

**3**

The Kurdish nationalist  
movement's anti-communism

**5**

Child labor in Turkey and the duty of  
Communist Youth of Turkey

**9**

The fight over the cake didn't start today:  
Capital no longer fits within its bounds

DECEMBER 2025  
●

Voice of  
**ТКР**  
Monthly international magazine

**7**

Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality operation:  
What is happening?

**11**

Preparations underway for NATO Summit  
in Ankara

# Social democracy, alliances, and **ТКР**



# Social democracy, alliances, and TKP

Kemal Okuyan – TKP General Secretary



After the October Revolution, the Communist movement broke away from Social Democracy and emerged as an international force in its own right. The rupture had begun earlier in Russia, but it was the 1917 revolution and the creation of the Communist International in 1919 that gave the movement its truly international character.

While Communist parties were being established across the world, Social Democracy, by the end of that historical shift, ended up fully anchored in the bourgeois camp.

Before we turn to Turkey, it needs to be said plainly: Social Democracy is not, despite what some argue, a workers' movement. Throughout the twentieth century, there were moments when the idea that Social Democracy represented one of two main pillars of the working class' movement gained influence, including within the Communist movement. Some went so far as to try, in the name of workers' unity, to bridge the divide between the two movements. To this day, some circles persist in trying to blur the class character of Social Democratic parties, particularly the British Labour Party.

The reality, however, remains unchanged: Social Democracy is a party of capital. In many countries, it

represents the strongest and most "progressive" segments of monopoly capital. By this measure, the claim that Social Democracy is petty-bourgeois also doesn't hold up.

The argument that the capitalist class can tolerate Social Democratic governments only for short periods and generally prefers right-wing parties—and that, for this reason, the relationship between social democracy and the big bourgeoisie cannot be overstated—has been disproven in many national contexts. It also neglects the fact that the capitalist system functions as a unified whole in the political sphere.

From the UK and Germany to France, the Scandinavian states, Greece, Italy, and Spain, Social Democratic parties have at times governed sometimes alone and sometimes leading coalitions. More importantly, though, they have provided tremendous service to monopoly capital even when they were in opposition. Right-wing parties cannot remain in power without a Social Democratic opposition whose misleading and time-buying strategies help pacify the working masses. In this sense, the "left" and "right" wings of the established order are two sides of the same coin, each completing the other.

The simple fact that Social

Democracy did not take shape in Turkey until the 1960s and surfaced only in the early 1970s is confirmation enough of this truth.

Even if we mention certain intellectuals or small groups in the late Ottoman era or early Republic who were influenced by Social Democratic ideas, a Social Democracy rooted in Marxism and the working class has never taken shape in Turkey. The bourgeois-democratic Kemalist movement that led the struggle against imperialist occupation and toppled the monarchy, and the single-party CHP (Republican People's Party - main opposition) that founded the Republic, never claimed to be Social Democratic.

It was the rise of the working class movement and the spread of socialist ideas that pushed CHP in the direction of Social Democracy in the 1960s. First it introduced the notion of being "left of center," and later settled on the label "Democratic Left." When Bülent Ecevit, the CHP leader at the time, said that the most effective tool against communism was the Democratic Left, he was also explaining why the Republic's founding party had suddenly adopted a Social Democratic identity.

Since then CHP has governed only in short stretches, but its greatest service to big capital has come







from the opposition—and continues to do so. It may seem like a strong claim, but without CHP, Erdoğan's AKP would never have lasted in power for more than twenty years, nor would the Turkish bourgeoisie have been able to fend off the revolutionary threat so effectively since the 1970s.

Except for brief interruptions and the post-1980 coup election period, Social Democrats—almost always the first or second party—have done nothing to reverse Turkey's long counter-revolutionary trajectory. On the contrary, they have systematically helped shift Turkish society and politics further to the right.

In TKP's view, Social Democracy is merely a barrier that must be swept aside if the working class is to truly confront the capitalist class. Some CHP figures may sympathize with Communists, and parts of its base may lean socialist—but none of that changes anything. As an institution, CHP undermines the emergence of an independent working class movement and channels the accumulated energy of the laboring classes safely contained within the system. The ideological and cultural damage caused by a party passionately committed to the market economy and firmly attached to NATO, yet maintaining a "left" image to keep a broad public inside the established order, should never

be underestimated.

Therefore, aside from the incidental, spontaneous convergence that may occur during mass mobilizations, TKP rejects any relationship with CHP—let alone alliances, coalitions, or cooperative arrangements.

This has nothing to do with sectarianism. Nor can this stance be explained merely as doctrinaire rigidity. The practical experiences of the revolutionary movement in Turkey since the 1970s have clearly shown the heavy costs of getting closer to Social Democracy. Alliances with CHP and with HDP/DEM—the legal arm of the Kurdish national movement and effectively a new sort of Social Democratic party—have dragged the Turkish left from the revolutionary front into the system's internal games of power, and this has resulted in its marginalization. This approach to alliances has likewise invalidated the claim that "unity creates strength," as the "united left" aligned with CHP and HDP soon lost its street-mobilizing capacity.

In truth, getting closer to Social Democracy and its variants in Turkey has produced outcomes much like those seen in Europe. Time and again, these policies have proven, wherever they've been tried, that they bring nothing to the working class, to revolution, or to socialism.

There are, however, always voices insisting that Turkey's democratic

deficiencies constitute a special case requiring the formation of a "democratic front." Yet even without considering the tragic consequences of democratization strategies—divorced from class foundations and dependent on internal system realignments—observed globally since 1945, Turkey's own history ought to provide more than enough insight.

Most shameful of all may be that so many small groups, each striving to appear more radical than the next, have retreated into the comfortable political terrain fashioned by Social Democracy.

TKP will persist in taking every possible step to reinforce the resistance of the working masses and revolutionary intellectuals to Social Democracy. Though the inequities of the electoral system—most notably the 7% threshold—push many who sympathize with the Party toward other electoral paths, TKP will continue to uphold its political and ethical resolve not to send representatives to Parliament through any collaboration with bourgeois parties.

We appreciate the concerns of friends who think this approach may isolate TKP, but we do not share their conclusion. In fact, far from being isolated, TKP is steadily gaining influence. And we intend to continue on this path.



# The Kurdish nationalist movement's anti-communism

**Cansu Oba,**

*Member of TKP Central Committee*

A recent article published by one of the Kurdish nationalist movement's media outlets has provided an opportunity to revisit certain aspects of the movement's class character and ideological foundations.

In reality, this stance is not new. Throughout Abdullah Öcalan's years in prison, he has repeatedly produced statements and writings that target socialist experiences and the founders of scientific socialism. These have for some time been highlighted in the movement's own media.

What makes the current moment significant is that Öcalan is one of the central actors in an ongoing political process in Turkey. The "peace process"—carried out with the open support of the leader of the fascist party and through direct contact between Öcalan, a parliamentary commission, and state officials—has transformed the political environment. At the same time, a former co-chair and current MP of the Kurdish nationalist movement's party, the DEM Party, declared that the party now effectively serves as the country's main opposition. All of this signals that the emerging bourgeois political landscape provides fertile ground for the resonance between the Kurdish nationalist movement's attacks on socialism and the bourgeois politics' more traditional forms of anti-communism.

Yet the PKK was never, in reality, a genuinely Marxist-Leninist organization. Founded in the late 1970s, a period in which the left dominated Turkey's political and social arena, the PKK employed Marxist-Leninist terminology and drew from these values, but it was always, at its core, a national movement.

Claims that Öcalan has "surpassed Marxism"—when considered together with his recent statement that he has been "waiting 50 years to be understood"—suggest a line of ideological continuity rather than a merely conjunctural shift.

The Kurdish nationalist movement, now firmly situated somewhere between social democracy and nationalism within Turkey's political landscape, has strengthened ties with various factions of the bourgeoisie, including some of Turkey's most prominent capitalist families. Meanwhile, its distance from the republic's founding principles and from secularism has frequently aligned it with the AKP government not only on current political issues but also on long-term regional strategy. The most recent peace process aimed to formalize this alignment into a strategic partnership tied to a broader regional imperialist project.

Outside Turkey, however—especially in Europe—the movement's image is refracted and

softened within left-wing public opinion. One reason is certainly the complexity of Turkish politics, which is difficult to understand from the outside. But this is not the only factor.

International exposure to Turkey has grown, and it is easier than ever to follow developments due to the country's increasing visibility in global media. It is therefore hard to claim that these kinds of statements or texts are inaccessible to international audiences. Indeed, the movement's arguments, as well as interviews with its representatives, frequently appear in European publications.

And some realities speak for themselves. The passages quoted below illustrate this clearly. Before turning to them, however, it must be noted that this "misperception" is also reinforced by the European reading of Turkish politics exclusively through the lens of an "authoritarian Turkish government." While not wholly inaccurate, this perspective often ignores or obscures class dynamics within Turkey and the AKP government's alignment with Turkish capital. As a result, many international observers view the Kurdish nationalist movement's struggle primarily through a liberal "freedom vs. authoritarianism" framework.

Additionally, a long-standing romanticism within parts of the



European left regarding the right of oppressed nations to self-determination”—regardless of contemporary material conditions—has also contributed to this distortion, something the movement itself has instrumentalized.

Yet during this same period, within the movement's own press, articles are found accusing communist movements of “defending the system,” equating actually existing socialism with fascism, and claiming that Marxist, Leninist, and Maoist revolutions ultimately became instruments of systemic power:

“The Marxist, Leninist, and Maoist revolutions—built through immense sacrifice and effort—ultimately became entangled with the system and even evolved into its strongest defenders. Lenin's Soviets, under Stalin, transformed into a form of Soviet fascism, while Mao's communism was pushed into becoming a major capitalist force. A socialism detached from society cannot become anything more than an extension of the existing system.

For this reason, new and innovative ideas must be developed within socialism, Marxism, Leninism, and Maoism. Socialism needs to be re-evaluated and re-socialized. A viable socialism must be freed from mistaken interpretations and outdated mentalities so that its social essence can emerge. A socialism that does not belong solely to a single class must be approached broadly and rooted within society as a whole.”

The text goes on to declare that socialism does not belong to any particular class, and that Öcalan has brought new life to socialism:

“Within this framework, Leader Apo (Abdullah Öcalan - tn) sought to identify the shortcomings of socialism and to change and transform it into a socially grounded model. By addressing the weaknesses of real socialism and scientific socialism, he introduced a new perspective and, through the development of democratic socialism, aimed to reveal socialism's core essence.”

And finally, the author “buries” scientific socialism in Rojava, ironically one of the closest U.S. and Israeli ally in the region and a

convenient asset in their Middle East strategy, and elevates it as the “first step of democratic socialism”:

“Rojava is the place where this new perspective on socialism has been introduced and developed. Indeed, Rojava represents the final stop of socialism and the first step of democratic socialism.”

As noted earlier, these are not new arguments. Öcalan's own writings over the years contain many such analyses. His letter to the PKK's 12th Congress—held last May, where the organization decided to dissolve itself—provides an especially distilled summary of this worldview and, in effect, rewrites the history of class struggle:

“Historical materialism should replace class struggle with ‘the commune.’ It is more accurate to revise Marxism through this concept. History is not a history of class struggle but of conflict between the state and the commune.”

He continues:

“The fundamental contradiction begins with the conflict between the masculine and feminine elements in society. It does not originate from class. Marx's class-based conflict theory is the main reason real socialism collapsed.”

He even criticizes Marx for “not being Marxist”:

“Marx, to live with his wife, sells his coat. He says, ‘Let me write this book so it earns money and saves my marriage.’ Is this what Marxism is supposed to be?”

These quotes demonstrate that Öcalan's approach is neither new nor incidental: it has deep roots in the ideological history of the movement.

Why, then, is it important to accurately understand the PKK's non-Marxist character now? As stated at the outset, Öcalan's analysis now fuels a new wave of anti-communist discourse in Turkey. His claim that the PKK was founded on the basis of “real socialism,” but became dysfunctional once real socialism collapsed and could not find a replacement, mirrors the government's own narrative that absolves the state and blames “the left” for past conflicts. In response, the TKP Central Committee emphasized that the PKK was never a Marxist organization and stated

that, at a moment when the PKK is contemplating its own dissolution, the government's effort to shift historical responsibility onto revolutionaries and socialism will not be allowed to stand uncontested. The statement underscored that a nationalism interwoven with liberalism—and political alliances with the United States or Israel—cannot in any form be reconciled with Marxism.

Assuming this approach—rooted in anarchism and other petty-bourgeois ideologies, such as liberalism—within the left spectrum represents, from a leftist standpoint, a form of self-negation. Let us recall that in the same letter, Öcalan references Kropotkin and states, “Lenin should have listened to him,” even though Lenin, in the Marxist-Leninist tradition we inherit, criticized Kropotkin and the anarchist currents of his time for petty-bourgeois romanticism and utopianism. In this light, it is no coincidence that the author of the initially cited article remarks that Rojava reminds him of Thomas More's works.

There are, of course, certain limits to treating these theses with full theoretical seriousness. This is largely because they do not form a coherent whole, but rather consist of arguments drawn from various theoretical backgrounds and combined in an eclectic manner. Nevertheless, this movement has a significant social base and is still regarded in many parts of the world as a progressive or socialist force. For this reason, we need to address this somewhat misleading image with greater care and clarity.

If we accept that Marxism cannot be stretched to the point of severing it from its class foundations, it becomes evident that this nationalist movement—whose ideological roots lie in pre-Marxist and non-Marxist traditions—must be approached without romantic lenses. In terms of realpolitik, tolerance for alliances with the United States and Israel or participation in expansionist neo-Ottoman projects, and, on the ideological plane, tolerance for petty-bourgeois currents and the new wave of anti-communism, are matters for those who have already abandoned the target of socialism—not for those committed to it.



## Child labor in Turkey and the duty of **Communist Youth of Turkey**

**Berkay Kemal Önoğlu,**

*Member of TKP Central Committee*

According to independent sources, more than 82 children have lost their lives in work-related accidents in Turkey in 2025. In recent weeks, news reports of child deaths resulting from child labor are almost daily encountered. This number marks the highest level in the past decade and may have already risen by the time this report is published. The Communist Youth of Turkey has been working to make this reality visible through statements and protests; yet, the fact that figures change with every update in statistics underscores the ongoing nature of this tragedy. Sadly, child labor has become so widespread in Turkey that these numbers risk being seen as nothing more than cold statistics.

In Turkey, child labor is legally allowed for children aged 15 to 17. Children under 14 are only permitted to work in sectors that do not interfere with compulsory education and are subject to strict regulations. Although 15 to 17-year-olds are supposed to work only in “light” jobs that do not harm their physical or mental health, there are still reports of children

under 14 dying at work. While many child workers face workplace harassment, mistreatment, violence, and abuse in their workplaces, just as many cases remain hidden from public attention.

Turkey lacks an effective system to ensure the safety and rights of child workers. Even if such a system existed, the reality is harsh: children born into working-class families are tested by unemployment and a lack of future opportunities from the very start, making child labor seem almost like fate. During the AKP era, deregulation that accompanies the rapid capitalist growth has normalized child labor. One key factor is that, as the population growth rate declines, employers increasingly turn to aggressive strategies to secure cheap labor.

Among approximately 4 million young people aged 15–17 in Turkey, 869,000 are registered workers. In addition, there are 1.1 million MESEM (Vocational Training Center) students. While not all of these students are under 18, they are all high school age. Moreover, tens of thousands

of children work informally. This situation points to a child labor system

in which one in every two youths in this age group is already part of the labor market. The share of child labor in the total workforce has approached 10%, and the gears of capitalism continue to grind children mercilessly.

The government constantly claims that Turkey is growing and developing. Yet it is not the welfare of the people that is truly growing—it is Turkish capitalism. And this growth has come at a horrific cost: in the past ten years, at least 750 children have lost their lives in workplaces. If the safety and well-being of the children of a country are not the primary measure of its development, then by what standard can a country truly be considered “advanced”?

The normalization of child labor in Turkey has been significantly driven by the MESEM (Vocational Training Center) system. Designed by employers and institutionalized in 2016, this model exploits the living conditions of poor families, and pushes young people into the



workforce at an early age. Although MESEM is presented as a program that allows students to continue their education while learning a trade after middle school, the reality is stark: of the 1.1 million students enrolled in the program, each spends only one day a week at school and at least four days in workplaces. During this process, they receive a government-funded salary. MESEM operates on a step-by-step training structure from apprenticeship to mastery, providing graduates with both a high school diploma and a certificate of mastery. And this is precisely the point—university placement rates clearly show how meaningless the high school diploma has become. Through MESEM, the state effectively hands over high school students, who should be under its protection, to employers under the guise of vocational education.

There are many reasons behind the rapid expansion of MESEM. Over the years, the quality of vocational high schools has sharply declined; students have been left with no opportunity to gain practical experience within the school environment. This pushed many young people toward MESEM with the hope that “at least I’ll be working under some form of state protection.” However, the deeper roots of the story lie in severe poverty, the inability of young people to pursue lives shaped by their own interests and talents, and a pervasive sense of hopelessness about the future. Families and children turned to MESEM, seeing it as “the lesser of two evils”, because they had no real alternatives. Meanwhile, business circles celebrated this system as a “revolution,” when in reality it marked a new turning point in the exploitation of working people and their children.

Today in Turkey, more than 7 million of the country’s 22 million children are growing up in poverty. No one can seriously claim that the

education system offers a “path out” for poor families anymore. The divide between rich and poor children is not limited to living conditions; in many instances, even the notion of equal treatment under the law has vanished.

One in every three children in Turkey lives in poverty. 76 of every 100 poor children do not own a single book. 77% cannot afford fresh fruits or vegetables at home. 63% cannot eat chicken or fish even once a day. 75% have never celebrated a birthday or any special occasion. 67% have never used a bicycle, skateboard, or roller skates. 72% do not have any new clothing and do not own a second pair of shoes. These are children who cannot even join school trips are deprived of the ability to meet their most basic living needs.



The Communist Youth of Turkey (TKG) has increasingly focused on the issue of child labor, especially as it has been incorporated into the formal education system through MESEM. However, our perspective and our approach to this struggle differ from the mainstream in important ways. We agree that child labor is a crime, but we cannot ignore that it is also the inevitable result of the current system. In such a system, harsh living conditions, high unemployment, and a lack of future prospects all push children into work. Families and children cannot be shamed or blamed for this. If nearly 10% of Turkey’s working class today consists of children, then their greatest strength against exploitation also comes from their role in production. They must organize in their workplaces and in

MESEM to demand their rights and take ownership of their future.

The struggle to abolish employer-driven education models like MESEM can only succeed by advocating for a new social system—one in which children are not exploited as workers, education is not treated as a commodity, and exploitation is completely eradicated. In today’s system, a public, high-quality, and free education shaped according to social needs would no longer be something that can be even demanded.

From the early years of the AKP government, transformation in the education system culminated in a model that effectively markets children’s labor directly to employers. They believed they could gloss over this reality; they even tried to make

it seem harmless by claiming that “at least children earn some money.” But they could not conceal the major capitalist interests behind these radical reforms. Today, tragically, anger is building across society, and growing stronger each day, on top of the bodies of our brothers, our sisters, our children.

Will Turkey protect its children, or will it surrender to a dark and hopeless future?

With all our strength, we continue to organize vocational education students who have now become part of the working class, follow workplace-centered struggles, and inform the public so that our friends whom this system has taken from us are not forgotten and this system is not normalized. Through our actions and our campaigns, we remain committed to pursuing this struggle.

We will not allow the responsible ministries, institutions, or employer organizations to hide from public scrutiny or act as if this issue has nothing to do with them. They are the perpetrators of child deaths that people of Turkey will never ignore. We will ensure that they are held accountable for every life lost!



# Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality operation: What is happening?

**A new stage has been reached in the most important political trial on Turkey's agenda. New charges against the defendants have emerged.**

**Yiğit Günay,**

*Member of TKP Party Council*

In the 2024 local elections, Ekrem İmamoğlu, who was elected Mayor of İstanbul with 51 percent of the vote in a city which is more populous than many European countries, was detained and arrested in an operation carried out on 19 March 2025.

In November, the İstanbul Chief Public Prosecutor's Office submitted its indictment on the case to the court. Thus, a new phase of the operation began.

At first glance: What is in the indictment?

The Prosecutor's Office describes a "profit-oriented İmamoğlu criminal organization." According to its claim, İmamoğlu, back when he was still mayor of İstanbul's western district Beylikdüzü, set up an organization with an internal hierarchy and discipline. This organization allegedly used the money it accumulated through bribes circulating in public tenders to gain political influence. The goal was to make İmamoğlu president of Turkey and make the wheel turn with even more power. To do this, it

supposedly tried to manipulate elections by sharing the personal data of İstanbul residents with the intelligence services of the United States, the United Kingdom, and Israel.

The 4,000-page indictment, in which 402 suspects are charged over 142 separate actions, requests a total prison sentence of up to 2,352 years for İmamoğlu. In addition, the Prosecutor's Office notified the Supreme Court of Appeals in order to have a closure case to be opened against CHP, İmamoğlu's party.

## **Who are the key actors?**

**Ekrem İmamoğlu:** The imprisoned Mayor of the İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality. In the last local election, he received more votes than the AKP and came out first. He is the leader of one of the three major factions of the social-democratic main opposition party, CHP. Originally a wealthy contractor. Politically, a typical center-right figure.

**Özgür Özel:** The Chairman of CHP.

Leader of one of the party's three factions. He became the party's head at the 2023 congress by forming an alliance with İmamoğlu. A pharmacist by profession. Rather than having a clear ideological line, he is a demagogue who served for years as the party's spokesperson in Parliament.

**Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu:** CHP's former chairman who lost the 2023 congress, and leader of the third faction. A retired bureaucrat. He has openly taken a stance against İmamoğlu and Özel, and is effectively supporting the judicial operation carried out by AKP.

**Tayyip Erdoğan:** The President and leader of AKP. He openly claims ownership of the operation and supports the prosecutor. He propagandizes as if the allegations were true, and is trying both to redesign the CHP internally and to shape the presidential candidate who might face him in the next election.

**Akın Gürlek:** The İstanbul Public



Prosecutor. The central figure behind the operation. An overtly political figure, he consistently issued rulings in favor of AKP and sentenced many revolutionaries during his time as a judge. Between 2022 and 2024, he served as Deputy Minister of Justice. During this period, as a reward, he was appointed to the board of the Luxembourg-based subsidiary of the Turkish state-owned mining company Eti Maden, with a high salary. The situation clearly violates Turkish law, but he does not care. He imitates an American style of prosecution, constantly gives statements to the media, and declares everyone guilty as if he were both the prosecutor and the judge.

### **What is actually in the indictment?**

Contrary to what one would expect from 4,000 pages, the indictment contains quite a small amount of evidence. Most of the allegations consist of the statements of municipal bureaucrats who became confessors, businessmen who became the state's witnesses or complainants, and above all the statements of secret witnesses, which are circumstantial evidence. Some allegations have already been proven false. The accuracy of some corruption claims will become clear during the judicial process.

On the other hand, one area where the indictment provides relatively concrete evidence is the claim that the personal data of Istanbul residents, collected through mandatory public-service applications, was combined with ballot-box data to conduct detailed political profiling. This tactic, used by all establishment parties that hold central or local power, is a crime whose weight is disproportionate to the sentences being sought. But the indictment does not use this issue because it cares about citizens' personal data; it uses it to connect the

matter to the charge of "espionage" by alleging that "this data was sent abroad for analysis." The espionage accusation at this point appears baseless.

### **What is the political logic of the operation?**

The operation aimed at CHP through İmamoğlu, which has resulted in interventions not only in İstanbul's Metropolitan Municipality and its districts but in many municipalities across Turkey, is from the government's perspective an attempt to shape the opposition and thereby suppress and steer social reactions.

It is clear that İmamoğlu, who appears in polls as someone who would defeat Erdoğan in a possible presidential election, is perceived as a threat. But this threat is not simply tied to polling numbers. İmamoğlu's profile is very similar to Erdoğan's. Just like Erdoğan was, he is a mayor of İstanbul's massive municipality, he is an actor who, using the financial and political strength he derives from local administration, tries to build his own political hegemony, and who recognizes the importance of cultivating close relations with the capitalist class and with Western states.

AKP saw here the risk of its monopoly over the support of capital and imperialism being broken, and intervened essentially for this reason. İmamoğlu had been developing very close relations not only with certain traditional big-capital groups such as Koç Holding but also with some pro-government conglomerates that rose during the AKP era and owed their existence to Erdoğan. In terms of relations with the West, he is a collaborator with imperialism who sends signals of "I can do more for you than Erdoğan", even to the point of sending a congratulatory message from prison to Venezuelan María Corina Machado because she received a Nobel Prize, a person who had lost all restraint to the extent of saying she would be happy if her country

were occupied by Israel. In fields such as economy, social rights, and exploitative relations, he is already a right-wing politician entirely parallel to Erdoğan.

For this reason, AKP is trying to keep the opposition away from its own sphere of consolidation and confine it within a platform whose boundaries are drawn thickly.

### **What is the opportunity for communists?**

Communists, who from the very first day have waged an uncompromising and harsh struggle against the government, now have, not only the chance to point out that the operation is entirely political rather than legal, but also the chance to explain the parts in the current picture that reveal the irrationality of capitalism.

Corruption is spread across all municipalities in Turkey. Because public services, in parallel with neoliberal policies globally, are handed over to the private sector in Turkey as well. Everything has to be outsourced to companies. This situation already creates fertile ground for corruption.

It was the AKP government itself that repeatedly leaked citizens' personal data. And not only political parties but also companies possess all data about citizens. Behind this lies the conviction, now firmly established among all establishment actors, that politics is not something to be carried out through face-to-face contact, not through linking arms and fighting in an organized manner, but through manipulations of perception and understanding conducted with mass communication tools.

Indeed, including the AKP's own base, the general public in Turkey does not believe that the operation rests on genuine legal grounds. The Prosecutor's Office added the scandalous "espionage" accusations later for this reason. But in any case, the filth that has spilled into the open may serve as a reason for the people to question this order.





## The fight over the cake didn't start today: Capital no longer fits within its bounds

The conflicts of interest within all spheres of Turkish capitalism extend beyond the current distribution of the cake. The imperial ambitions of the capitalist class also encompass potential future gains. It is clear that efforts to target capital—particularly through judicial processes—should not be seen merely as attempts to “adjust” or “set boundaries”; rather, they aim to consolidate capital in pursuit of broader, more ambitious objectives.

**Gülay Dinçel,**  
*Member of TKP Party Council*

In recent months, the power struggles between the different groups of the Turkish capital have intensified. Government operations have extended to some large companies and holdings. Some business owners or senior executives have been linked to the trial of İstanbul's Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu. In a separate corruption case, for the first time in history, a deputy governor of the Central Bank was arrested. Naturally, a broader perspective can also take into account other developments from the past year, including investigations into the top names of the largest organization of the capitalists, TÜSİAD, internal conflicts within political parties, and

infighting within the state.

TKP, in its previous publications, had pointed out that the internal war within the ruling circles was slipping out of control, emphasizing that the essential issue was securing a larger share of the cake.

Analyses based on distinctions such as old-new, pro-government-secular, İstanbul-Anatolia, or even finance-industry-trade have very limited explanatory strength when it comes to conflicts within the capitalist class. Sharp categorizations regarding the composition of capital implicitly assume that the illicit practices highlighted by current operations exist outside ordinary economic

functioning and are products of special mechanisms. This, in turn, introduces an additional dichotomy between “clean” and “dirty” capital. As a result, public attention drifts excessively toward issues such as controlling “black money,” bringing overly swollen activities into line, or redistributing accumulated wealth in this domain. Yet, both the world and in Turkey, these activities—including drugs which might be considered the most isolated form of “business”—are integral parts of capitalist functioning, of production, trade, and financing mechanisms. Just as tax evasion, contraband goods, bribery, and all forms of corruption are inherent to capitalist activities.



There is substantial evidence that a significant portion of the surplus value appropriated by the Turkish bourgeoisie in industrial production is realized abroad. High import dependence in manufacturing inputs, high export levels, relations established with international capital through value chains, and the modest increase in average value added despite rising production volume all point to a major transfer of value. This situation alone—leaving everything else aside—implies money constantly moving in and out of official records. If one mechanism of this movement is finance, another is undoubtedly channels that are far from respectable.

For this reason, it is difficult to determine precisely where the boundaries of the clean-dirty capital distinction begin and end, or to clearly define the direction and degree of the symbiosis between the two forms. In a cake that is not expanding at the desired pace—or is even at risk of shrinking—the strong attempting to enlarge their share is of course no trivial matter and remains an important issue. However, when depicting structures that are deeply intertwined—and therefore capable of coexisting whether they grow or contract—one must be cautious not to frame the picture as though one expands solely by suppressing the other.

### **Plump capital**

It would be more accurate to focus on the reasons behind the bottleneck experienced by Turkish capitalism and the intensifying competition among capitals. Rather than analyses that concentrate on those rising from below challenging those above, on positional shifts among capital groups, or, plainly, on a shift in the capitalist hierarchy, it seems more productive to start from the idea that an overly swollen mass of capital can no longer fit within its bounds.

The concept of “plump capital” is, of course, somewhat caricatured. Yet it is useful for describing the pace of development in Turkish capitalism after 2001 and the scale reached by the expansion of capital accumulation. It may appear contradictory, but an extended period

unfolded in which—thanks to unique opportunities created and seized—both monopolization and capital concentration intensified while, at the same time, the diversity of capital expanded. The most significant factor enabling diversification alongside concentration was undoubtedly the new domains opened to capital through liberalization and deregulation, particularly large-scale privatizations. One may also add the rapid expansion of domestic and foreign market opportunities, sectoral diversification, and maturation.

Diversification should not be understood merely as the addition of new names to the upper segment of capital owners; the expansion of established players into new fields of activity should also be considered within this framework.

In this context, it can be said that a significant portion of the large capital groups grew enormously, while many capitalists positioned at different points of the hierarchy seized major opportunities and reached scales that would be difficult to attain within two decades under normal circumstances.

Rather than positional shifts within the composition of capital, the central dynamic today is the intensified search for a leap capable of relieving the existing plumpness. Transfers of capital ownership, new privatizations, and the emergence of new growth dynamics within existing markets all represent opportunities, of course. A capitalist class that had not become so bloated could, under normal conditions, carry out a relatively ordinary level of competition for such opportunities. However, at the current scale of Turkish capitalism, these are insufficient for expanding capital accumulation and satisfying the capitalist class. Preserving the current situation—or opting for what might be called moderate growth—necessarily imposes a reorganization with a strong consolidation dimension. When one also considers regional developments, increasingly evident imperial ambitions, and the progress made in overseas operations, the potential for a leap becomes even stronger. The

oscillation between scenarios of staying afloat in a possible consolidation and preparing for broader new opportunities heightens the severity of the tremors.

### **Is the composition of capital as flexible as assumed?**

Turkey is a large country with a large economy. The specific conditions surrounding its founding, the maturity and scale of its capitalism, the complexity of its exploitation mechanisms, and the configuration of its international connections all limit the degree of rootlessness—even for the most disreputable elements of the capitalist class. In both intra-capital networks and in relationships with the institutions within the system, there are mediations that go far beyond direct connections.

Of course, this complexity does not alter the fact that the existing order is one of plunder, and that the capitalist class is a class of thieves. Yet capital groups that cannot be reduced to their own corporate structures and that are part of various direct and indirect networks at both national and international levels cannot be toppled through simple operations. Many of those who have achieved much in a short time, whose hands have been held, have not arrived at their positions by chance. Whether they derive their power from politics or politics derives power from them is a contentious and highly complex issue.

The most striking contemporary example is Baykar, the weapons company owned by the family of Erdoğan's son-in-law, the Bayraktars. Would the doors of the Presidential Palace have opened without the progress made together with the Kale Group, which has strong ties to the United States? Conversely, without the Palace doors opening, would they have gone beyond being a reliable medium-scale solution partner to reach the point of acquiring the Italian weapons manufacturer Piaggio, or cooperating with Leonardo, another major weapons producer?



## Preparations underway for NATO Summit

**Ankara prepares for the NATO Summit in 2026. The whole world will suffer the political consequences of this international terrorist organization. The people of Ankara, for their part, will suffer these consequences through the paralysis of their daily lives.**

NATO's 2026 Leadership Summit will be held in Ankara on 7-8 July 2026. A state of emergency has already been declared in the capital, eight months before the meeting of the organization that exports attacks, war and terror to many parts of the world.

First, construction activities have begun at Ankara's international airport Esenboğa, in order to welcome NATO leaders. In addition, a tender was also quickly announced for the expansion of the military airport located in Etimesgut. The tender includes, besides a new runway, a VIP reception hall and the State Guesthouse. The cost of the tender is nearly 6 billion liras.

One of the pro-government journalists wrote on these preparations in her

column on mainstream newspaper "Hürriyet": "The U.S. Secret Service (USSS) and the White House Military Office apply a principle called the 'one-hour rule' in the U.S. President's travels. According to this, the President goes to places that are at most one hour away by road from the point where he lands. (This corresponds to a distance of approximately 50-70 km.) This is not a law, but an operational standard for security and emergency response planning." The project concerning the airport is related to these preparations.

There is another aspect of the airport project. The expansion of the airport will also affect the historic complex of the Sugar Factory. The housing units located outside the factory's main building and

a series of other protected structures are facing the risk of demolition. The residents living in these housing units were asked to vacate their homes in a hurry. In addition, a forested area will also be destroyed due to the project. Even the structures under protection could be put at risk in this chaos.

As the summit approaches, Ankara is bracing for extraordinary security measures, both in the air and on the ground. Public employees whose work is deemed non-essential will be placed on administrative leave, and key roads across the city will be closed to traffic. In short, ordinary residents of Ankara will find their daily lives disrupted, restricted, and, in many ways, terrorized by the heavy-handed security measures.





The second of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) had been held in İstanbul in 1996. During the conference, the people of İstanbul had faced a similar problem. Authorities even resorted to measures such as the widespread culling of street dogs. At the NATO summit held in İstanbul in 2004, extraordinary security measures were also taken, and access to an area in the city center had been prohibited.

TKP continually brings the issue to public attention through ongoing statements and organized protests. The latest statement underlined the following: "We will not allow those who want to open the republic's heritage, our city, and our resources to plunder for NATO leaders. Those who threaten our country's sovereignty and the people's security will find us, the working class patriots of Ankara, communists, standing against them. Together, we will show

who the homeland really belongs to. The workers in the factory and the housing units will stay; you, along with that NATO you love so much, with all foreign bases and soldiers, will get out of this country!"

With its multifaceted preparations and political messaging—carrying both political significance and implications targeting the people—the summit will continue to remain a priority on the TKP's agenda.





# Highlights from Turkish Foreign Policy



## **Demands of sanctions and peace deals**

The war in Ukraine takes a new turn with Trump announcing his new plan while the month that had led up to this moment had been full of conflicts and contradictions. After the Hungary meeting with Putin was cancelled by Trump, new sanctions were implemented.

Erdoğan had already been asked to implement the sanctions during his White House meeting with Trump. The new sanctions reiterated this request as talks of sanctions for Turkish banks who enable the sale of Russian oils resurfaced. Conversely, the pipelines through which Russia's remaining natural gas shipments to Europe pass, currently run through Turkey. This transit route is a vital source of income for Turkey. Therefore, it seems unrealistic that the EU will implement its decision to shut off the gas valve to Turkey by 2027.

The importance of this transit route can be seen as Turkey has

increased its natural gas import from Russia by 18 percent compared to last year, despite the radical decrease in purchasing Russian oil. Biggest refineries in Turkey are decreasing their oil export from Russia, and starting to increase their buys from Iraq, Kazakhstan and others. Some sources even say export from Russia may be reduced to zero in long term. Along with China and India, Turkey has been one of the largest buyers of Russian oil.

The US has demanded that Turkey stop buying oil and natural gas from Russia in an official statement released by the US State Department on 10 November. This followed a meeting between US Secretary of State Mark Rubio and Turkey's Minister of Foreign Affairs Hakan Fidan. We will see if Ankara will be able to discard the lucrative pipelines as the current contracts between Gazprom and Turkey's state-owned energy company, BOTAŞ, expire on 31 December. Of course, the pressure may de-escalate or at least be

postponed for now, depending on the developments surrounding the Ukraine plan.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Fidan, has described the war in Ukraine as a conflict that threatens the global energy market and food security, and that has significant repercussions for the rest of the world. Fidan stated that there are powerful circles in the US and Europe that do not want the war to end. He believes that the Trump administration has ultimately come to agree with Turkey that 'the war must end.' He also pointed out that the recent visits to Turkey by the British Prime Minister and the German Chancellor, and their meetings with President Erdoğan, suggest that European leaders also want this.

According to various sources, Qatar and Turkey played a part in drawing up Trump's new plan and in supporting US mediation efforts. Right after his meeting with Ukrainian President Zelensky in Ankara, Erdoğan announced that



# TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY

he would have a phone call with Putin to discuss the path to peace and Turkey's involvement in it. It was later stated that Erdoğan and Putin discussed bilateral relations between Turkey and Russia, the war between Russia and Ukraine, and regional and global issues. Although Erdoğan had said before the meeting that they would discuss the re-establishment of the grain corridor, this was not reflected in his statement after the meeting.

A few hours before the video conference of the 'coalition of the willing' countries offering post-war aid to Ukraine, Macron announced that British, French

## The Eurofighter deal and increasing defense expenses

Turkey has the largest fleet of F-16s of any NATO country outside the US. However, it is expected that Washington will delay the delivery of new F-16s until 2030. As a result, Ankara is looking to Europe to meet its fighter jet needs. Following his meeting with Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, German Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul had spoken positively about Turkey's purchase of Eurofighter jets. The sale was finalized during British Prime Minister Keir Starmer's visit to Ankara.

A cooperation agreement on

the Gulf.

Turkey's defence dealings with Qatar don't end there. Meteksan, which is part of Bilkent Holding, has produced unmanned naval vehicles. The company made its first sale to Qatar a few months ago. Bilkent Holding is also active in the construction sector of the defence industry. Tepe Construction, which is part of the holding company, is currently constructing an air base in Romania for the US. Bilkent Holding has strong ties with Israel. While the genocide in Palestine continues, Tepe Construction is currently building an annex for the US



and Turkish soldiers would be deployed to conduct training and security operations. After the video conference, Erdoğan stated that Turkey "will continue its diplomatic efforts to facilitate direct contact between the parties, with the aim of achieving a just and lasting peace as soon as possible."

The Ministry of National Defense (MSB) stated that the deployment of Turkish troops to Ukraine would only be possible if a ceasefire was secured between Russia and Ukraine, and if a clear mandate was established for the mission framework and the extent of each country's contribution was determined.

fighter jets was signed with a ceremony.

At a joint press conference following the meetings, Erdoğan accused Israel of committing genocide in Gaza and called for Germany to intervene. Merz defended Germany's policy towards Israel, avoiding polemic. The whole event gave the impression of being a carefully planned PR exercise designed to reassure public opinion in both countries, rather than being a genuine incident.

In addition to the 20 units to be purchased from the UK, a further 12 Eurofighter Typhoons are planned to be acquired from Qatar and Oman. These second-hand jets were also discussed during Erdoğan's visits to

embassy in Jerusalem, which Trump moved there from Tel Aviv during his first term as president, disregarding international law.

Over the past 15 years, Turkey's industry has rapidly militarized its production in response to the new trends of global capitalism. Turkey's industrial bourgeoisie has not only become the subcontractor of NATO's military restructuring, but also its economic engine. Consequently, Turkey's industrial structure is being reshaped to align with the military logic of global capitalism. While the state portrays this process as a national defence initiative, it is the integration of capital into NATO's imperialist agenda.

## Elections in Cyprus and political boundaries

Last month, the candidate supported by the AKP government lost the elections in Northern Cyprus. Erdoğan said, "This was an important election, and we highly respect the will of the Turkish Cypriots. For this reason, we congratulated them. We did not make such a significant investment in Northern Cyprus for nothing."

Respect for the sovereignty and democracy of Turkish Cypriots was short-lived. Following the signing of the agreement between Lebanon and the Republic of Cyprus on the delimitation of maritime zones, Turkey's Ministry of Foreign Affairs took matters into its own hands on behalf of the Turkish Cypriots.

Turkish Foreign Ministry spokesperson Öncü Keçeli stated that, since 2003, the Republic of Cyprus had "signed bilateral agreements with neighbouring countries on the delimitation of maritime areas around Cyprus, disregarding the Turkish Cypriots, who are a sovereign and equal component of the island."

The issue was also raised in a speech delivered by Defence Minister Yaşar Güler at the Turkish Grand National Assembly's Planning and Budget Committee. Güler stated that the Greek Cypriot administration's desire to develop military and political relations with countries within and outside the region, as well as its desire to arm itself, is progressing in a manner that will increase tension and undermine stability.

Recently, relations between the Republic of Cyprus and Israel have been in the spotlight. However, it is unclear to whom Güler was referring when he used the phrase 'countries outside the region' in his speech. The country with the most influence in Cyprus is the United Kingdom. In the same speech, however, Güler praised the so-called government imposed on Syria for doing exactly what he had criticized the Republic of Cyprus for doing.

## The European Parliament – annual Turkey report

The EU's 2025 Turkey Report was made public on 4 November. As it was not mentioned in the news, it caused no stir or controversy in Turkey's domestic politics. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs merely issued a brief statement on its official website. The fact that this annual report, which dominated the country's agenda every year until 20 years ago, has now been met with silence reflects the changing nature of Turkey-EU relations and Turkey's diminishing attachment to the issue.

As Turkey moves forward with the neo-Ottomanist policy, the European Union has also fully embraced its role as an instrument of imperialist war and exploitation. Europe's expectations of Turkey are clear:

Firstly, she must guard the borders secured by the Readmission Agreement. Secondly, she is



expected to manage organized industrial sites that provide cheap inputs to EU capital through the Customs Union mechanism. The third and newest expectation is for Turkey to supply human and product resources to help transform the EU into an offensive force. Macron's statement after the 'coalition of the willing' further proves this aspect.

### Gaza agreement falls apart immediately

The ceasefire agreement was signed by four countries acting as guarantors: the United States, Turkey, Egypt, and Qatar. Over the first week, Israel violated the ceasefire 47 times, carrying out more than 100 attacks and killing 38 Palestinians while wounding a further 147. Palestinians appealed to the UN and the guarantor countries, demanding that Israel comply with

the ceasefire. To fully implement the plan, it was proposed that cooperation be established with Israel, Egypt, Qatar, and Turkey 'to maintain pressure on Hamas.'

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reportedly had rejected any role for Turkey or Qatar in the post-war administration of Gaza, describing it as a "red line." He and other Israeli officials had expressed concern that the involvement of the two countries could give them political influence in Gaza. Indeed, the first Turkish rescue team to arrive was unable to enter Gaza because the Rafah crossing was closed. In an interview that same week, Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan claimed that Turkey was acting not only as a mediator of the agreement but also as a guarantor.

The statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding Israel's attacks on the Gaza Strip was rather mild. It expressed deep concern for civilians and emphasized the vital importance of full compliance with the ceasefire. Israel was simply urged to honour the ceasefire and avoid actions that could jeopardize peace and stability.

In early November, ministers from seven countries that support US President Donald Trump's 20-point plan for Gaza met in Istanbul. The Minister of Foreign Affairs stated that their diplomatic efforts on this issue were ongoing. He argued that, rather than facing rejection from Israel, they were waiting for the mission and powers assigned to the International Stabilization Force to be defined. At the same press conference, Minister Fidan stated that Hamas was ready to transfer authority in Gaza to the Palestinian committee.

Following serious breaches of the ceasefire, the president of the National Intelligence Organization (MIT), İbrahim Kalın, also joined the mediation process at Washington's request. Later in Istanbul, Kalın met with a high-level Hamas delegation led by Khalil al-Hayye, head of the Hamas negotiation team.





### Missions in Syria

Decrees signed by President Erdoğan extended the Turkish military mission periods in Lebanon, Iraq, and Syria. Parliament approved the extension of support for the UN force in Lebanon by two years, as well as authorization for cross-border operations in Iraq and Syria for an additional three years.

The motion stated that operations were necessary against the PKK, PYD/YPG, and ISIS structures that pose a threat to Turkey's security. This reasoning raised some interest, as the AKP government has been involved in the peace process for over a year now with the PKK, which officially announced its disintegration in March. The motion further shows the motivation behind the AKP government's involvement in the peace process goes beyond the borders of Turkey. Furthermore, Erdoğan's unusual silence throughout the entire process and mentioning of a PKK threat in this motion indicate that the government is trying to maintain a certain image according to the public. The plausibility of this move is debatable, as the AKP government tries to have the cake and eat it too.

The motion also authorized the presence of foreign armed forces in Turkey, when necessary, to be used according to principles determined by the President.

Turkey has embarked on a diplomatic mission as well as the military one in Syria. The Republic of Turkey's fully authorized ambassadorial mission to the Syrian Arab Republic is resumed after a 13-year hiatus. Nuh Yılmaz, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, has been appointed to the post. Working closely with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Yılmaz is also significant in terms of the power struggles within the government. Previous reports have suggested that Syria is one aspect of the disagreement between Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan and Director of the National Intelligence Organization (MIT) İbrahim Kalın.

### COP 30

Turkey and Australia had disagreed for over a year regarding the venue for the United Nations Climate Change Conference, with both countries competing to host the 2026 summit. The impasse lasted until the final day of the current climate summit in Belém,

Brazil. Had no solution been found, the summit scheduled for next year would have been awarded to Germany by default. However, Germany had indicated that it would not have sufficient time to plan the event properly.



Turkey will host the event and handle logistics, while the Australians mainly focus on the content. Turkey aims to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2053. This date was chosen to mark 600 years since the conquest of İstanbul and has more symbolic than scientific significance. This is the perfect example to show how the AKP government is greenwashing the capital of Turkey, not that Western countries are any better. While Turkey may not implement any of its new climate initiatives, neither will the foreign capital that invests in Turkey.

# Children in Turkey

## 3 MILLION CHILD WORKERS IN TURKEY



According to data from the Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK), children make up 25.5% of the total population in Turkey. The labor force participation rate for children in the 15-17 age range was reported as 24.9%. However, data released by trade unions reveals that the official figures are far from reflecting reality.

The Vocational Training Centers (MESEM), promoted by the AKP government as an education model and presented under the guise of vocational training, have emerged as a practice that legitimizes child labor across the country. When children in MESEM, along with those working unregistered and children under the age of 15, are added to the official numbers, a frightening picture emerges: there are at least 3 million child workers in Turkey.

## 82 CHILD WORKER DEATHS RECORDED IN 2025

According to the Child Work Murder Report published by the Workers' Health and Work Safety Assembly (İSİG), the number of recorded child worker deaths between the 2024 and 2025 academic years is 72. In 2025, the number of children who have lost their lives in in work-related accidents has already reached 82. Children are predominantly employed in the agriculture, construction, industry, and service sectors. Proportionally, 28% of the deaths occurred in the agricultural sector.



## 6074 BIRTHS AMONG GIRLS UNDER 18

Although TÜİK does not publish direct statistics on child marriages, 6,074 of the births in 2024 were by girls under the age of 18. Due to the lack of current and comprehensive shared data, it is difficult to access official figures.

However, research conducted by various institutions provides important insights on the subject. A report published in 2020 revealed that Turkey is the country with the highest rate of child marriage in Europe, and girls are married off 27 times more than boys of the same age.

Religious, tribal structures, and traditional pressures stand out as determining factors in child marriages. Proportionally, the highest rates of child marriage are observed in the Eastern Anatolia and Southeastern Anatolia regions.



## 1 IN 4 CHILDREN GOES TO SCHOOL HUNGRY

According to research, one in five children in Turkey cannot access adequate nutrition, and one in four children has to go to school hungry. OECD data shows that Turkey is one of the countries with the highest child poverty rates.

Based on data from the first six months of 2025, the number of children whose basic needs cannot be met while living with their families and who are therefore at risk of being taken into state care is approximately 172,000. Meanwhile, the number of children fainting in schools due to hunger is increasing every day.



# Republican People's Party: indispensable pillar of the system



Founded by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and as old as the Republic itself, the Republican People's Party (CHP) has managed to remain one of the central actors in every major political rupture in Turkey. Carrying the mission of the founding party of the Republic of Turkey, CHP has, for more than two decades, been presented as the supposed political address for "getting rid of the AKP," even as its alliance strategies have constantly shifted. In reality, far from weakening the AKP government, CHP—directly or indirectly—has acted as an important supporting element during the AKP era.

Yet since the operations launched in March 2024—operations that have resulted in the detention of numerous CHP officials, mayors, and even İstanbul Metropolitan Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu, who was expected to run against Erdoğan in the next presidential elections—the party has come under intense legal and political pressure. With discussions even extending to the possibility of appointing a trustee to the CHP, the party's long-standing structural function for bourgeois rule has been

pushed into the background. For that reason, this article traces several critical turning points in Turkish political history to re-establish the broader picture.

## Origins of the 'founding party'

Although today the CHP is widely regarded—both inside Turkey and internationally—as a social democratic party, its origins have little to do with the historical development of European social democracy.

In Europe, social democratic parties arose from the fierce class struggles of the 19th century, emerging as the organized political force of the working class fighting for even the most basic economic, political, and human rights. Their ultimate goal, expressed most clearly in Marx and Engels' Communist Manifesto, was a classless society free from exploitation.

However, as World War I approached, nearly all of these parties—with rare exceptions such as the Bolsheviks—voted in favor of the war budgets of the ruling class of their countries, thereby crossing over from the ranks of the working

class politics to the bourgeois politics completing their transformation into bourgeois parties by the early 20th century despite their working-class base.

The Republican People's Party, by contrast, never had such origins. Founded shortly before the proclamation of the Republic, CHP was not born of a working-class movement, nor did it claim to represent one. On the contrary, it claimed from the beginning that modern social classes did not exist in Turkey as in the West, and as the Party grew, it adjusted its trajectory to serve the interests of the emerging bourgeoisie, who steadily eroded the very essence of the republic.

The year 1946—portrayed today by CHP as the beginning of Turkey's political decline—and the founding of the Democrat Party can be understood only in this light. The progressive reforms at home and the pursuit of friendly relations with the Soviet Union abroad no longer met the needs of the increasingly self-confident capitalist class. A more aggressive bourgeois party was needed to anchor Turkey firmly in the U.S.-led

“Free World,” beyond CHP’s own structural limits at the time. Thus the Democrat Party emerged.

Until 1946, the year the Democrat Party was founded, Turkish politics largely operated under single-party rule. Although the CHP gradually shifted to the right and leaned toward anti-communism despite the young Republic’s friendly ties with the Soviet Union before, the Democrat Party came to power as a fully pro-American, reactionary, and pro-capitalist party, aiming to overcome the CHP’s characteristics as the party of the Republic—traits seen as obstacles by Turkey’s capitalist class and U.S. interests.

## **The reluctant social democrat: ‘left of center’**

It was not the Democrat Party’s aggressiveness that pushed CHP toward social democracy, but the rise of the working class movement in the 1960s in Turkey.

Those years witnessed a major awakening of the working class: mass organization, strikes, and political mobilization. The election of 15 deputies from the Workers’ Party of Turkey (TİP)—propelled by workers’ votes—forced the bourgeois social system to respond.

It was in this context that İsmet İnönü, the leader of the CHP in that period and the “Second Man” of the Republic after Mustafa Kemal, introduced the term “left of center,” marking CHP’s turn toward social democracy.

A buffer was needed between the organized working class and the bourgeoisie, along with its instruments of control. Through this buffer, the working class could be confined to strictly intra-systemic demands. The CHP’s “Left of Center” initiative aimed to keep radicalizing workers, students, and intellectuals within the boundaries of the existing system, cultivating the illusion that meaningful reform was possible without a fundamental rupture.

## **CHP’s way of anti-communism: ‘the populist Ecevit’**

By the late 1960s, the revolutionary politicization of students combined with the awakening of

the working class, sharply polarized class struggle in Turkey. As the country drifted toward a systemic crisis in the 1970s—with workers, revolutionaries, and communists gaining unprecedented social influence—CHP positioned itself under Bülent Ecevit as a system-friendly “alternative.”

CHP became the mechanism through which millions who desired revolutionary change were confined within the limits of the capitalist social system. One of the most dynamic periods of Turkey’s revolutionary forces was thus squandered; millions who demanded systemic change were diverted, manipulated, and ultimately deceived.

Years later, Ecevit openly admitted in an interview that he had played a decisive role in preventing communism from taking root in Turkey—confirming the party’s central mission: distancing the working class from the revolutionary path.

## **CHP during AKP government: conditioning Turkey to the AKP**

Over the more than two decades of AKP’s rule, CHP played a crucial role to absorb all the reactions to the government by lowering expectations, normalizing AKP’s moves, and narrowing the boundaries of political struggle to the elections.

When mass anger erupted against the AKP’s intensifying Islamist policies, CHP leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu responded by saying, “I cannot say secularism is under threat,” helping to pacify public outrage.

Immediately after millions took to the streets during the 2013 Gezi Resistance, CHP directed those resisting to the ballot box and nominated an Islamist figure to run against Erdoğan in the presidential elections.

Following the failed coup attempt of July 15, 2016, CHP helped the AKP government to restore its legitimacy.

Whenever the AKP violated the law, CHP repeated the mantra “We will defeat the AKP despite all this,” effectively guiding public anger back into the narrow limits of the existing social system and facilitating the

acceptance of AKP’s impositions.

In truth, none of the AKP’s major policies were unique to the AKP. They were part of a broader capitalist restructuring program aligned with the needs of the bourgeoisie—and CHP’s mission was to restrain the millions who resisted and to keep them tied to the capitalist system.

## **“CHP under attack”: can Turkey be governed without the CHP?**

This article is not focused specifically on the legal and political assaults against CHP in the past year. However, one point must be emphasized: Completely eliminating the CHP would never be wise for Turkey’s capitalist class or its political representatives—and that is not the intended goal.

CHP, regardless of all its past “services,” remains one of the ruling class’s most crucial mechanisms for reconciling millions of workers with the darkness they are forced to live in—the capitalist offensive, relentless reactionary policies, and deepening exploitation.

Without CHP’s constant effort to absorb, tranquilize, and domesticate those who want to struggle, Turkish capitalism cannot be governed. The Republican People’s Party is the most effective barrier preventing millions of impoverished workers, futureless youth, and abandoned retirees from turning toward a revolutionary break.

In that sense, the pressure CHP has faced over the last year also serves another function: reshaping the party into a force suited to the needs of the new phase of capitalist rule.

However, what is often overlooked is that, given the importance of CHP’s role in maintaining the system, even the actions of a government with diminished governing capacity can unpredictably unsettle the system and disrupt various dynamics.



## Revolution is now out as an eBook

The eBook of the English edition of Revolution, the latest book by Kemal Okuyan, TKP General Secretary, is now available.

Originally published in August 2025, Revolution received significant attention from readers and rapidly went through five print editions. The English edition, released in October 2025, brings Okuyan's reflections on the very nature of revolutions to the international audience.

To access the e-book: [Please Visit Web Site](#)



## Revolution is your right!



TKP Central Committee issued a statement on the 108. anniversary of the Great October Revolution emphasizing the right to revolution. In the statement, which directed the questions *"Must this system continue as it is? Is the fate of humanity and our country unchangeable?"*, it was expressed that the October Revolution demonstrated how a paradise on earth could be created when humanity exercised its most valuable historical right — the **right to revolution**.



## Kemal Okuyan: The October Revolution is humanity's rebellion

A delegation of the Communist Party of Turkey (TKP), headed by General Secretary Kemal Okuyan, took part in the ECA General Assembly and the international meeting organized by the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) on the occasion of the 108th anniversary of the Great October Revolution, held in Athens on 22-23 November.

Addressing participants at the international meeting with a presentation titled "war, revolution, and rebellion" Kemal Okuyan began by stressing that the new epoch opened by the October Revolution—though interrupted by the assaults of the capitalist classes—has not yet come to a close.

Okuyan focused not only on the nature of imperialist war but also on that of imperialist peace, noting that the October Revolution was an act of defiance against both.

Another significant point in Okuyan's address was his insistence that the October Revolution cannot be reduced to the simple implementation of a ready-made theoretical blueprint. He emphasized that the Bolsheviks faced grave and complex challenges, which they overcame by upholding their principles while displaying genuine revolutionary creativity. Read Full text of [Kemal Okuyan's speech](#).



## TKP was at the 3rd Congress of the PCTE

PCTE (Communist Party of the Workers of Spain) convened its 3rd Congress under the slogan "A Party to Struggle Under All the Conditions." Kemal Okuyan attended the Congress at the invitation of the Central Committee of PCTE and gave a [speech](#).



## Statement expressing solidarity with Venezuelan people

TKP Central Committee issued a [statement](#) titled "The Venezuelan people shall not stand alone" about accelerating imperialist aggression in Latin America and threats directed at Venezuela. The statement emphasizes that no imperialist power has the legitimacy to interfere in the internal affairs of another country, nor to forcibly impose its political will or social preferences, and the Communist Party of Turkey stands in unconditional solidarity with the Venezuelan people in the face of these escalating threats.

## The Women's Solidarity Committees took to the streets in many cities on November 25

On the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, The Women's Solidarity Committees raised their voices, took to the streets with the slogan "We will tear down your violent rule" in different cities and university campuses.

Senem Doruk, TKP Central Committee Member responsible for the Women's Solidarity Committees, addressed the crowd in İstanbul:

*"Let this stand as a promise to the women you have murdered: we will hold both the perpetrators and their accomplices to account. We will tear down this system that kills us every day—and bury it under your feet!"*



## Protests from TKG on World Children's Rights Day



TKG (Communist Youth of Turkey) gathered in front of the Ministry of the National Education in Ankara, and at Beşiktaş Square in İstanbul declaring "The capitalist system, seeking to cultivate cheap labor for corporations, is driving children to their deaths. All institutions responsible for education, justice, and labor policies are turning a blind eye to the 82 child labor deaths. We are confronting this issue!" And emphasized that they will hold those responsible for the deaths of child workers to account. In Turkey, 83 child workers lost their lives in 2025.



## TKP staged a protest against Israel in Munich



TKP Organization in Germany protested against Israel during the Fenerbahçe-Maccabi Tel Aviv basketball game in Munich with the slogan "Can't Play Ball on Rubble, Free Palestine."



## Protest by the TKP in front of the Polish Embassy

Ahead of the closure case against the Communist Party of Poland, members of the TKP held a demonstration in front of the Polish Embassy in Ankara. The protest condemned the attempt to erase the socialist legacy of the Poland entirely and to prosecute communists who speak out loudly against inequalities.

## Fidel Castro commemorated on 9th anniversary of his passing

The Communist Youth of Turkey and the José Martí Cuba Friendship Association commemorated Fidel Castro, the great leader of the Cuban Revolution, on the ninth anniversary of his passing with events held in Ankara and İzmir. At the gatherings, which were also attended by Alejandro Francisco Díaz Palacios, Ambassador of the Republic of Cuba to Ankara, the ongoing relevance of the struggle against U.S. imperialism was emphasized.

