

Turkeys Red Flank

International Institute of Social History



Introduction

Socialism in Turkey is comparatively young and has the characteristic features of youth. A victim of extremely long and harsh repression, the socialist movement, almost from its establishment, was forced to shine in the darkness: not until 1960 was it given a constitutional right to exist.

And even then its life was short, because as a result of the 1980 coup, its right to legal activity was again revoked. Socialism was not the only left-wing movement that had to struggle to exist in Turkey. Anarchism has even less of a history there than does socialism: the first anarchist demonstrations in Turkey took place during the second half of the 1980s.

Because it was forced underground, the leftist movement in Turkey had an innate tendency to fragmentation and radicalization. Its leaders and practitioners were isolated from their fellows elsewhere in Turkey and abroad. Thus, a divergent analysis of society caused the Turkish Communist Party to be at odds with the powerful Communist International. During his exile in Istanbul (1929-1933), the internationalist leader Trotsky failed to build up a network of Turkish adherents. More recently, the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), with its Marxist-Leninist ideology, was unsuccessful in attracting European support. Removing the hammer and sickle from the party flag (1995) was intended to dispel mistrust.

Moreover, the issue of ethnic minorities seriously influences the character of socialism both in Turkey and in the diaspora. As a rule, ethnic minorities mobilize along ethnic nationalist lines. But in the 1970s various Kurdish nationalists saw fit to establish their own left-wing organizations, and Kurds massively joined the leftist organizations of Turkish origin.

Nowadays, more than five million former inhabitants of Turkey live abroad. Compared to other ethnic groups that have emigrated, the propensity to organize among former Turkish nationals is strong. On the one hand, their political organizations in the diaspora reflect the polarized situation in their homeland, on the other, they are influenced by the mores of their host country. The special women's branches of Turkish organizations in Holland mirror Dutch rather than Turkish emancipatory ideals.



Student demonstrations in May 1960 against the rightist regime Menderes led to a coup by the military and an ensuing liberalization. Students and soldiers celebrated victory together.



In 1980 once again the military struck hard and thousands of activists were arrested. The photo shows Reha Isvan, vice president of the Society for Peace (Baris Dernegi), on trial before a military court. On her right is the Society's president, Mahmut Serafettin Dikerdem. On her left is vice president Orhan Apaydin (collection M. S. Dikerdem)



A second coup in 1971 led to a complete setback. Student leaders Deniz Gezmis, Yusuf Aslan, and Hüseyin Inan were sentenced to death by a military court and hanged.

Sources

A wealth of sources at the IISH provides context for the study of the social history of Turkey, the Turkish Left, labour, and the Turkish and Kurdish diaspora in Europe. Though relatively new – acquisitions were initiated during the late 1980s – the IISH collection in Amsterdam dealing with Turkey is no doubt the most comprehensive and accessible in the world.

This store of documents includes archives, books, pamphlets and periodicals, posters and photographs, and sound and video tapes. The collections are open to academic researchers, journalists, and anyone who wants to consult them.

The Institute's library has 20,000 titles covering the social-economic history of Turkey and the Ottoman Empire since 1800. Non-book materials focus on the early socialist movement before 1920, the communists (1920-1991), the Turkish Labour Party (TIP) (1961-1971), the radical leftist groups that emerged from the student movement of the 1960s, and the Kurdish movement since the 1960s. The files with letters from Turkey's great poet Nâzım Hikmet and about him are classics in themselves.

Many files that deal with Turkey can also be found in the archives of international organizations like the International Confederation of Trade Unions (ICFTU), the Socialist International, and the International Labour Organization (ILO). Collections about Turks and Kurds in the diaspora include many organizations in Holland and Germany. The records of the Dutch Turkish Workers Society (HTIB) and the associated Turkish Women's Society (HTKB) are but two examples.

Turkish anarchists demonstrating against the war in Iraq in front of the University of Istanbul, 2003. During the Ottoman Empire the Ministry of War was housed in this building.



Communism

The history of **communism** in Turkey is very well documented. The Russian revolution was witnessed by Turkish socialists and the Turkish Communist Party, which was founded in 1920 in Baku at a Congress of Peoples of the East initiated by the Communist International.



The Comintern believed Turkey lacked a working class and was not ready for revolution. The discussions on Turkey in Moscow and Baku can be found in more than 40,000 pages of documents. A microfilm of these files (the originals of which are in Moscow) can be consulted at the IISH.

The Communist Party was banned in 1922, and for many years its leaders and members would be victims of murder, exile, and other types of repression. In the 1970s the party secured many key posts in the trade unions. In 1983 merger negotiations with the Turkish Labour Party (TİP) began. The founding congress of Türkiye Birlesik Komünist Partisi (TBKP) in 1988 had to be held abroad. The archive of the TBKP, part of the archive of the TKP, and the papers of many leading figures are in the IISH.



Opposite: A parade on the occasion of 1 May in Ankara in 1925. This was one of the last public 1 May celebrations in Turkey. Celebrating May Day was prohibited thereafter until 1976, when there was a mas-

sive demonstration on Taksim Square in Istanbul, organized by the trade union federation DISK. The photo above shows the 1 May 1978 demonstration on Taksim Square.

Kemal Sülker

The archive of Kemal Sülker is also a rich source for research on Hikmet, since Sülker wrote a biography of the poet. As the author of several books on the history of Turkish trade unions, Kemal Sülker's collection is especially strong in material on trade unions.



Unlike any other library or institution in the world, the IISH systematically collects and stores the journals and bulletins of the Turkish trade unions (Kemal Sülker collection)

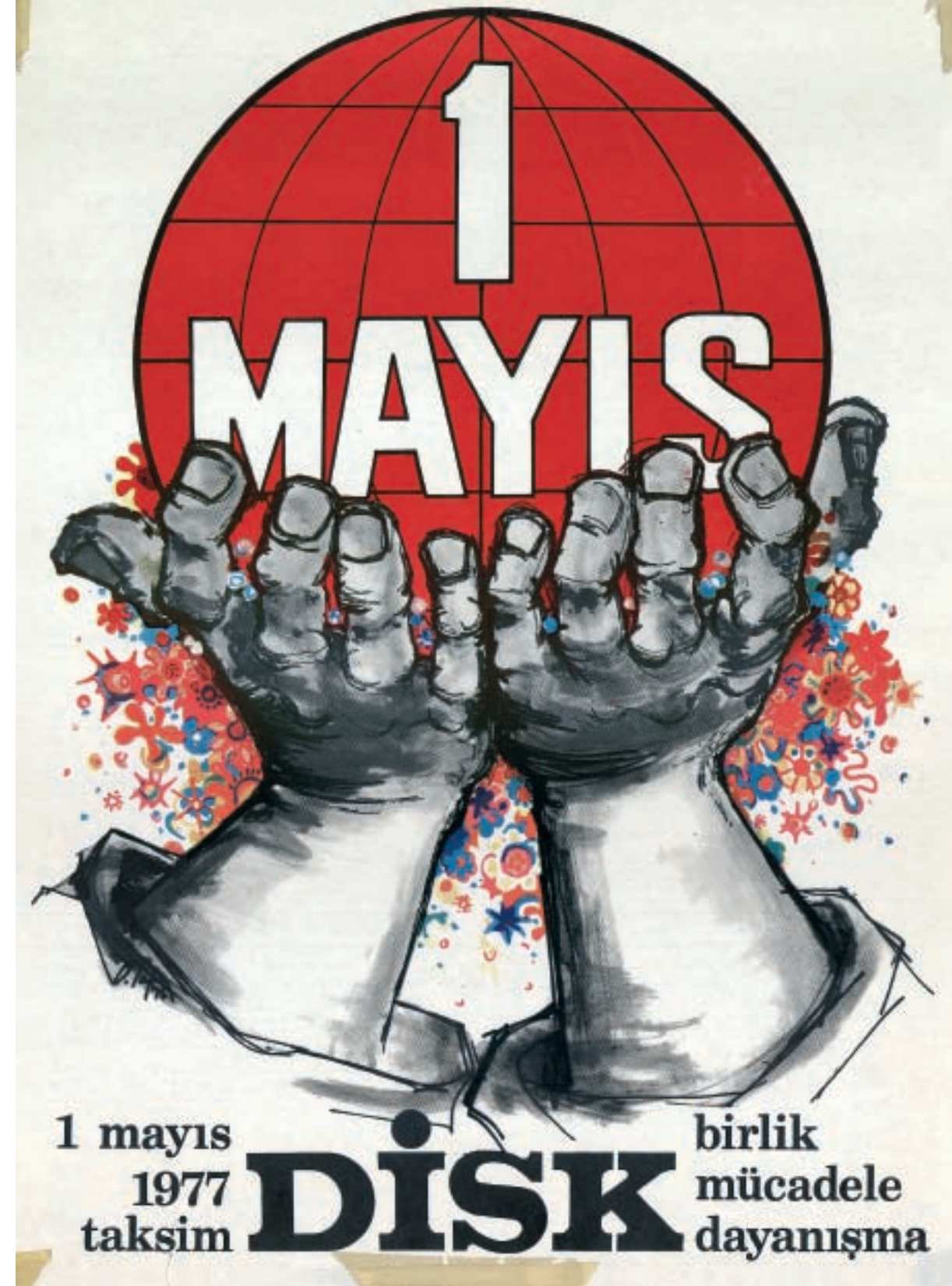
Poster calling for 1 May 1977 demonstration by the trade union federation DISK, designed by Orhan Taylan.

Next spread: Demonstration in The Hague, April 1978 (press photo De Waarheid)

Trade unionism had been almost non-existent in Turkey until 1908, when there was a wave of strikes. Because Turkish economic life was dominated by small artisan workshops rather than factories, attempts to establish a trade union federation failed, and strikes were officially prohibited until 1963.

It was only in 1952 (helped by American support) that a 'yellow' trade union federation, Türk-İs, was established. After the 1960 coup, the trade unions that had been prohibited emerged once again. Twelve trade union leaders began the Turkish Labour Party, and Kemal Sülker held various important posts in the new party. Only one-third of its members were industrial workers, while fifty percent were white collar workers and craftsmen.

The Confederation of Revolutionary Trade Unions (DISK) was born in 1967. Kemal Sülker, who had previously been involved in Türk-İs, became the secretary of DISK. His archive includes official records of both federations, the Turkish Labour Party, and research materials for his books on the socialist movement.





HOLLANDA TÜRKİYELİ İŞÇİLER BİRLİĞİ

HTİB

TURIST İŞÇİ YERİNDE TRON CEZALAN DIRILMALI
TURIST İŞÇİLERİN BİR KISMI DEĞİL TAMAMI AFEDİLMELİ

AHOR ILEGALES QUIEN DE

UNIDAD PARA TODOS OS OPERARIO EN

DEP

The Kurds

The Kurds have been fighting for their rights since time immemorial. About ten million Kurds live in Turkey, and they have always reached out for support for their struggle abroad. The broad range of Kurdish materials at the IISH allows an overview of Kurdish organizations both within and outside Turkey.

The library materials cover the Kurdish revolts since 1880. Documentation includes the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK), which envisaged a rural Kurdish insurgency and an independent socialist state. After the 1980 coup, PKK operations were continued from Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq. The archives of Lissy Schmidt and the International Society of Kurdistan give a lively picture of the international solidarity movement.

The International Society of Kurdistan (ISK) was founded in 1960 in Amsterdam by Dutch students and journalists. ISK engaged in research on the history of the Kurds.

The German journalist Lissy Schmidt was concerned with worldwide publicity for the Kurdish cause until she was murdered in Iraq in 1994, together with her Kurdish guide Azis Qadir Faraj. Lissy Schmidt (born in 1959) moved to Istanbul in 1984, worked in the Turkish part of Kurdistan and in the autonomous Kurdish region in northern Iraq. She contributed to the *Frankfurter Rundschau* and other journals and radio broadcasts.

Birecik (Turkish Kurdistan), 1 September 1997:
Thousands of Kurds greet the bus convoy of the 'Musa Anter Peace Train Delegation'. The Delegation was named after the Kurdish journalist and writer Musa Anter who was murdered in 1992.



Village Institutes

A social experiment that had a great impact on Turkish culture, even today, took shape in the late 1930s:

the **Köy Enstitüleri** or **Village Institutes**. This was an attempt to reduce illiteracy and improve the educational level in the countryside. Although education was theoretically supposed to be for boys and girls, in reality the girls did not participate.

Instruction at a Village Institute, 1942.

The institutes (Köy Enstitüleri) were a social and educational experiment intended to upgrade the educational level in the countryside. When the experiment ended in 1953, the institutes had helped 17,000 students, many of whom were to become teachers. (Photo from collection H. Inanç)

The students at the village institutes took theoretical and practical lessons that were intended to be useful for daily life in the village. The five-year educational program included languages, art, science, maths, agriculture, and crafts such as carpentry and tailoring. Although the village institutes were the result of law and were an official policy, resistance to this secular education grew, and in 1953 the experiment ended.

It was feared that the institutes would eventually produce 'the marxists of tomorrow'. In fact, they generated thousands of new village teachers with enlightened ideas.

Some of these teachers later initiated the leftist trade union of teachers, Türkiye Öğretmenler Sendikası. Many famous novelists such as Fakir Baykurt and Mehmet Basaran began their careers as students of the Village Institutes.

The IISH has a unique collection of photographs on the institutes as well as the research archive of the Dutch scholar of Turkish life, Wim van den Munkhof.



Devrimci-Sol

Devrimci-Sol (Revolutionary Left) or DHKC

(Revolutionary People's Liberation Front) is a radical leftist organization rooted in the student movement of the seventies. It characterized the Turkish system as institutionalized fascism and engaged in armed violence and bombings against it.

The violent attacks were intended to express the 'struggle for the revolution and for the awareness and encouragement of the masses'. DHKC activists have been struggling for years against 'F-type' solitary confinement cells. Since 2000 more than 100 prisoners have been killed during uprisings or hunger strikes to protest these cells. The charming bracelets in the IISH collection that were crafted by imprisoned members of Dev Sol/DHKC present a paradox when the grim circumstances of imprisonment and the DHKC ideology of violence are borne in mind. The bracelets were smuggled out of prison and entrusted to the IISH. Together with many letters, hand made illustrated bulletins, flyers, and drawings from DHKC prisoners, the bracelets form a colorful asset amongst the Turkish collections at the Institute.

Some of the folklore products crafted in jail by members of the revolutionary militant Dev Sol/DHKC. These were smuggled out of jail and, together with many other objects and documents, entrusted to the IISH in 2006.



Access

The Institute is open to visitors and for research purposes. For more information, the address, and opening hours, see www.iisg.nl. The Turkish language version is available at <http://www.iisg.nl/uste/>

Staff members involved in the Turkey Department are Zülfikar Özdoğan (Amsterdam), Emirali Türkmen (Ankara), and Lokman Polat (Stockholm).

Research data includes archives, books and periodicals, photographs, posters, and video and sound tapes. The collections may be accessed in various ways via www.iisg.nl.

The archives index contains individual archival descriptions listed alphabetically and a list of all archives by country (browse Turkey, viz. the country that houses a Turkish or Kurdish organization abroad). The documents themselves can only be consulted in the reading room.

Donors and owners of archives on loan to the Institute may have imposed certain restrictions about accessing, copying, and publication. In some cases, it may be necessary to request the express permission of the donor or owner.

Books, periodicals, and image and sound materials are retrievable via the library catalogue <http://www.iisg.nl/opc.php>.

In addition, the archives index, library catalogue and other data collections may be consulted via a single search at <http://search.iisg.nl>.



A Turkish language bulletin about the acquisitions and activities of the Turkey Department at the IISH is issued annually since 2001: Sosyal Tarih. Uluslararası Sosyal Tarih Enstitüsü Türkiye Bölümü.

It is also available online as a PDF file at: <http://www.iisg.nl/uste/>.

(Editor: Zülfikar Özdoğan, email zoz@iisg.nl)

İstirak (Participation), the journal of the Ottoman Socialist Party OSP (1910)

نومبرو ۱ - ۲۰ - ۷ هزیران ۱۳۲۸ پنجشنبه سنه ۲

صاحب امتیاز: حسین حلی
موزادار و تحریریه: ایچون حسین حلی
بکه مراجعت اولتور: بکه مراجعت اولتور

اشترک

ابونه سرائیل: داخله سنه لکی ۲۰
غروش خارجده: ۸ فرانک

مدیر مسئول: صالح سری
ناشر: انزله خانسی
بابه عالیده: ابوالعود ساجده
سنده دائره: مخصوصه

مسلک موافق: هر نوع اوراق
قول با بدلیج

ملم نوع بشرده و علم روی زمین
jurnal socialista
ichtirak

نسخه سی (اون بش کونده بر پنجشنبه کونلری نشر اولتور سوسیالیست غز نه سیدر) ۱ غر و شدر

اشتراک کونل بر مقصدی:
عثمانلی سوسیالیست کیتخانه سی
نای آله سوسیالیزم افکارنه عالمده
بر کلیات وجوده کتیر مک بیتنددیز
عمله نک حیاته، جمعیت بشریه نک
معادت آیه سنه اساسی اوله یله جک
قواعد و نظریات اجتماعی نی بو
کیتخانه ایله قارئلر مزه کوسترمک
آکلا تئق ایسته یوروز سوسیالیزم
رهبر عمله نامنده کی ایلمک رساله انتشار
ایتمشدر



المائید سوسیالیزمک موجدی
قارل مارکس

Collections from/re Turkish and Kurdish migrants

'Alternatif'

(Turkish Youth Center, Amsterdam)

Devrimci İşçi

(Revolutionary Workers Committee, Netherlands)

Hollanda Türkiyeli İşçiler Birliği

(Netherlands Turkish Workers Society)

Hollanda Türkiyeli Kadınlar Birliği

(Netherlands Turkish Women Society)

Inspraakorgaan Turken

(Forum of Public Enquiry, Netherlands)

Islamitische Stichting voor Onderwijs en Opvoeding

(Education according to Islam, Netherlands)

Mustafa Dokudur

(Immigrant Labour, Netherlands)

Turan Gül

(Immigrant Labour, Netherlands)

Muharrem Karaman

(Migrant Committees, Belgium)



Files on Turkey in non-Turkish archives at the IISH

Amnesty International

Campaign for the Defence of the Turkish Peace Association (London)

'Communist Parties of Azerbaijan, Iran and Turkey'

European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)

'Human rights and opposition movements in Turkey' collection

International Confederation of Trade Unions (ICTU)

International Labour Organization (ILO)

International Union of Socialist Youth (IUSY)

Miners International Federation Socialist International (SI)

'Turkey-Transcaucasus relations' collection

Ford Nederland (Employees Council, Ford Amsterdam)

Gastarbeidwinkel Nijmegen (Immigrant Labour, NL)

International Society of Kurdistan (Amsterdam)

Komitee Mensenrechten in Turkije (Human Rights in Turkey Committee, NL)



Landelijk Actiecomité Wet Arbeid Buitenlandse Werknemers (Immigrant Labour, NL)

Nederlands Centrum Buitenlanders (Netherlands Center for Immigrants)

NOS Programma Paspoort (Immigrants, NL)

Remplod (Reintegration of Emigrant Manpower, Netherlands)

Stichting Nederland Kurdistan (Dutch Kurdistan Foundation)

Stichting Peregrinus (Immigrant Labour, NL)

Werkgroep Buitenlanders Leiden (Immigrants, NL)

Werkgroep Internationaal Beleid Utrecht (Immigrants, NL)

Tom Etty (International secretary Dutch trade union federation FNV)

Jak den Exter (Anthropologist)



Colophon:

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