

Contribution of the Bolshevik Party (North Kurdistan–Turkey)

## ***Country Report***

Turkey is a semi-colonial, capitalist country dependent on imperialism, with feudal remnants particularly in the superstructure.

It is an important regional power in the Middle East, holds North Kurdistan and Northern Cyprus under occupation and has expansionist intentions.

### ***Some facts about Turkey's structure***

***Population*** Approximately 70 million people live in Turkey. (According to the last census in 2000 there was a population of 67 844 903, the rate of increase in population was 1,83 % between 1990-2000, tendency falling. In addition, there are about 3 million emigrants in various countries of the world, above all in Western Europe, about 1 million in Germany.)

***Turkey is a Multinational State*** The dominant nation—Turks—make up the majority (about 70 %); with about 20 % the Kurds form the second largest group of the population. They reside mainly in that region of Kurdistan which remained within the boundaries of “Republic Turkey” after the First World War as the boundaries in the Middle East were redrawn by the imperialists: in North Kurdistan. In addition there are various national minorities: Armenians, Greeks, Jews, Arabs, Circassians, Lazes etc. Under the Lausanne Treaty (1923), Armenians and Greeks are also recognized by Turkey as “Christian minorities”. (Only a few live in Turkey. 1,3 million people of the Armenian nation were murdered by the Turkish ruling classes in the first genocide of the 20th century. After the Lausanne Treaty about a million Anatolian and Thracian Greeks were expelled to Greece while almost a million Turks moved from Greece to Turkey during the “population exchange”.) According to official Turkish interpretation, other—predominantly Muslim—nationalities do not exist at all. The Turkish ruling classes deny every national oppression, because everyone would enjoy full civil rights irrespective of national affiliation. Every man or woman who does not belong to the Armenian or Greek minority is considered as “Turk”. Someone who does not accept that and defines his national identity other than as Turk, is stamped and persecuted as “separatist”.

*National oppression of the non-Turkish nationalities is a characteristic feature of the Republic of Turkey since its foundation.*

***Religion*** The overwhelming majority of the population is Muslim (99 %), mainly Sunnite.

***Urban/rural population*** The great majority of the population (numbers vary between 61 and 76 percent) lives in urban areas.

***Occupation according to sectors of the working population*** 18,4 % of all employees work in the processing industry, 4,9 % in the construction sector, 44,0 % in the service sector, 32,7 % in the agricultural sector. The share of agriculture in the GDP is 14 %, of industry 26 %, of services 60 %.

While the number of the employed in the agricultural sector, and the share of the agricultural sector in the GDP constantly decrease, the numbers for other sectors are on the rise.

In the agricultural sector too the economy is organized capitalistically. Remnants of feudal property relations still existing particularly in Kurdistan do not play almost any role in the economy anymore.

***Relations of ground ownership*** The main form of ground ownership in Turkey/North Kurdistan today is small to medium ownership. Most farms in Turkey are small holdings mainly based on “family labor”, employing a few wage workers in addition. “Peonism” practically does not exist anymore.

***Feudal remnants more prominent in the superstructure than in the economy*** Feudal remnants show themselves in the influence of the Islamic religion which penetrates everything, in various forms of extra-economic dependency of former serfs on their former landlords, like partial survival of some feudal traditions such as feudal family and clan ties, blood vengeance (although not a mass phenomenon), stoning of wives per “family council decision” etc.

**Economy** Turkey's GDP was \$US 147,7 billion in 2001. The real increase in GDP between 1990 and 2001 was on the average 3,3 % p/a. (In 2000/2001 Turkey had one of its deepest crises in the last decades, so that that year the GDP growth was negative—minus 8,7 %.)

This means, the Turkish economy, taken as a whole, is a growing capitalist economy with all features characteristic of a capitalist economy. This is true, for example, in the development of industrial production and in the structure of Turkey's exports. Today Turkey's exports consist not of raw materials and certain agricultural products anymore, but largely of industrial goods. Turkey had a total export volume of \$US 35 billion in 2001. Clothing and textiles made up 3 % of it, motor vehicles 8,8 %, iron and steel 7,8 %, electronics 4,0 % and food 10,2 %. The imperialists see not only a big market and a supplier of cheap raw materials in Turkey, but increasingly also a cheap wage country with many advantages of location from which to develop other markets as well. This way, many "joint ventures" are developed particularly in the light and the construction industries where imperialist capital makes a good deal with its lackeys in Turkey.

**Turkey's position in the world production of some selected goods** We can see the result by looking at Turkey's present position in the world production of some selected industrial goods: In the housing construction sector Turkey stood at the 7th position in the world with 226.000 dwellings in new housing development in 2001. In cement production Turkey is 8<sup>th</sup> with 36,0 million tons. In the production of synthetic fibers on cellulose and synthetic material basis it ranks 10<sup>th</sup>. It is 15<sup>th</sup> in steel production, 6<sup>th</sup> in the production of TV sets, and 10<sup>th</sup> in the production of household refrigerators.

**Dependent capitalism** One must know, however, that this development does not lessen, but intensifies the dependence of Turkey on imperialism. The dominant Turkish big bourgeoisie offers its services to the imperialists—against good remuneration, of course—as a willing helper in developing the markets in the Middle East and in the periphery of the former Soviet Union with mainly Islamic Turkic peoples.

The economy of Turkey is dependent on imperialism. It is a highly indebted state. The foreign liabilities amounted in June 2003 to \$US 137,9 billion. International organizations of capital like IMF and World Bank, for whom the smooth functioning of the so-called "debt service" is the most important thing, dictate Turkey's "economic activity programs".

The US imperialism is still the predominant imperialist power in Turkey. It has, however, a serious competitor in the shape of German imperialism, the biggest "trading partner" of Turkey since the seventies, outstripping the USA also in direct investments—except for the military industry. The French, English and Swedish imperialism are also strongly engaged in Turkey. Between the USA and the EU, i.e. above all Germany and France, there is a fight going on for predominance in Turkey.

**Public sector** The public sector" still plays a very important role in the economy. This role, decisive right up to the eighties, is forced back more and more in the course of privatization. Notwithstanding that, 15,6 % of the workforce is employed in the public sector. The state is still the biggest employer in Turkey.

### **Summary**

We think these facts speak for themselves, and show us clearly that Turkey is a capitalist country dependent on imperialism. The appraisal of present-day Turkey as a semi-feudal country misses the truth. In such a country, to propagate people's war, which is essentially a peasant revolution based on agrarian revolution, as the only way of the revolution is, in our opinion, out of place.

There was and is no peasant movement in Turkey on the basis of agrarian revolutionary demands, particularly for land. Considering the economic basis of Turkey, neither will there be any such movement.

**Fascism** Politically, Turkey is a fascist state. That is, the rule of the Turkish bourgeoisie is based above all on open systematic terror, and this since the foundation of the Republic. The Kemalists who led the liberation war of the peoples of Turkey against the imperialist forces of occupation, and particularly against their willing helpers like the Greek ruling classes, set up a new bourgeois Turkish state on the ruins of the Ottoman empire after the military victory in the liberation war. In this state any opposition was suppressed by fascist methods in the name of defending the Turkish/Kemalist revolution. A one-party/one-man dictatorship was erected.

The organized communist movement in Turkey overstressed almost always wrongly the positive aspects of the Kemalist rule and finally acted as a supporter of the Kemalist revolution, which did not prevent the Kemalists from attacking to smash the Communist Party.

First the founder of the TKP/ML—our forerunner organization—, Ibrahim Kaypakkaya, revealed in 1972 the true character of the Kemalist dictatorship as fascist, and paved the way for the development of the communist movement as an independent political force. A formal multi-party democracy was introduced in Turkey after the Second World War, but State power always remained in the hands of the Kemalist bureaucratic bourgeoisie, with the army at the center. And whenever this state bureaucracy saw its power in danger, the military putshed (27 May 1960 and 12 September 1980) or threatened with a coup d'état to get the government it favored into power (12 March 1971 and 28 February 1997)

***Character and path of the revolution*** In its first stage, the revolution in Turkey/North Kurdistan will be an anti-imperialist, anti-fascist, new-democratic revolution. It will have a socialist perspective and will be continued under the dictatorship of the working class and peasantry uninterruptedly.

The reason for the democratic stage lies not in the existence of a “semi-feudal structure” or of decisive anti-feudal tasks in the economy.

Its necessity lies in the existence of big anti-imperialist tasks, tasks in the national question, antifascist tasks, and above all, in the lack of democratic, let alone socialist traditions and consciousness of the working masses.

Concerning the path of the revolution, the revolution in Turkey will not follow the path of people's war (peasant revolution, encirclement of the cities from the countryside etc.). It will take the Russian rather than the Chinese path, certainly without copying it.

***Some current political developments*** Currently an embittered power struggle is going on among the ruling classes in Turkey. In this struggle two camps stand face to face: On the one side stand the defenders of the *status quo*: the Kemalist bureaucratic bourgeoisie that holds the state apparatus in its hands, with the fascist army at the center. Almost all parties of the ruling classes except the governing AKP are on this side. Popular support for this wing is dwindling. They act as defenders of the “secular, democratic state founded on the rule of law”—as they call it—and “Turkey's independence”. Which is completely a fraud.

On the other side stands the present governing party that names itself a “conservative-democratic” party. Although this party has a 2/3 majority (through a first-past-the-post electoral system) in the parliament that suffices to change the constitution alone, it shies direct confrontation with the state bureaucracy, with the real holders of power in the country. It attempts to creep into power through very cautious steps. This party, which split off from the radical-Islamic party banned repeatedly, tries to get itself recognized as a “moderate Islamic democratic reform party” by the imperialists and the Turkish big bourgeoisie. It seems as if they are successful with this plan.

In the fight for power in the state, the question of the EU affiliation plays an important role. In order to force back the power of the Kemalists, the government wants to get the package of “democratization” and “liberalization” measures required by the EU passed, while the Kemalists come out more and more openly with an anti-EU and anti-imperialist jargon. It seems as if a struggle democracy versus national independence was going on. What an illusion. Neither is the one side concerned about real democratization, nor is the other side really concerned about independence from imperialism.

Our position on the in-fighting among the ruling classes is to bring it across to the workers and toilers that, for us, both of them are like the plague and the cholera. We must wage our own fight for democracy and independence against all parties of the ruling classes. We are too weak to derive any benefit from the contradictions among them for our revolutionary struggle.

***The movement of the working masses*** Compared with the challenges, the labor movement in Turkey is weak. The degree of consciousness and organization is low. Not even 10 % of the workers are organized in unions. The current struggles are, as a whole, of defensive nature, and their leadership is, as a rule, in the hands of the union bosses who grew together with the system, so that the workers' struggles can mostly be degraded to the tail of a section of the ruling classes in their power struggle. We saw that in the struggle against privatization, where the union bosses called state capital as “people's property”, and waged the struggle as a struggle for state capitalism. Or, currently a campaign is run-

ning against a bill submitted by the government for reforming the municipal administration. The Islamists want to weaken the central administration in order to force back the power of the Kemalists, and give more competences to the communes. The Kemalist centralist state and its apologists howl. With and behind them the union bosses. Workers and toilers are called upon and organized for actions to defend the quo status.

**The peasant movement** As a mass movement with specifically peasant demands this movement is weaker than the labor movement. In recent years the longest lasting peasant movement was a struggle on the basis of demands of the environmental policy. It was a question of gold extraction with cyanide in a field in the Aegean region. An MNC wanted to buy up the whole field in order to end the peasant movement. The peasants did not let themselves be bought up. This movement showed that demands relating to environmental policy can become an important lever in the development of mass movements in the future.

**The feminist movement** is slowly but steadily developing as a mass movement. While there is strong desire developing on the part of the working women to fight as an independent women's movement with their own demands, this wish is ignored by most of the revolutionary organizations, and the independent movement of women is dismissed as feminist and splittist. On this 8<sup>th</sup> March in Istanbul, for example, the proposal of various women's organizations—also of us—to organize an independent women's demonstration without men was rejected by most of the revolutionary organizations. We think this wish of women is legitimate, the independent organization of working women in their own organizations does not weaken but will strengthen the class struggle of the working class also by involving and drawing women, who would otherwise maybe remain at home, directly into the struggle.

**The struggle of the students in secondary and higher education** for their democratic and economic demands plays a role that is not to be underestimated in the mass movement in Turkey. All later revolutionary and communist organizations were to develop out of this movement in the late sixties. The level of this movement is nowadays not very high, but it has potential, and it has recovered itself from the deep depoliticization after the putsch of September 12, 1980.

**The strongest mass movement of the toilers** in Turkey/North Kurdistan in the last 15 years was and is undoubtedly the **Kurdish national movement**. In its development the bourgeois-nationalist organization PKK and the armed struggle waged by it played the decisive role. This organization evolved more and more openly onto a reformist line. Its "Chairman", Abdullah Öcalan, after being arrested and put under the control of the Turkish state, openly declared the "strengthening of integral Turkey" as his political objective. The PKK followed its chairman, who lets himself celebrate as "The Sun". The whole policy of the PKK, now calling itself Kongra Gel after several name changes, is directed towards conciliation with the Turkish state.

The Kurdish national movement is still the biggest mass movement in Turkey today. But now, it is a system-immanent, system-concurrent reformist mass movement. When sometimes it behaves radically, this is because the Turkish fascist state is not ready to accept the offers the PKK makes it. It wants a complete dissolution and total submission of the PKK. To win the revolutionary potentials still existing in this movement for the communist struggle is an important task. This is possible only when the Bolshevik Party of North Kurdistan can establish itself among the masses as the true alternative in the fight against the fascist Turkish state, against bourgeois nationalism and reformism. This is a difficult task, but without solving this task we cannot reach the unity of the working masses of Turkey and North Kurdistan in the fight against the common enemy. We must and we will solve this task.

**The organized left movement** In the organized left movement left of the social democracy exist on the one hand **legal left** parties calling themselves socialist, partly communist. None of these parties is really socialist. None of them has any mass influence. Their real strength is expressed maybe most clearly in the elections. All together, they get maybe one percent of the votes.

**The revolutionary left** is necessarily organized illegally in fascist Turkey. That does not mean at all that they do not do any legal work. They publish legal newspapers, work in legal mass organizations like unions, partially have their own "mass" organizations, "cultural centers", "neighborhood centers"

etc., but as parties they are illegal. All of these organizations call themselves socialist, communist, Marxist-Leninist or Maoist.

There are three main currents: The former PLA supporters, Castroist-centrist groups, and Maoists.

A common characteristic of all revolutionary left organizations is that they handle subjectively while appraising the situation, and exaggerate grossly. They exaggerate the spontaneous mass movement. They exaggerate their own situation and successes. Should one study the organs of revolutionary left organizations in Turkey/North Kurdistan, one surely comes to the conclusion that the revolution is already knocking on the door. It will break out in a couple of days, months etc. And the respective organization is firmly anchored among the working measures and leads their struggles. This picture has less to do with reality than with wishful thinking! In order to let wish become reality, it is necessary first to understand the reality as it is!

**And we:** The Bolshevik Party (North Kurdistan–Turkey) exists as a party since 22 years. In these 22 years we worked out our political complexion, and starting from being an organization abroad, developed towards an organization operating in Turkey/North Kurdistan.

**Main task: Building the Bolshevik Party** We think the most important thing for the communists of every country is to create and build a Bolshevik Party. This party must be built in the class struggle. This party must be built in the working class.

We think building the Bolshevik party runs, must run, through two stages. In the first stage of party building the main task of the party is to win the vanguard of the proletariat for communism. We are still in this first stage. We work systematically to win the vanguard of the proletariat. For this reason we concentrate our forces on the struggle of the proletariat. We try to get our foot into the factories, and base our organization on factory cells. We work in the reactionary unions for a militant class line. Our whole practice shows us that this work is immensely difficult and laborious, and no great successes can be expected in the short run. However, Marxism-Leninism teaches us, and we know from the experiences of the communist world movement and from our own experiences, that this is the only correct way for the proletarian party and for the victory of the proletarian revolution.

**Two parties for two countries** With regard to the organizational structure of our party, proceeding from a concrete analysis of the situation in Turkey/North Kurdistan, and proceeding from the Marxist-Leninist principles and the experiences of the world communist movement, from those of the CPSU(B) in particular, we have trodden a new path. We began building two regional parties organizationally independent of each other in Turkey and North Kurdistan that are united in a central party.

At the end of our party-building work there will be a Bolshevik Party (Turkey) in Turkey and a Bolshevik Party (North Kurdistan) in North Kurdistan. These parties will carry out the regional work completely independently of each other in their own responsibility. These parties will be united in the central party BP (NK–T).

Proceeding from the fact that the BP (NK/T) was established as a central party, we follow the reverse path. Out of the one central party, we are now trying to develop two regional parties. We see and experience the difficulties. But the difficulties are there to overcome. We will overcome them.

**The policy of new orientation abroad** Another question is that of the future of our organizations abroad. We were forced by the circumstances to start off as a purely overseas organization. We had quite a strong organization in some West European countries, particularly in the FRG.

There was not only a representation abroad for international relations, and maybe a few other organizations with special duties, but a whole lot of party and sympathizer organizations that conducted agitation and propaganda for the revolution in Turkey/North Kurdistan among workers from there in the European countries, and tried to organize them for the revolution there.

In our 5<sup>th</sup> congress (in 1994) we made the clear analysis that workers from Turkey/North Kurdistan, whose focus in life was the European countries, have become part of the working class in these countries, and they should organize themselves in the communist parties of these countries. The future of our comrades and sympathizers abroad, when they do not go back or are not sent to North Kurdistan/Turkey, or are not organized for special tasks abroad, lies in the communist organizations of the countries in which they live. Since years we are trying to put this policy which we call “The New Orientation” into practice. We made good experiences with it and took concrete steps. We have the firm plan to continue these steps and bring them to conclusion.

***The Marxist-Leninist World Movement*** Concerning the unity of the International Marxist-Leninist Movement, we think we first need a common foundation elaborated jointly, a political platform worked out in common, to create this unity.

In order to work out this platform, the Comintern program of 1928, the decision to dissolve the Comintern 1943, the resolutions of the Cominform on Yugoslavia, the Moscow declarations of 1957 & 1960, and the 1963 polemics have to be assessed in common open and also public discussions—public in the sense that important differences of opinion are not concealed from the masses. In addition, the unification attempts since then must also be assessed.

It is necessary to make theoretical works, studies, etc., carried out by various parties on their own, into component parts of joint works and studies.

We know how difficult it is. But this can be done.

Joint discussions, joint theoretical studies are naturally not the only levers in unifying or reunifying the world communist movement. Parallel to that, in practical politics we must make the labor movement of all countries a really internationalist movement, we must collaborate in joint international actions. The objective foundations for it are stronger than ever before.

We think mutual open and public criticism also serves to educate the masses, and we needn't have any shyness before that. The world communist movement will grow together again only in joint practical struggle and in joint efforts to create an international political platform, which efforts do not preclude, but include open and public debate and mutual criticism.

We can succeed in doing that, we will succeed in doing that—together.