

## THE EFFECTS OF NATIONALISM ON THE TURKISH LEFT: THE CASE OF THE TURKISH WORKERS' PARTY

Melek KAYMAZ MERT\*

### Abstract

Today, the concept of nationalism is generally associated with right-wing ideologies, while leftism is thought to be a view that believes in a universal citizenship understanding devoid of nationality and is more positioned on class distinctions. When we look at the historical phases of the Turkish leftism, it is seen that nationalist ideas coexist with leftist ideology, except for some radical leftist forms. The Turkish left mostly emphasized nationalism through its anti-colonial views. The nationalist and fully independent Turkey thoughts and discourses of Atatürk and the founding staff of the Republic have always had a great impact on the Turkish left. Established in 1961 as a party that defines itself as a representative of the oppressed working class, the Workers' Party of Turkey has a left-wing line and has drawn attention as the only socialist party that was able to elect a member of Turkish Parliament. However, when the establishment of the Workers' Party of Turkey, the phases it went through and the discourses of the party members are examined, it is clear how much it is compatible with the nationalist view. The aim of this study is to read the effect of the nationalist view on the Turkish left through the Workers' Party of Turkey.

**Keywords:** Nationalism, Leftism, Turkish leftism, Workers' Party of Turkey

## MİLLİYETÇİLİĞİN TÜRK SOLU ÜZERİNE ETKİLERİ: TÜRKİYE İŞÇİ PARTİSİ ÖRNEĞİ

### Öz

Günümüzde milliyetçilik kavramı genellikle sağ ideolojilerle bağdaştırılırken, solculuk ise milliyet duygusundan yoksun evrensel bir vatandaşlık anlayışına inanan ve daha çok sınıfsal ayrımlar üzerinde konumlanan bir görüş olarak düşünülmektedir. Türk solunun geçirdiği tarihi evrelere bakıldığında, bazı radikal sol düşünce biçimleri hariç, milliyetçi fikirlerin sol ideolojiyle bir arada olduğu görülmektedir. Türk solu tarihsel süreç içerisinde çoğunlukla sömürge karşıtı görüşleri üzerinden milliyetçiliğe vurgu yapmıştır. Atatürk ve Cumhuriyet'in kurucu kadrosunun milliyetçi ve tam bağımsız Türkiye düşünceleri ve söylemleri, Türk solu

\* Öğr. Gör. Dr, Bursa Teknik Üniversitesi, Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu, Yıldırım /Bursa, Turkey, E-mail: melek.mert@btu.edu.tr. <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9027-7780>

*üzerinde her daim büyük etkiye sahip olmuştur. 1961 yılında kendini ezilen işçi sınıfının bir temsilcisi olarak tanımlayan bir parti olarak kurulan Türkiye İşçi Partisi solcu bir çizgiye sahip olmuş, TBMM'ye milletvekili seçtiren tek sosyalist parti olarak dikkati çekmiştir. Ancak Türkiye İşçi Partisi'nin kuruluşu, geçirdiği evreler ve parti üyelerinin söylemlerine bakıldığında milliyetçi görüşle ne kadar bağdaştığı açıktır. Bu çalışmanın amacı milliyetçi görüşün Türk solu üzerindeki etkisini Türkiye İşçi Partisi üzerinden okumaktır.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Milliyetçilik, Solculuk, Türk Solu, Türkiye İşçi Partisi

## Introduction

Leftism is an ideology that takes a stand against any class distinction, opposes the free market economy, and adopts a supranational approach with the claim that all oppressed people are accepted as a single nation. Nationalism, on the other hand, is accepted as a view that attaches great importance to the sensitivity and consciousness of belonging to a nation (Anthony, 2013: 15). Therefore, it can be thought that the concepts of leftism and nationalism do not support each other or that these two concepts are contradictory to each other.

The foundations of modern Turkey's political thought go back to organizations such as the Young Turks and İttihat Terakki. The leftist view's connection with these, stems from this organization's oppositional views (Turkmen and Özger, 2016: 23). The nationalist view, like other political views, was embodied in these organizations in the last periods of the Ottoman Empire. The traces of nationalism are also seen in the left movements that started to become widespread in the country, especially in the 1960s and later.

The most important difference that distinguishes the nationalist view from the others is that it continues to exist as one of the most deeply ingrained ideas that manifest itself in almost all political currents in the history of Turkish politics and thought. One of the most important examples that can be shown in this context has been the Workers' Party of Turkey. Founded by a group of trade unionists in 1961, it started out with the slogan of "National Democratic Revolution" and continued its way with its own nationalist discourses (Belge, 2008: 36).

The aim of this study is to exemplify and read the effects of nationalist thought on the Turkish left through the Workers' Party of Turkey. In this context, first of all, the relationship between leftism and nationalism was discussed within the scope of the conceptual framework, then the historical framework of the leftist view's ties with nationalism in Turkey was revealed. Later, the establishment of the Workers' Party of Turkey the phases it went through and the emphasis on nationalism in these phases were evaluated through the discourses of the founders and notables of the party. The method used in this study is archival research and literature review.

## **1. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: ON LEFT NATIONALISM**

Because nationalism and leftist views present two different ideological perspectives, they are regarded as unrelated or even competing ideologies. For the left, nationalism, seen as an artificial phenomenon, is a veil that prevents the oppressed classes from seeing that they are exploited. On the other hand, for nationalism, the left view is a way of thinking that does not care about the feeling of nationality and national identity and does not see important arguments for a nation. In the historical process, although these two basic views are in opposition, they have been able to act together against capitalism and imperialism, which are the common enemy perception (Güngör, 2021: 859).

In order to understand the relationship between the left view and nationalism, it is necessary to analyze Marx and Engels first. Marx saw nationalism as a feature of states, not as communities differentiated in terms of characteristics. Similarly, in Engels' works, it is seen that the concept of nation is frequently used to meet the nation-state. In his speech at the First Labor Federation, Marx stated that there was no contradiction in the international workers' party trying to create an independent Polish nation. On the other hand, especially Engels' approach to nationalisms such as Czech nationalism and Slavic nationalism is different. Engels speaks of two understandings of nationalism under the name of 'historical nations and nations without history'. Nations without history do not deserve an independent existence (Benner, 2014: 180).

On the other hand, Marx used the concept of nationality to designate the people of a sovereign state, as well as to express people with a language and a common history. In this context, Marx and Engels somewhat endorsed the workers' national struggles. In this direction, they have also developed the idea that the proletariat could be successful if it was organized on a national basis. In other words, the national struggle and the class struggle go together. As it will be noticed, Marx and Engels considered the nation as a prerequisite for the revolution, but also gave the proletariat the task of building a nation suitable for this revolution (Marx and Engels, 2017: 115-116).

Engels had a much more nationalistic orientation to the German nation. That the reconquest of the German-speaking bank of the Rhine was a matter of national honor for him. He thought that the Germanization of the forcibly severed Netherlands and Belgium was a political necessity. In addition, Engels also mentioned the need to discard unnecessary foreign words in the German language. Engels' reaction to foreign influence was not limited to this. For example, he was of the opinion that foreign forms applied in architecture should not be allowed in Germany (Davis, 1991: 23). For Marx and Engels, nationalism is a concept that should pave the way for the socialist revolution (Buçukçu, 2018: 48). Without this, it is not possible to

come to the power. In this context, the Revolution of 1848 brought the idea of unity and autonomy to the nations that had been deprived of unity until then, and thus paved the way for a socialist revolution, even if it was not a real socialist revolution (Marx and Engels, 2017: 110-111).

When we look at the historical process, first of all, the understanding of nationalism in Soviet Russia comes to the fore. Vladimir Ilyich Lenin (1870 -1924), who had 'little interest in nationalism' during his exile from Russia and was an ardent communist from the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution until his death, was brought to the Soviet leadership (Hayes, 1995: 90). The revolution created an idea that would enable the unification of different people and the abolition of Russian nationalism in Tsarist Russia, which was founded on the "Strong Russia" chauvinism. But with the revolution, the Russians almost saw Russian nationalism as a movement that would save them. During this period, an understanding of nationalism was tried to be formed on the ideological foundations of the Soviet Union (Private, 2014: 99). The 1905 Rebellion in Russia revealed the powerful results of the unification of socialists and nationalists. By including the revolutionary role of nationalist movements in his work titled "The Right to Self-Determination of Nations", Lenin stated that the power of nationalism would be the best way to prepare the future rapprochement of nations (Lenin, 1998: 19).

The process that deepens the relations between nationalism and socialism is essentially the new conditions of the world that emerged after the Second World War. With the development of the Non-Aligned movement, which came to the fore at the Bandung Conference convened in 1955, socialism and nationalism were blended in the struggle against imperialism. The colonies of the Western states in Asia and Africa, especially after 1945, embarked on independence movements against the colonial states (Murat, 2018: 363). In colonial countries, anti-imperialist movements naturally took a socialist form. There are two main reasons for this situation: The first is that the exploiters are capitalist countries. It leads societies to engage in the liberation movements psychologically, and the hostility to capitalism pushes the exploited nations to socialism. The second important reason is that socialism is perceived as synonymous with planning economy. Since these countries do not have a developed bourgeois class, a significant part of the economic activity is under state control (Buçukçu, 2017: 58).

Another development that blended nationalism and leftism was the Chinese Socialist Revolution. In this process, Mao Zedong, who brought the oppressed sections of the society together under the roof of nationalism, put the concept of nation at the center of the socialist revolution. The revolution meant a national struggle and liberation against the imperialist powers. With this nationalist-socialist perspective, Mao united the broad masses of the people and took steps towards class homogeneity. In other words, with the help of national consciousness, it was an important goal to reach an agreement on the basis of socialism with some classes, such as the national

bourgeoisie, with which the general public had some contradictions (Zedung, 2008: 67).

## **2. TURKISH LEFT AND NATIONALISM**

While explaining the relationship between the Turkish left and nationalism, it is possible to examine this long process in three stages: Socialist movements in the last period of the Ottoman Empire, 1960, when the left movement gained significant momentum from the first years of the Republic, and the establishment of the Workers' Party of Turkey, which was the subject of the study. Nationalism has somehow influenced left ideology from the beginning to the end.

### **2.1. The Relationship between Leftism and Nationalism in the Last Periods of the Ottoman Empire**

In order to look at the development of the leftist view in Turkey in the historical process, it is necessary to look at the opposition movements in the last period of the Ottoman Empire. It is obvious that a significant part of these opposition movements was triggered by the nationalist ideas spread with the French Revolution. Particularly, separatist movements carried out by ethnic and religious minorities should be emphasized in this context.

The oldest socialist organization in the Ottoman Empire was the Armenian Hinchakyan Party, founded in 1887, and the Dashnaksutyun Society, founded in 1890. All the founders of these two organizations were Marxists. The biggest of the demonstrations and riots against Ottoman Empire took place in Istanbul. In 1890, Cangülyan, Kılıcyab, Açıkbaşyan, Boyacıyan and Damadyan, who were among the leaders of the party, started preparations for the rebellion in Istanbul. After the speeches made in the Kumkapı church and Cangülyan's smashing the tughra, the symbol of the Ottoman State, under his feet, the armed demonstrators came to Bab-i Ali. Thanks to the measures taken, the demonstrators were dispersed, and this attempt was left inconclusive. Patriarch Ashekyan, whose actions were said to be inappropriate, resigned from his post. After that, the Hunchak party intensified its actions once again. They organized new demonstrations, especially in Istanbul and other provinces (Özşavlı, 2012: 148).

Thessaloniki, which was almost the center of socialist organizations in the Ottoman Empire, was a place where in 1910 approximately 150.000 population consisted of Jews, Greeks, Bulgarians, Turks, Serbians, Albanians, and Armenians. Nearly half of the population of the city of Thessaloniki, which had an important proletarian mass, the main feature of which was ethnic diversity, was Jews. Long working days and low wages caused significant social unrest among this large mass of workers. The workers of Thessaloniki did not remain silent against this exploitation and showed significant resistance and established unions and similar societies of a different nature than the solidarity associations established with the

initiative of the employers. (Haupt and Dumant, 1977: 123). In addition, the minorities like Armenians, Bulgarians, Jews, and Greeks who joined the socialist organizations had improved their relations with Europe since they had already joined the international socialist movement a few years before the Second Constitutional Monarchy. The Bulgarian Social Democratic Workers Party joined the Second Labor Federation and started socialist propaganda in Rumelia. The Armenian Dashnaksutyun Revolutionary Party adopted a Marxist program and entered the Second International Labor Federation in 1907, as well (Aydar, 2014: 65).

In the atmosphere of freedom that developed after the 1908 Revolution in the country, just like the proliferation of associations, clubs and strikes, there was also an increase in socialist publications in connection with these. One of them is the “İştirak”, which was started to be published weekly by Hüseyin Hilmi on February 26, 1910 and was closed after the 17th issue (Durgun, 2012: 9). The Affiliate, which was able to return to its broadcasting life later on, announced the establishment of the “Ottoman Socialist Party” a week later. The journal, which had a revolutionary character, openly called all workers to unite. The ideas put forward in the first issue of İştirak and the declaration and program of the Ottoman Socialist Party published are related to issues such as tax reform, nationalization and pacifism. The party has never been able to cooperate with socialist parties and organizations founded by minorities, which is an indicator of the national point of view (Tuncay, 2019: 123).

In these years, socialist organizations were mostly concerned with the separatist movements of minorities in line with the ideas of nationalism or the efforts made to protect workers' rights and improve the working conditions of workers. Socialism was not fully understood, especially the socialist activities carried out by the Turks remained in the shadow of nationalism.

## **2.2. Nationalist Socialism of the Republic of Turkey**

Despite the existence of socialist formations in the Ottoman Period, socialist and communist movements, operating in Turkey during and after the Turkish War of Independence, began outside of Turkey in 1916-1917. The first Turkish socialist and communist movements, which started in France, Germany, Switzerland and Russia, became centralized in Turkey after 1919 and provided the birth of socialist and communist movements that have survived until today.

Turkish socialism began to flourish especially after 1919 because the struggle with the capitalist and imperialist Europeans during the Turkish War of Independence and the rapprochement with the Russians increased the effectiveness of this ideology. Enver, Cemal, Talat Pashas and Dr. Nazım who were famous unionists, founded a communist party in Baku in 1919. One of the founders of this party, Dr. Nazım, before becoming one of the founders of such a communist party, rendered great services to Turkism

through the “Turk Ocağı” which was established in 1911. He also adopted the ideas of Ziya Gökalp. ([www.aturkancyclopedisi.gov.tr](http://www.aturkancyclopedisi.gov.tr), 2022). He is a very 'national' character for those who believe in communism.

The Communist Party of Turkey (TKP) was founded in Baku, within the borders of the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic, under the leadership of Mustafa Suphi in June 1920. Just like Dr. Nazım, Mustafa Suphi started his political life with a Turkist-nationalist view. He wrote articles in “Tanin”, the publication organ of the Committee of Ittihat Terakki. He attended the organization's congress held in Thessaloniki in 1911 as the Anatolian delegate, influenced by the ideologies of Turkism and Turkish Nationalism, with the influence of his close friends such as Yusuf Akçura, Ahmet Ağaoğlu, Talat Küçük, Ferit Tek, Mehmet Hafız and Yusuf Kemal, but he distanced himself from Turanist ideas. Between 1910 and 1912, he drew a new route with an anti-colonial and anti-imperialist perspective. Later, after the Bolshevik revolution, he was influential in the spread of anti-imperialist ideas on the people of Turkish and Muslim origin living in Central Asia and Russia (Ayber, 2022: 23).

At this point, it should be stated that Mustafa Suphi was also influenced by the ideas of Sultan Galiyev, who was a Turkish intellectual during his stay in Soviet Russia. The Cedid movement, which was the current of thought in Galiyev, was like a synthesis of Marxism and Turkism. Cedid movement can be shown as a response to the Russian strategy which tried to make Turks de-identified to spread Russian culture (Çay, 2020 :103). Some intellectuals like İsmail Gaspıralı and Galiyev started an Islamic Education Reform. They were interested not only with the Crimean Tatars, but also with all Russian Muslims. İsmail Bey, with the slogan of "Unity in Language, Idea, and Work “dedicated his life to the opening of Cedid Schools. In fact, İsmail Gaspıralı's "Language, Idea, Work Unity” ideal, in a way, constitutes the backbone of Sultan Galiyev's cultural Turkism. After a while, they were organized on the axis of their own ideology and they solved the leader problem by choosing Sultan Galiyev (Erdem, 2006).

The Turkish Communist Party is among the most important issues that need to be mentioned in order to reveal the nationalist side of the Turkish left. The Communist Party of Turkey was one of the organizations with various socialist-communist tendencies in Anatolia, which was occupied by the Western imperialist powers, under the influence of the Bolshevik Revolution that took place in October 1917. According to the "Report on the Activity of the Central Committee of the Communist Organization of Turkey", the communist activities among the Turks had two dimensions. First, dealing with the Turks included in the territory of Russia, the second was to prepare the Turks of Turkey for communism (Çelik, 2018: 64). When we look at the leftist organizations and parties, especially in the first years of the Republic, almost all of them have a national stance. When we look at left-wing intellectuals, it is seen that they cannot leave the nationalist line very much. For example, one of the founders of the Communist Party of

Turkey and later the Vatan Party, one of the important politicians and thinkers of the Marxist-Leninist line, Hikmet Kıvılcımlı had also nationalistic traces in his discourse and actions. These traces can also be understood from the name of the second party he founded. He also mentioned the positive results of the conquest of Istanbul by the Turks in 1953, that is, on the 500th anniversary of the conquest of Istanbul (Kıvılcımlı, 2008: 167).

It is also possible to see the traces of Turkish nationalism on the leftist view in literature, and one of the best examples that can be given in this regard is Nazım Hikmet, who is also referred to as the “poet of the nation”. The socialist, communist and revolutionary aspect of Nazım Hikmet, who lived between 1902-1963, is always emphasized. However, he is a follower of the belief of the journal “Genç Kalemler”, who adopted the spirit of “the return to the national identity in language and literature” and advocated the use of Turkish against Ottoman Turkish. He witnessed the Turks' struggle against imperialism, namely the First World War, and supported Mustafa Kemal's ideas (Nurettin, 1975: 13). He describes the community he formed with his friends during the occupation of Istanbul as follows: “As a young man of 17-18, we formed a gang with friends. When it got dark, we would scatter around Cadde-i Kebir (İstiklal Street), where mostly 'non-Muslims' lived, and shamelessly take down the enemy flags here and throw them away. We even walked from İnebolu to Ankara in four days to join the Kuvai Milliye (Öztürk, 2022: 78).

When it comes to the 1930s, the prominent ideas in the Turkish left are referred to as the “Kadro” movement. It can be said that Turkish nationalism has an important place in the ideas of Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, the pioneer of the “Kadro” movement (Sanlı, 2021: 341).

In his youth, first a supporter of Turan, then a socialist with the experience of Soviet Russia, he joined the Turkish Revolution. Describing the mission of “to set a precedent for colonies or semi-colonies”, this mission defines itself as “the world “revolutionary, disciplined, organizational, nationalist”, not through the TKP, which considers the revolution as a precursor (Sanlı, 2021: 345). He became a CHP member with the thought that it could happen in a republic party. It is thought that there is a Sultan Galiyev effect on the intellectual infrastructure of his ideas. According to him, under the conditions of imperialism, there was no classification in the colonies and semi-colonies and mainly because the workers in the metropolises of the colonizers also benefited from capitalism. The issue was to resolve the contrast between colonial countries and semi-colonial/colonial societies. This point, Şevket Süreyya adapted Galievist socialism to the Turkish Revolution and created a new set out to create an ideology (Bora, 2017: 160).

In Turkish political life, 1950, is the year that the Democratic Party (DP) came to power after the “years of one-party government”. In this



political environment, where the ban on forming a party was lifted, left-wing parties were able to find a place for themselves

Two socialist party, in such an atmosphere, was founded. Also, a large number of publications were published, and a strong trade union organization occurred within the working class. One of the most characteristic features of this period was the emergence of a leftist tendency outside the line. By 1946, the divisions within the TKP, which had represented the left until that day, became evident. (Eren, 2019: 259).

The first legal socialist party, the Socialist Party of Turkey, was founded on May 15, 1946, led by Esat Adil Müstecaplıođlu, who was outside the tradition of the TKP. Esat Adil, in those years, differed from other leftist views in terms of his support of America's financial aid to Turkey. In some of his writings, We can also find some nationalist tendencies such as "Mehmet Akif's Personal and Social Character – Patriotism – Nationalism – Poetry". For him, Mehmet Akif was not as a political figure, but as a great artist. He also expressed the nationalist ideas of Mehmet Akif and made his own definition like a socialist nationality (Müstecaplıođlu, 1937) .Shortly after, on June 20, 1946, Dr. Sefik Hüsnü Deđmer on the other hand, is the Socialist Laborer of Turkey established the Socialist Laborer and Peasants' Party (İleri, 2006: 63).When we compare the two parties established during this period, we can say that the first one had more nationalist traces.

In the process until 1960, many parties were established by taking advantage of the political environment brought by the multi-party life. However, with the military coup that took place on May 27, 1960, this environment left its place to martial law, and antidemocratic events that had never happened before in Turkish political history began.

### **3. THE TURKISH LEFT AND NATIONALISM AFTER 1960: THE CASE OF THE TURKISH WORKERS' PARTY**

The bipolar world led by the United States and Soviet Russia after the Second World War, called as the socialist and capitalist world, the independence of the former colonial nations and their struggles were the fundamental facts that determined the climate of the 1960s. This process was related to how the transition to Socialism would take place in colonial, semi-colonial or dependent countries. It brought about discussions and different left approaches. This was the echo of the rise of the left around the world. Turkey was one of the countries where the left ideas found debates on the direction and method of independence and national development had begun. Left movements, which became much stronger in terms of politicization compared to the past, thanks to translation publications followed the developments all around the world (Aybar, 1968: 6).

In this period, three left movements representing different left approaches and forming the main orientations of left thought emerged: the Yön movement, the National Democratic Revolution movement, and the

Workers' Party of Turkey. In this divergence, while the two were shaped by the Soviet influence before 1960, the Workers' Party of Turkey was different. While adhering to the tradition of TIP, TIP circles brought an alternative left approach to this tradition (Söylemez and Erdem, 2020: 108).

Almost 1 year after the May 27 coup, The Workers' Party of Turkey was founded on February 13, 1961, by 12 unionized workers who were members of the Istanbul Trade Union. Unlike the Communist Party of Turkey, it was established to express the problems of workers and protect their rights (Türkiye İşçi Partisi, 2022). The founders of the party showed that they wanted the working class to have a party as well. In this context, the Party which was established after the coup, put socialist movements on a legal basis for the first time in Turkey's history. Until then, all socialist movements and organizations had been attributed to the Communist Party of Turkey. The Workers' Party of Turkey, on the other hand, did not have organic ties with the Communist Party (Şener, 2015: 90).

There are other features that make the Workers Party of Turkey unique in Turkey's political history. It is the only party where all its founders are unionists. However, its founders were not involved in leftist organizations. Among the rhetoric of the party, there was no "protecting the rights of the oppressed working class" as in the common socialist rhetoric. In the first place, they emphasized that they wanted to represent the working class, which was dissolved in different parties. Another important feature is that it is the only socialist party that was able to place a deputy in Turkish Parliament and 15 deputies from the Party managed to enter the Parliament in the 1965 elections (Cumhuriyet Gazetesi, 2022).

When we look at the first constitution and program of the Workers' Party of Turkey, it is possible to see traces of Turkish nationalism. Some of the articles in its constitution are as follows: "The Party evaluates the events of the country and the world in terms of the Turkish working class and the masses of the working people; defends their interests; struggles for the realization of their rights and freedoms." In the third paragraph of the second article: "The masses of working people, who make up the great majority of the nation, are the real creators of all wealth and all values, the only driving force of social development." This situation was repeated in the second paragraph of the third article: "The work of making Turkey an advanced society and the work of the masses of the working people to have a say and decision in the affairs of the country and to provide them with good living conditions are interdependent parts of a single cause; one cannot be accomplished without the other." (Tustav, 2022). In particular, this article explains that society is seen as a whole. Another important article is article 53; "It is considered that half of those who are in charge of all organs of the party are elected from among those who live by selling their labor to the owners of means of production because they do not own the means of production, or from among the members of the management organs of the labor unions. The candidate lists to be submitted to the congresses by the

governing bodies are prepared on this basis. Congresses also elect delegates and organs, inspired by this principle.” (Tustav, 2022). The purpose of this article is to prevent the left hegemony of the Workers' Party of Turkey.

The party program was accepted at the first big congress held in İzmir on February 10, 1964 (Akdere and Karadeniz, 1994: 260). In this program, commitment to Atatürk's revolutions was emphasized. In the program of the first establishment of the party in 1964, an attitude close to "Left Kemalism rather than Socialism" come to the fore. At the entrance of the program, they read a short letter called “What does Atatürk Say?” This clearly showed that Kemalist view was interiorized. Furthermore, during the congress, ideas like “Only with the unity of the people can a struggle be waged against systems such as imperialism and capitalism that try to destroy society”. Protecting the national independence and existence with a peaceful foreign policy, protecting the sovereignty rights, the republic and national independence, counting the protection of the territorial integrity of Turkey as the highest duty were stated as important goals. As a defense policy, defending the integrity of the homeland, protecting the sovereignty of the people, and protecting the republic, protecting the integrity of the homeland under all circumstances, regardless of attacks from outside, were the objectives of defense. (Keskiner, 2022: 69).

When we look at the goals and ideology of the party, we can say that the influence of nationalism, especially Atatürk's nationalism, is quite large. The emphasis on full independence in the party program, the stance against imperialism, especially the efforts to remove the US superiors from Turkey indicate a very national fervor (Bora, 2020: 616).

In addition, the spirit of the Kuvay-i Milliye can be clearly seen in the Party. For example, at the meeting of the General Management Board of the Party held in Ankara on May 9, 1965, Chairman Mehmet Ali Aybar said, “The moral suffering of living in a derelict, dependent country is in our heads and flesh, but the faithful joy of the revival of the Kuvay-i Milliye spirit is in our hearts, we are living our most painful but most hopeful days”. Explaining the basic principles of his policy, he stated that the “Kuvai Milliye spirit” has been revived in Turkey, that incompatible situations and agreements regarding our national independence and sovereignty rights will not continue, and that no one will be able to stop the “Second Liberation Movement” (Sismanov, 1978: 89).

Speaking on behalf of the Party at the liberation day of İzmir, Nihat Sargın stated that the working Turkish people, who are very devoted to their independence, won the first Independence War and set an example for all the colonial countries of the world and are still in a "national liberation struggle" today. It is possible to see the emphasis on the "Second National Liberation Struggle", which was put forward within the scope of an independent foreign policy, in almost all the documents of the party, and in all the speeches of the leader Aybar and other party members on foreign policy. In the election manifesto of 1965, The Party stated that it was a peacemaker, that it had no

eyes on any state's land, would not take part in any war of aggression, but would wage a "National War of Independence" when attacked, and that the purpose of the national defense policy was to protect the independence, national existence, the integrity of the homeland and the republic (Aybar, 1988: 28).

A parliament member from The Party, Behice Boran, who tabled a motion of censure on "Cyprus, Bilateral Agreements and American Bases in Turkey", expressed her views on bilateral agreements and the NATO alliance, and asked the government to start working on reversing this wrong path. "We must show our best efforts to return to a policy that Atatürk followed during the National War of Independence, which is truly independent, does not enter into military alliances, creates a security belt around Turkey, and bases Turkey's defense on its own industry and national strategy. He wanted to follow a foreign policy that did not enter into any military alliance as in his period and develops good neighborly relations with the surrounding countries." (Oran, 2001: 573).

According to the Party, the fact that Turkey is a NATO member does not mean that Turkey is secure. In reality, although the states in this alliance, which was established to realize the USA's goal of dominating the world, seem equal on paper, NATO is actually an alliance under the command of the USA and imperialism. Turkey, which gained its independence by fighting against colonialism, has no place in such an alliance. Because in such an alliance, the independence and sovereignty rights of the small states that are included with the big states are limited and these states become the outpost of the big states, they are driven to the line of fire for the benefit of the big states, and they suffer the misfortune of being the first target in a possible war (Dumrul, 2020: 38).

Süleyman Demirel's thought NATO as a defense pact, but also the treasure of the elements that made a 2500-year-old civilization was not accepted by Mehmet Ali Aybar. According to Aybar, who stated that the civilization mentioned in the face of the discourse was Greco-Latin Christian civilization; after the periods of slavery and feudal lordship, now it has covered a capitalist and imperialist social order and philosophy (Akdere and Karadeniz, 1994: 265). The order that NATO is based on and defended is the exploitative and western hegemony itself, which should never be forgotten that we are among the first victims of this and that we are trying to get rid of these exploitative and destructive ties by fighting in the War of Independence (Oran, 2001: 123).

Mehmet Ali Aybar, the first chairman of the party, was the grandson of Hüseyin Hüsnü Pasha from the Ittihat Terakki. In 1946, he contradicted İsmet İnönü and joined the Democrat Party due to his articles that he thought the country was not "free" enough. He wrote articles in "Vatan" newspaper. His opposition to the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Soviet Union in 1968 left him alone among other socialists as he thought that socialism became a dogma. He always found the Soviet Union as a totalitarian and

stated that he thought some of Stalin's moves were to look cute to the West (Tunaya, 1999: 112).

Continuing his political activities in the following period, Aybar did not join the leftist parties that were founded later, such as the Socialist Party of Turkey and the Turkish Working Socialist Peasant Party. His love of freedom, filtered from the romance of Namık Kemal, was fed by the experience of the National Independence War, national but universalist; individualistic but socialist in nature. With his enthusiasm that cannot fit into these definitions, he was a "late Young Turk" (Aksakal, 2009: 80). Aybar's spirit of Kuvayi Milliye and his desire for independence were embodied in his article "İstiklal Hersey Üstünde" on the Truman Doctrine on April 5, 1947, and he stated that "to protect our independence against the Soviets tomorrow, no Turk will accept being a slave now." He also displayed a nationalist stance on the Cyprus issue and expressed the persecution of the Turkish Cypriots (Aybar, 1988: 123).

Mehmet Ali Aybar defended the idea of socialism that only special to Turkey, which was the product of a thought based on a strong Turkish nationalism and did not condition itself on existing socialist theories, integrating with the spirit of National Independence War. Aybar has always argued that Turkey should have a free socialism, but if this happens, originality could be achieved (Ünlü,2002). Aybar, an intellectual who sincerely believed in this, was soon accused of "turning to the right", being bourgeois and populist by the Turkish left (Aksakal, 2009: 76).

Atilla İlhan, another Turkish intellectual, supported Mehmet Ali Aybar and his party during those years. For him, the war of liberation was "political independence won by the "national liberation front" against imperialism (İlhan, 2018a: 26). He supported the idea of "left of the middle", which was frequently spoken in those years, and in this context, he put the Turkish left in a different place. İlhan, who thinks that politically the left was represented by the Workers' Party. On the other hand, in CHP, where İnönü was influential, that a left-wing movement could not last long. İnönü and CHP, which he had been criticizing since the 40s, were disapproved by the public. The reason why he thought like that was İnönü would get stuck in his disconnected and anti-democratic tradition.

Behice Boran, the only female member of the Workers' Party of Turkey who managed to enter the Parliament, was the editor of a magazine called "Yurt ve Dünya". The magazine published articles on topics such as economy and politics (Dinçer, 2008: 193). For example, in her articles, a special importance was attached to the policies of creating a national bourgeoisie by İttihat Terakki because they tried to establish large Turkish-Muslim merchant groups through national companies and national banks (Şanda, 1944: 35).

In some issues of the journal, the difference between racism and nationalism was mentioned. It was emphasized that cultural differences between societies developed not in biological characteristics, but in different

cultural exchanges over time. In the articles that deal with racism in terms of Turkish history, it is emphasized that there is no basis for racism in Turkish society historically, for example Ziya Gökalp is not a racist but a nationalist. Europe uses racism to separate the people. This is a result of imperialist ideas (Başoğlu, 1944: 25). Although it is thought to be a socialist journal, the authors focused on how the Republican regime would settle in the society and discussed how to adopt Kemalist ideas. Although social problems were often mentioned, the goal was to maintain the Atatürk line.

### **Conclusion**

The history of nationalist discourses on the Turkish left goes back many years. The ideas of the Communist Party of Turkey, founded by some thinkers in the Ottoman Empire after the Bolshevik Revolution, based on nationalism, reveal this fact. Turkish nationalism also comes to the fore in İttihat Terakki, which was among the opposition movements in the last period of the Ottoman Empire. The nationalist movements that emerged with the French Revolution also greatly affected the socialist organizations established by minorities such as Armenians and Greeks living under the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, traces of nationalism can be seen in all socialist and opposition structures before the establishment of the Republic.

Full independence has always been the most important concept for the Republic of Turkey, as a state that was established with great difficulties after a very tough struggle against the imperialist powers in the First World War. Atatürk's understanding of nationalism, which embraced everyone without any discrimination, greatly influenced the left movements that emerged on the scene in the 1960s. For this reason, instead of concepts such as class conflicts or the dictatorship of the proletariat, which are the main arguments of socialism, the left embraced the nationalist concepts of Kemalism. Leftists believe that true nationalism means opposing capitalism with an anti-imperialist stance. They handled the Kuvay-ı Milliye Spirit with socialism and preferred to use concepts such as left nationalism instead of the word socialism.

The Workers' Party of Turkey, which managed to enter the Parliament for the first time in the 1965 elections, also adopted Atatürk's understanding of nationalism, accepted Turkey as a single nation, and supported the Kuvay-ı Milliye spirit against imperialism in all its discourses and actions. It did not support the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Soviet Russia and stood by the national consciousness movements of the Turks living under the roof of Russia. Seeing that Soviet Russia took an imperialist stance like the USA, The Workers' Party of Turkey were never close to it, even though it adopted a 'socialist' ideology. It also acted as required by Turkish nationalism on issues such as Turkey's NATO membership and the Cyprus issue.

---

**Hakem Değerlendirmesi:** Dış Bağlımsız

**Yazar Katkısı:** Melek Kaymaz Mert %100

**Destek ve Teşekkür Beyanı:** Çalışma için destek alınmamıştır.

**Etik Onay:** Bu makale, insan veya hayvanlar ile ilgili etik onay gerektiren herhangi bir araştırma içermemektedir

---

**Çıkar Çatışması Beyanı:** Çalışma kapsamında herhangi bir kurum veya kişi ile çıkar çatışması bulunmamaktadır.

**Peer Review:** Independent double-blind

**Author Contributions:** Melek Kaymaz Mert %100

**Funding and Acknowledgement:** No support was received for the study.

**Ethics Approval:** This study does not contain any human or animal research that requires ethical approval.

**Conflict of Interest:** The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest

---

## References

- Akdere, İ. ve Karadeniz, Z. (1994). *Türkiye Solunun Eleştirel Tarihi, 1908-1980*. İstanbul: Evrensel Yayıncılık.
- Aksakal, H. (2009). Güler Yüzlü Bir Sosyalist, İlkeli Bir Siyasetçi: Mehmet Ali Aybar'ın Türk Siyasal Yaşamındaki Yeri ve Önemi. *Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*. 1(2). ss. 79-102.
- Atatürk Ansiklopedisi (2022). *Doktor Nazım Bey (1872-1926)* <https://ataturkansiklopedisi.gov.tr/bilgi/doktor-nazim-bey-1872-1926/> (Erişim Tarihi:13.06.2022)
- Aybar, M. A. (1968). *Bağımsızlık - Demokrasi - Sosyalizm Seçmeler: 1945-1967*. İstanbul: Gerçek Yayınevi,
- Aybar, M. A. (1988). *Türkiye İşçi Partisi Tarihi 2*. İstanbul: BDS Yayınları.
- Ayber, F. (2022). *Mustafa Suphi: Milliyetçilikten Sosyalizme*. <https://teoriveeylem.net/tr/2021/01/mustafa-suphi-milliyetcilikten-sosyalizme/> (Erişim Tarihi: 14.06.2022)
- Aydar, Ö. (2014). Osmanlı Devleti'nde İlk Sosyalizm Tartışmaları ve İlk Sosyalist Örgütlenmeler, *Atatürk Dergisi*. 4 (2). ss.51-83.
- Başoğlu, M. Ş. (1944). Psikoloji Karşısında Irkçılık, *Yurt ve Dünya Dergisi*. 1(25), s.25.
- Belge, M. (2008). *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce: Sol*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.
- Benner, E. (2014). Marx ve Engels'te Milliyetçilik ve Milli Kimlik: Bir Yeniden Değerlendirme. *Mülkiye Dergisi*.1 (167), s.193.
- Bora, T. (2017). *Cereyanlar: Türkiye'de Siyasî İdeolojiler*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları

- Bora, T. (2020). *Cereyanlar: Türkiye’de Siyasi İdeolojiler*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.
- Buçukçu, Ö. (2017). *Türkiye Sosyalist Solu ve Milliyetçilik* (Yayımlanmamış Doktora Tezi), Kocatepe Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Üniversitesi, Afyon, s. 48
- Çay, M. M. (2020). Türkiye’de Sultan Galiyev Algısı Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme. *Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları*, 124(244), ss.103-146.
- Çelik, A. (2018). Atatürk Döneminde Türkiye’de Komünist Propagandaya Karşı Alınan Önlemler. *History Studies*. 10 (10). ss.58-84
- Cumhuriyet Gazetesi (2022). *Türkiye İşçi Partisi 60, DİSK 54 Yaşında* <https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/yazarlar/erinc-yeldan/turkiye-iscii-partisi-60-disk-54-yasinda-1812585> (. Erişim Tarihi: 15.06.2022)
- Davis, H. (1991). *Sosyalizm ve Ulusallık*. (Çev. K. Emiroğlu). İstanbul: Belge Yayınları.
- Diñer, H. (2008). II Dünya savaş yıllarında Türkiye’de bir dergi: Yurt ve Dünya, *Atatürk Yolu Dergisi*. 11 (42) 193-230.
- Dumrul, U.G. (2020) Türkiye İşçi Partisi 1961-1971 (Yayımlanmamış Doktora Tezi). İstanbul Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, İstanbul, s. 38
- Durgun, H. (2012). II. Meşrutiyet Döneminde Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda Görülen Sosyalist Faaliyetler (1908-1914). *Türk Yurdu Dergisi*. 101 (293), ss.1-10
- Erdem, Ö. (2006). *Sultan Galiyev: Bütün Eserleri*. İstanbul:İleri Yayınları
- Eren, E. (2019). Türkiye Sosyalist Hareketinde Yabancı Sermaye Tartışması (1950). *Avrasya Sosyal ve Ekonomi Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 6(12), ss. 259-274.
- Güngör, B. (2021). 1960’lı Yıllarda Türk Solunun Almaşıklığı: Sosyalizm ve Milliyetçilik. *Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi*.23 (3), ss. 859-890.
- Haupt, G. ve Dumont, P. (1977). *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda Sosyalist Hareketler* (T. Artunkal). İstanbul: Gözlem Yayınları.



- Hayes, C. (1995). *Milliyetçilik Bir Din* (Çev. M. Çiftkaya), İstanbul: İz Yayıncılık.
- İleri, R. N. (2006). *Kırklı Yıllar-5*. (1. Baskı). İstanbul: Tüstav
- İlhan, A. (2018b). *Hangi Sol*. (5. Baskı). İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları.
- Keskiner, Y. (2022). *Türkiye’de sol: 1960-1971* (Yayımlanmamış Yüksek lisans Tezi), Afyon,Kocatepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, s. 56.
- Kıvılcımlı, H. (2008). *Osmanlı Tarihinin Maddesi.*, İstanbul: Sosyal İnsan Yayınları.
- Lenin, V. (1998). *Ulusların Kendi Kaderini Tayin Hakkı*. (Çev. M. Erdost), Ankara: Sol Yayınları.
- Marx, K. ve Engels, F. (2017). *Komünist Manifesto*, İstanbul: Yordam Kitap.
- Murat, T. (2018). Bandung Konferansı ve Türkiye. *Fırat Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 28 (2) ss. 363-379.
- Müstecaplıoğlu, E. (1937). *Mehmet Akif – Ferdi ve E İctimai Karakteri, Vatanperverliği, Milliyetçiliği, Şairliği*. İstanbul: Ülkü Yayınları
- Nureddin, V. (1975). *Bu Dünyadan Nâzım Geçti*, İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi.
- Oran, B. (2001). *Türk Dış Politikası: Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.
- Özel, M.S. (2014). Stalin Dönemi Rus Milliyetçiliği ve Politikaları. *Kırıkkale Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 4 (2), ss. 99-122.
- Özşavli, H. (2012). Ermeni Milliyetçilik Hareketlerinin Doğuşu Taşnak-İttihat ve Terakki İttifakı. *Ermeni Araştırmaları* 1 (41) (2012), ss. 141-190.
- Öztürk, Z. (2022). *Nâzım Hikmet’te Milli Bilinç*.  
<https://teoridergisi.com/nazim-hikmette-milli-bilinc> (Erişim Tarihi:14.06.2022)

- Şanda, H.A. (1944). Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Yabancı Ticaret Müesseseleri. *Yurt ve Dünya Dergisi* 1 (25), s. 35.
- Sanlı, F. S. (2021). Şevket Süreyya Aydemir'in Tarihi Metinlerinde Türk İnkılâbına Eleştiriler. *Türkiyat Mecmuası*, 31(1), ss. 341-374.
- Şener, M. (2015). *Türkiye Solunda Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset: Yön, MDD ve TİP*. İstanbul: Yordam Kitap.
- Sismanov, D. (1978). *Türkiye İşçi ve Sosyalist Hareketi: Kısa Tarih (1908-1965)*, İstanbul: Belge Yayınları.
- Smith, A. (2013). *Milliyetçilik*. (Çev: Ü. Yolsal). Ankara: Atıf Yayınları.
- Söylemez, F. ve Erdem Ç. (2020). Attilâ İlhan ve “Ulusal Sol” Düşüncesi. *Uluslararası Yönetim Akademisi Dergisi*. 3(1), ss. 104-113.
- Tunaya, T.Z. (1999). *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler: Mütareke Dönemi 1918-1922*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1999.
- Tuncay, M. (2019). *Türkiye'de Sol Akımlar (1908-1925)*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2019.
- Türkiye İşçi Partisi (2022). *Parti Tüzüğü*. <https://turkiyeiscipartisi.org/>, (Erişim Tarihi: 14 .06. 2022)
- Türkmen, E.ve Özger, Ü. (2016). *Türkiye Solundan Portreler*. Ankara: Dipnot Yayınları.
- TUSTAV. (2022). *TİP'linin El Kitabı*. <https://www.tustav.org/kutuphane/tip-kutuphanesi/> (Erişim Tarihi: 15.06.2022)
- Ünlü, B. (2002). *Bir Siyasal Düşünür Olarak Mehmet Ali Aybar*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.
- Zedung, M. (2008). *Pratik ve Çelişki Üzerine*. (Çev. A. Kırmızıgül), Ankara: Epos Yayınları.