The Turkish Left and the Kurdish Question

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The national question has troubled Marxists of all lands. For Marxists, the national question has, on the one hand, been a question of democracy, a matter of the oppression of nations by others. On the other hand, however, Marxists have perceived the nationalist movements as having the potential to hinder the (inter-)national unity of the proletariat, the true agent of transition to socialism. This dilemma has troubled proponents of Marxism around the world since the time of Marx and Engels.

Marxist politics in Turkey has been no exception in this respect, and the national question has been a source of discomfort since the foundation of the Turkish Republic. The Turkish Republic inherited a multi-ethnic population from the Ottoman Empire. Turkey’s first census, conducted in 1927, revealed the following linguistic/ethnic communities within its borders: Turks (with a population of 11,777,810), Kurds (1,184,446), Arabs (134,273), Greeks (119,822), Circassians (95,901), Jews (68,900) and Armenians (64,745). While nearly all of these groups acknowledged the legitimacy of the national framework introduced with the establishment of the republic, Kurds have resisted this framework, and have done so by means including armed struggle, supporting the political parties in opposition, and escape from the reach of the state. Eventually, the Kurds’ resistance turned to become the only instance of the national question in Turkey bothering not only the Turkish state but the Turkish left too since the foundation of the Turkish Republic.

In what follows, I aim to examine this long-running preoccupation of Turkey’s Marxist left with the national (Kurdish) question. I will begin, however, with an exploration of the national question as approached by the founders of Marxism.
Marxism and the national question

From Marx and Engels to Lenin, the leading figures of the first generation of European socialist thought and politics were discomfited by the national question. However, it looks fair to suggest that the preoccupation of the Marxists of the time with the national question was not inspired by the complexities of nationalism so much as the questions of whether or which nationalist movements would be supported by the workers’ movements and whether or which stateless nations ‘deserved’ their own states.

Marx and Engels supported the nationalist causes of both Poland and Ireland. In the wake of the 1848 Revolutions, the Polish national question became about the establishment of an independent Polish state on territory that had been distributed in 1795 among what Marx called the Holy Alliance of Russia, Prussia and Austria. Viewing ‘the partition of Poland as providing the cement which held the Russian–Prussian–Austrian Holy Alliance together’, both Marx and Engels supported the liberation of Poland.

Marx and Engels also backed the liberation of Ireland. Marx, according to Michael Löwy, was initially ‘in favor of Ireland having autonomy within a union in Britain and believed that the solution to the oppression of the Irish (by the big English landlords) would come through a working-class (Chartist) victory in England’. Later, however, Marx came to support the complete liberation of Ireland from the yoke of Britain, and argued that the Irish needed ‘independence from England, agrarian revolution, and protective tariffs against England’. In a similar vein, Engels expressed his sympathy toward Irish nationalism and argued that the Irish [and the Polish] people have not only the right ‘but even the duty to be nationalistic before they become internationalists’. Marx also argued that it was ‘the task of the International everywhere to put the conflict between England and Ireland in the foreground, and everywhere to side openly with Ireland’.

The support of Marx and Engels for the liberation of Ireland was notably rooted in a different logic from that which they employed to support the liberation of Poland, however. While they supported the latter on the basis that it would hasten the disintegration of the old regimes of Europe, embedded in their support for Irish independence were hopes that it would reinforce the polarization between the English working class and bourgeoisie. This indicated that the national question was not treated by the founders of Marxism as an issue in and of itself, but in terms of its possible contribution to the undoing of old regimes in Europe and to the promotion of workers’ struggle in Europe. This is sometimes interpreted as a lack of theoretical systematicity and coherence with respect to the national question.

Engels’ analyses of nationalist resistances elsewhere may have done little to allay the notion that the founders of Marxism lacked coherence in their reasoning with regard to the national question. As is widely known, Engels had little sympathy towards several of the nationalist movements of the time, especially those of the ‘Southern Slavs’. While he had suggested that the solution to the Polish and Irish questions was liberation from the yokes of Russia and Britain, his proposed solution to the national questions concerning the territories of Austria-Hungary was the assimilation of national groups like the Czechs or Croats into the German or Magyar nations. His opinion was informed by the Hegelian approach to the category of nation, which held that the establishment of a state was a primary purpose of nations. Following Hegel, Engels appears to have subscribed to the notion that stateless nations would not contribute to the dissemination of civilization/capitalism, which was a prerequisite of the coming of socialism. Instead, these ‘relics’ of peoples, Engels believed,
would be forces that tethered Europe to the past. These ‘residual fragments’ included not only the Southern Slavs of Austria, but the Gaels of Scotland, the Bretons of France and the Basques of Spain.10

While Marx and Engels supported the emergence of an independent Polish state in the context of the 1848 Revolutions, by the turn of the twentieth century their Polish follower Rosa Luxemburg had come out in opposition to the Polish national movement. Luxemburg’s rationale against the independence of Poland from Russia paralleled that of Engels’ repudiation of Southern Slavic nationalist movements. Having found that Poland’s integration with the Russian economy had accelerated the development of capitalist relations of production there,11 Luxemburg held that the secession of Poland would mean a disruption in the expansion of market relations.

Of this generation of Marxists, Otto Bauer, the leading figure of Austro-Marxism of the time, was one of few who recognized the cultural nature of the national question. Bauer acknowledged the ‘authenticity’ of the national question, and employed psycho-cultural terms such as ‘national characteristics’ and ‘national culture’ in his analysis of it. The national question (or the question of small nations) was perceived by Bauer to be more durable vis-à-vis the dissemination of capitalist relations of production, and more resistant to being pacified by proletarian internationalism. Thus, the development of capitalism did not have to result in the extinction of small nations. Contra to Engels, for instance, he argued rather prophetically that capitalist relations of production might instead end ‘not with the assimilation but the awakening of “non-historic” nations’.12 Likewise, he disagreed with the commonly held view that proletarian internationalism would necessarily neutralize the urge towards national membership. Instead, his observations regarding the working-class movement in Austria-Hungary led him to believe that workers expressed the suffering caused by their position in a capitalist system via a nationalist discourse. Since the dominant classes in Austria were of German origin, ‘the hatred against bureaucracy, nobility and the capitalist class’, Bauer argued, took ‘the form of the hatred of Czechs against the Germans’.13

Having grasped the durability of ‘non-historic’ nations, Bauer advocated, in his Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie (The National Question and Social Democracy) (1907), the solution of ‘national autonomy’ to the national question in multinational Austria-Hungary. His solution was based on the principle that each national community should be able to reproduce its existence without necessity of territorial autonomy.

Lenin opposed both Bauer’s reception of and Luxemburg’s aversion to nationalist movements. In Lenin’s view, Bauer’s programme of cultural-national autonomy would in practice mean nothing but having ‘separate schools for each nationality’.14 This, Lenin believed, would contradict the principle of proletarian internationalism. He argued that the workers ‘can be split up, divided and weakened by the advocacy of such an idea, and still more by the segregation, of the ordinary peoples’ schools according to nationality’.15

Lenin’s opposition to cultural-national autonomy was consistent with his distaste for various forms of decentralism, including federalism. Lenin saluted with no hesitation capitalism’s achievement of building a unified new society from the remains of old societies that had been split by both physical and socio-economic distance. This unity, he believed, was the necessary basis for a massive and unified proletariat, and that any kind of decentralism in modern societies would weaken the class unity of the workers. On the other hand, while Lenin opposed non-territorial cultural autonomy, he endorsed the idea of autonomous regions. He believed in ‘the necessity of replacing’ the old regional divisions in Russia with
‘others that will conform as far as possible with the national composition of the population’. The creation of ‘autonomous areas … with entirely homogeneous populations’, Lenin argued, would help bring an end to national oppression, immediately adding, however, that the ‘national-territorial’ principle could not be the only factor taken into consideration when drawing the boundaries of autonomous regions.

Alongside Lenin’s advocacy of culturally homogeneous autonomous zones came support of assimilation as the solution to the national question. Lenin was in fact by no means uncomfortable with assimilation. He firmly condemned those who did not ‘recognize and champion the equality of nations and languages’, but believed that the ‘true’ ideal for the international proletariat was to welcome ‘every kind of assimilation of nations, except that which is founded on force or privilege’. Most of all, though, Lenin is known in Marxist discussion of the national question as the champion of the principle of nations’ rights to self-determination. This principle was recognized by Marxists as early as the London International Congress (Second International) in 1896, wherein the congress declared that it stood for ‘the full right of all nations to self-determination’. Despite this, not all Marxists of the time applauded the principle, neither was there consistent interpretation of the resolution. Luxemburg, as mentioned, was one of its strongest opponents.

In contrast to Luxemburg, Lenin endorsed the right of secession by oppressed nations on the grounds that this right would strengthen the international proletariat movement. The proletariat of the oppressed nations, Lenin believed, would not support the international struggle of the workers against the bourgeoisie without first the workers’ movement in the oppressor nation recognizing the right of the oppressed nation to self-determination. However, this is not to say that Lenin advocated secession as the answer to the national question. In his view, ‘the recognition of the right [to self-determination] does not exclude either propaganda and agitation against separation or the exposure of bourgeois nationalism’. While it was a right that need not be exercised, Lenin believed its recognition by states was necessary in order to ensure the alliance between the proletariats of oppressed and oppressor nations.

The narrative above testifies to the stressful nature of early Marxist engagement with the national question. The Turkish left’s preoccupation with the national question has been no less stressful, and has been encumbered with it since the foundation of the Turkish Republic. In what follows, I will examine the engagement of the left with the national question in the Turkish context. However, as I stated at the outset, of many ethnic groups in Turkey only Kurds have resisted the national framework imposed by the Turkish Republic, making the Kurdish question the only instance of the national question in Turkey. Accordingly, the preoccupation of the Turkish left with the national question has actually been a preoccupation with the Kurdish question. This long-running preoccupation can be examined in terms of four periods.

**Encounter**

Communist ideals were echoed in Turkey beginning only in the first decades of the twentieth century, among a group of intellectuals who founded the first Turkish communist party after the Bolshevik revolution of 1917. In the four decades following its foundation, Türkiye Komünist Partisi (TKP) (The Communist Party of Turkey) was the only sizeable...
It was during these four decades that the first generation of Turkish Marxists, who were actually no more than a fistful of intellectuals, initially encountered the Kurdish question.

The TKP’s assessments concerning the Kurdish question indicate that the leading cadres of the TKP shared an intellectual heritage with the founders of the young Turkish Republic. Like the founders of the new regime, this first generation of Turkish Marxists perceived the Kurdish question to be a by-product of the clash between past and present. By this way of thinking, which was originally championed by the founders of the republic, Kurdish unrest was nothing more than backlash by ‘the past’, characterized by tribalism, banditry and political reaction against ‘the present’, in the form of the modern, secular, national Turkish republic. However, even though the TKP shared a logical framework with the founders of the republic (Kemalists), it differed at least in the terminology employed in its analyses of the Kurdish question. As students of Marxism, TKP cadres employed Marxist vocabulary alongside Kemalist vocabulary. At the heart of Kurdish unrest was, Turkish communists of the period believed, the resistance of landlords (i.e. feudalism) against the bourgeoisie (i.e. capitalism).

The concrete examples of this hybrid vocabulary appeared during the Kurdish rebellion of 1925. The sixth issue of the weekly journal of the TKP, Orak-Çekiç (Sickle-Hammer), published on 26 February 1925, assessed the rebellion in the following terms: ‘The rebellion is being headed not by Sheikh Said, but by landlordship; people side with the government against political reaction.’ The seventh and last issue of the same weekly, published on 5 March 1925, characterized the rebellion as the common enemy of the TKP and the bourgeoisie, and urged the defeat of this ‘black power’. Though it echoed the new regime in characterizing the 1925 rebellion as political reactionary, the TKP added some ‘Marxist flavour’ to its own analysis. According to the TKP, beneath the question of political reactionary was a more structural problem, the endurance of feudalism. To this view, the 1925 rebellion was backed by the feudal landlords of Kurdistan who, according to the TKP, had to be cleansed by the republican government by means of land reform.

The way in which the TKP viewed the Kurdish question was also shaped by Comintern’s strategic concerns. The TKP’s support for the Kemalists’ fight against the Kurds, in fact, was approved by the Comintern. Reports and articles appearing in Inprekorr, the organization’s ‘official’ publication at the time, also portrayed the Kurdish rebellion of 1925 as a reaction of backward feudals, incited by British imperialists, against a progressive bourgeoisie. Accordingly, the Comintern addressed a letter, in 1926, to the TKP central committee, ordering the TKP to denounce any show of resistance to the reforms implemented by the Ankara government. Likewise, Bukharin announced, in his speech delivered at the 12th congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), that the CPSU would support the new regime in Turkey, even when communists in Turkey were being harassed by this regime.

The Kurdish question was once again on the agenda of communists when Kurds revolted again in 1930. The TKP’s analyses of the rebellion appeared in the July–August 1930 issue of İnkılap Yolu (Path of Revolution), the periodical of the party’s central committee. Perceiving again the Kurdish resistance as a reactionary movement, the TKP argued that the Kurds’ revolt was backed by the imperialists of the time. However, the TKP acknowledged this time that there was more to the Kurds’ unrest than political reactionary and imperialists’ provocation. This ‘more’ was put in the following terms in a key party text in 1930:
Kurdish tribal chiefs and sheikhs are the salaried slaves of British and French imperialism. However, the repulsion and partial destruction of minorities, repression of Kurdish revolt, and Turkification by violence could not solve the national question. It continues to play a huge role. Unequal development in the country and the relative and absolute underdevelopment of the regions inhabited by national minorities (Kurdistan, Lazistan) are factors that constantly threaten the unity of the Turkish bourgeois state.\(^{29}\)

In other words, the TKP of the 1930s perceived the Kurdish question as a type of national question, intermingled with the question of the endurance of feudalism, political reactionary and imperialist provocation.

The idea that the Kurdish resistance may not be reduced to the endurance of feudalism and political reactionary was sustained by another prominent figure of the TKP, Hikmet Kıvılcımlı, again in the 1930s. Kıvılcımlı argued rather scandalously that the so-called Eastern question was in fact ‘a national question, a Kurdish national question’.\(^ {30}\) The historical facts, he suggested, testified to the notion that Kurds comprised a separate nation, on the basis that their community could be characterized by territorial, linguistic, cultural and economic unity.\(^ {31}\) However, he added, since peasants constituted the majority of the Kurdish population, the Kurdish question was in essence a question of peasantry. He further alleged that the Turkish bourgeoisie was pursuing ‘the procedures of colonization in Kurdistan’, and eventually reached the conclusion that the TKP’s policies concerning Kurds warranted a ‘serious and relentless’ critique.

However, Kıvılcımlı’s views did not resonate within the party. When Kurds revolted once more in Dersim (Tunceli) in 1937–38, the TKP assessed the revolt using the terminology it had employed in its assessments of the Kurdish rebellion of 1925.\(^ {32}\) The Kurdish question was once again seen as a question stemming from the endurance of feudalism in the regions inhabited by Kurds.

To conclude, the Turkish Marxists encountered the Kurdish question by virtue of the Kurdish revolts of the 1920s and 1930s and they basically perceived it as a question stemming from the endurance of backward social relations. The idea of a national question and hence the Leninist principle of the right to self-determination or Bauer’s idea of ‘national autonomy’ were as yet on the horizon for the Turkish left.

**Embracement**

The Turkish left grew into a sizeable political movement for the first time during the mid-1960s. This, of course, was related to the dramatic socio-economic change Turkey experienced after the Second World War, and the democratic climate guaranteed by the 1961 constitution. The weekly periodical Yön (The Way) was the first to open a space for the Turkish left’s deliberations on the Kurdish question during this second period. Yön hosted critical essays concerning the Kurdish question, such as Muzaffer Erdost’s Şemdinli Röportaji (Şemdinli Interview) and Doğan Avciöglu’s Kürt Meselesi (The Kurdish Question) within its pages.

The Kurdish question was touched on in Yön, if vaguely, first in the form of a discussion on the underdevelopment of the Eastern region. Arguing that the governments of the 1950s followed policies that had actually deepened regional inequalities, Yön considered the development of the East one of the most urgent concerns for the country.\(^ {33}\) The question of the endurance of landlordship became the second avenue by which the Kurdish
question was pursued. However, while the Kurdish question was framed as one of regional underdevelopment and the endurance of feudalism, and was accordingly believed to be solvable by way of planned development strategies, it was diffidently conceded to bear an ethno-cultural component.

Articles more explicitly suggesting an ethno-cultural dimension to the question appeared in coming issues of Yön, in articles authored by young Kurdish intellectuals and leftists. Acknowledging ‘the question’ as one of underdevelopment, Sait Kırmızıtoprak, for instance, suggested that ‘the foundation of the idea of development’ could be taught to people in their mother tongues. Kırmızıtoprak firmly opposed assimilation and refused the idea that it was an indispensable ingredient of national unity. A bolder exposition on the dimensions of the question, which departed from the theme of underdevelopment, could be found in Şemdinli Röportajı. Published in 17 consecutive issues of Yön between July and November 1966, Şemdinli Röportajı is particularly important in that it catalogued ethnic, historical and social aspects of the Kurdish question.

Of the numerous authors who contributed to Yön, it was undoubtedly Doğan Avcıoğlu, the principle writer and one of the founding architects of the journal, who best represented it. One of his articles, entitled ‘The Kurdish question’, is distinguishable for its decisive stance on the issue. Commencing with the contention that officials treated the Kurdish question as though it did not exist, this short but sharp article criticized the policy of enforced integration, the failure of which, according to Avcıoğlu, was inevitable. Having conceded the connection between the region’s underdevelopment and the endurance of landlordship, he asserted the ethnic dimension: ‘Nonetheless, is it possible to solve a question with an ethnic dimension using economic measures alone? Numerous examples from around the world show us that those efforts which failed to recognize the ethnic dimension have failed. As to the solution, Avcıoğlu was most honest, simply confessing that socialists of the time, himself included, were unable to prescribe a more effective solution. Avcıoğlu was honest in another respect as well. He did not attempt to hide his nationalist inclinations, and plainly warned Kurds: ‘At this point, there is no room for hesitation. We are one nation and we will not forfeit one inch of our land. To any oblivious persons with separatist ambitions, may they be mindful! They must know that socialists will fight first for an inch of land.’

Türkiye İşçi Partisi (Workers Party of Turkey)

The Türkiye İşçi Partisi (TİP), founded by a group of trade unionists in 1961, was the first sizeable left-wing political party, and as such is held in high regard in the history of the Turkish left. Fifteen parliamentary seats were taken by socialists during this period, an accomplishment made more remarkable because the party had cultivated organic ties with Kurdish citizens and paid sincere attention to the Kurdish question. In fact, Kurds, who were called ‘Easterners’ in the jargon of the time, made up the third major group, alongside trade unionists and intellectuals, represented in the top ranks as the party blossomed. This openness to Kurds and interest in the Kurdish question eventually culminated in a revision of the party charter. The version approved during the first congress in 1964 proclaimed that the Turkish left would pay close attention to the Kurdish question, and identified the ‘Eastern question’ as a primary concern of the party.

Paralleling the economic backwardness of the [Eastern] region, citizens here are backward in social and cultural terms. Moreover, those citizens who speak Kurdish and Arabic, as well as
those belonging to the Alevi sect, are subject to discrimination.... These citizens ... have not
been afforded the comforts of citizenship that they have earned.... TİP will treat these groups
as full citizens.... 40

Formulated by the then chair of the party, Mehmet Ali Aybar, this attention to the Kurdish
question in the party programme continued to be stressed in later party documents as well.
The second congress was held in 1966, in Malatya, a city with a considerable Alevi-Kurdish
population. Here the party defined itself as the only political organization in which working
people and socialist intellectuals could unite to solve the problems in the East. This recipro-
cal interest between the TİP and Kurds continued to grow into the following year, when
mass demonstrations organized by the party were held in six predominantly Kurdish towns.
Known as ‘Eastern Meetings,’ these demonstrations were evidence of two developments: that
the Turkish left had allied itself with the Kurdish citizenry, and that, after three decades, the
Kurdish resistance had resumed, this time with a new form and discourse.

As time passed the TİP devoted more and more space on its agenda to the Kurdish
question, and those aspects of the question other than underdevelopment were empha-
sized once more at the third congress. In the 1968 programme, the TİP condemned the
scorn with which Kurdish and Arabic citizens were treated, and asserted that the Eastern
question had, in addition to an economic dimension, an identity dimension as well. At
the fourth congress, held in Ankara in 1970, the TİP took its most radical stance on the
question in announcing:

[that Kurdish people inhabit the East of Turkey; that the dominant classes and fascist govern-
ments have, from the very beginning, implemented policies of oppression, terror, and assimila-
tion toward Kurds ...; that the main reason for the underdevelopment of the region inhabited
by Kurds ... is, in addition to the law of unequal development of capitalism, the economic
and social policies pursued by governments serving the dominant classes ...; that, therefore,
any consideration of the Eastern Question as a question of regional development is no more
than an appendage of the chauvinist-nationalist perceptions and attitudes of dominant class
governments; and that supporting the Kurdish people's struggle for their full constitutional
rights of citizenship ... is an ordinary and obligatory task of our party....]

The Supreme Court closed down the TİP on 20 July 1971, citing the decisions of the fourth
congress for the ban. The Turkish left paid for its embrace of Kurds.

**First Schism: National Democratic Revolution (NDR)**

The Turkish left had already been on its way to both an ideological and organizational split
before the TİP was closed. By the end of the 1960s, two groups from within the party had
begun to reveal divergent views concerning Turkey’s social structure and revolutionary
strategy. While the leadership of the party continued to pursue a socialist revolution by
parliamentary means, the ‘revolutionist youth’ championed the strategy of a national dem-
ocratic revolution that would be implemented by means of forceful methods. Even though the Kurdish question was not among the issues leading to the first great schism of the Turkish left, it was obvious that the two sides of the party did not share the
same attitude to the question. The party leadership, which was supported by the 'Easterners',
gradually deepened its warm interest, meanwhile Mihri Belli, the architect of the NDR,
seemed to catch the spirit of the TKP from the first half of the century. Like the TKP cadres,
his sympathized with Mustafa Kemal, and viewed the Sheikh Said rebellion of 1925 as a
reactionary movement serving British imperial interests. Belli, however, was not entirely indifferent to ‘the Eastern question’, as he termed it. He supported the freedom to speak in one’s mother tongue, as well as the dismantling of the feudal system as the solution to the question. Belli argued that ‘the question would be solved within national frontiers by means of implementing an NDR in both the East and the West’, viewing it as consistent with the socialist principle of self-determination. He added, however, that ‘the principle of self-determination is not a must, and it does not follow from this principle that every nation, whatever the conditions, is obliged to establish its own nation-state’.

Belli’s ‘TKP-inspired’ views were not universally approved of by NDR supporters, who, from the beginning, were far from unified. This lack of unity was first manifested in the split among the ranks of the journal Aydınlık, which had been central for NDR followers. The split took place in 1969, with one group, led by Doğu Perinçek, founding the new publication Proleter Devrimci Aydınlık (PDA) (Proletarian Revolutionary Enlightenment), with another group, led by Mihri Belli, founding Aydınlık Sosyalist Dergi (ASD) (Enlightenment Socialist Journal). A further schism occurred within the ranks of the ASD, which was announced in a manifesto entitled ‘An Open Letter to Aydınlık Sosyalist Dergi’, written by Mahir Çayan, Yusuf Küpeli, Ertuğrul Kürkçü and Münir Aktolga. The authors, all of whom had emerged as key figures in the history of the Turkish left, declared their discomfort with the nationalist inclinations of the NDR line. In the manifesto’s section on nationalism, Çayan and his friends denounced Belli’s contention that ‘socialists are fervent nationalists’, arguing that ‘socialists are patriots, not nationalists’. Belli’s view that ‘the solution to the national question in Turkey must be sought, in all cases, within national borders’ was also repudiated:

[t]his view is wrong and anti-socialist…. The revolutionary proletariat would consider the [national] question from the perspective of the principle of nations’ rights to self-determination…. The revolutionary proletariat … would discuss openly which of the solutions presupposed by the principle of nations’ rights to self-determination, such as separation, autonomy, federation, etc. would be feasible, when, and under what conditions.

In the meantime, upholding the TKP-inspired view on the Kurdish question became more and more difficult in the early 1970s. This was mostly because the Turkish left now had deeper contact with Leninist literature. Add to this the growing mobility of Kurds. Under these conditions, even the PDA circle, which supported Belli’s nationalist inclinations, appeared loyal to the principle of nations’ rights to self-determination. When the PDA followers founded the illegal Türkiye İhtilalci İşçi Köylü Partisi (TİİKP) (The Revolutionary Workers and Peasants Party of Turkey), their party programme defined Kurds as an ancient people with a rich language and announced the Kurds’ right to self-determination and right to a state were acknowledged. However, although the TİİKP endorsed the principle of nations’ right to self-determination, the party still continued to associate the national (Kurdish) question with the NDR, saying ‘the Kurdish national question … is a part of our national democratic revolution because it is a national question in a semi-colonized, semi-feudal, third world country’. Accordingly, the party criticized ‘those views that isolate the national question from the struggle against imperialism and feudalism’. Likewise, it denounced those who perceived the Kurdish question as one of colonization, and who supported the establishment of separate organizations in Turkey and Turkey’s Kurdish provinces.

This second period in the history of the Turkish left was important in several respects. First, it is evident that the Turkish left achieved the status of a genuine political movement
in this period. Second, an organic and sincere relationship between the left and Kurds was achieved for the first time during these years. Third, when reflecting on the Kurdish question, the left dumped, though not entirely, the vocabulary of Kemalism, partly owing to the increased availability of Marxist-Leninist literature during this period.

On the other hand, this second period was also host to the first grand schism in the ranks of the leftists as well. Though the schism was centred primarily on issues like ‘the strategy of revolution’ and ‘the question of alliances’, conflicting views on the Kurdish question also appeared around this time. Disagreement over the latter occurred principally between those who perceived the Kurdish question as a national question and those who continued to define it as a remnant of feudalism, which needed to be dealt with via radical administrative reforms. Nevertheless, the second period pivoted on the deterioration of the ‘union’ between the Turkish left and Kurds. By the early 1970s, Kurdish leftists had assembled their own political organizations.

Separation

The coup of 1971 bulldozed the Turkish left. The elite cadres of left-wing political organizations were either exterminated or imprisoned. However, the coup failed to bring an end to the attraction between the left and the masses in Turkey. By the mid-1970s, mass support for the Turkish left was larger than ever.

The left developed a clearer vision with respect to the Kurdish question during this third period. It now had no doubt that the Kurdish question was a vital question for Turkey, and that it would be an essential aspect of the revolution. Additionally, the left was by now nearly united in the conviction that the Kurdish question was in principle a national question, and hence that it must be thought of in the Leninist vocabulary of nations’ rights to self-determination. Although the vocabulary of the 1930s that characterized the question as ‘the endurance of feudalism’ was never abandoned entirely, by the mid-1970s almost all major arteries of the Turkish left had acknowledged the national character of the Kurdish question and were in agreement about the parameters and lexicon of the question.

The fact that the Turkish left now shared a common field of engagement on the issue did not stop the emergence of new disagreements in respect of the question. A new dispute emerged among leftists as to whether the Leninist principle of nations’ right to self-determination would necessarily clear a path for Kurds toward statehood. Whether the Kurdish question was one of colonization, and whether Kurdish and Turkish revolutionaries should necessarily share the same political organizations were the other disputed issues of the period.

Since many groups overlapped on essential points, a catalogue of the views of each leftist organization with regard to the question is of no use. Instead, I believe that an examination of the views of organizations representative of the three major traditions that evolved on the Turkish left would be adequate. This section is thus dedicated in turn to the ‘revisionists,’ the ‘frontists,’ and the ‘Maoists’.

‘Revisionists’

Compared with its counterpart of the 1930s, the illegal TKP of the 1970s appeared to have changed its views drastically on the Kurdish question. Being the leading organization of
the ‘revisionist’ tradition on the Turkish left, the TKP of these years acknowledged the national character of the question, and announced that the party was loyal to the Leninist principle of nations’ right to self-determination. However, the TKP sustained the idea that the principle of self-determination did not explicitly dictate the separation of nations, thus making room for a solution within the frontiers of the nation-states. Arguing that the right to self-determination did not have to be understood as the right to separation, the TKP endorsed ‘unity in opposition to separation’. Accordingly, the TKP suggested resolving the national question by means of a democratic constitution. At the 1977 party conference, the TKP endorsed the view that ‘all minorities, and especially Kurdish people, should be given their constitutional and democratic rights’ and announced that the ‘bourgeoisie’s policy of compulsory assimilation’ was denied. It was further announced that once the TKP had seized power, every nation would have the right to education and publication in its own language.

The TKP’s opposition to the ‘right to separation’ was naturally followed by disdain for the idea of separate organizations for Turkish and Kurdish leftists. Separate organizations would be of no use because the TKP ‘would not separate Kurdish people’s fight for freedom and independence from that of the Turkish people, the Turkish working class’s fight for democracy, national independence, and peace’. However, though the party was opposed to the separation of the two struggles into the Kurdish question and the question of socialism in Turkey, it was still apparent that the former was, in the eyes of the TKP cadres, subject to the latter. For the TKP, ‘the question of the unity of workers, peasants, and labourers of all nations was the most important of all … and all other questions were dependent on this main one.’ In other words, the solution to the Kurdish question was believed to be part and parcel to the establishment of socialism in Turkey.

‘Frontists’

Two illegal organizations, Kurtuluş (Liberation) and Devrimci Yol (Revolutionary Way), were the primary successors to the ‘front’ tradition in Turkey that had been established by the THKP-C during the early 1970s. These two popular organizations managed to carve out a militant leftist space within the wide gap that separated the revisionists and Maoists, the pro-Soviet and pro-China inclinations. Sharing organizational roots and pursuing leftist politics in this same ‘middle’ space, these two groups were alike in several respects. Nonetheless Kurtuluş and Devrimci Yol diverged on the issue of the role they assigned to the industrial proletariat and, more importantly, on their perspectives regarding the Kurdish question.

Kurtuluş emphasized the national characteristic of the Kurdish question in a most determined manner, which produced an unbridgeable gap between it and the rest of the Turkish left. Among the group’s theses, the most significant was one concerning the status of Kurdistan. Kurtuluş defined the relationship between Turkey and Kurdistan as a relationship between colonizer and colonized. Another radical thesis of Kurtuluş had to do with the group’s interpretation of the principle of nations’ right to self-determination. According to Kurtuluş, Kurds’ right to separation had to be recognized not only theoretically but practically too. A Kurdish national movement towards separation must be recognized as legitimate, Kurtuluş argued, and should Kurds opt for this solution it must not be opposed. By extension, Kurtuluş took a stance in favour of separate political organizations for Turks and Kurds.
The radical views espoused by Kurtuluş prompted severe debate and sharp criticism. Among these critiques was one posed by Devrimci Yol, which, like Kurtuluş, endorsed a ‘people's democratic revolution’. To begin with, Devrimci Yol did not share the aforementioned view of Kurdistan as a colony of Turkey. This fundamental disagreement was followed by two others, these concerning the timing of revolutions in Turkey and Kurdistan, and the issue of separate organizations for Turks and Kurds. Although it conceded that the Kurdish question was a national one, and although it promised to support the Kurds’ struggle, Devrimci Yol sharply opposed the thesis that Kurdistan was a colony. Devrimci Yol suggested that the relationship between Kurds and Turks was a relationship between ‘oppressor and oppressed nations in an old-type multinational state’. Accordingly, the group opposed the separation of Kurdish and Turkish leftist organizations and opposed the idea that a separate Kurdistan revolution was inevitable.

‘Maoists’

Maoism was insufficient as a general guide to prevent Maoist groups within Turkey from diverging. Roughly speaking, Turkey has had three major Maoist veins with irreconcilable theses. Türkiye Komünist Partisi – Marxist-Leninist (TKP-ML) (Communist Party of Turkey – Marxist-Leninist), Türkiye İşçi Köylü Partisi (TİKP) (Workers and Peasants Party of Turkey), and Türkiye Devrimci Komünist Partisi (TDKP) (Revolutionary Communist Party of Turkey) have all been active since the mid-1970s. These three organizations have had major disputes over both internal and external affairs, such as the Three World Theory, the nature of Kemalism and the Kurdish question. TKP-ML espoused the most radical views on the Kurdish question while the Maoist TİKP championed ‘national unity.’ The TDKP was positioned in-between the other two groups on this issue.

The TKP-ML has been remarkably consistent in its position on Turkey’s social structure. Since its founding in the mid-1970s, this illegal organization has advanced the view that Turkey is a semi-colonized and semi-feudal country. This social structure, it adds, calls for a people’s democratic revolution comprising anti-imperialist and anti-feudal efforts. The TKP-ML has been consistent in its views on the Kurdish question too, recognizing it as a national question, and acknowledging the Kurds’ right to separation. According to the party, Kurdish secession is not required, but should Kurds move to establish their own state, the decision would be welcomed.

Founded in the late 1970s by the Aydınlık circle of the early 1970s, TİKP was the most resolute advocate of nationalist democratic revolution, albeit in a diluted form that reduced the idea of NDR to a mere anti-imperialist strategy. While Turkey was gradually being pulled into civil war during the late 1970s, the TİKP maintained that the primary contradiction was not between the social classes within Turkey, but between ‘social imperialist’ USSR and ‘Turkey’. Although the TİKP progressively revealed nationalist inclinations, it never abandoned Leninist terminology, and continued to endorse nations’ right to self-determination. As for the solution to the Kurdish question, the TİKP ambiguously advocated ‘removing all privileges’. This ambiguity was particularly noteworthy compared with the language used by other left-wing organizations of the time. An even more radical difference, though, emerged in respect of the TİKP’s appraisal of Kurdish resistance during the 1970s, blaming ‘foreign incitement’ for the unrest of Kurds in Turkey. Moreover, the TİKP blamed Kurdish left-wing
organizations for being ‘nationalist’ and for collaboration with the USSR. The party believed the USSR intended to build a ‘puppet [Kurdish] state’ in the Middle East using Turkey’s Kurdish leftists to achieve this.72

Within Maoist circles, Halkın Kurtuluşu (People’s Liberation) had the greatest mass support. With regard to the Kurdish question, the group, like many other leftist organizations of the time, had no qualms about invoking the principle of nations’ rights to self-determination.73 Accusing the TKP of the past of opportunism and social-chauvinism, it alleged that this position was still pursued by some leftists of the 1970s, but that this position reinforced the narrow-mindedness and nationalism of an oppressed nation. Thus, many Kurdish revolutionaries had adopted bourgeois nationalism as a response to the social-chauvinism of revisionists and opportunist.74 Halkın Kurtuluşu accused such Kurdish revolutionaries of non-Marxist behaviour and of treating the Kurdish question in isolation.

The claim made by Kurtuluş that Kurdistan was a colony of Turkey was categorically denounced by Halkın Kurtuluşu. The exploitation of Kurdistan, it was posed instead, was not separate from the exploitation of Turkey in general.75 Accordingly, those who defined Kurdistan as a colony of Turkey and those who championed separate political organizations for Turkish and Kurdish leftists were perceived not to be anti-capitalist at all. Thus, it was announced that those national liberation struggles that were bereft of an anti-capitalist perspective would not be supported.76 For Halkın Kurtuluşu, the Kurdish political movement separated from proletarian struggle would inevitably fall under the mandate of imperialism. To avoid this, it was necessary to try to solve the Kurdish national question under the leadership of a revolutionary party of the Turkish and Kurdish proletariat.77

To summarize, it was during this third period of the Turkish left that its bond with Kurds and position on the Kurdish question began to splinter in earnest. On one side, the main body of the left divorced itself from Kemalism during the seventies and acknowledged the national nature of the Kurdish question. Likewise, guided by Leninist orthodoxy, the majority of leftist circles now recognized the Kurdish nation’s right to self-determination. On the other hand, with the exception of Kurtuluş, most leftist circles objected to Kurdish leftists’ claims that Kurdistan was a colony of Turkey, and that the Kurds’ struggle for liberation might be independent of the struggle for socialism in Turkey. This schism paved the way for a deep separation between Turkish and Kurdish leftists. By the end of the 1970s, the majority of Kurdish leftists affiliated exclusively with Kurdish sects or parties.

**Divorce**

The coup that seized Turkey on 12 September 1980 was extraordinarily oppressive. More than 500,000 citizens were taken into custody, approximately 100,000 citizens were sued on the accusation of membership in illegal organizations, more than 30,000 fled the country, and 50 young men were executed in the few years following the coup. The result was that the Turkish left was heavily suppressed in the 1980s. The Kurdish left experienced nearly the same fate, with the exception of the Partiya Karkeran Kurdistan (PKK) (Worker’s Party of Kurdistan), which saved some of its members from the coup, then began to wage a guerrilla struggle in 1984. By the late 1980s, Kurdish unrest in Turkey took the form of a mass movement led by the PKK or its legal appendages. Hence, when the Turkish left attempted to resume its political activities during the late 1980s, they experienced a new asymmetry with the Kurdish left, felt in both size and influence. Furthermore, the lexicon of the Kurdish
left by now had absorbed many ‘bourgeois’ and ‘nationalist’ terms such as ‘human rights’ and ‘independent Kurdistan’. Most importantly of all, while the PKK insisted on an armed struggle, most of the remnants of the Turkish left were now inclined to carry out a legal political struggle as opposed to a guerrilla resistance. This ever-growing asymmetry eventually resulted in the divorce of the Turkish left from the Kurds and the Kurdish question. However, the divorce in question assumed different forms in the case of different traditions of the Turkish left. The successor of each of the three traditions of the 1970s divorced itself from the Kurds and the Kurdish question in its own particular way.

Özgürlik ve Dayanışma Partisi (ÖDP) was founded in 1996 by successors Devrimci Yol and Kurtuluş, the two illegal organizations of the frontist tradition of the 1970s. The Kurdish question was the most hotly debated issue within the ÖDP during its first few years. The debate did not burn over the ‘nature’ of the question, though. There was consensus among the party ranks that it was a national question, and that Kurds were legitimately represented by Kurdish organizations (both legal and illegal), namely the Halkın Emek Partisi (HEP) (People’s Labour Party) and the PKK. Because of this, the ÖDP shied away from proposing programmes towards resolution of the Kurdish question. The separation of organizations between Kurdish and Turkish membership had the parallel impact of separating issues, such that it became as though the ÖDP were no longer also a party for Kurdish citizens, or that the Kurdish question was no longer a Turkish question. The ÖDP did not keep branch offices in Kurdish provinces for a long time, and Kurdish people did not show significant support for the party. The tacit agreement was now that the Kurdish question was a question for Kurds, via Kurdish representation. Within the ÖDP, the dispute thus became about the place of the Kurdish question on the party’s agenda, and about the possibility of building relationships with the Kurdish representation in Turkish politics. While the successors of Kurtuluş in the ÖDP maintained that the Kurdish question needed to remain at the top of the agenda, and that the ÖDP must offer unconditional support to their representatives in both the legal and illegal organizations, the successors of Devrimci Yol opposed the privileged positioning of the question on the party’s agenda. Likewise, they opposed strong support of Kurds on the grounds that it would weaken the party. This dispute prompted the successors of Kurtuluş to split from the ÖDP in 2001. Following this there remained almost no connection between the Devrimci Yol tradition and the Kurds and the Kurdish question.

Some successors of the illegal TKP of the 1970s resurfaced in a legal version of the TKP in 2001. Albeit that this specified Turks and Kurds as the equal elements of the working class in Turkey, the TKP still remained loyal to Marxist orthodoxy and accordingly defined the Kurdish question in Turkey as a labour question in practice. The TKP remained loyal not only to the Marxist orthodoxy, but to Kemalist orthodoxy as well. Like the communists of the 1930s, the TKP of the new millennium perceived the Kurdish question as a social and historical anomaly. At its 2004 conference, the party announced that it would endeavour to eliminate tribal structures and the traces of same that lingered in cultural and ideological domains. The TKP also declared that the Kurdish labourers needed to be ‘transformed’. The Kurdish labourers, the TKP suggested, had to be imbued with an anti-imperialist and class-based consciousness, in contrast to a national one. Unsurprisingly, today, the TKP has no support from Kurds in Turkey.

While the successors of the revisionist and frontist traditions of the 1970s tended to distance themselves from Kurds and the Kurdish question beginning in the 1990s, the successor of the Maoist TİKP, İşçi Partisi (İP) gradually developed a nationalist-socialist
standpoint. According to the İP, today’s Kurdish question is not a genuine political question, but a fake question created by the US and the EU imperialisms. In the words of Doğu Perinçek, the İP chair who happened to have led both the Aydınlik circle and the TİKP during the 1970s, ‘[t]he Kurdish question has been resolved with respect to democratic rights and freedoms’ and ‘our citizens of Kurdish origin have obtained their democratic rights in every sphere’.81 Perinçek’s view has been endorsed by the central body of the party as well.82 By extension of the logic that the Kurdish question was resolved, the İP has long been championing a policy of assimilation.83 Also, İP is now a firm opponent of the current negotiations between the Turkish state and the PKK, and sustains a politics of oppression in the field of the Kurdish question.

To conclude, having separated from the Kurds and the Kurdish question in the mid-1970s, the Marxist Turkish left finally divorced itself from the Kurdish question in the late 1990s and the early 2000s. In other words, by the 2000s there remained almost no sizeable link between the Turkish left and the Kurds and the Kurdish question. However, the divorce in question took place on different grounds and in different ways. ÖDP, the successor of the frontist tradition, divorced itself from the Kurds and the Kurdish question on political grounds, i.e. on the ground that the Kurdish question should no longer be at the top of the political agenda of the Turkish left and on the ground that Kurds had now their true, nationalist representatives. The TKP, the successor of the revisionist tradition, on the other hand, divorced itself from the Kurdish question mainly on an ideological basis. Perceiving the struggle of Kurds and Kurdish parties as inferior to the leftists’ struggle for socialism, the TKP chose to remain loyal to the orthodox conviction that all struggles other than the one for socialism have to be subjected to the latter. The successor of the Maoist tradition İP, on the other hand, divorced itself from Kurds and their struggle on the grounds of enmity and completed its transformation into a nationalist-socialist party.

**Conclusion: re-embracement?**

The foregoing narrative attests to the fact that the Turkish left’s relation with the Kurdish question during the republican period in Turkey can be viewed in four periods roughly corresponding to four conditions: encounter, embracement, separation, and divorce. The Turkish left first encountered the Kurdish question during the mid-1920s, and the period was notable for the left’s lack of distinct language, due to its strong bonds with the Comintern and Kemalism. During these years, the left viewed the Kurdish question as a remnant of the past to be undone by the era’s reformist efforts. The Marxist left grew into a sizeable actor in Turkish politics during the 1960s, when the Kurdish question first entered the agenda of legal Turkish politics in the republican era. It was during this second period that the Turkish left voiced the Kurdish question and embraced the Kurds. However, it was during the 1970s, i.e. in the third period, that the Turkish left began to endorse the most radical solutions to the Kurdish question. Inspired by Leninism now, the Turkish left defined the Kurdish question as a national question and discussed it in terms of the Leninist dictum, nations’ right to self-determination. However, it was during the same period that the Turkish left and the Kurdish opposition separated. Albeit that the Kurdish movement separated from the Turkish left it remained leftist and this is why the leftist imagery is so powerful in today’s Kurdish movement. Nonetheless, the Kurdish movement’s loyalty to the spirit of leftism did not stop the eventual divorce of the Turkish left from the Kurdish question and the Kurds.
Given that the Marxist Turkish left was shrunk into an ignorable size as opposed to the fact that the Kurdish movement turned into a massive political and armed movement in the context of the new millennium, it became impossible for the former to supervise the latter as it is assumed in Marxist orthodoxy and hence the Turkish left divorced itself from the Kurds and the Kurdish question.

The Turkish left and the Kurds stood apart throughout the first decade of the first millennium. In fact, it was as if the state of divorce was going to be the ultimate form of the relationship between the Turkish left and the Kurdish movement. However, relations between the Turkish left and the Kurdish movement have changed once more in the last few years, making a brand new state of relationship between the two possible.

Having abandoned the ideal of building an independent Kurdistan on ‘Turkish’ territory as early as 1993, the PKK substantially changed its strategic goal recently. The PKK has for some time been sustaining a new programme established on denigration of the nation-state and ‘capitalist modernity’. Tagging these as the two evils responsible for the sufferings of the last century in Turkey and in the Middle East, the PKK proposed a new programme informed by the principles of a ‘democratic nation’ and ‘democratic modernity’. While the idea of a democratic nation entails a polity run by a multicultural logic, the idea of ‘democratic modernity’ as opposed to ‘capitalist modernity’ refers to a desire to transcend capitalism in a way other than was tried in the case of real socialism. The PKK merged these two principles into one single motto, namely ‘democratic autonomy’, and this has become the new strategic goal to achieve for the PKK.84 Having substantially renewed its strategic goal, the PKK changed its main means as well. While the PKK has for long prioritized unarmed struggle, it announced recently in 2013 that the era of armed struggle was over and it was now time for political struggle.85

This substantial renewal in the aim and the means of the PKK was accompanied by the PKK-backed legal circles’ attempt to build a rainbow coalition composed of a Kurdish movement, socialists, feminists, and religious and ethnic minorities. The last attempt to build such a coalition seems to have been a success. Established by numerous parties, groups, organizations and initiatives, in 2012 Halkların Demokratik Partisi (People’s Democratic Party – HDP) received 13.1% of votes and won 80 seats in parliament in the elections in June 2015, which, considering that the former political parties of the Kurdish movement in Turkey received between 4% and 6% of votes in the previous elections, can be registered as an important success.

Both the establishment of the HDP and its success in the elections indicate that divorce is not the main form of the relationship between the Turkish left and the Kurdish movement any more. It seems that some segments of the Turkish left and the Kurdish movement have now re-embraced. However, it is important to note that this re-embracement did not take place between the same actors who divorced in the 1990s. Instead, it is evident that both the Turkish left and the Kurdish movement have changed greatly since the time of the divorce. While both the Turkish left and the Kurdish movement were typical Marxist-Leninist movements of the world of the 1970s, the Kurdish movement took a radical step towards a radical democratic imaginary. The step taken by the Kurdish movement was followed by some segments of the Turkish left and this made a re-embracement possible. Today, many segments of the Turkish left and the Kurdish movement are standing together again, albeit with a renewed political imaginary.
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Notes


2. The national framework introduced by the first constitution of the Turkish Republic and the Lausanne Treaty signed in 1923 was based on two main principles: the recognition of non-Muslim minorities’ right to their ethno-religious culture and the Turkification of non-Turkish Muslims of Turkey. However, while the non-Muslim citizens of the Turkish republic have had the right to reproduce their ethno-religious identity, they have constantly been subject to discrimination since the foundation of the republic.


11. Löwy, op. cit., p. 86.

12. Ibid., p. 94.


15. Ibid.


17. Ibid., p. 50.

18. Ibid., p. 35.


The TKP was founded on 10 September 1920 in Baku, Azerbaijan. It was forced into illegality during most of its history and faced a large number of mass detentions.

Tunçay Türkiye'de Sol Akımlar I [Leftist Currents in Turkey I], BDS Yayınları, İstanbul, 2000 [second printing], p. 195.

Ibid., p. 199.

Ibid., p. 199.


Mete Tunçay, Türkiye'de Sol Akımlar II [Leftist Currents in Turkey II], BDS Yayınları, İstanbul, 1993, p. 33.

See Ragıp Zarakolu, 'Komintern ve Türkiye' [Comintern and Turkey], Sosyalizm ve Toplumsal Mücadeleler Ansiklopedisi [Encyclopaedia of Socialism and Social Struggles], vol. 6, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 1855.

Ibid., p. 261.


Ibid., pp. 41–55.

Dersim isyan mıydı tartışması.


Doğan Avcioğlu, 'Kürt Meselesi' [The Kurdish Question], Yön, No. 194, 1966, p. 3.

Ibid., p. 3.

Ibid., p. 3.


Mehmet Ali Aybar, TIP (Türkiye İşçi Partisi) Tarihi 3 [The History of Workers Party of Turkey vol. 3], BDS Yayınları, İstanbul, 1988, p. 64.

Ünsal, op. cit., p. 8.


In the meantime, leftist Kurds did not remain indifferent to and made their own contribution to this split in the ranks of the Turkish left. Kurdish leftists started to build their own organisations in the late 1960s. The first of this kind was Devrimci Doğu Kültür Ocakları – DDKO (The Revolutionary Eastern Culture Hearths).

Çayan, pp. 206–207.


This new split is important in the history of the Turkish left for it turned out to become the moment that paved the way for the establishment of the Front Tradition in Turkey. Led by Mahir Çayan, the group split from ASD published the journal Kurtuluş, which happened to be the birthplace for Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Partisi Cephesi (THKP-C) (Turkish People’s Liberation–Front).

Çayan, pp. 206–207.

54. Ibid., pp. 91–92.
55. Ibid., pp. 91–92.
57. Ibid., p. 529.
58. TKP Konferansı (Belgeler), p. 134.
61. Ibid., p. 45.
63. Kurtuluş opened a larger space for the industrial proletariat in its ranks than Devrimci Yol, which, arguably the most populist of organizations of the Turkish left, was mostly popular among the gecekondu (shanty-towns) dwellers, i.e. the poor of the cities.
66. Ibid.
69. For a history of TKP-ML see http://www.partizan.org/finalframeset.htm (accessed 29 June 2012).
74. Ibid., p. 4.
75. Parti Bayrağı (author’s name missing), ‘Milli Mesele Üzerine’ [on the National Question], Parti Bayrağı, No. 5, 1978, p. 52.
76. Ibid., pp. 52, 73.
77. Ibid., p. 52.
80. İşçi Partisi has recently changed its name to Vatan Partisi.
83. Ibid.
84. This new strategic goal of the Kurdish movement was actually developed by Abdullah Öcalan, the leader of the PKK, since he was imprisoned in 1999, Öcalan compiled all this news of him in the defences he submitted to the European Courts of Human Rights. See Abdullah Öcalan, Kürdistan Devrim Manifestosu [The Kurdistan Revolution Manifest], Ararat Yayınları,

85. However, the recent negotiations between the Turkish state and the PKK collapsed in the summer of 2015 and the PKK returned back to the armed struggle again.