKP a few months ago) and "Türkiye Halk İştirakiyyun Fırkası" (T. People's Communist Party, officially founded in Ankara at December 1920, utilizing an Arabic loan-word in its name which means Socialist rather than Communist, as I have already indicated at the beginning of this paper) under the heading of "Utopianism". Under another heading, "Enlighteners and Contemplators", he treats the "Legal Marxism" of the years 1922-25 (Aydınlık which the name of their monthly journal modelled after the French Clarté, means Light in Turkish, more than Clarity) and the "Economism" of the years 1926-27 when the reformist tendencies of the CC dictated a policy of "wait and see" and one of collaboration with Kemalism. According to Kivılcımlı, these are Mensheviks and Mensheviks-in-reverse, also with inclinations of what Lenin called Otzovists (Recallers).

Kivılcımlı's other work on Fractions, after some theoretical consideration, identifies two main fractions which appeared in the TKP after 1927. The first, he brands as Anarcho-Bundism or Narrow Minoritism and the second as New-Proletarianism or Communist Dogmatism or Ultimatumism. I am not sure who has in mind with the former characterization. This may be hinting at some CC members or even an already purged group. With the latter, we may be confident that Nazım's group is intended.

Kivılcımlı accuses them with primitivism, resulting in by-heard recitations, instability and lack of discipline to the extend of Bakuninism; also demagogy and provocation which leads to compromise with the police. (Kemalism is an exaggerated militaristico-fascist system") Kivılcımlı has a lot to stay against the intellectuals in the party who pose as "essentialists", but are prone to opportunism.

These vague observations are important in the absence of documentary evidence about reciprocal platforms of the CC and the alluded oppositions. From Kivılcımlı's phraseology, one typical feature emerges. As in the cases of other national sections, the Turkish Communists like him conceived the world with Marxist references and categories drawn from Soviet politics. This went as far as searching for Turkish equivalents of Russian heresies such as the Workers' Opposition and Trotskism. Their counterparts were always discovered in the context of radically different situation. This may be explained to some extend, with drawing resemblance in order to make intelligible an alien set of ideas to people who only knew well certain categories. Hence to liken Nazım's group to the Workers' Opposition in Russia could be (though grossly misleading) a kind of shorthand. Observing such servile usage of terminology, it may be wondered why I regard Kivılcımlı "original". Misoriginality resides in his (mostly unsuccessful) endeavors in the sphere of materialist philosophy of history where he attempted to combine the Oriental and Ottoman experience with the Occidental.

→ A last word on Communist oppositions may be a praise for freedom from centralist stereotypes. Nazım for example, contributed dryly dogmatic articles to Aydınlık in 1924 when he was still under the heavy spell of his indoctrination. But when he was ousted from the party, he no longer adhered to the dictates of the Comintern and wrote freer, more humanely and more beautifully. On the other hand, Dr. Şefik Hüsnü who used Marxism creatively in analyzing Turkey's problems in the pages of Aydınlık started to write in a rather boring, uninteresting and unreal idiom once he began to obey the line imposed on all loyal Communists by the Comintern.

TÜRKİYE SOSYAL TARİH ARAŞTIRMA
TÜSTAV

TKP Congresses

<u>Congresses</u>		<u>Statutory Documents</u>
I. Baku (1)	1920	1st Programme and Statutes (2)
II. Ankara (3) (THIF)	1922	
III. İstanbul(3) (Akaretler)	1925	
-P.Conference Vienna(3)	1926 1930	2nd Programme (4)
IV. İstanbul(3) (Haliç)	1932	
-P.CC Plenum(5)	1934	

(1) Minutes of proceedings published (Baku 1920), Turkish in Arabic Characters. Transcription of the full text is given in the 4th ed. of my book, referred to at the end of p.9 above.

(2) Both published as separate pamphlets (Baku 1920). Full transcriptions also given in my book.

(3) All these meetings were illegal, hence no minutes or decisions are published. Yet possibly, reports of the observant Comintern representatives may be found in TKP archives.

(4) First drafted in the Vienna Conference, then underwent corrections by the Comintern. Published by the (illegal) İnkilap Yolu in January 1931 as a 52 page pamphlet: 58 articles preceded with an Introduction by Dr. Şefik Hüsnü and complemented with "Theses on the Question of Turkey." To be fully reproduced in the forthcoming volume of my book (1925-1936).

(5) Supposedly attended by prominent leaders of the Comintern such as G. Dimitrov, O. Kuusinen and D. Manuilsky. Cf. a brochure published abroad in Turkish celebrating the 65th anniversary of the TKP: TKP'nin Savaş Tarihinden Sayfalar / Pages from the War History of the TKP (Essen: Ermis Verlag 1985), p.62.

Participation of TKP in Comintern Congresses

Turkish Participants

I.	1919		Mustafa Suphi (1)
II.	1920		İsmail Hakkı (2) 2nd delegate unknown (Too many to mention here!)
		- Baku Congress of the Peoples of the East(3)	
III.	1921		Süleyman Nuri (4) Salih Zeki
IV.	1922	Salih Hacıoğlu Nizamettin Nazif Zinetullah Nuşi Yerhan İsmail Hüsrev (Tökin)	Orhan (Sadrettin Celal Antel)(5) (Sakallı) Celal (Yalnız) Vedat Nedim (Tör)
V.	1924		Faruk (Ali Cevdet) (6) Dr. Şefik Hüsnü (Değmer)
VI.	1928		Fahri (Ali Cevdet) (7)
VII.	1935		Ferdi (Şefik Hüsnü Değmer) (8) (Party code-names underlined)

(1) Delegate with a consultative voice. His speech not included in the original minutes, appeared in Izvestia (6th March 1919); in Russian language Protokolls (M.1933), pp.244-46.

(2) Mistakenly called "Pasha." His speech is given in The Second Congress of the Communist International (M.1920), pp. 141-42.

(3) Compte-rendu sténographique: Le premier Congrès des Peuples de l'Orient (Petrograd 1921), reprint: Maspero 1971. English translation from the Russian original, Baku Congress of the Peoples of the East (London: New Park Pubs., 1977).

(4) The Third Congress of the Communist International (M.1921), p.159. I quoted relevant pages from his unpublished memoirs in MS in my book.

(5) Bulletin of the 4th Congress of Communist International, Nr. 17 (M.25th Nov.1922), pp.27-31

(6) Protokoll-Fünfter Weltkongress der KI, vol. II, pp.708-12

(7) Protokoll-Sechter Weltkongress der KI, vol. III, pp.330-33.

(8) This delegate who has elected (in absentia) to the EC of the KI in the last Congress, is now made a member of the Congress Presidium and elected to the Control Commission. He is the chairman in a session on August 15, but himself makes no speech. Protokoll - Siebenter Weltkongress der KI, vol. I, p. 100 and vol. II, p.807.

Participation of TKP in Affiliated Organisations of the Comintern

PROFINTERN (Red Trade Unions International established in 1921)

- The Anatolian TKP (THIF) seems to have created a "Preparatory Central Bureau of Red Trade Unions of Anatolia" headed by Necati (?) according to a hand-bill declaration distributed in Istanbul in Fall 1922. (See my vol. II, p.421)
- Among the signatories of a protest against the Government of TGNA towards the end of 1922, there is one "Mahmut Ahmet, delegate at Profintern." (Ibid., p.454)
- A booklet by TKP (THIF) published in late 1922, addressing "The Toilers of Turkey" is signed by "The Preparatory Bureau of the Trade Unions of Turkey," besides the Control and Ankara Provincial Committees of the party. (Ibid., p.460)
- Two delegates from Turkey (Comrades İsmail and Rollan (?) spoke at the Third Profintern Congress. Protokoll über den Dritten Kongress der Roten Gewerkschafts-Internationale (Berlin 1924), pp.299-310.
- Two of Profintern's publications are printed in Turkish (M.1923): Programme of Activities, and Resolutions of the Second Congress. (See my vol. II, p.564)

KIM (Communist Youth International established in 1919)

- An organizational bureau was formed in the first Congress of TKP.
- There are several documents issued by the "Communist Youth Union of Turkey" in early 1920s, including a periodical called the "Enchained Youth" (Ibid., pp. 484-92)
- A May Day declaration by the Union in 1928 will be published in transcription in my forthcoming volume (1925-1936)

MOPR (International Red Aid established in 1922)

- There is an appeal to Turkish workers in the (mimeographed) underground organ of TKP Provincial Committee Kızıl (Red) İstanbul (Nr.7, 8th December 1930), to join the Red Aid organizations in factories where they exist and elsewhere, to set up revolutionary committees in order to help the needy workers.
- Another reference to MOPR in Turkish party literature is in a statistical table of a book by Dr. Hikmet Kıvılcımlı. (8)

WES/later WEB (Western European Secretariat/Bureau est.d in 1919/20)

- Dr Şefik Hüsnü is reputed to have worked in, and even headed it.
- No information is available to me as to Turkish participation in

← KRESTINTERN (Peasants' International established in 1923).

(8) In his Party and Fraction p.92. In a comparative chart of ratios between intellectuals and workers during 1923-32, he states that 42,85 percent of workers left the party (yet, in contradistinction to the intellectuals, none became "dogmatic"), 14/28 percent stayed as party leaders and 42,85 percent wavered (a 28, 56 percent were MOPRists). The publisher has a note (Nr.64) here, confessing he did not recognize this word: By the way, Dr. Kıvılcımlı's toying with percentages is of course, nonsensical. He did not know (together with many an academic pseudo-social-scientist) the absurdity of taking percentages when one deals with small numbers.

Party Press

I. Legal (until 1925)

Yeni Dünya Newspaper

(New World)

(Baku 1920) and pamphlets

Yeni Dünya Newspaper

(Eskişehir 1920) Islamic-Bolshevik
(Ankara 1920-21) Organ of the
(official) TKP

Anadolu'da Yeni Gün

(New Day)

(Ankara 1920-21) also organ of the
(official) TKP

Emek (Labour)

(Ankara Jan. 1921) Organ of the People's Comm.
Party (6 issues, daily)

Yeni Hayat (New Life)

(Ankara 1922) also organ of the P.'s CP (26
issues, weekly)

Kurtuluş (Liberation)

(Berlin and Istanbul 1919-20) Organ of the
Turkish Workers' and Farmers' (Soc.) Party (1 +
5 issues, monthly + 1 issue in German)
(Istanbul 1921-25) (31 issues, monthly with
intervals)

Aydınlık (Light)

(Istanbul 1923) (issues, weekly)

Vazife (Duty)

Orak ve Çekic

(Sickle and Hammer)

(Istanbul 1925) (7 issues, weekly) + Publication
series and handbills etc.

II. Illegal (after 1925) Mostly mimeographed.

All published in Istanbul unless otherwise indicated.

Alev (1927, 3 issues): Bolşevik (1927, 1 issue); pamphlet Lenin (1927)

Kıvılcım (1928, 1 issue); pamphlet (May Day)

Kommunist (1929, 2 issues) + handbill and pamphlet (May Day)

İnkılap Yolu (1930-32, 4 double issues) Organ of the CC, reputedly printed in
Berlin and smuggled into Turkey. (1)

Kızıl (Red) İstanbul (1930-35; fortnightly, but irregular, about 40 issues) Organ
of the Provincial Committee; but in Summer 1932 two issues published as
Bolşevik, organ of both CC and Provincial Committee.

Kızıl Eskişehir (1930, single issue), Organ of Prov. Comm.

Kızıl Samsun (1935, single issue) Organ of Prov. Comm.(2)

Orak ve Çekic (1935-36, 12 issues at irregular intervals) CC Organ

Aydınlık Mecmuası (1936, single issue) Organ of the Study Group on Turkey
(3)

III. Legal booklet series

Marksizm Biblioteği (1935-36, 14 titles)

Emekçi Kütüphanesi (1935-36, 4 titles)

İnsaniyet Kütüphanesi (Deviant : 1930s, 40 odd titles)

(1) There are many KUTV publications (mimeographed pamphlets, usually translations of Marxist classics for the students of the party school in Moscow): to what extent they have circulated in Turkey, unknowable.

(2) Kadro (Legal) (Ankara 1932-34), monthly 36 issues), an important revisionist journal by ex-Communists must also be mentioned.

(3) Projektör (Deviant : Single issue appeared legally in March 1936, but was promptly banned.

"Decentralization" 1936

A surviving "Old Rifle" (as Communist veterans are named in Turkey) once related to me what he had heard from the participants of the TKP CC meeting where a Comintern representative announced the directive to separate from the center. He began his speech by stating he was not an agent of Mustafa Kemal, as his listeners would suspect after hearing what he was about to say.

The message he delivered amounted to virtual dissolution of the party. Because the official foreign policy of the Turkish Republic was pro-Soviet, this was no time for creating troubles for the Government by harassments about workers' rights etc. Communists working underground should now surface, participate in legal organizations including the Republican People's Party, contribute to the ordinary press, with a view to safeguard democratic ideals (which in this context meant, interests of the Soviets). Though Fascism was illegal in the country, there could develop new currents favouring it (in fact, they did!) and against such contingencies, Communists should constantly be on the alert. Only a skeleton organization should be preserved underground, independent of the Comintern, to coordinate such activities.

Of course, this dictate to the TKP was a special application or adaptation of the new Comintern tactics adopted in its Seventh Congress in 1935, for the establishment of ANTIFASCIST Popular Fronts in every country. The "General Staff" of World Revolution always drew its plans with the equation in mind of interests of socialism to the interests of the Socialist Motherland (Soviet Union). But in this instance, it surpassed all its former record in giving priority to the defence of the Soviet State before everything else.

I do not know if there were similar treatments of other Middle Eastern KPs at the time. (And I hope to find it out in relevant papers of this project.) I think the Egyptian party had already been excluded from the Comintern; but it was not a consequence of the Seventh World Congress or related to its logic. It seems the difficulties encountered in Egypt had to do with bringing together in the party, foreign residents as well as natives; especially the Arabs' dislike of including Jews in the party's ranks.

In one of the rare-subsequent-pronouncements by Turkish party officials concerning the "Decentralization" we read the following: ←

"The Seventh Congress of the Comintern gave the key to our party to start a new era of activity. The party determined for itself a new war path. It decided to support the government of Ismet Inönü in all its performances which served national independence of the country and social development, and which were conducive to the interests of the people. The party's clandestine workers' unions and the secret Communist Youth Organization were disbanded and their members were given the duty of joining legal workers' and youth organizations. The positive results of this campaign soon appeared both in workers' and in youth movements. A manifest slide to the left was observed in the ~~cynical~~ movement. Legal leftist unions and union leaders began to play prominent roles in the workers' movement of Turkey. The youth movement too was vitalized. The initiatives of the youth, especially university students increased. The direction of this movement which has previously under the influence of extreme nationalism changed. The voice of progressive youth grew louder."

(From the text of Yakup Demir's speech on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the 1935 Comintern Congress (the real name of this First Secretary of the CC of TKP was Zeki Baştımar, a KUTV graduate) in the emigre journal Yeni Çağ (October 1965).)

Discarding idealizations and exaggerations exhibited above, this in a way was an affirmation of the Kadro line severely reprimanded at the time (1932-34) by TKP. As Kadro itself, being largely composed of ex-party members, was a continuation of the pre-1925 party line, it can also be interpreted as a return to the original diagnosis of the situation and strategy. The harsh attitude taken towards Nazım Hikmet's opposition group, calling it an accomplice of Kemalism, with this new shift had also become devoid of theoretical foundation. Yet, the healing of wounds took time.

h A recent essay by an old-timer, claims that the Comintern wanted to liquidate the Turkish KP for the interests of the Soviet state in 1936, when opposed it and succeeded in imposing on the Comintern the famous compromise of Separate Work. Rasih Nuri Ileri, "Atatürk, TKP ve Kürt Sorunu Hakkında bir Deneme (An Essay on Atatürk, the TKP and the Kurdish Question) Mülkiyeliler Birliği Dergisi, Nr. 140 (February 1992) p.54.

Had this decision anything to do with G. Dimitrov's proposal of the Troian Horse tactics at the Seventh Comintern Congress: Let anti-Fascists join all legal Fascist organizations, to work inside them to attract popular masses into anti-Fascist struggle? Though there is an obvious resemblance, Communists neither at home nor abroad regarded at that time, the Republican People's Party in power to be Fascist party.

l A brief article on TKP in the 3rd edition of the Great Soviet Encyclopedia signed by N. Il'darove (English translation published by MacMillan and Collier, 1976, vol. 12) claims that the party organized a series of workers mass demonstrations in spite of the prevailing hard conditions, against the policy of collaboration with Fascist Germany, defended by reactionary circles in Turkey during the Second World War. Demonstrators wanted friendly relations to be established with the Soviet Union. The party has been prosecuted again and again, especially in 1941 and 1951 many of its leaders and activists were arrested. TKP consistently supported vital interests of the working classes and demanded a truly independent democratic Turkey, withdrawal from the NATO and SCENT, dismantling of US bases in Turkey.

This account hides the fact that TKP was largely passive during the war years, only contributing to the cause of democracy (Allies) in the daily press which was tolerated by the Government for a while. Towards the end of the war, when all "extremes" began to be prosecuted, it was forced to revitalize itself, though confined to a marginal section of the urban populace under severe repression.

(9) Baranev 1900-1968 general secretary of TKP in 1930s, he also edited the Kızıl İstanbul. He had studied chemical engineering in Germany (1925-27(x)), then had a political education in Soviet Union.