



European Journal of Turkish Studies

Social Sciences on Contemporary Turkey

14 | 2012

**Ideological Productions and Transformations: the
Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and the Left**

Between integration, autonomization and radicalization. Hamit Bozarslan on the Kurdish Movement and the Turkish Left

Interview by Marlies Casier and Olivier Grojean

Hamit Bozarslan



Electronic version

URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/ejts/4663>

DOI: 10.4000/ejts.4663

ISSN: 1773-0546

Publisher

EJTS

Electronic reference

Hamit Bozarslan, « Between integration, autonomization and radicalization. Hamit Bozarslan on the Kurdish Movement and the Turkish Left », *European Journal of Turkish Studies* [Online], 14 | 2012, Online since 18 January 2013, connection on 16 February 2020. URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/ejts/4663> ; DOI : 10.4000/ejts.4663

This text was automatically generated on 16 February 2020.

© Some rights reserved / Creative Commons license

Between integration, autonomization and radicalization. Hamit Bozarslan on the Kurdish Movement and the Turkish Left

Interview by Marlies Casier and Olivier Grojean

Hamit Bozarslan

EDITOR'S NOTE

Hamit Bozarslan is Director of Studies at the EHESS (Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales) in Paris. His most recent publications include *Histoire de la Turquie de l'Empire à nos jours* (Paris, Tallandier, 2013), *Sociologie politique du Moyen-Orient* (Paris, La Découverte, 2011) and *Passions révolutionnaires. Amérique latine, Moyen-Orient, Inde* (with Gilles Bataillon & Christophe Jaffrelot, Paris, Éditions de l'EHESS, 2011). In this interview, he develops an extensive historical account of the relations between the Kurdish Movement¹ and the Turkish Left from the 1950s, and - always favoring comparisons with other movements - pointing to the crucial factors explored in his previous work: the links between political generations and radicalization, the question of self-sacrifice, the dynamics of integration-autonomization of the Kurdish Movement in Turkey, and the various processes of 'nationalization'-'regionalization' of the Kurdish Question in the Middle East. This allows the identification of future research questions, not only on the Kurdish Movement and the Turkish Left, but also on individual political commitment and collective mobilization in Turkey, Kurdistan and the Middle East.

Introduction

- 1 **If the contemporary Kurdish Movement in Turkey can be considered as a part of the Left in the Turkish partisan system, this has not always been the case. And it is of course part of the more global Kurdish Movement in the Middle East. So, we would like you to elaborate on the relationship between the Kurdish movement and the Turkish Left²...**
- 2 We need a periodization for that. In the 1950s the Kurdish movement is not at all included or integrated in the Turkish Left. One the one hand, the Turkish Left is still a passive movement at that time, which exists only throughout a few universities. So when you'd look at the Turkish Communist Party in 1958-1959 you'll find almost nothing. On the other hand, I have the impression that after 1955-1956 there is a clearly distinctive Kurdish sensibility that you can observe in Diyarbakir, or through the figures like Musa Anter, Tarik Ziya Ekinci and Canip Yıldırım. They are in contact with Kamuran Bedirxhan, who teaches at the *Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales* in Paris. They are aware of his articles and some of them dream about the establishment of a Kurdish state, but they have almost no links with the Middle East wide Kurdish movement. The emergence of the Barzani rebellion in Iraqi Kurdistan creates a great hope for this circle of socialization. So the Kurdish movement doesn't start as a part of the Turkish Left.
- 3 In the 1960s however the nascent Kurdish movement does integrate into the Turkish Left. Why? There are probably many reasons. First of all, the 1960 coup changed a lot of things in Turkey. The leftwing ideas are widely discussed and the formation of the Turkish Workers' Party – the *Türkiye İşçi Partisi* or TİP – begins. This creates a huge public avenue and possibilities for young Kurdish students. And from that point onwards, the Kurdish movement becomes a part of a wider Turkish leftwing contest, which recognizes the autonomy of the Kurdish Issue. So from 1961-1969/70 the Kurdish movement can by and large be considered a part of or an extension of the Turkish Left, or at least something that exists in a fusion with it.
- 4 **Prior to that, the Turkish Communist Party was founded in the 1920s. This was just after Lenin's discourse on the nation and nationalism. Does it incorporate some of these aspects in its program?**
- 5 The Kurdish question is discussed within the Turkish Communist Party already in the 1920s and partly after the proclamation of the Republic. When we look at the publications of the Turkish Communist Party of 1925-1926 they head in two contradictory directions: on the one hand they recognize the Kurdish nation and admit that it is an oppressed nation. At the same time they support the Kemalist power, because they consider that in spite of its repressive nature, it is 'more progressive' than what they qualify as the Kurdish feudal lords. The main nightmare for them is the 'reactionary forces.' But when you take the 1950s, the Communist Party finds itself in East-Berlin and has a publication, but it has no foot on the ground in Turkey. In 1951 there are some arrests, but it is a very marginal event.
- 6 **In his Memories Musa Anter devotes one chapter to the '49'lar,³ the 49 Kurdish Intellectuals arrested in December 1959 and condemned for being 'communists' and agents of the Soviet Union. Could we consider 'the 49' socialists?**

- 7 The majority of the 49 define themselves as socialists, and you have 3 or 4 generations joined together. Some of the people who are arrested in the case of the 49 were born in 1897. They are aged sixty or more. But the overwhelming majority was born in 1937, 38, 39. This means that they are very young people, who did not experience the Kemalist period, because they were born at the extreme end of it⁴. These young people had leftist ideas and dreams. While the others, among them some older people (Sait Elçi, Ziya Şerefhanoglu, Faik Bucak, etc.), had a very strong, conservative rightwing sensibility. There is thus a clear division between these generations, and between these two worldviews: those who have a leftwing sensibility were accusing the others of being prone to imperialism. Still, the 'Kurdishness' brought them together. For instance Örfi Akkoyunlu, a leftwing Kurdist, was saying: 'Let us first create a Kurdish fascist state and in this Kurdish state I will say "Damn you fascism! Long live socialism!" and the Kurdish judges will condemn me to death and when I will be hanged I will shout out "Long live socialism!"'

I. Integration into the Turkish Left

- 8 **So the first contacts between the Turkish Left and the Kurdish movement are within the Turkish Workers' Party?**
- 9 Probably in the TİP; yet the TİP is not the only leftwing actor at this time. There is also *Yön*, which is a leftwing Kemalist journal, published by some putschists, like Doğan Avcıoğlu, and with one of the most radical Kurdish activists, Sait Kırızitoprak writing for it. So the frontiers are not clear-cut ones.
- 10 **Inside the TİP, four Kurds are elected to the Parliament in 1965. How can we understand the relationship between the Turks and the Kurds within the TİP? Were they having good relationships or were the Turks considering the Kurds' demands too radical?**
- 11 It is very difficult to answer this question. The relations were probably very good because some important figures of the TİP were Kurds, coming from the Kurdish movement and there was indeed a kind of reconfiguration after the 49 in the 1960s. The Kurdish movement finds a sort of legitimization in the leftist discourses. Why? Because the leftwing movement, and 'Marxism-Leninism' as a supposedly unified ideology insist strongly on the rights of the oppressed nations to determine their own future. That means that the Kurdish militants believed that 'Marxism-Leninism' would simultaneously provide them a way to remain Kurdish and to ensure fraternity between Kurds and Turks. It was thus supposed to allow a double emancipation: the emancipation of the Turkish working class and oppressed strata, and the emancipation of the Kurds.
- 12 The French political scientist Jean Leca has argued that universal doctrines allow one to remain 'particular' i.e., a specific ethnic or sectarian group, and at the same time to have a universal understanding and projection of its fate⁵. I think that in the Kurdish case we have a similar situation. So you remain Kurdish while at the same time you accept, as a Kurd, the sacrifice that the fight for universal emancipation demands from you. So the relations with the TİP are very strong. And in turn, the TİP adopts during its 4th Congress in 1970, a resolution recognizing the existence of the Kurds. But at the same time, already at the end of the 1960s, and despite the relations being very close

and even organic, there is the beginning of a split. This split can be explained by the radicalization and autonomization of the Kurdish movement.

- 13 **At the time of the TİP's resolution on the Kurds there were personalities like Tarik Ziya Ekinçi, Mehdi Zana, Kemal Burkay, who are against this very progressive resolution. They feared the reaction from the authorities. Did this create tensions within the TİP?**
- 14 The people you mention already found themselves in a rather marginal position by the 70s, especially when we compare the dynamics of the TİP in the Kurdish areas with the dynamics amongst the leftwing Kurdish students. The paradox is that the Kurdish movement remains a pacifist movement by and large until 1973-1974. With the exception of Sait Kirmızıtoprak. But what is considered as very radical step for a legal party like the TİP in 1970, is already anachronistic for the Kurdish student movement, which itself is still a legal movement. Compared to the DDKO (*Devrimci Doğu Kultur Ocakları*, Revolutionary Eastern Cultural Hearths) or to the leftwing underground revolutionary movements, the TİP is already considered as a pacifist movement with no future. So after 1968 you have a bifurcation in the Turkish Left, both among the Kurds and the Turks, but also among the Turkish militants themselves.
- 15 **You talked about the double dimension in the discourses, being at the same time universalistic and particularistic. What does it mean? Did Kurdish militants instrumentalize the Left to advance a pro-Kurdish agenda? Or were they as much pro-Kurdish as Marxists?**
- 16 It was not something instrumental. When you take the minority movements throughout the world, if we agree to call them like this, and you consider them as sacrificial movements, then they cannot legitimize their own struggle exclusively by their own cause. They have to relate their cause to something higher concerning the humankind as a whole. That is why the emancipation of the humankind is extremely important to them. So you interpret your own struggle and the price that you pay for it as the price that you pay for the emancipation of the whole humankind, which, in turn, will allow you to emancipate yourself, as Jean Leca has explained about the Algerian mujahidin. What does this mean? It means that the fight against the colonial order will allow you to overcome the dialectic of master and slave. You sacrifice your life not only in order to free yourself, but also to free the colonizer himself from his dependence on the need to have slaves. For the Kurdish movement, the Armenian movement, the Palestinian movement, you have this same pattern: the price you pay, as an oppressed group, is paid as much for the humankind broadly speaking as for your own emancipation. There is nothing instrumental in that.
- 17 Obviously, when you as a sociologist try to objectify the situation, you see that there is an ethnic, sectarian or regional stock within many leftwing movements throughout the world. No movement can exist without a social basis, and a social basis is not always, and not necessarily, a class-based one. There is a Kurdish stock, an Alevi stock, a Tamil stock... But beyond this necessary objectification, one should also take into account the sacrificial subjectivity of the engaged actors, which has a real transformative, radicalizing effect on the leftwing contest broadly speaking. The 'cause' is not only something that you objectively believe in: you deeply experience it. Otherwise, we could not understand why the Palestinian movement had the trajectory it had. Or why the Armenian movement had the universalist trajectory it had until the 1990s, so almost seventy years after the genocide.

- 18 **So at the end of the 1960s, there is a real ‘nationalization’ of the Kurdish movement in Turkey - that is an integration to the Turkish political space - through the Turkish Left. Does this mean that it was less depending upon the ‘regionalization’⁶ - at the scale of the Middle East - of the Kurdish issue, or are there still a lot of interactions on that side as well?**
- 19 In the 1960s, the Turkish Left is by and large ignoring the existence of the Kurdish question in the Middle East. Of course, everyone knows that the Kurds are not only living in Turkey but the political, interpretative framework that is developed is based exclusively on a ‘national’ framework. And don’t forget that during this period the Turkish Left is looking at the Arab world. It is not Barzani who is a model for the Left. Nasser is a model. Arafat is a model. Why? Because in 1967 the Turkish Left is not yet an anti-Kemalist Left. For them Atatürk seems to be reincarnated, so to say, in the very persons of Nasser and Arafat. Yet, for the Kurdish militants in the TİP, Barzani is a genuine anticolonial Kurdish reference, a reference that rehabilitated the Kurds as an oppressed nation throughout the Middle East. So for them the father figure is not Mustafa Kemal but Barzani. So these two references do coexist.
- 20 **Why are Nasser and Arafat such important models?**
- 21 Because they are new and appear as being more radical than Atatürk in their ‘anti-imperialist struggle.’ The Turkish leftists do not dissociate themselves from Kemalism, but start to formulate some criticisms vis-à-vis Atatürk. In their emerging ‘Marxist-Leninist’ conception of the world they believe that Atatürk led an anti-imperialist war but consider his reforms not having gone far enough: they did not go beyond changing the superstructure. He did not transform society in its depths. Nasserism and Arafatism were considered as socially and politically much more radical and ‘anti-imperialist’ than Kemalism. So Kemalism is considered by these leftwing figures as a kind of aborted revolution, but still a revolution and still a reference. While for the Kurds Atatürk cannot be a reference.

II. Dynamics of radicalization and autonomization

- 22 **Dev-Genç (*Devrimci Gençlik*, Revolutionary Youth) is created in 1969 and within it, the political organizations THKO and THKP-C - both founded in 1970 - are probably the most pro-Kurdish⁷. Are there other parties within the radical Left that were pro-Kurdish? And how did these radical Turkish parties position themselves vis-à-vis the Kurdish question from that period onwards?**
- 23 Dev-Genç is an outcome of the radicalization process of the Turkish youth movement. It is a radical split-off from the TİP as an axiological-political pattern. So one of the reasons why the TİP is considered anachronistic and pacifist, while its program is becoming radical, is the formation of Dev-Genç. Many young people have no affinity at all with the TİP. Dev-Genç is a symbol of a strongly radicalized Left; and within this process of radicalization you have some kemalists, like Doğan Avcioğlu, who hold a putchist perspective. And while they are different from Dev-Genç, you cannot really draw a line between them and Dev-Genç.
- 24 Both THKO and THKP-C emanate from Dev-Genç. Yet, they no longer believe in any kind of legal framework. With their emergence, Dev-Genç itself also becomes an anachronism. And what are their positions vis-à-vis the Kurdish question? By

1969-1970 no one can continue to ignore that there is a Kurdish question in Turkey. It is true that these movements still pay a tribute to Kemalism, but that is a very limited tribute; their axiological idols come from elsewhere (as 'Che,' 'Uncle Ho,' or Mao...). Their leaders, Mahir Çayan and Deniz Gezmiş, consider it obvious that the Kurdish nation is an oppressed nation. For both of them the socialist revolution will allow for the transformation of Turkey and allow the Kurdish people to determine their own future. That is why we count many Kurdish militants within these organizations.

- 25 **Mainly Alevi - as we know that Dersim has a long 'tradition' of armed contestation - or also Sunni?**
- 26 Alevi and also Sunni, who find themselves mainly in İstanbul. Both organizations have very little presence in Kurdistan itself. They are based in İstanbul and Ankara, amongst the students there. When you take these parties, you have three important figures: THKO with Deniz Gezmiş, who is very romantic and anything but a theoretician. He can be considered like Che Guevara or Fidel Castro. On the other hand there is THKP-C with Mahir Çayan, someone with a theoretical thickness, who has read about the Latin-American experiences, probably also read Trotsky and advocates a theory of permanent revolution. For him, the revolution is not only a regime change, but a process in time and space that aims at the creation of a resistant 'New Man.' You have a third figure: İbrahim Kaypakaya [who in 1972 founded the Communist Party of Turkey-Marxist-Leninist (*Türkiye Komünist Partisi-Marksist Leninist* or TKP-ML), Editor's note]. He comes from the more plebeian, popular bases, unlike Mahir Çayan and Deniz Gezmiş who come from the 'petty bourgeoisie' or the middle classes. He is Maoist, and a Turkish Alevi, and he formulates the first real criticism of Kemalism as a fascist regime. In his reading, one cannot find any positive feature in Kemalism since it was, from its very beginnings, profoundly antirevolutionary and anti-Kurdish. Kaypakaya develops the most radical interpretation of the Kurdish issue in 1971-1972.
- 27 **As we know the role it plays in PKK⁸ history, it is surprising to see that the idea of the 'New Man' was there at such an early stage⁹...**
- 28 When you read the poetry of Mahir Çayan, you will see a discourse of resistance beyond political and military struggle; it really is Franz Fanon speaking¹⁰: the responsibility for slavery lies also with the slave himself and it is only his resistance that will allow him to become a free man. Violence is the main key to reach this goal. So it is not only about changing the system but about creating a man who frees himself from his chains. We haven't got this in the writings of Deniz Gezmiş. But with Mahir Çayan, and later with Abdullah Öcalan, this idea of the New Man is clearly formulated.
- 29 **Given that these three organizations are so pro-Kurdish, how could we explain the formation of the DDKO? Is it because the Turkish legal Left is not receptive enough to the Kurdish issue that many old TİP-members, helped by some students, create the DDKO? Where should we situate the DDKO within this split between the TİP and the student movements?**
- 30 The creation of DDKO has nothing to do with the three former organizations. With the huge demonstrations of 1966-1967 in the Kurdish areas, the so-called *Doğu Mitingleri* ('Eastern Meetings'), you have something totally unprecedented in the Kurdish cities. You have a kind of autonomization vis-à-vis the Turkish Left that comes from the basis and wherein the Kurdish members of the TİP also play a very important role. Take Mehdi Zana: he is plebeian, he is a modest tailor, who has no social capital and no

cultural capital, yet he becomes an influential figure with the 1966-67 plebeian dynamics. These are not necessarily leftwing dynamics, yet the Kurdish youth in İstanbul and Ankara, but also the Kurdish urban society cannot remain outside of the ascending leftwing movement. So the creation of the DDKO is a direct consequence of both intra-Kurdish and Turkey-wide dynamics. But one should also add that at the turn of 1971 (before the military coup), the landscape is fluid: people can be within the TİP, participate to the Dev-Genç activities and at the same time have a foot in the DDKO. You observe at once a process of autonomization of the Kurdish movement and fluidity between it and the Turkish Left.

- 31 The DDKO has two characteristics. The first one is that the people in the DDKO are profoundly pacifist, with the exception of Sait Kirmızıtoprak, who will create the first radical cell within the Kurdish movement, advocating the armed struggle. The program of the DDKO remains extremely reformist. On the other hand, by the simple fact of saying 'We are from another part of Turkey, from the "East"' – read 'Kurdistan' under the lines – 'there is a Kurdish language, there is a Kurdish history,' they create a momentum for an unprecedented radicalization. Of course, the TİP recognized the existence of the Kurds in 1970, but in the case of the members of DDKO, they are not supporters of the Kurdish cause: they *are* the Kurds, they are the *cause*. So, a profound pacifism and profound symbolic radicalism go hand in hand.
- 32 **The DDKO are the first, but the beginnings of the 70s see the creation of many autonomous Kurdish parties. Rizgarî, the DDKD, Kemal Burkay's party¹¹... while at the same time there is this radical Turkish Left that is radicalizing even more. So how can we understand the autonomization at that time?**
- 33 This autonomization starts precisely with Sait Kirmızıtoprak, an important figure that we have to take into account. He is one of 'the 49'. He has been arrested. He is an Alevi Kurd from Dersim. By 1969-1970 he creates a very small organization called the Revolutionary Democratic Party of Kurdistan¹². What is the theoretical contribution of Sait Kirmızıtoprak? First of all he argues that Kurdistan is a colony. This is a dramatic shift in scale because if you are in a colony your fight cannot be simply an anti-imperialist fight - as the Turkish Left presents its own struggle - it has to be a war of decolonization fought against the Turkish state itself. Kirmızıtoprak has been extremely influenced by the Algerian and other anti-colonial wars. According to him, a Kurdish war of liberation is necessary *and* possible within Turkey itself. This makes a second very important evolution, because until Kirmızıtoprak no one envisioned any kind of Kurdish armed struggle in Turkey itself, Barzani being extremely keen to have pacific relations with this country. For Kirmızıtoprak, the war that should be fought was definitely not a war similar to the precedent Kurdish uprisings like that of Sheikh Said in 1925; it had to be a prolonged, national and social anticolonial war like in Algeria and other countries. Kirmızıtoprak openly accuses the Turkish Left of being a colonial Left and reproaches them not to stand for the colonized people. Kirmızıtoprak gets killed in Iraqi Kurdistan already in 1971 in an internal Kurdish political vendetta. But he leaves a very important legacy that will become a radicalizing legacy after 1973.
- 34 From 1973 onwards we find almost exclusively autonomous Kurdish organizations. Obviously, some people still remain in the TİP until the 1980s, like Naci Kutlay and Tarık Ziya Ekinci, or other Turkey-wide leftwing organizations; but the dominant dynamics after 1973-74 are radicalized intra-Kurdish dynamics. This is so because following the 1971 military coup the Kurdish activists believed that they could no

longer afford a reformist policy. From 1961 up until 1971 people believed in the Constitution and it is incredible to see, *a posteriori*, how naïve they were. They believed that the Constitution was the supreme value and that it protected everyone. They continued to believe this even after the first political killings of 1968-69. But with the military coup of 1971 they understood that the constitution is just a piece of paper. That created a real shock.

- 35 Secondly, after 1973, both in the Turkish Left and in the Kurdish Left you have a much broader plebeian dynamic. There is a very important generational shift. You no longer have only university students, some of them coming from lower or wealthy middle classes, participating to the political contest, but 15, 16, 17 years old youth. This is the case in Turkey, in Kurdistan and probably in Iran or Latin America as well... This changes the very landscape of leftwing movements. This shift has probably to do with the spread of the leftwing ideas that are re-appropriated as the only meaningful political syntax by a precociously politicized youth. This political syntax allows you to pass from adolescence to adulthood, create solid circles of socialization, and adopt a specific axiology to legitimize it. These children are either the children of the rural exodus that started 20 years earlier or the second generation of urbanized young people. Kurdistan is one of many worldwide scenes where this shift takes place¹³.
- 36 A third element is that following Barzani's defeat in 1975 the Kurds no longer have any kind of father. The figure of the father appears to be that of a 'betrayed.' Barzani is accused of having 'betrayed' the Kurdish cause, not because he wanted to, but because he trusted the 'imperialist powers.' Finding themselves without this reference after almost 15 years of a Barzani cult creates a huge vacuum. This vacuum cannot be filled without a process of radicalization. Here we see the autonomous groups like the Kurdish Socialist Party emerge, and other organizations like the DDKD and Rizgarî, who remain mostly pacifist but are very radical in their discourses and do not exclude the possibility of an armed struggle. And then we have other groups like Kawa, Tekoşin ('Militancy'), *Beş Parçacılar* ('Liberators of the five parts of Kurdistan'). There is the KUK¹⁴, which is an emanation of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, which is extremely radical and committed to the armed struggle, and finally you have the emergence of the PKK. And all of this happens in 4 years' time, between '73 and '77-78. In less than half a decade, the entire Kurdish political landscape undergoes a process of radicalization.
- 37 **There is also a change in the parliamentary Left at this time. The *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi* (Republican People's Party or CHP, founded by Mustafa Kemal) takes up the pledge of social democracy again. This has consequences for the Kurds, in particular the Alevi Kurds, who are quite supportive of the CHP, despite the party's Kemalism.**
- 38 Indeed, despite the CHP's Kemalism they are supportive of this party, but in order to understand this fact, we have to go back in time. In 1971 the military coup is a tremendous shock in many places of Turkey, but in particular in Kurdistan, and not only among the Alevi Kurds but also among the Sunni ones. After the military regime, the CHP appears as the only warrant of an *ad minima* democratization in Turkey. What does this mean? That there will be no return to the military regime and that basic constitutional liberties will be respected. That is why many Kurds – Alevi or Sunni – do support the CHP at that time. A second factor is that in 1973-74 the CHP takes effectively some steps towards democratization in the post-military era, and obtains

the amnesty of the imprisoned militants and intellectuals, both Turks and Kurds. And there is a third element that appears in 1974-1975, which is the beginning of a massive phenomenon of violence, creating a total polarization within the society. Many people consequently fear the perspective of a civil war. So you support the CHP not because you are CHP in your heart, but because there is no other alternative. Finally the sociological profile of the CHP between 1974-1980 is important: its Turkey-wide leaders are leftwing nationalists and Kemalists. Locally however the CHP is widely Kurdified. They are Kurds, speak Kurdish and are aware of their own Kurdishness. You have this phenomenon in the rightwing movements too. The Islamist movement of Erbakan, for example, is locally very strongly Kurdified. Even in the Justice Party of Demirel you have Kurdish elements. So the fact that the CHP is both a nationalist Kemalist party, but advocating democracy in Turkey and is locally Kurdified explains why this party is at once criticized and at the same time widely present in Kurdistan. The breaking point will be 1977 when Mehdi Zana and a couple of other people will be elected mayor in Kurdistan.

39 **So you are saying that the CHP was actually not a leftist party but a pro-democracy party?**

40 Yes, at least it was giving the appearance to be the only democratic alternative in Turkey of 1970s; it was indeed thought to be the only party able to protect the people from civil war and against fascism, a kind of non-satisfactory harbor, but still a harbor. Social-democrat elements of the CHP's discourse maybe allowed it to have some popularity in 1973-1974, but not at all in 1975, and after 1976-77, a period during which people only have one preoccupation: how to protect a rudimentary democratic system and how to prevent a civil war, ending with the victory of the 'fascists.' The greatest fear, both in Turkey and Kurdistan, is that of a civil war. And in 1977-78, there are huge military 'war-games' in Kurdistan adding another layer to this fear. Without this fear it would be impossible to understand the relatively powerful position the CHP found itself in.

41 Also in the 1970s you have to take, once again, the phenomenon of coexistence of different generations into account. Within the Kurdish movement there are people who are aged 45 and young people who are only 13-14 years old. The birth of the KUK and the PKK creates a shock among the Kurds, as these groups fight a civil war amongst themselves (probably some 400 lives have been lost in their internal fightings). As Musa Anter explains in his memories, for the older generations this is an incredible trauma; they consider the stability and the end of this internal violence as a necessity for the survival of the Kurdish movement. The coexistence of classes, the plebeian dynamic finds its translation in this youth, but also in the fact that someone like Mehdi Zana becomes such a central figure. All of this is very important in order to understand the configuration of the Kurdish movement in Turkey of the second half of 1970s.

III. New processes of integration: consequences of the 1980 coup and PKK's insurgency

42 **So first meetings in 1974-1975, creation of the *Kurdistan Devrimciler* (Revolutionaries of Kurdistan) in 1976, and finally founding of the PKK in 1978. On the one hand, we know that Abdullah Öcalan and some others were active in the Turkish Left. On the other one, we know that the PKK from the start clashes**

with other radical leftist organizations. But following 1982 we see the creation of several joint fronts, like BIR-KOM¹⁵... We were wondering why, at certain points, PKK sought to align or collaborate with certain other radical leftist parties. What incentives did these parties have to respond to PKK's call?

- 43 You have to distinguish different periods. Until 1982 you are in a desperate situation and all these kinds of coalitions are out of despair. The shock created by the military coup of 1980 was huge. While you were expecting a civil war, you face a military coup and within days you don't have any kind of space for maneuver. So what to do? When you take the situation of Chile, or Argentina, or Spain you have exactly the same configuration. Everything you have done in the past has stopped, become to some extent meaningless, and you ask 'what happened to us?' and 'how can we resist and survive?' The first concern is a concern with survival: 'we should continue to exist' as an organization, as a political circle, as a political project.
- 44 After 1982 I think the situation is a little bit different. The PKK has an important stronghold in Lebanon, important strategic networks in Syria, and can be considered as the dominant actor among the leftwing exile organizations. This dominant position obliges the PKK to be internationalist, to assume a new role as the 'big brother' of the Turkish Left, to protect the Turkish Left or what remains of it. For the radical Turkish Left the consensus is reformulated in defense of the Kurdish movement. Indeed, these fronts set-up did not lead anywhere, but you do see after 1982 that many former radical Turkish leftist militants join the PKK or at least developed a pro-PKK policy. They could say 'here is something of us'. Don't forget that the Turkish Left dreamt of the armed struggle in the 1970s and all of a sudden you have an armed struggle but it is not a Turkish armed struggle. So it symbolically changed the equilibrium of power. What İbrahim Kaypakkaya suggested for the Turkish case, they were realizing it.
- 45 **Let's return to 'legal' politics... Following the 1980 coup, in 1985 we have the establishment of the SHP¹⁶. This is the party wherein former members of the TİP and other people will reinvest and will try to take part in legal politics. Could you elaborate on this transition? How were the relations between Kurds and Turks within the SHP? And what made the main difference between the SHP and the former CHP?**
- 46 Therein lies the key. Not one party, formerly illegal or legal, can rise up to its feet again after 1983. Everything is destroyed. The cadres of the parties are gone. The military regime from 1980 to 1983 was indeed very brutal; by threatening with the possibility of a return to the 'period of anarchism' (i.e. violence) it succeeded in depoliticizing the society as a whole, with many people retreating from the political sphere. This is the case for all the parties. If you look at the radical Right party, the MHP¹⁷, there is nothing left of them in 1983. Many of their members reconvert to Islamism, or withdraw into private, in some cases mafia business... So after the coup the political space is totally unstructured. Former political leaders are not allowed to be elected and no one is occupying the same place as he was before.
- 47 The violence is gone and we are in a context of a very slow and painful exit out of the military regime. Take the case of Chile in 1983, it is in this kind of situation that the political actors found themselves. How to get out of the 'reign of fascism'? So everybody bends to the SHP - and before 1985 to the People's Party, one of the three parties that was allowed to exist by the military regime in 1983¹⁸. This is the case of the former unionists, that is to say, the ones who were not imprisoned. This is the case of former

social-democrat political leaders, and of course, of the Kurds, that means the ones who are not imprisoned. So gradually the SHP becomes the party where everyone who does not belong to the rightwing parties reassembles. With the exception of course of the radical Left and of the PKK...

- 48 When the PKK starts its war in 1984 there is no one that gives the guerilla more than three months to survive. They are considered as adventurers, befall a lot of critique. There is a fear of a massive return to repression. Thus the SHP becomes a kind of refuge in the face of the apocalypse of the past and a potential apocalypse in the future. And it is true that after 1987 the atmosphere becomes more relaxed, but until 1987 we find ourselves still in the context of the military regime. The National Security Council is still highly influential under President Evren. Economically, the new Özal government can do whatever it wants, but when it comes to politics or security, the military is in charge, and this very much to the contentment of the very conservative Prime minister. You can find very little criticism in the press towards the former military regime.
- 49 But from 1987 the PKK really inscribes itself permanently in the Kurdish, and Turkish political arena. The public opinion can no longer ignore it. The Kurdish movement can no longer ignore it. And at that time the Soviet-Union is in a state of fragmentation; thus the preservation of a massively 'anti-communist' security regime becomes much harder to legitimize. The Özal Government has already been present for 4 years and thus has had the time for political appointments, for controlling the Interior Ministry... So there is a period of change from 1987 onwards. For instance, the former leaders of the Communist Party are invited to return to Turkey: communism is no longer considered a threat. And during the same period one can observe a bifurcation between the Kurdish movement and the SHP too.
- 50 **So there is no advancement of pro-Kurdish ideas within the SHP before 1987? How does this divergence between Kurdish and Turkish personalities within the SHP come into being?**
- 51 Everybody knows who are the Kurdistans, but there is no advancement of pro-Kurdish ideas at all within the SHP. The Turkey-wide democratization is the only claim, still carefully formulated by the SHP. No leading figures, Kurdish or Turkish, dare to pronounce a critique of the military regime. But from 1987, with the weakening of the military regime you have a very rapid radicalization. As I said, the military's mechanisms of control start to lose their strength. So the program of democratization, the critique of the military regime and the Kurdish question are again discussed within different frameworks. Without a doubt, the word 'Kurd' is not yet used in 1987, but it is certainly, and even massively used in 1989. No one is yet defending the PKK in 1987 but in the following years the politicians can no longer ignore what is happening and they have to admit that the PKK enjoys popular support. The year 1989 is also crucial for another reason. Some Kurdish SHP-deputies accept to attend the conference at the Kurdish Institute in Paris and even though there is only one of them who addresses the people at the conference, there is a qualitative shift.
- 52 **So this conference about the Kurdish Question takes place in Paris in 1989. The participants are being excluded from the SHP, others withdraw. Is this something that they had to undergo or was it also experienced as an opportunity?**
- 53 The people who participated in the Paris' Kurdish Conference are still very far away from the PKK's position whereas at the same time they are known to belong to the

Kurdish movement. The fact that they have been excluded from their party is instrumentally very important. For them it means that they cannot integrate into the Turkish political class and that they have no other choice as Kurds to become autonomous from the Turkish political class. Locally they can use this event explaining that they have been excluded because the Turkish political class, including the legal 'leftwing' party, is not able to listen to their cause or accept their claims. This creates the conditions for a new and popular radicalization, which will lead to the current situation. At one point they say 'we have nothing to do with a Turkish party even if it labeled itself as "social-democratic," and our Kurdishness is the main ground on which our political identity and struggle are based'. Also of importance is 1991, when the Turkish Islamist party Refah allies itself with the radical political Right. In a matter of days all the Kurdish Islamists resign from Refah. This way this party loses its strongholds in Kurdistan and loses support amongst the Kurdish population.

IV. Reconfiguration of a distinct Kurdish political space since the 1990s

- 54 You said that the Kurdist people within the SHP find themselves in positions very far from the PKK... Yet in 1990 they establish the HEP¹⁹, a party that is not entirely founded on pro-PKK bases, but which nevertheless develops a stronger linkage with the PKK and the guerilla. How should we understand the position of the HEP and its successors as compared to the SHP?
- 55 My reading is that in the 1990s you have a total reconfiguration of the Kurdish political space, as a distinct space from the Turkish political space. What makes this reconfiguration possible is that the PKK, which was so heavily criticized within the Kurdish movement and by the Kurdish elites, turned progressively into a totally accepted and legitimate actor. It even imposed itself as the primary reference point of the Kurdish contestation. From the 1990s onwards it is what this actor says that is determinant. You cannot do anything if it contradicts with the lines set out by this actor. The other Kurdish actor, that we can define as the representative actor of the Kurdish political space, is of course the HEP (and its successive avatars). This second organization, which is implemented on the ground and acting legally, cannot be entirely distinguished from the PKK, but cannot be reduced to it either. The party has to be accountable in everyday life, is very pluralistic and, naturally, cannot have a military hierarchy. And these two parties, the HEP and its successors and PKK, do restructure the Kurdish space. One as a representative actor, the other as the reference actor.
- 56 **Should we consider the HEP a leftist party like any other leftist party, with its labor unionists and its defence of social justice as any other leftist party?**
- 57 The HEP is above all a Kurdish party, *plus* a leftwing party. I think that says a lot. What is this 'plus'? It means the party is saying 'we are in the front of any kind of social fights, the trade unions fights, the fight for women's rights... we are the most democratic party of Turkey' but at the heart there is this Kurdish thickness. That is also the case for DEP²⁰. It will be the case for all the parties. What makes the HEP a popular party is that before everything else it is a Kurdish party.

- 58 **And does the relationship with the PKK means that the HEP will also take up a more Marxist position? Or is there no incentive to affiliate with this Marxist ideology, in particular as Marxist concepts are already starting to change within the PKK itself by that time?**
- 59 I think that in the 1990s the PKK remains a radical leftwing movement. Its discourse does not change radically, in spite of the fall of the Berlin Wall. Why? Because to some extent the PKK is a 'Fanonian' party rather than a 'Marxist-Leninist' party, the way this concept was understood in the 1970s and 1980s. PKK's Fanonian terms of self-identification, or its call for self-sacrificial forms of violence remain alive even in the 1990s. The HEP does not adopt these ideas. Partly because it is not in the tradition of its members. Some of them are coming from the TİP, some of them from the CHP or from the trade-unions, and they will not adopt such a radical discourse. But they will adopt a very radical discourse concerning the democratization of Turkey, human rights, the trade union rights and many other things. From this point of view, they can be defined as radicals, but without this Fanonian, sacrificial dimension²¹.
- 60 The relations between this reference actor, which is the PKK, and the representative actor, which is HEP (and its successors) have not been easy and they still aren't. They couldn't divorce and, still, my guess is that this couple has never been an entirely happy couple. They were and still are obliged to co-exist. They were obliged to give meaning to one another. And at the same time they had and still have different ambitions. The PKK's ambition is to remain the reference actor, which at one point uses violence and determines the outer borders of the political space, sets the red lines. It defines what is legitimate and illegitimate, from its own point of view, but presented as the point of view of the Kurdishness as such. The Kurdish legal party on the other hand has an interest in broadening itself, opening itself to other parties, having a place and visibility in Turkey itself and negotiate with Turkey, negotiate with the women's movement, with the trade unions, to have another kind of relationships with the Americans or with the Europeans... For example, the PKK is considered a terrorist organization by the United States and the European Union and at the same time the Kurdish legal representatives are welcomed in Washington. So this creates new kinds of resources. The PKK cannot ignore that fact and cannot condemn it. But at the same time this creates a complex situation.
- 61 **You mentioned that, in the 1990s the Marxist discourse of the PKK does not really change, despite the development of their theory on the 'New Man.' But some of the people who had joined the PKK or the Turkish Left in the beginning of the 1980s no longer consider it a leftist movement, but just an 'Apoist' movement, after Öcalan's nickname...**
- 62 In the 1990s many Turkish leftist movements criticized the PKK, but not because they were against its armed struggle. They would even support the independence of Kurdistan, but for them the PKK is no longer a leftwing movement, ideologically speaking. The personality cult of Öcalan, internal killings and PKK's regional positioning, are not necessarily accepted by the Turkish Left. But one should also take into account the absence of any kind of actor with the ability to produce the leftwing norms internationally speaking. The less there are international norms determining what a leftwing movement is or should be, the more there is a switch from the leftwing revolutionary axiology and discourses to the program of democratization. To give just one example: before the 1990s no one would speak about the women rights as

something that should be defended *per se*, or the rights of homosexuals. In the 1970s, the leftwing movements would even consider homosexuality as something totally perverse, while in the 1990s you cannot be from a leftwing sensibility if you don't take into account the rights of the homosexuals. The reason of this switch is that, in the absence of 'heavy actors' like the Soviet Union or Maoist China, the leftwing movement is no longer able to produce its own norms, and has to accept the democratic norms coming from outside and those norms are much more individually based than before. To some extent, you see this evolution also within the strict framework of the PKK itself: in the 1980s no one could accept the idea that there are Kurdish rock bands and rap bands, whereas today PKK cannot object to this. It has been obliged to accept this.

63 **And to invite them for Newroz (the Kurdish springsfest)...**

64 To invite them and to accept these norms that are coming from the outside as democratic and universal ones. The Kurdish movement in Turkey, and the pro-PKK parties in Syria and Iran, define themselves today as ecologist and feminist ones. You could not imagine such a political program in the past. And these are armed struggle actors. They are armed but still need to cultivate an emancipatory horizon, besides their Kurdishness, that they can present to the Kurdish society and to the world at large. This is also true for the Kurdish legal party in Turkey, which takes up the defense of the rights of homosexuals. I think they would be very unhappy if there were Kurdish homosexuals defending overtly their homosexuality, but at the same time they are obliged to say that 'We cannot be democratic unless we defend this cause'.

65 But to return back to your question on the relations between the PKK and the Turkish radical Left: today, the Turkish radical Left no longer has any vitality. In the 1990s and even more so in the 2000s we can no longer talk about a radical Turkish Left. Of course we have some militarized groups in the region of Dersim, and the relationship between TIKKO²² and PKK have been very bad in this specific region. In the Maraş region as well as in the Black Sea Region, some sleeping guerilla cells still seem to exist. But there is no longer a radical Turkish leftist mass movement. The Turkish Left we can observe today is more a liberal Left, engaged nationally in defense of individual rights, ecological questions, feminism, the defense of animal rights... And it is true that this alevism that nurtured the radical Left has also been dismantled and become inward looking.

66 **Today, in parallel, the young militants are often very heavily socialized in the ideas of PKK. Sometimes more than the older generations...**

67 Of course, therefore my hypothesis is that the older generation of PKK tries everything to control the radicalization of these young people, which has become possible by the very popularization of the PKK itself. The price of this control is to be itself very radical. If the older PKK generation does not accept a kind of radicalism, they will not be able to prevent the radicalization and autonomization of the younger generations. You could see this phenomenon in many places, as in the case of the Islamist movement of the 1990s. The Islamist movement had the obligation to be radical in order to prevent the radicalization of the younger generation.

V. Nationalization, regionalization, and transnational networks

- 68 To go back to larger processes, in the 1960s we have this ‘nationalization’ of the Kurdish movement that finds itself at the side of the Turkish Left and we witness something similar following the coup, given that the questions they deal with are particular to Turkey. But we have a ‘regionalization’ in the 1970s - with the fall of Barzani - and at the end of the 80s - with Halabja and then the war against Iraq - which will all contribute to the felt need to develop parties of their own... The PKK in 1978 and the HEP in 1990. So could we say that the autonomization in relation to the Turkish Left often comes at a time of ‘regionalization’ of the Kurdish issue?
- 69 Yes, but on the condition not to forget the internal dynamics, despite everything. As I said, the process of autonomization started in 1969-1970 with the DDKO... In 1975 this autonomization went hand in hand with the radicalization. There was an extreme axiological urgency felt in Kurdistan in the wake of the fall of Barzani that pushed many people to act, to do ‘something’... in order to ensure the survival of Kurdishness both in Turkey and elsewhere in the Middle East. The ‘1975’ momentum cannot be explained solely by the possibility to establish Kurdish parties, but by this absolute and sacrificial sense of urgency. Both the KUK and the PKK are the outcomes of this sense of urgency.
- 70 To a large extent, the Kurdish space can be considered Middle-East-wide as an integrated and interacting political space. Since 1958, whenever there is an important event in one part of Kurdistan, it has an immediate impact upon the other parts too. This is also clear in the memoirs of the ‘49’. For them, Barzani is clearly the counter-Atatürk. He is the Atatürk of the Kurds and what is more, he is alive. So the beginning of the Barzani revolt in 1961 and its fall in 1975, the Iranian Revolution in 1979, the establishment of a ‘safe haven’ in Iraqi Kurdistan in 1991... all these events have region-wide structuring effects on the Kurdish space in the broad sense. The PKK guerilla in 1984, also has such a structuring effect, even the arrest of Öcalan in 1999 exerted a radicalizing impact upon the Kurds of Iran... so indeed, different parts of Kurdistan are symbolically, and more and more, concretely, interacting.
- 71 **So at certain times issues will be more structured at a regional level, the PKK and more generally the Turkish part of the Kurdish movement being more receptive to what is happening in Iran, Iraq and Syria. Does this, at these times, transgress the borders of Kurdistan in the sense that relationships are also developed with for example the Communist Party of Iraq, the Syrian Left...? Or are the contacts limited to contacts with the Turkish Left and the international Left? How do the contacts with the ‘external’ Left look like?**
- 72 To my knowledge there have never been contacts between the Kurds of Turkey and the Arab Left or Syrian, Iraqi or Iranian Left. However, there were extremely close contacts with Palestinians. In the 1980s the Kurdish movement and the Palestinian movement evolve together for a certain period of time. The PKK participates into the Lebanon war for example, in 1982, and fights against Israel. And at the end of the 1970s and in the beginning of the 1980s these two movements feed one another. But after 1986-1988 this relationship ceases to exist.

- 73 With the Socialist International there are relations since the second half of the 1980s and not only by the Kurds of Turkey, but also the Iranian Kurds. For example Ghassemlou knew everybody, including François Mitterrand, and was a member of the French Socialist Party. Talabani has been president of the Socialist International. And Kurds from Turkey tried to develop relationships with Ségolène Royal, François Hollande in France, Oscar Lafontaine in Germany... These were fruitful relationships but these were institutional relationships and did not relate to the radicalization.
- 74 Lastly, the relations with Sinn Féin, the Catalans, are relations of the 2000s, not before. The relations with the ANC²³ of South-Africa for example date back to 2004, but these are also related with Turkish journalists and intellectuals' relationships with these parties, like Hasan Cemal, Cengiz Candar... They get in touch with these parties in order to look into how they have resolved their questions, how they developed peace negotiations...

Conclusion: Radicalism, conservatism and political generations

- 75 **Maybe to finish some questions about the political Right. Given the 1982 constitution the Kurds and Turkish Left find themselves in similar situations. There is not the same space for conservative Kurdish parties to develop. The situation in Turkey differs from the one in Iraq. So is it really this historical context that explains the specificity of this relationship?**
- 76 I would add two nuances. In the 1970s the Kurdish political space in Iraq is almost entirely on the Left, a fact that contrasts with the fundamentally conservative positions of Barzani as a 'national leader.' So Barzani, the conservative, is directing a movement that is a 'revolutionary' movement. If you look at Talabani's discourse in the 1970s and 1980s he is advocating a kind of Maoism. And the number 2 of the PDK, Sami Abdulrahman has leftwing positions. But both parties were very radical at that time and there is a relation between the dissidence and the radicalization. But you are right, today you cannot imagine a radical leftist movement in Iraqi Kurdistan. Even the communist Kurdish movement in Iraq is extremely conservative and cooperates electorally with the Islamists.
- 77 Secondly there has always been, and still is, a conservative force amongst the Kurds in Turkey. While there was hegemony of the Left over the Kurdish movement, there has always been an internal 'rightwing' tradition too. But this tendency has not had a chance to become autonomous. People like Şerafettin Elçi, Abdülmelik Fırat – the grandson of Sheikh Said – were or are still conservative. So there has always been an opposition, but an integrated opposition. And while being conservative, the figures of this tradition did not try to impose conservative policies upon the Kurdish movement. They had their own legitimacy, a constituency, and a very strong symbolic prestige. But they could never grow autonomous. Is it because this movement was first of all leftist? Or mainly national? Well, I would say that the reason of this non-autonomization is because the Kurdish movement in Turkey is first of all profoundly national. So any kind of open dissidence would be considered as a dissidence towards the nation, and thus as treason. So until today, these conservative personalities have interest to stay within the movement, even if it is by and large a 'leftist' one.

- 78 We also need to take into consideration that in Turkey you have only two politically radical generations called the '68ers' and '78ers,' i.e., people who are born in 1948 or 1958, and become active 20 years after and are the great actors of the 1968-1971 and 1977-1980 events. But if you take the case of Kurdistan you also have the generations of 1988ers, 1998ers and without a doubt a generation of 2008ers; these people experienced Kurdish mobilizations, got access to Kurdish cultural resources, etc., and have entered adulthood under the conditions of PKK's guerilla war. Every generation found itself caught up in maelstrom of radicalization. And every generation had to become a politically active one, which led to an important rejuvenation of the Kurdish movement broadly speaking. The Kurdish movement today is consequently very young. If you look at the studies by Ayşen Uysal and Oğuz Topak with regard to CHP members²⁴, you will see that many local cadres are 50-55 years old, whereas in today's Kurdish movement many cadres are 25-30 years old. The BDP²⁵ stands in sharp contrast with the CHP, where Ankara still controls the nominations, and which currently is trying to integrate the generation of 1958! This rejuvenation of Kurdish political space also inhibits conservatism.
- 79 Of course, if tomorrow we had peace, people who are 30 today would have enough time to age and become conservative! But, for the time being, having a phenomenon of rejuvenation every ten years has proven to be politically very meaningful.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Anter, Musa (1990) *Hatıralarım*. İstanbul: Doz.

Bozarslan, Hamit (2013) "'49'lar"ın Anıları Üzerine Tarihsel-Sosyolojik Okuma Notları ve Bazı Hipotezler.' In: *Kürt Tarihi*, forthcoming.

Bozarslan, Hamit (2007) 'Türkiye'de Kürt Sol Hareketi.' In: Murat Gütekingil (ed.), *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, Vol.9, pp.1167-1207.

Bozarslan, Hamit (2004) *From Political Struggle to Self-Sacrifice: Violence in the Middle East*. Princeton, NJ: Marcus Wiener.

Bozarslan Hamit (1999) 'Le phénomène milicien: une composante de la violence politique en Turquie des années 1970,' *Turcica* 31, pp.185-244.

Bozarslan, Hamit (1997) *La question kurde. États et minorités au Moyen Orient*. Paris: Presses de Sciences Po.

Fanon, Franz (2004) *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Press (first published in French in 1961).

Grojean, Olivier (2008) 'La production de l'Homme nouveau au sein du PKK,' *European Journal of Turkish Studies* 8, URL: <http://ejts.revues.org/index2753.html>

Kutlay, Naci (1994) *49'lar Dosyası*. İstanbul: Fırat Yayınları.

Leca, Jean (1991) 'Nationalisme et universalisme,' *Pouvoirs* 57, pp.31-42.

Mardin, şerif (1978) 'Youth and Violence in Turkey,' *Archives européennes de sociologie* 19, pp. 229-254.

Uysal, Ayşen and Oğuz Topak (2010) *Türkiye'de Partiler Ve Sosyal Ağların İnşası*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.

APPENDIXES

Abbreviation list

ANC: African National Congress

BDP: *Barış Demokrasi Partisi*, Peace and Democracy Party

Bir-Kom: see FKBDC

CHP: *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, Republican People's Party

DDKD: *Devrimci Demokratik Kültür Dernekleri*, Revolutionary Democratic Cultural Associations

DDKO: *Devrimci Doğu Kultur Ocakları*, Revolutionary Eastern Cultural Hearths

DEP: *Demokrasi Partisi*, Democracy Party

DSP: *Demokratik Sol Parti*, Democratic Left Party

Dev-Genç: *Devrimci Gençlik*, Revolutionary Youth

EHESS: *Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales*

FKBDC: *Faşizme Karşı Birleşik Direniş Cephesi*, Unified Resistance Front Against Fascism

HEP: *Halkın Emek Partisi*, People's Labor Party

HP: *Halkçı Parti*, People's Party

INALCO: *Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales*

KUK: *Kurdistan Ulusal Kurtuluşçuları*, Kurdistan National Liberationists

MHP: *Milliyetçi Harekât Partisi*, Nationalist Action Party

PDKT: *Partîya Demoqrata Kurdistanê Tirkîye*, Democratic Party of Turkish Kurdistan

PKK: *Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan*, Kurdistan Worker's Party

PSK: see TKSP

SHP: *Sosyaldemokrat Halk Partisi*, People's social democrat Party

SODEP: *Sosyal Demokrasi Partisi*, Social Democracy Party

THKO: *Türk Halk Kurtuluş Ordusu*, People's Liberation Army of Turkey

THKP-C: *Türk Halk Kurtuluş Partisi-Cephesi*, Turkish People Liberation's Party-Front

TİP: *Türkiye İşçi Partisi*, Turkish Workers' Party

TİKKO: *Türkiye İşçi Köylü Kurtuluş Ordusu*, Workers' and Peasants' Liberation Army

TKP-ML: *Türkiye Komünist Partisi-Marksist Leninist*, Communist Party of Turkey-Marxist-Leninist

TKSP: *Türkiye Kürdistan Sosyalist Partisi*, Socialist Party of Turkish Kurdistan. Later renamed in PSK: *Partiya Sosyalîsta Kurdistan*, Socialist Party of Kurdistan

NOTES

1. In Turkey, the Kurdish Movement includes Islamist groups and tendencies (like the armed group Hizbullah in the 1990's) but these are quite marginal. If we do not refer to the Islamist part of the Kurdish Movement in this interview, conservative personalities are of course taken into account.
2. In Turkish, see also Bozarslan 2007.
3. See Anter 1990: 151-182 and also Kutlay 1994.
4. See Bozarslan 2013.
5. See Leca 1991.
6. On the 'regionalization' of the Kurdish Question, see Bozarslan 1997: 292-311.
7. THKO: *Türk Halk Kurtuluş Ordusu*, People's Liberation Army of Turkey; THKP-C: *Türk Halk Kurtuluş Partisi-Cephesi*, Turkish People Liberation's Party-Front.
8. *Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan*, Kurdistan Worker's Party, founded in 1978 and led by Abdullah Öcalan.
9. See Grojean 2008.
10. See Fanon 2004.
11. Kemal Burkay's party is the TKSP (*Türkiye Kürdistan Sosyalist Partisi*, Socialist Party of Turkish Kurdistan), that will later be renamed PSK (*Partiya Sosyalîsta Kurdistan*, Socialist Party of Kurdistan); DDKD: *Devrimci Demokratik Kültür Dernekleri*, Revolutionary Democratic Cultural Associations.
12. The PDKT (*Partiya Demokrata Kurdistanê Tirkîye*, Democratic Party of Turkish Kurdistan) has a clear revolutionary line, while its predecessor, led by Faik Bucak, is far more conservative.
13. See Bozarslan 1999 and Mardin 1978.
14. *Kurdistan Ulusal Kurtuluşçuları*, Kurdistan National Liberationists, founded officially in 1978.
15. In fact the FKBDK: *Faşizme Karşı Birleşik Direniş Cephesi*, *Unified Resistance Front Against Fascism*, founded in 1982.
16. *Sosyaldemokrat Halk Partisi*, People's Social Democrat Party.
17. *Milliyetçi Harekât Partisi*, Nationalist Action Party.
18. The SHP resulted from the fusion, in 1985, of the Social Democracy Party (*Sosyal Demokrasi Partisi*, SODEP) of Erdal İnönü and the People's Party (*Halkçı Parti*) of Aydın Güven Gürkan, both founded in 1983. The other leftwing party of this period is the DSP (*Demokratik Sol Parti*, Democratic Left Party) founded in 1985 by Ecevit's family.
19. *Halkın Emek Partisi*, People's Labor Party, pro-Kurdish.
20. *Demokrasi Partisi*, Democracy Party, which follows the ban of the HEP in 1993.
21. See Bozarslan 2004.
22. *Türkiye İşçi Köylü Kurtuluş Ordusu*, Workers' and Peasants' Liberation Army. Armed Branch of many groups originating from the TKP-ML.
23. ANC: African National Congress.
24. See Uysal ; Topak 2010.
25. *Barış Demokrasi Partisi*, Peace and Democracy Party, successor of the HEP, DEP and of the other following pro-Kurdish parties.

INDEX

Keywords: PKK, Left, Kurdish movement, Middle East, 1980 military coup