

THE EVALUATIONS OF ŐEFİK HÜSNÜ  
ON THE "NATIONAL QUESTION" AND ON THE REVOLUTION IN  
TURKEY BETWEEN 1919-1925

by  
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“The Evaluations of Şefik Hüsnü on the "National Question" and on the Revolution in Turkey Between 1919-1925”, a thesis prepared by Neslişah Leman Başaran in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree at the Atatürk Institute for Modern Turkish History.

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Title: The Evaluations of řefik Hüsnu on the "National Question" and on  
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This thesis examines the evaluations of řefik Hüsnu Deęmer, who was the general secretary of the Communist Party of Turkey for many years, on the social, economic and political structure of Turkey, the national liberation struggle and the foundation of the Republic in the period between 1919-1925. The topics that řefik Hüsnu dealt with within this period were the class structure of Turkey, the possibility of a socialist revolution in the actual conditions of the country and the attitude that the communists should take towards the national liberation struggle in Anatolia and its leadership. The answers that řefik Hüsnu formulated were closely related not only to the objective conditions of the country, but also to the debates taking place in the international communist movement and to the existence of the newly founded socialist republic in Russia.

This thesis analyzes the thoughts of řefik Hüsnu within the framework composed of the elements mentioned below; at presenting the evolution in the thinking process and organizational position of řefik Hüsnu and at revealing how his evaluations of the national movement varied parallel to the great changes in Turkey in the aftermath of World War One and parallel to the alterations in the policies of the Communist International.

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Başlık: 1919-1925 Yılları Arasında Şefik Hüsnü'nün Türkiye'de Devrim ve "Ulusal Kurtuluş" Hakkındaki Görüşleri

Bu tez uzun yıllar Türkiye Komünist Partisi genel sekreterliği yapmış Şefik Hüsnü Değmer'in, 1919-1925 yılları arasında, Türkiye'nin sosyal, iktisadi ve siyasal yapısı ve ulusal kurtuluş mücadelesi ile cumhuriyetin kuruluşu hakkındaki düşüncelerini incelemektedir. Şefik Hüsnü'nün bu yıllarda ilgilendiği ve tez kapsamında incelenen başlıklar, Türkiye'nin sınıfsal yapısı, sosyalist bir devrimin mevcut koşullarda mümkün olup olmadığı ve komünistlerin Anadolu'daki ulusal kurtuluş mücadelesine ve bu mücadeleye liderlik eden ulusalcı kadrolara karşı nasıl bir tavır alması gerektiğidir. Şefik Hüsnü'nün bu sorulara verdiği cevaplar sadece Türkiye nesnelliği ile değil aynı zamanda uluslararası komünist hareket içerisindeki tartışmalar ve Rusya'da yeni kurulmuş olan sosyalist cumhuriyet ile de yakından bağlantılıdır.

Tez, Şefik Hüsnü'nün bu konulardaki görüşlerini tüm bu bağlantılarıyla birlikte incelemeye çalışırken aynı zamanda dönem içerisinde, Şefik Hüsnü'nün, kendi düşünsel ve örgütsel gelişimini; Türkiye'nin Birinci Dünya savaşının ardından geçirdiği büyük dönüşümler ve Komünist Enternasyonalin savunduğu politikadaki değişime paralel olarak Türkiye'deki ulusal harekete dair düşüncelerinin süreç boyunca nasıl bir değişim izlediğini de ortaya koymaya çalışmaktadır.

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## PREFACE

This study examines the evaluations of the communist leader Şefik Hüsnü on the “national question” and on the revolution in Turkey, in the period of the emergence of the communist movement in the beginning of 1920’s. The period of examination starts with the first articles written by Şefik Hüsnü as a socialist in 1919 and ends with his going abroad in May 1925, after the closing of the publications of the communists by the government. Within this period Şefik Hüsnü’s thoughts on the political and social and economic situation of the country are analyzed through his articles published in the monthly reviews *Kurtuluş* and *Aydınlık* and in the weekly review *Vazife*, and through the letters that Şefik Hüsnü wrote to the Communist International.

The study consists of six chapters. Chapter One deals with the development of the working class in Istanbul. Secondly this chapter provides historical information on the socialist movements in the aftermath of World War One, particularly on the socialist group which returned from Berlin and in which Şefik Hüsnü participated in 1919.

Chapter Two includes a brief biography of Şefik Hüsnü and his becoming socialist in France. This chapter examines his articles written in *Kurtuluş* and reveals the influence of French Marxists on his first considerations about the possibility of a socialist revolution in the Ottoman Empire. This period is marked

by Şefik Hüsnü's efforts to prove that the principles of social and economic development in Europe were equally applicable to the economic and social development of the Ottoman Empire and that a working class existed in the Empire which rendered possible the implementation of the struggle for socialism.

Chapter Three deals with the foundation of the Communist Group of Istanbul headed by Şefik Hüsnü and the efforts of this group to establish relations with the world communist movement. This chapter also deals with the “national question” as was put forward in the Second Congress of the Communist International by Lenin and the attitude of the Communist International towards the national movements of Eastern countries, such as Turkey. Respectively, the first considerations of Şefik Hüsnü on the “national question” and on the National Struggle in Anatolia are analyzed within this chapter.

Chapter Four starts with the abolition of the sultanate in the aftermath of the victory of the national liberation struggle and reveals the change in the evaluations of Şefik Hüsnü on the “national question.” The chapter deals with the influence of Leninist theory and the revolution in Russia on Şefik Hüsnü and how he adopted and implemented the tactic of Comintern to support the revolutionary nationalist movements against imperialism. This was a period in which the “particular conditions” of Turkey became the center of focus for Şefik Hüsnü.

Chapter Five deals with the alterations in the evaluations of Şefik Hüsnü on the revolutionary strategy in Turkey after being criticized by Comintern about his political tactics mentioned in Chapter Four. The disharmony in the relations between Comintern and the Communist Group of Istanbul headed by Şefik Hüsnü is also analyzed within this chapter. Finally, Chapter Six concludes the study.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

The emergence of the communist movement in Turkey began with the end of the World War One. The Mudros Armistice finished the long war years for the Ottoman Empire, but opened a new period for the new state of Turkey. The period of 1919-1925, as the period of examination of this thesis, was critical for the birth of this new republic of Turkey. On the other hand, the same years and the same conditions of the period gave birth to a relatively new movement in this country: communism. The first Marxist review was published in 1919; the ideology of scientific socialism was first dealt within this review. The following year, 1920, witnessed the emergence of communist organizations in Istanbul, in Anatolia and in Baku. During the national liberation years and the following years of the foundation of the republic, this young communist movement in Turkey was working to find its way in this eventful atmosphere of the country. These were the years in which the foundations of the communist movement in Turkey were laid.

The communist movement in Turkey, in this period, had several sources of influence. This was somehow the continuation of an Ottoman Socialism regarding the cadres and workers' organizations, a product of the internal conditions of the country in the aftermath of the World War One, and it was also influenced and shaped by the extraordinary years of workers' and left-wing movement in the

European countries, and finally by the young socialist revolution of Russia. The Ottoman intellectuals, who had obtained their educations in European countries, mainly France, Switzerland and Germany, and who witnessed the revolutionary years succeeding the World War One, who had encountered with Marxism and scientific socialism where these theories had been born, played major roles in the emergence of this movement. The second source of influence was the socialist revolution which took place in a neighboring country towards the end of World War One: The October Revolution in Russia in 1917. At the end of the war there were many Ottoman prisoners and exiles in Russia and some of them were influenced by the new socialist system in foundation. As a result, the Communist Party of Turkey was founded in Baku and many communist cadres from there went or tried to go to Anatolia during the liberation war. The two most important leaders of the communist movement, Şefik Hüsnü and Mustafa Suphi were influenced by these two different sources, Europe and Russia respectively, in becoming communist.

Most of the members of the group who published the first Marxist review and founded the first scientific socialist party in Istanbul in 1919 first got together in the aftermath of the World War One in Berlin. In 1919, there were students and workers in Berlin, who had gone there during the war. This group<sup>1</sup> founded a party named Workers' and Peasants' Party of Turkey (*Türkiye İşçi ve Çiftçi Fırkası*) and

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<sup>1</sup> The members of the group were Ethem Nejat, İsmail Hakkı, Vehbi (Sarıdal), Vedat Nedim (Tör), Nizamettin Ali (Sav), Nurullah Esat (Sümer), İlhami Nafiz (Pamir), Hamit Sadi (Selen), Mümtaz Fazlı (Taylan), (Mehmet) Sadık Ahi (Eti), Namık İsmail, Ali Cevdet, Selahattin Nejat (Yalkı), Nafi Atuf (Kansu), Servet (Berkin), İhsan Raif, Mustafa Nermin, and Lem-i Nihat. Mete Tunçay, *Türkiye'de Sol Akımlar (1908-1925)* (İstanbul: BDS Yayınları, 2000), pp. 167, 203, 467.

in May of 1919 published a review titled *Kurtuluş*<sup>2</sup> (Liberation). They also established a worker's organization in Berlin called the Worker Association of Turkey (*Türkiye İşçi Derneği*).<sup>3</sup> The activities of this group in Berlin did not last long because after few months almost all the members of the group returned to Istanbul.<sup>4</sup> Only one issue of the review *Kurtuluş* was published in Berlin.<sup>5</sup>

This first issue of the review *Kurtuluş* revealed that the group had acquired a Marxist foundation during their residence in Germany. The first article signed by the "Boards of Directors"<sup>6</sup>(*Heyet-i İdare*), had style of a manifesto and seemed to be influenced by the Communist Manifesto of Marx and Engels. The author summarized the history of the past two centuries as the struggle of conflicting classes, similar to the narration of the Communist Manifesto. He emphasized the importance of the enlightenment and of the victory of "reason" in the bourgeoisie's coming to power; and stated that the capitalist system, which came with liberal ideas, should be overcome by the new revolutionary class, the proletariat. The Marxist character of the review was best revealed in an article written by Vedat Nedim about "The Social Income and Political Parties."<sup>7</sup> In this article, Vedat Nedim gave a summary of the Marxist explanation of the capitalist economy. We may deduce from this article that in this period Vedat Nedim was aware of the major part of Marxist literature. The first issue also contained a

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 167.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 468. The president of this association was Sadık Ahi who also made a translation about Jaurès in *Kurtuluş* published in Berlin.

<sup>4</sup> A prominent figure in the establishment of the party and the review Vedat Nedim remained in Berlin until 1924.

<sup>5</sup> In fact this was a double issue numbered as 1-2. This issue had also a cover in German, Kurtlus (Befreiung). *Kurtuluş*. (Istanbul: Anadolu Yayınları, 1975) p. 25.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 26-30.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 31-36.

declaration of the Worker's and Peasant's Party of Turkey (WPPT) addressed to the "proletariat of all countries" in Turkish and also in German.<sup>8</sup> The declaration starting with the famous call of the Communist Manifesto, "Proletariats of All Countries, Unite!" reflected, besides the internationalist character of the party, its attitude against the imperialist attacks of the Allied forces on the Ottoman Empire.

At the end of 1919 this group returned to Turkey,<sup>9</sup> bringing together with them a Marxist theoretical understanding and view of scientific socialism. Shortly after their return at Istanbul, new members<sup>10</sup> joined the group; among these new members two prominent and effective figures were Sadrettin Celal and Şefik Hüsnü, who had also been educated in Europe.

The group restarted the publication of *Kurtuluş* in Istanbul, on 22 September 1919 and the WPPT was reestablished in the capital by adding "socialist" to its name, as the Workers' and Peasants' Socialist Party of Turkey (*Türkiye İşçi ve Çiftçi Sosyalist Fırkası*)<sup>11</sup>. The president of the party was at first Vehbi (Sarıdal) Bey, but after the occupation of Istanbul, Vehbi Bey went to Anatolia to join the National Struggle and a young painter, Namık İsmail, became the succeeding president. Şefik Hüsnü was the general secretary of the party. The WPSPT participated in the parliamentary elections in Istanbul in December 1919. Three candidates stood for the parliamentary elections of 19 December: Ethem

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid. p. 61-64.

<sup>9</sup> Mete Tunçay narrated this return to the patria with these meaningful words: "The day, Mustafa Kemal Pasha set foot on Samsun by Bandırma boat, Akdeniz boat delivered our citizens that it brought from Berlin at Haydarpaşa". Tunçay, p.203.

<sup>10</sup> The other newly participated members among the writers of the review were Reşat Nuri Drago, Selahattin Rıfat, Falih Rıfkı Atay, Bedii Refet, M. R. Dünder, Mehmet Selahettin, Ziyetullah Nuşirevan, Rasih Yoldaş. *Kurtuluş*, pp. 21-22.

<sup>11</sup> Tunçay, 169. The official recognition of the party was on 18 December 1919, one day before the parliamentary elections.

Nejat, Vehbi Sarıdal and Süleyman Efendi. None of these candidates was elected to the parliament.

The WPSPT was distinguished from the other socialist parties of the period by its Marxist and scientific socialist attitude. This attitude was also apparent in the review of the party, *Kurtuluş*. Accordingly, the party was concerned with establishing the unity of the workers' movement and initiating a political struggle among the workers. Also, as was mentioned before, there were gathered in the ranks of the party and the review, in 1919, many intellectuals, of which the overwhelming majority had taken educations in Europe and were familiar with Marxist theory and scientific socialism. We may say that the first and major influence over these cadres was made by European Marxists and the vivid experiences of the strong working class movement in these countries.

In the period between 1919-1921 there were two main political parties in Istanbul aimed at organizing the workers: The Socialist Party of Turkey (*Türkiye Sosyalist Fırkası*) and The Worker and Peasant Socialist Part of Turkey. The first one of these two parties succeeded at organizing many more workers than the latter one and was much more popular among the working class of Istanbul<sup>12</sup>.

The Socialist Party of Turkey, headed by Hüseyin Hilmi, was the continuation of the Ottoman Socialist Party (*Osmanlı Sosyalist Fırkası*) founded by the same person in 1910. This party did not show any noticeable presence among workers in the period before the war. After the reestablishment of the party, due to clever tactics of Hüseyin Hilmi, it succeeded at gathering thousands

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<sup>12</sup> For further information on the socialist and communist organisation in Istanbul during Armistice years see Paul Dumont, "Les Organisations Socialistes et La Propagande Communiste à Istanbul Pendant L'Occupation Alliée 1918-1922" and "Socialisme, Communisme et Mouvement Ouvrier à Istanbul Pendant L'Occupation (1919-1922)", In *Du Socialisme Ottoman à L'Internationalisme Anatolien* (Istanbul: Les Editions Isis, 1997), pp. 175-202 and pp. 279-216.

of workers in its ranks. This success was rather due to the financial aid that Hilmi could provide for the workers' strikes in Istanbul during the occupation years. In this period, Hilmi acquired a large amount of money, from an unknown source and used this money to materially support the workers during strikes. In this way, these strikes ended up attaining most of their goals. The result was that these workers participated in the party in big numbers.<sup>13</sup> By this aspect the SPT was functioning more as a syndicate than as a political party. On the other hand, this tactic of Hilmi could not last for long and by 1921 the brilliant years of the SPT came to an end.

On the other hand, the aim of the Workers' and Peasants' Socialist Party of Turkey was to create a more sound and continuous working movement in the capital. To form a union of Workers' Organizations was the primary concern of the WPSPT. As already mentioned the WPSPT determined its doctrine as scientific socialism and established its political aims more clearly than other contemporary socialist parties. The first of the regulations of the party was as follows: "The Worker and Peasant Socialist party of Turkey was established in order to defend the political and economic rights and interests of the workers and peasants of Turkey according to the essentials of scientific socialism."<sup>14</sup> Right after its foundation, the WPSPT organized a worker meeting in 25 October 1919 in the *Ferah* Theater at Şehzadebaşı. Two thousands workers participated at the

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<sup>13</sup> Tunçay, pp. 38-41, 61-62.

<sup>14</sup> "İlmi sosyalizm esaslarına göre Türkiye işçi ve çiftçilerinin siyasi, iktisadi hukuk ve menfaatlerini siyanet ve müdafaa için "Türkiye İşçi ve Çiftçi Sosyalist Partisi" ünvanile bir siyasi parti teşkil edilmiştir." Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Türkiye'de Siyasi Partiler* Vol. II (Istanbul: 1999, İletişim yay.) p. 494.

meeting.<sup>15</sup> The daily journal of the period *İkdam* gave the news of this meeting under the headline “The Worker’s Movement Begins in Istanbul.”<sup>16</sup>

The emergence and the development of the working class in the Ottoman Empire started in the first half of the nineteenth century, as most writers about the issue have indicated.<sup>17</sup> It is estimated that the number of industrial workers in the second half of the nineteenth century was more than ten thousands.<sup>18</sup> The first strike took place in as early as 1872.<sup>19</sup> But for a long time the working class and its struggle remained weak due to the very slow and discontinuous development of the industry and the capitalist mode of production in the Ottoman Empire. On the other hand, the number of the workers in the cities kept growing until the beginning of the twentieth century. The working class struggle and a class consciousness were developed through these years. Before the Armistice of Mudros the working class of cities, especially of the capital, experienced many strikes and political worker organizations made their first appearances.

The first worker’s movement -or reaction may be a better term, started as early as the emergence of the working class and was very similar to the first acts of the workers in the countries where capitalism first developed. In the second half

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<sup>15</sup> Oya Sencer (Baydar), *Türkiye’de İşçi Sınıfı-Doğuşu ve Yapısı* (İstanbul, Habora Yay., 1969), p. 281.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 247.

<sup>17</sup> Erişçi indicated that the emergence of the capitalism and the working class in the Ottoman Empire started in the first half of the nineteenth century. Lütfi Erişçi, *Sosyal Tarih Araştırmaları* (İstanbul: TÜSTAV Yayınları, 2003) p. 89. Fişek wrote the establishment of the capitalist production relations and the emergence of the working class in its real sense took place in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Kurthan Fişek, *Türkiye’de Kapitalizmin gelişmesi ve İşçi Sınıfı* (Ankara: Doğan Yayınevi, 1969), p. 2.

<sup>18</sup> Erişçi, p. 89.

<sup>19</sup> Although there is still discussion about the date of the first strike, the general opinion indicates that the strike of the Beyoğlu telegram workers was the first strike registered in the history of the Ottoman Empire. Fişek, p. 44.

of the nineteenth century workers did damage to the production means in several work places.<sup>20</sup> In the period until 1908, a few strikes were held and a first few worker organizations were found but did not last for long. With the year 1908, the worker's movement became relatively widespread -in the cities, as shown in the wave of strikes of that year. The government, directed by the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) felt obliged to take measures against the worker's movement.<sup>21</sup> The 1908 strikes constituted a milestone in the working movement history of the Ottoman Empire. Political organizations addressing the working class made their first appearance in this period.<sup>22</sup> However, until the end of the World War One, the motto of the worker's movement remained economic issues; the demands of the workers in strike were better payment or regulation of work hours. On the other hand, the long years of the Balkan Wars and World War One and the oppressive CUP power interrupted these first years of struggle of the Ottoman workers.

The working class movement reemerged under very different conditions after the Mudros Armistice. During the occupation years many strikes took place, especially in enterprises owned by foreigners, mainly in the transportation sector. Nineteen strikes took place in the period after the Armistice and during the National Struggle years (1919-1922) and almost all these strikes were organized in

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<sup>20</sup> *Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet Türkiye'sine İşçiler 1939-1950*, ed. Donald Quataert and Eric Jan Zürcher (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1998), p. 29. Also, Sencer, p. 70.

<sup>21</sup> The law on strike of 1908 (Tatil-i Eşgal Kanunu) prohibited all worker syndicates and strikes in the country.

<sup>22</sup> The first worker organization having political character was the illegal "Ottoman Association of Workers" (*Osmanlı Amele Cemiyeti*). In 1908, there were in Rumeli several socialist workers' organizations mainly of non-Turkish ethnic groups. Sencer, pp. 157, 224-225.

Istanbul, under the occupation of the Allied forces.<sup>23</sup> The worker's movement rose the following years to such an extent that in July of 1921 there was a widespread rumor in Istanbul that a general strike was on the way.<sup>24</sup>

In this period there was also an increase in the number of worker organizations and of socialist political parties.<sup>25</sup> It was estimated that the Socialist Party of Turkey (SPT) had 17,000 members<sup>26</sup>. The number of workers organized, during these years, in worker organizations, the equivalent of the syndicates, was also indicative. The International Union of Workers (*Beynelmîlel İşçi İttihadı*) which was a federation that covered three worker unions had approximately 3,700 members<sup>27</sup>. The Association of Tobacco Monopoly Workers (*Tütün Rejisi İşçileri Cemiyeti*) had 1,500 members.<sup>28</sup>

Besides this high rate of organization among the workers, they were also politically active during the occupation years. It was reported that thousands of workers participated in a demonstration to protest the occupation of Izmir in Sultanahmet in 30 May 1919.<sup>29</sup> It can also be claimed that some of the strikes

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<sup>23</sup> Mehmet Şehmus Güzel, *Türkiye'de İşçi Hareketi 1908-1984* (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 1996), p. 110.

<sup>24</sup> Sencer, p. 255.

<sup>25</sup> The main worker organizations founded right after the Armistice were: *Kasımpaşa Seyrüsefain Amelesi Cemiyeti*, *Anadolu Şimendifer Amelesi Cemiyeti*, *Beynelmîlel Deniz İşçileri İttihadı*, *Beynelmîlel Marangoz İşçileri İttihadı*, *Beynelmîlel Bira İşçileri İttihadı*, *İstanbul ve İzmir İşçileri Cemiyeti*, *Matbaa İşçileri Cemiyeti*, *Aydın Demiryolları İşçileri Cemiyeti*, *Elektrik İşçileri Cemiyeti*, *Terkos Şirketi İşçileri Cemiyeti*, *Şark Demiryolları Memurin ve Müstahdemin Cemiyeti*, *Zonguldak Amele Birliği*, *Balya Karaaydın Amele Birliği*. Ibid., p. 265. There were four leftist parties found in this period: *Türkiye Sosyalist Fırkası*, *Türkiye İşçi ve Çiftçi sosyalist Fırkası*, *Osmanlı Mesai Fırkası*, *Müstakil Sosyalist Fırkası*.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. p. 116.

<sup>27</sup> Korniyenko claimed that the IUW had 8,000 members in December 1920. Radmir Platonovich Korniyenko, *The Labor Movement in Turkey, 1918-1963* (Washington: Joint Publications Research Service, 1967), p. 25.

<sup>28</sup> Sencer, p. 119.

<sup>29</sup> Güzel, p. 120.

were organized by the workers in order to cause obstacles to the occupation forces and to support the national liberation struggle.<sup>30</sup>

Although there existed a working class and worker's movements in Istanbul in 1919, the industrial proletariat was still a small amount within the whole population of the Ottoman Empire. The economy of the Empire was still agricultural and the big majority of the population was poor or little land owner peasants. The slow development of industrial production was a natural limit for the accumulation of industrial workers in the cities. The industrial production and factories were not very widespread in the Ottoman Empire still at the beginning of the twentieth century. The industry was constituted mainly of the state factories to meet the needs of the state and some sectors found and run by the European capitalists. Although industrial production started to gain importance at the beginning of the twentieth century, it was still far from constituting the core of the Ottoman economy.

Another point to be mentioned was that the working class movement, since its beginning, was exposed to heavy oppression mostly unproportionate with its actual threat. The power, influenced by the threat that the western working class caused to their own governments, took preventive measures even when we can not talk about the existence of a working class movement. The very first attempts of the workers to get organized, politically or not, were suppressed immediately with force. This was an important obstacle blocking the working class from becoming a united and social force.

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<sup>30</sup> Fişek argued that the fact that most of the strikes in this period took place in the transportation sector was the proof that the strikes were used as a conscious weapon against the imperialist forces. Fişek, pp. 54-55.

Another important point about the Ottoman Empire's working class was its ethnic composition. The industrial production first developed in the western territory of the Ottoman Empire and these were mostly constructed by foreigners or by other ethnic groups than Turks. At the beginning of the twentieth century most of the factories were located in the western regions of the empire. This meant that the working class of the empire was composed of mainly the non-Turkish population. The Turk and Muslim workers were mainly unskilled.<sup>31</sup> The proportion of Turkish workers within the total number of organized workers was low. This means that after the Balkan Wars, when the Ottoman Empire had lost most of its territories in the Western regions, many industrial centers, like Selanik, were lost together with a big proportion of the industrial workers.

After all, compared with Europe where the theory of scientific socialism was first developed, the working class, in the aftermath of the World War One, was still living its period of infancy in the Ottoman Empire. That is why, one of the first matters of socialists like Şefik Hüsnü was to prove a working class existed in the country and that socialism was worth to struggling for in Turkey.

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<sup>31</sup> Korniyenko, p. 7.

## CHAPTER TWO

### EVALUATIONS OF ŞEFİK HÜSNÜ IN *KURTULUŞ* AS A SOCIALIST INTELLECTUAL

Şefik Hüsnü was born in Selanik in 1887.<sup>32</sup> He finished high school in Selanik, at a college called M. Graud, where he learned French. In 1905, he went to France and took his higher education in Medicine, becoming a doctor of neurology. At that time he was a Young Turk and participated in Paris in the meetings of the Young Turk as a student representative. In Paris, he has become acquainted for the first time with socialist ideas under the influence of the French socialist leaders of the period Jean Jaurès and Georges Clemenceau. He narrated this as follows:

In France, the socialist *Parti Unifié* and the journal of this party *Humanité* was emerging around the personality of Jean Jaurès. Clemenceau, one of the greatest orators of left, had a big influence among the students of Paris

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<sup>32</sup> There is no biographical work on the life of Şefik Hüsnü. But there are articles written about him in various revues especially in the period 1960-1980, and prefaces to the books collecting his articles. Most of these articles on Şefik Hüsnü were gathered in the book *Şefik Hüsnü/Yaşamı, Yazuları, Yoldaşları* (İstanbul: Sosyalist Yayınlar, 1994). The following biographical information is taken from a series of articles published in the journal "Yeni Gazete" in April 1967 under the name "İfşa Ediyorum." These articles were the documents the prosecutor Kazım Alöç presented as the confessions of Şefik Hüsnü he made during his detention in December 1946. Rasih Nuri İleri, on the other hand, claimed that these were not confessions of Şefik Hüsnü at his detention but the memoirs he prepared covering the period of his life 1917-1939. These articles have recently been gathered in a book that has not been published yet. *40'lı Yıllar 5*, İstanbul: Tüstav Yayınları (Forthcoming).

University, same as Jaurès. I also was influenced by these with all my enthusiasm and adopted the world socialist currents under this influence.<sup>33</sup>

In 1912, he returned to the country and participated in the Balkan War and served at the Dardanelles in the World War One. After the Armistice he arrived in Istanbul. At that time, he was a socialist intellectual who was seeking to get involved in the socialist movement. His evaluation of the socialist movements in Istanbul at that time was as follows:

In 1919, at the beginning of the Armistice years, important political currents emerged in Turkey. ‘Worker Associations’ and ‘Socialist Parties’ were also among these. However, these movements were not led by central organizations or persons able to grasp the situation as a whole and direct the struggle by one center.

The leader of the Socialist Party, Hilmi, was a total ignorant. The chief of the Social Democrat Party, Dr. Hasan Rıza, was a miserable old man who was drowned in customs and ceremony.<sup>34</sup>

In the Armistice years, in Istanbul, there was vivacity in the formation of socialist parties or associations. There was especially a group of students and workers who had come back from Germany right after the Armistice and was seeking to establish a socialist organization in Istanbul.<sup>35</sup> A young painter, Namık İsmail, was one of them. In 1919, Şefik Hüsnü received a letter from Namık İsmail, inviting him to participate in the formation of a socialist party. Thus Şefik Hüsnü joined the meetings of this group of intellectuals at the house of the painter,

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<sup>33</sup> “Fransa’da Jean Jaurès’nin şahsiyeti etrafında sosyalist Unifié Partisi ve bu partinin organı olan Humanité gazetesi doğuyordu. Paris Üniversitesi öğrencileri arasında büyük sol hatiplerden Clemenceau’nun da Jaurès gibi, etrafında yarattığı büyük tesirler vardı. Ben de bütün heyecanıyla bu tesirler altında kaldım ve dünya sosyalist cereyanlarını bu tesirler altında benimsedim.” 40’lı Yıllar 5, p. 38.

<sup>34</sup> “1919’da mütareke başlangıcında, Türkiye’de büyük siyasi cereyanlar baş gösterdi. Bunlar arasında ‘Amele Cemiyetleri’ ve ‘Sosyalist Partiler’ de vardı.. Lakin, hareketlerin başında, durumu bütünlüğüyle kavrayacak, mücadeleleri bir elden idare edecek kudrette merkezi teşekküller ve şahsiyetler belirmemişti. Sosyalist Parti lideri Hilmi, karacahil idi. Sosyalist Demokrat Parti reisi Dr. Hasan Rıza adap ve merasim içinde boğulmuş, kitlelerden uzak zavallı bir ihtiyar idi.”. Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>35</sup> See Introduction, pp.

where the foundation of a socialist party was discussed. As a result of these discussions, the Worker's and Peasant's Socialist Party of Turkey (*Türkiye İşçi ve Çiftçi Sosyalist Fırkası*) was founded and Şefik Hüsnü became the general secretary of the party. The group started to publish a review named *Kurtuluş* in which Şefik Hüsnü also published articles.

Both of the articles that Şefik Hüsnü wrote in this review during 1919 were about the existence and development of a working class in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>36</sup> As a socialist intellectual who had learned about Marxism and socialism in France where there was a strong and well rooted workers' movement, Şefik Hüsnü was convinced that the socialist movement in Turkey should rely on the working class of the country. But this was not an easy thing to do in the actual conditions of the Ottoman Empire where the economy was not based on industrial production and hence the workers did not constitute a considerable mass. But Şefik Hüsnü believed that these conditions were about to change for the Ottoman Empire and that a working class was on the eve of formation. Therefore, in his first articles as a socialist, he emphasized two things: that the development of a working class which would be crowned by a socialist movement was an inevitable fact in the future of the country and that meanwhile, the young socialist movement needed the engagement of the intellectuals who were the most developed elements of the backward Empire.

In these first articles Şefik Hüsnü had to deal with the question of how Marxist doctrine and the idea of socialism were relevant and possible in the Ottoman Empire, where industrial production and hence the proletariat were almost non-existent. There were objections among the intelligentsia that socialism

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<sup>36</sup> Şefik Hüsnü, "Yarıncı proletarya" and "Bu günkü proletarya ve sınıf şuuru," *Türkiye ve içtimai inkılap* (İstanbul: Aydınlık Külliyyatı, 1922), pp. 26-33, 34-39.

could be at most a utopia in the actual conditions of the Empire. Şefik Hüsnü accepted the objective fact that an industrial proletarian class similar in quantity and quality to that of European societies was not yet present in the country because of the late development of the Empire. But Şefik Hüsnü had two arguments against these objections, which he put forward in his first articles. The first argument was that the industrial workers were only a part of the working class which was not supposed to be the biggest and the working class had a more extensive definition covering the majority of the population in the country.<sup>37</sup>

You understand the term “proletariat” in its narrowest sense, and you use it merely for the part of workers who operate by using their physical force and make their living out of it. Whereas, the scientific and common meaning of “proletariat” is the sum of human class who do not possess capital and income inherited or gained, who make their living by putting in a material or an intellectual work and who are deprived of a living when they are unable to work for some reason. And, in us, this class of people are: civil servants, doctors, engineers, writers, etc... a big majority of the whole population.<sup>38</sup>

Obviously Şefik Hüsnü put forward this point to prove that socialism was worth fight for in the actual situation of the country. But the interesting point is that Şefik Hüsnü, while arguing that the majority of the population in the country was proletarian, only pointed out the urban elements, what we call today “white collars.” However, this did not mean much practically in the actual conditions of the Empire. These “white collar” workers were far from seeing themselves as

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<sup>37</sup> The same idea has been put forward by other writers of *Kurtuluş*. For example, Ethem Nejat in the first issue of *Kurtuluş* published in Istanbul wrote an article entitled “*Proletarya kimlerdir?*” and claimed that ninety-five percent of the population in the country was proletarian. *Kurtuluş*, pp. 75-83.

<sup>38</sup> “*Siz proletarya tabirini en dar manasında alıyorsunuz, ve bunu yalnız maddi kuvvetlerini istimal suretiyle işlemeyen ve tedarik-i maişet eden amele kısmına hasr ediyorsunuz. Halbuki proletarya tanımı ilmi ve umumi manasında mevzu veya müstesib bir sermaye ve iradı olmayan fikri veya maddi herhangi bir say sarfederek temin-i hayat eden ve bir sebep dolayısıyla çalışmadığı zaman medar-ı maişetden mahrum kalan sınıf-ı beşerin heyet-i mecmuasına şamildir. Ve bizde bu sınıf halk: memurlar, tabibler, mühendisler, muharrirler, ilh... nüfus yekununun pek büyük bir ekseriyeti teşkil eder.*” Şefik Hüsnü, “Yarıncı proletarya,” p. 28.

belonging to the proletarian class. On the other hand, it has to be noted that Şefik Hüsnü did not refer to the peasantry, which was in fact the overwhelming majority in the Empire at that time. A possible explanation is that the experiences of Şefik Hüsnü, until that time, were made up by his observations in the most developed cities of the Empire and during his stay in Europe. These restricted his evaluations to the urban elements of the Empire. Like many Ottoman intellectuals, Şefik Hüsnü did not possess hopeful expectations about the peasantry of the country. He paid attention to the peasantry only in the sense of their becoming proletarians. Apart from the strong Western Marxist influence, there was another reason for this neglect of the peasantry as a contributor force in the revolution: this was the character itself of the Turkish peasantry. It was the most unconscious and immobile force of the population according to Şefik Hüsnü. And he insisted on this evaluation until 1925.

The second argument of Şefik Hüsnü was that the social and economic conditions that would force Ottoman society to change would eventually and necessarily create a bigger mass of industrial proletariat also. In the article “Tomorrow’s Proletariat,” Şefik Hüsnü drew a picture for his readers of how capitalism would develop in Ottoman lands after the defeat of the World War One and how this development would shape the social classes. He believed that Ottoman society would in a short time enter to a development path similar to that of Europe. He thought that the development of capitalism was inevitable and imminent in the Ottoman territory; and the development of capitalism would give birth to a bigger mass of city and village proletariats. The picture he drew was very similar to the accumulation of capital in France under the Second Empire. He presumed that the reconstruction works after the destruction of the World War

One would be the motto of this development. The reconstruction work of the central cities damaged most from the war would entail the foundation of construction firms and banks and consequently the need for the establishment of factories to meet the needs for the construction projects. These would create the need for a much larger work force than was available at the moment in the cities. The migration from villages to the cities would follow. This migration would give birth to dramatic social changes in the villages that would end up by transforming the small landowner into salaried and poor land worker. In the end, society would be divided into two opposite classes in the cities as well as in the villages, and that would give speed to the class struggle and render the victory of socialist revolution possible.<sup>39</sup>

The undeveloped economic conditions of the Empire were a great difficulty in front of a Marxist who was trying to implement the struggle for socialism in that country. Marxism and scientific socialism was a theory based on the development of capitalism and the conscious struggle of the working class. Since this theory had emerged through Europe where capitalism had first appeared, it took as a model the development of economic and social conditions of these countries. However, this was a universal theory and Marx assumed that sooner or later capitalism would be spread all over the world, replacing the old relations of production with the capitalist system in backward countries as well. Therefore the development of capitalism was inevitable for the Ottoman Empire as well and Şefik Hüsnü believed that the evolution of social and economic conditions in the Empire would follow the model predicted by Marx in the nineteenth century.

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., pp. 29-33

Meanwhile, Şefik Hüsnü acknowledged that in the actual circumstances, the elements included in the extensive definition of proletariat were most of them unconscious about their class belongings and the industrial proletariat was a small quantity. Under this uneven development of the country, Şefik Hüsnü considered the engagement of the intellectuals in the struggle of the emancipation of the working class very important. Especially in his articles in *Kurtuluş* during 1919, he endeavored to convince the Ottoman intellectuals that socialism was necessary and possible for the development of the country and called them to use their intellectual force for the struggle of the workers:

The duty of this intellectual and idealist class, which has generous feelings, is to provide our young proletariat the appropriate means by the aid of the methods -best suitable to reach the goal, and by the aid of the organization, that the poor and suffering section in the countries where the class struggle has started long before us, has learned along the dangerous experiences paid by their life and blood; and to reach them to the liberation day without being submitted to the suffering and tortures previously experienced by their elder brothers.<sup>40</sup>

This call to the intellectuals to guide the political struggle of the workers also had its roots back to Henri Barbusse's<sup>41</sup> "the duty of the enlightened".<sup>42</sup>

The circumstances also were favorable for Şefik Hüsnü's call of "the duty of the enlightened." The general situation of the country was good for making propaganda among the intellectuals. The end of the World War One broke down

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<sup>40</sup> "... Alicenap hissiyata malik mütefekkir ve mefkureci sınıfa düşen vazife, bizden pek çok evvel bu sınıf kavgasına başlamış olan memleketlerde, sefil ve muztarip tarafın, canı kanı pahasına, yaptığı mühlik tecrübelerden sonra öğrendiği ve kabul ettiği -maksada vusule en sadık- mücadele usulleriyle ve teşkilatıyla, bizim genç proletaryamızı tecehhüz; ve büyük kardeşlerinin çektikleri azap ve işkencelere maruz kalmadan, kendisini kurtuluş gününe isal etmektir." Ibid., p. 33

<sup>41</sup> Henri Barbusse was a French writer and intellectual who adhered to communism after the World War One and who became a member of the Communist Party of France in 1923. With other French intellectuals sympathetic to socialism he published the revue *Clarté*. Jean Touchard, *La Gauche en France 1900-1981* (Editions du Seuil, 1977), pp. 193-194.

<sup>42</sup> George Harris pointed out that Şefik Hüsnü and the *Aydınlık* group was influenced by Barbusse's concept of the "duty of the enlightened." George Harris, *The Origins of Communism in Turkey*. (Stanford, California: Stanford University, 1967) p. 101.

the old paradigm of the Ottoman intellectuals by defeating the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) and left the intellectuals open for new paradigms.<sup>43</sup>

The modernization of Ottoman society or the economic and social development of the Ottoman land was an issue that concerned many Ottoman intellectuals in that period. Şefik Hüsnü also dealt with this issue in his articles in *Kurtuluş* and claimed that the modernization of the country was closely linked to the political struggle of the workers. He took up the view of an Ottoman intellectual who assumed that the modernization of the country was a moral issue and that it was time to work for “logical libertarianism.” According to this view, modernization and liberal ideas were first to be introduced to the backward thinking people who were not conscious that the cause of their problems was their conservativeness which hindered the progress. Şefik Hüsnü treated this issue with a materialist viewpoint and emphasized the determinacy of the economic basis over the superstructure. According to him, the modernization of Ottoman Society was only possible with the development of the industrial production. The industry would increase the number and the consciousness of the workers in the country and of the poor people. Thus, contrary to the Ottoman intellectual, he put forward that the source of the problem was material rather than moral. The backward thinking of the people would be overcome by the development of objective economic conditions of the country and the conscious political struggle of the working class.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> George Harris claimed that communism in Turkey “grew on the same intellectual soil that nourished the flowering of Kemalism, the revolutionary program that ordered the development of Republican Turkey.” Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>44</sup> Şefik Hüsnü, “Yarıncı Proletarya,” pp. 27-28.

To sum up, the concern of Şefik Hüsnü in these first years was to provide an analysis of the economic and social conditions of the country according to Marxist theory. He was applying the model of development of classes as this was deduced by Marx from the experiences in the developed capitalist countries. Şefik Hüsnü was trying to find out in the actual circumstances of the empire the clues of the evolution of the objective circumstances that would render possible the political struggle of the proletariat for the socialist revolution. We have to say that these evaluations were too much influenced by the experiences of the socialist movement he had witnessed in France. The particular conditions of the Ottoman Empire as a backward country and the imminent implications of these conditions were not taken into account in his evaluations. He focused on the potential forces rather than actual forces of a revolution. Whereas, the application of the Marxist principles and the theory of the socialist revolution in a backward country as was the Ottoman Empire at that time required a more original adaptation of these principles to these particular conditions. On the other hand, the application of Marxist theory in the conditions of backward countries was an issue some Marxists were dealing with in the beginning of the twentieth century. This entailed the reinterpretation of the actual tendency of world capitalism, especially taking into account the new aspect in the penetration of the European capitalists in the backward countries; and therefore some reevaluations in the Marxist theory of socialist revolution had to be made. These were brought about by Lenin at the beginning of the twentieth century, while trying to solve the question of socialist revolution in Russia, where similar to Turkey, capitalism and industrial proletariat were still underdeveloped. Therefore Lenin, in his politics, had to take into

account the intentions of the bourgeois-democrats to abolish the czar, and the peasantry as an important mass force in the country.

It seems that at this period, Şefik Hüsni remained untouched by these contributions made to Marxist theory, too relevant to the actual conditions of the Empire. The influence of Soviet experience and of the theses of Lenin would not be apparent in the writings of Şefik Hüsni until 1922<sup>45</sup>. And until that time the major source of influence for him would remain French and European Marxists. For instance, the review published in June 1921, *Aydınlık*, would be named after the review of French socialist intellectuals published in France by Henri Barbusse, *Clarté*. Also *Aydınlık* in his first issues would give space to the articles and writings of French socialist intellectuals like Magdeleine Marx Paz.<sup>46</sup>

By the first half of 1920, dramatic events started to take place in the Ottoman Empire. A few months after the Armistice, Istanbul was occupied by the Entente powers and the parliament, having an affiliation to the national liberation struggle recently started in Anatolia, was dispersed, many deputies were arrested, and many others left Istanbul to go to Anatolia. The occupation powers, together with the government, exerted great pressure on the political life in the capital. *Kurtuluş* review was closed and the party had to suspend its activities. Under these circumstances there were no possibility to continue the legal actions of organization and publication. This initiated a split among the socialist intellectuals in the WPSPT. Some members of the party, like Vehbi Bey, claiming that the

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<sup>45</sup> During a prosecution in 1927, Şefik Hüsni replied to the judge that he first read the works of Marx and later knew about Lenin. Ergüder, Jülide, ed., *1927 Komünist Tevkifatı : İstanbul Ağır Ceza Mahkemesindeki Duruşma* (İstanbul : Birikim Yayınları, 1978), p. 35.

<sup>46</sup> She had a visit in Turkey in the summer of 1921 and published an article in *Aydınlık*. *Aydınlık*, 2 (1 July 1921), p. 24

conditions were not favorable to continue the struggle in Istanbul, went to Anatolia to cooperate with the national liberation movement.<sup>47</sup> Some other members of the party, including Şefik Hüsnü, preferred to remain in the capital and continue their political work in this city until the liberation and after. This choice of Şefik Hüsnü, not to leave Istanbul, was the logical implication of his presumption on the social movement in Turkey<sup>48</sup>. He always believed that the proletariat of Istanbul had the most developed class consciousness among all workers in the country and was the candidate to become the pioneering force of a social movement, though they were not great in number and constituted a minor part of the whole proletariat. A later reason would be the concern of Şefik Hüsnü to remain distant from the leadership of the nationalist liberation struggle, who proved several times their hostile attitude towards the communists in Anatolia.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> The suspension of party activity and some members' going to Anatolia was later been explained in a declaration published by the party in 15 April 1923 as follows: "The Party's executive committee, when those who menaced the existence of our nation encircled Istanbul externally and internally, for the sake of our nation preferred to limit its activities rather than to continue the struggle and waste our forces. In this way, the situation became available for many conscious comrades to participate in the national liberation struggle."<sup>47</sup>". Tunçay, p. 482.

<sup>48</sup> Metin Çulhaoğlu notes on this issue that, most of the socialists of the period 1908-1923 in Turkey remained outside of the process in Anatolia in 1918-1922 which determined the future of Turkey because of their extremely objectivistic approach. He further claimed that this was the reason why the socialism in Turkey could not understand Kemalism later on. Metin Çulhaoğlu, *Bir Mirasın Güncelliği: Tarih Türkiye Sosyализm* (İstanbul: YGS Yayınları, 2002), p. 152.

<sup>49</sup> George Harris interpreted the choice of Şefik Hüsnü to remain in Istanbul as follows: "In fact, however, Deymer's reluctance to leave Istanbul must have had less to do with unwillingness to abandon the workers than a pragmatic recognition that remaining in Turkey's only intellectual center was essential if he wished to maintain his position in the struggle for leadership of the inchoate communist movement." George Harris, *The Communists and the Kadro Movement: Shaping Ideology in Atatürk's Turkey* (Istanbul: İsis Press, 2002) p. 51. In these years there is no sign that there was a struggle for the leadership of the communist movement. In fact the Istanbul and Anatolian wings were quite independent of each other. The fact that Istanbul was in these years the only intellectual center of Turkey most probably have played a role in the decision of Şefik Hüsnü to remain in this city. But this has to do with his opinion that intellectuals would play a major role in the proletariat's creating a social movement.

CHAPTER THREE  
FIRST CONSIDERATIONS OF ŞEFİK HÜSNÜ ON THE “NATIONAL  
QUESTION”

The occupation of Istanbul in March 1920 put an end to the publication of the review *Kurtuluş*. For the coming fifteen months, until the publication of the review *Aydınlık*, Şefik Hüsnü and his comrades did not publish a regular review in Istanbul. On the other hand, after the occupation of the capital, some members of the group around *Kurtuluş* and the Workers and Peasants Socialist Party of Turkey came together to found a clandestine communist organization in Istanbul under the name of the Communist Group of Istanbul, in May 1920. Şefik Hüsnü has been the general secretary of this group.

The Communist Group of Istanbul headed by Şefik Hüsnü probably made its first contact with the Communist International at the beginning of the summer of 1920. Shortly after the foundation of the Communist Group of Istanbul in May 1920, the group received an invitation from the South Bureau of the Communist International to participate in the second Congress of Comintern.<sup>50</sup> To send to the

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<sup>50</sup> Şefik Hüsnü, “Rapport du groupe communiste de Cons-ple(*sic.*) au 3<sup>e</sup> Congres de l’Internationale Communiste” (31 May 1921), Türkiye Sosyal Tarih Araştırma Vakfı (TÜSTAV) Archives, Istanbul, Turkey, CD 25A, 31-36, p. 538.

congress, the group had to determine two delegates from among themselves.<sup>51</sup> The two delegates of the Communist Group of Istanbul left Turkey in mid-July for Moscow, where the congress would take place. But as they realized that they would not be able to reach Moscow in time for the congress, they stayed in Baku where they joined the first Congress of Eastern Peoples, organized right after the Second Congress of Comintern, in the first days of September. These two delegates of the CGI also participated in the first –foundation- congress of the Communist Party of Turkey on 10 September 1920 in Baku. In this first congress of the party, one of these delegates, Ethem Nejat was elected general secretary of the Party.<sup>52</sup> In this way, the CGI took part in the formation of the Communist Party of Turkey and became a branch of it in the country.

These two delegates, however, with their other thirteen comrades, were never able to reach back Turkey again and were murdered on the Black Sea in January 1921. There is also no evidence that these two delegates of the group had established any contact with the communist group left in Istanbul after their arrival at Baku. The correspondences of Şefik Hüsnü reveal that there was no well established connection between Baku and Istanbul until the first half of 1921<sup>53</sup> while the group was supposed to receive instructions from the party in Baku. In fact, the Communist Group of Istanbul and Şefik Hüsnü had an existence independent of Comintern and of its resolutions until the first half of 1922.

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<sup>51</sup> These two delegates were Ethem Nejat and Hilmioğlu Hakkı. Hilmioğlu Hakkı was referred as Haitré in the letter of Şefik Hüsnü. *Ibid.*, p. 538.

<sup>52</sup> Hilmioğlu Hakkı, together with Ethem Nejat, was elected in the Central Committee of the CPT, composed of seven persons. Other members of the Committee were Mustafa Suphi, İsmail Hakkı, Nazmi and Süleyman Nuri. Yücel Demirel, trans. *TKP MK 1920-1921 Dönüş Belgeleri-1* (İstanbul: Türkiye Sosyal Tarih Araştırma Vakfı, 2004), pp. 20-21.

<sup>53</sup> During the winter of 1920-21 the group was supposed to be in the contact with the CPT in Baku by the intermediary of a member called N. Lütfi. Şefik Hüsnü, “Rapport du groupe communiste de Cons-ple(*sic.*) au 3<sup>e</sup> Congrès de l’Internationale Communiste” (31 May 1921), p. 540.

The group and Şefik Hüsnü, in this period, rather preferred to keep their relation with the parties of Europe. In the end of 1920, the group decided to establish closer links with the international communist movement and especially with the communist parties of the West European countries. The main reason for this was the pressure of the occupation forces in Istanbul and of the government on the activities of the communists. All acts, even the most indirect ones (such as articles published in independent reviews) were hindered immediately by the police. So the group sent two delegates to Europe, one to France and one to Italy, to draw the attention of the proletariat leaders of these countries to the “pathetic situation of the peasants and workers in Turkey”<sup>54</sup> and explain to the communists of these countries the view of the CGI on the “National Question” and particularly on the national movement in Anatolia.

Şefik Hüsnü was the delegate sent to France<sup>55</sup>. He participated in the historical congress of the Socialist Party of France at Tours in December 1920, where the communist group at the party affiliated with Comintern and, according to the instructions of the Second Congress, broke with the party and found the Communist Party of France. Şefik Hüsnü also wrote two articles on the reviews of the French communists emphasizing the existence of a proletarian class in Turkey

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid. p. 539.

<sup>55</sup> The person sent to France was referred as Baydour in the Letter of Şefik Hüsnü to Comintern at 31 May 1921. Some sources indicate that Şefik Hüsnü participated in Congress of Tours. Belli, p. 59. Şen, Bilal. “Türkiye Komünist Hareketinde Şefik Hüsnü’nün Yeri” In *Şefik Hüsnü / Yaşamı, Yazıları, Yoltaşları*, p. 81. Mete Tunçay also wrote that Şefik Hüsnü has participated to this congress at Tours and mentioned that Baydour may be a pseudonym of Şefik Hüsnü. But he rather supposed that this was a real name. Mete Tunçay informed us that there was a real H. (Hüseyin Ragıp) Baydour at that period who was writing articles against imperialism in Istanbul. On the other hand it seems most probable that this Baydour was the pseudonym of Şefik Hüsnü in his travel to France. In the mentioned letter, Şefik Hüsnü gave a detailed account of the Baydour’s travel in France whereas he just mentioned that a person N. went to Italy. In a later letter, he defended the same theses on the article that Baydour published in l’Humanité, in a very similar way. Most probably Şefik Hüsnü has used the passport of this H. Baydour in his travel to France and kept using this name during all his stay. Tunçay, pp. 207-208.

and underlining the distinction between the communist movement and the revolutionary movement in Anatolia.<sup>56</sup> Şefik Hüsnü is also said to have conducted interviews with members of the Socialist Party of France Cahnin and Frossard<sup>57</sup> during his stay in France.

While Şefik Hüsnü and his comrades were establishing a clandestine communist organization in Istanbul and were trying to establish contacts with the Communist International and Communist Parties of Europe, important developments were taking place in the international revolutionary movement. The Second Congress of the Communist International founded in the spring of 1919,

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<sup>56</sup> The two articles written by Şefik Hüsnü (under the pseudonym of Baydour) are said to be in Revue Communist December 1920 issue 11 and in Humanité 11 January 1921, in the letter of Şefik Hüsnü dated 31 May 1921. But the responsible of the archives of the Communist Party of France said that he looked at these issues and couldn't find any articles signed as Şefik Hüsnü or H. Baydur in the mentioned issues.

George Harris refers to these articles in *The Origins of Communism in Turkey*. The article in the December Issue of *La Revue Communiste* written by Baydour was entitled "*Chronique internationale: En Turquie*". In this article Baydour criticized Şerif Manatov for not basing his activity on the "organized masses of peasants and workers" and claimed that he knew nothing of Marx nor of the worker's movement and was continually referring to Lenin as the inventor of "a doctrine that differs from Marxism". George Harris, *The Origins of Communism in Turkey* (Stanford, California: Stanford University, The Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, 1967) p. 169, n. 6.

The article written in *l'Humanité* dated 4 January 1921 was entitled "*Le Mouvement Ouvrier en Turquie*". In the article Baydour objected to the French Communist Longuet's reference to Enver Pasha's statement that "no proletariat existed in Turkey" and expressed his concern about "not to confuse the nationalist movement in Anatolia with the proletarian movement, pointing out that Atatürk was leading a clearly bourgeois government which cooperated with Soviet Russia for purely political reasons". Ibid. p., 176, n. 6

These views expressed by Baydour are very similar to and totally compatible with those expressed by Şefik Hüsnü and confirm the supposition that these were the same person during the travel of Şefik Hüsnü in France.

<sup>57</sup> Cachin and Frossard were members of the central group in the French Socialist Party and were sent as delegates to the Second Congress of the Communist International. They have accepted the decision of 21 conditions of participation to Comintern, taken in the Second Congress and presented these conditions at the Tours Congress of the FSP. They have initiated at the foundation of the Communist Party of France after this congress and Frossard was elected as the general secretary of the party. Frossard was also a Mason and In January 1923 he rejected the request of Comintern to break with the Mason lodge and resigned from the party. Edward Hallett Carr, *Sovyet Rusya Tarihi Bolşevik Devrimi 1017-1923*, trans. Tuncay Birkan, III Vol. (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2004) vol. III, p. 163, 179, 211, 389-390, 424.

with the initiative of the Communist Party of Russia, was a turning point for the revolutionary movements of the world.

The Second Congress of Comintern was held in the summer of 1920, in Moscow. While the congress was taking place the expectation of an imminent world revolution, succeeding the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, was at its highest point.<sup>58</sup> This world revolution was expected to be inflamed by the revolutions in West European countries. Accordingly, the first item on the agenda of the Second Congress of Comintern this summer was how to accelerate the world revolution.<sup>59</sup> As an important component of the world revolution, the colonial and semi-colonial peoples of the East took their place on the agenda of the congress under the title of the “national question.” Lenin, in a speech he delivered, declared that the world aftermath of the World War One was defined by the division between oppressor and oppressed nations. The oppressed people in the world constituted the seventy percent of the world’s population and were people of the colonial and dependent countries exploited by the imperialist forces.<sup>60</sup>

For the first time in the history of the world revolutionary movement, the movements in the Eastern countries were attributed a great role in the world revolution. The Marxist theory of revolution was based on the proletariat of the developed capitalist countries and socialism was possible by the conscious act of the proletariat. That is why, before the World War One, the revolutions in the Eastern countries, still living in pre-capitalist conditions and where the industrial

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p.159.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 181.

<sup>60</sup> Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov Lenin, *Speeches At The Congresses Of The Communist International* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1979) p.42.

production and proletariat were non-existent, were seen as possible after capitalism and bourgeois democracies were introduced there. But the Russian Revolution was not totally compatible with this theory; the first socialist revolution in history took place in the most backward country of Europe.

With this aspect, the revolution in Russia was already a contribution to the Marxist theory of socialist revolution and this was further developed by Lenin the years after 1917. The imperialist system's center was the developed countries of Western Europe, but the imperialist-capitalist system was a whole including also the non-developed countries in the world. So the struggle in the colonial and semi-colonial countries was also an important factor weakening and demolishing the imperialist system. The victory of the working class movement in West Europe was still at the heart of the world revolution, but the struggles in the East against British and French imperialism were also a great opportunity to accelerate the revolutions in Europe. Therefore in the summer of 1920, Lenin defined three forces against the capitalist system, three components of the world revolution: Soviet Russia, the communist movement in the capitalist countries and the movements of colonial and semi-colonial peoples oppressed by imperialism.<sup>61</sup>

Hence the mission of the Second Congress was to include the struggle of Eastern peoples against imperialism in the struggle of world revolution and make possible the application of the principles of the world revolution in these countries.<sup>62</sup> Lenin declared in the Second Congress that, "the imperialist war has drawn the dependent peoples in world history. And one of the most important tasks now confronting us is to consider how the foundation stone of the

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<sup>61</sup> Branko Lazitch, *Lénine Et La Troisième Internationale* (Paris : Editions De La Baconniere, 1951) p. 161.

<sup>62</sup> Carr, p. 238.

organization of the Soviets movement can be laid in the non-capitalist countries. Soviets are possible there; they will not be worker's soviets, but peasants' soviets, or soviets of working people".<sup>63</sup>

On the other hand, the application of the principles of the world revolution to the colonial and semi-colonial countries was a problematic issue. The struggles in these countries against British imperialism were national struggles headed mostly by bourgeois leaderships. In the Second Congress, the national movements against imperialism were considered as the allies of the communist movement no matter their class character and accordingly, an important decision was taken in the congress to no longer call these movements against imperialism in the Eastern countries "bourgeois democratic", but call them henceforward "national revolutionary movements."<sup>64</sup> These movements were conceived as revolutionary as long as they were against the domination of imperialism. This was, of course, an important tactical decision for Comintern; and aroused discussions among communists. During the second congress, M. N. Roy, an Indian delegate, proposed thesis on the "national question" quite different from the above mentioned thesis of Lenin. The main difference was on the tactical implications of Lenin's thesis. Roy was rather advocating that the struggle of the workers and peasants in the colonial and semi-colonial countries should be independent from the national movements. On the other hand, Serrati, an Italian delegate was totally against the thesis of Lenin on the "national question" and claimed that the communist parties

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<sup>63</sup> Lenin, p. 52.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p.60.

should in no way cooperate with the national movements and work solely for a proletarian revolution.<sup>65</sup>

In the summer of 1920, the policy to support the national movements was not just a simple alliance with the national revolutionary movements in the Eastern countries. The social revolution was perceived as equally possible in these countries with the leadership of Soviet Russia and victory of the proletarian movements in the West. So Comintern, while recommending the support of the national revolutionary movements in Eastern countries, was also taking care of the revolutionary and communist movements in these countries even though they were weak.<sup>66</sup> However, the revolutionary movements in these countries could not be genuinely proletarian and thus were not supposed to wait for the development of the proletariat. Comintern was also asking the communist parties in these countries to give support to the national revolutionary movements by keeping these movements' total independence, and to organize the peasant movement and at the end the peasant soviets: "It would be utopian to believe that proletarian parties in these backward countries, if indeed they could emerge in them, could pursue communist tactics and a communist policy, without establishing definite relations with the peasant movement and without giving it effective support."<sup>67</sup>

For the revolutionary struggle in the colonial and semi-colonial countries of the East, Lenin put the emphasis on the politics and the leadership rather than on the objective economic conditions. If Marxist theory was to be followed in its strict sense, the objective conditions of a socialist revolution were non-existent in

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<sup>65</sup> Carr., pp. 238-244.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 239.

<sup>67</sup> Lenin, p. 61.

these countries. The proletariat was the motto of the socialist revolution and was itself the product of the capitalist mode of production. But in these colonial and semi-colonial countries where the pre-capitalist mode of production was the dominant mode of production and where the people were mostly constituted of peasants, a proletarian movement and thus a proletarian revolution was out of the question. But Lenin asked the question: “Are we to consider as correct the assertion that the capitalist stage of economic development is inevitable for backward nations now on the road to emancipation and among whom a certain advance towards progress is to be seen since the war?” And the reply was in the negative.<sup>68</sup> “With the aid of the proletariat of the advanced countries, backward countries can go over to the soviet system and, through certain stages of development, to communism, without having to pass through the capitalist stage.”<sup>69</sup>

A few months after the Second Congress, Comintern organized a general meeting in order to concretize the resolutions on the national movements in the East, this time with the delegates of Eastern peoples. The First Congress of Eastern Peoples was held in 1-7 September in Baku, and repeated the theses of the Second Congress on the national and colonial questions together with the delegates coming from the “oppressed” countries. The delegates gathered in Baku, numbering 1,891 persons, were mainly from Near East countries, including mostly delegates from countries of the former Russian Empire. Delegates from

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. 63.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 63-64.

India, China and Korea also attended the Congress.<sup>70</sup> Conforming to the resolutions of the Second Congress, the delegation of this meeting was far from being homogeneous in the political sense. The communists and non-communists from the Eastern countries were gathered at this meeting for a common cause: the emancipation of the Eastern peoples from the oppression of imperialist countries, and particularly from the British imperialism. Thus the actual political affiliation of the delegates could vary from communist doctrines through Islamic concerns and bourgeois democratic requests. The participation in the congress by representatives from Turkey was a good example to reveal this heterogeneity. The representative of the National Government in Anatolia, İbrahim Tali Bey, participated in the congress together with the ex-leader of the Committee of Union and Progress, which had led the country in the World War One, Enver Pasha, and naturally communists, including Mustafa Suphi and Ethem Nejat, were present in the congress.

The main theme of the Congress was the unity of the proletariat of the west with the oppressed peoples of the East. The Asian and African continents with their 800 million people were an important element for the world revolution. In the aftermath of the World War One, national movements had started against English and French domination in the Near East and this was considered as a great associate to weaken the British and European imperialism. The importance of the revolts in Eastern countries at that period was lying on their contribution to the revolutions in the Western countries. The revolutions in the East were seen as a factor that would hasten the victory of the West European proletariat.<sup>71</sup> While the

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<sup>70</sup> Ali Alev, trans. *Baku 1920 Birinci dođu Halkları Kurultayı (Belgeleri)* (İstanbul: Koral Yayınları, 1990), p. 9.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 79.

Congress of Eastern Peoples was taking place in Baku, the revolutions in the West European countries, and thus an imminent world revolution were still expected by the Soviet Russia and Comintern. The capitalist systems of the West had been weakened by the World War One and the national movements in the East would be another stroke for these imperialist countries already in crises. So the national movements in the Eastern countries were first considered as an associate for the revolutions in the West. There was a second implication of the nationalist movements in the Near East, particularly important for Soviet Russia. The British military existence in the countries of the Near East was a threat to this young socialist country and it was willing to free its neighbors from this military existence. This second factor would gain more and more importance with the decrease of the expectation of an immediate revolution in the Western countries in 1921.

Zinoviev, the president of the Congress, in his opening speech described the distinction between the proletarian movements in the west and the national liberation movements at the East as follows:

There are two movements. One is the communist movement of the proletariat and it is fast, excited and strong. This movement is apparent in Russia, France, Germany, Italy and is enlarging day by day. The other is the movement of oppressed nations who are groaning under the oppression of English and French capitalism and this movement is less strong and often zigzagging, still has not found its way and still does not know what it wants exactly.<sup>72</sup>

And he repeated the theses that Lenin put forward in his speech at the Second Congress. The world was now divided into two camps, as the oppressing and oppressed, as sovereign and dependent nations. With the victory of the proletarian revolutions in the West, the social revolutions in the East could be established

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 49.

without the necessary condition of a capitalist phase. Not the workers soviets but the soviets of peasants were equally possible in these agrarian countries of the East. He also referred to the national movement in Anatolia as:

The policy of the Turkish People's Government is not the policy of the Communist International, our policy. But after all, we say that we are ready to support every revolutionary struggle given against the English government. At the moment the riches still predominate in Turkey, but the time will come when everything will change.<sup>73</sup>

Turkey and the national liberation movement in Anatolia headed by Mustafa Kemal were given special importance during the congress. Enver Pasha and the representative of the government in Ankara presented their declarations, each ensuring they were together with the Soviet Republic and Comintern and that a social revolution would follow the struggle against imperialism. These declarations were followed by the decisions of the Congress on the National Struggle in Turkey:

As in the Second Congress of Comintern, the First Congress of Eastern Peoples also declares willingness to support the national revolutionary movements which work for the emancipation of the oppressed nations of the East from the foreign imperialists' oppression. (...) Meanwhile, the congress puts forward that the national revolutionary movement in Turkey is only against the foreign exploiters and that this movement will not mean the emancipation of the workers and peasants from oppression and exploitation in general. The victory of this movement will not bring the solution of the most important problems of the working masses in Turkey: the question of land and of taxes will remain as the most important hindrance for the emancipation of the East composed of various nations.<sup>74</sup>

At the end of 1920, the alliance with the nationalist movement was a provisional situation only against the imperialist invasion. And Comintern did not dream about a social revolution that would be made by the bourgeois

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p. 50.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., pp. 128-129.

leadership of the nationalist movement, however revolutionary. But “the concrete analysis of the concrete situation” was indicating that, in the age of imperialist aggression, the “national question” should be more seriously considered by communists. Lukacs, a Hungarian communist, defended the thesis of Lenin by bringing forward the fact that “the revolts of the colonial and semi-colonial peoples must necessarily be national wars to which the revolutionary parties must by all means lend their support; to be indifferent to them would be directly counter-revolutionary.”<sup>75</sup> The existence of a socialist system in Russia and the necessary and recent world revolution realigned the revolutionary forces in the world: “for instance Kemal Pasha may represent a revolutionary constellation of forces in certain circumstances whilst a great ‘workers party’ may be counter-revolutionary.”<sup>76</sup> Therefore communists should take advantage of this national revolutionary movement to defeat imperialism. But this issue was getting complicated when its practical implications for the Turkish communists were considered. The young communist movement deprived of a mass support in the country was supposed to create the appropriate means to better take advantage of the national movement in the country. Otherwise, it would remain an insignificant movement in the country or would be totally annihilated.

The defeat of the Red Army in Warsaw in August 1920 and the decrease of the revolutionary wave in Europe during the winter of 1920-1921 weakened expectations of an imminent world revolution that would be started in West

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<sup>75</sup> Georg Lukacs, *History And Class Consciousness* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1975) pp. 275-276.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 311.

Europe.<sup>77</sup> The international policy of Soviet Russia could no longer rely on an imminent world revolution and the collapse of the imperialist system. The threat caused by imperialist countries were real and since overthrowing them by revolutions their homeland was nearly impossible, Soviet Russia should follow a more realistic international policy based on keeping the imperialist threat away from near its borders.

Lenin described this situation in his speech at a session of the Third Congress of the Communist International as a state of equilibrium in the international position of the RSFSR. Under these circumstances the national revolutionary movements and the national governments against imperialism in the Near East gained more importance for Soviet Russia and of course for Comintern. Lenin declared in the congress that perhaps the national liberation struggles in backward countries would play “a much more revolutionary part” than had been expected.<sup>78</sup>

That is why during the winter of 1920-1921, Soviet Russia gave weight to fortifying its relations with the national movements of Near Eastern countries, like Turkey and Persia and, in March 1921, treaties were signed with the nationalist governments of these two countries. These treaties were also a sign that in this period, not revolutionary expectations but the fortification and the defense of the homeland of the revolution were first on the agenda of Soviet Russia. Therefore the tendency to give support to the national revolutionary movements of the East gained speed, but on the other hand, to give effective support to the communist parties in these countries has lost its importance. The fact that the assassination of

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<sup>77</sup> Carr, pp. 204,216.

<sup>78</sup> Lenin, p. 118.

the Turkish communists in the Black Sea in the January of 1921 did not arouse a reaction from the part of Soviet Russia and Comintern was a sign of this new policy that marked the atmosphere of the Third Congress of the Communist International.<sup>79</sup>

In the following congress in the winter of 1922, the belief that the world revolution would take longer than expected was stronger and put its mark on the decisions of the congress on the “national question.” The communist parties in Near East countries were openly invited to support their national governments in their struggle against imperialism and postpone their communist program after the final victory of this struggle. In the Fourth Congress, also affected by the coming peace agreement in Lausanne, Comintern was more resolute about keeping its good relations with the nationalist governments in countries like Turkey, even to the detriment of the weak communist parties in these countries. The criticism of N. Roy, the delegate of India, on the politics of Comintern to support the bourgeois leadership of the nationalist movement did not find response from the part of the Executive Committee and was objected to by a Turkish delegate, who asked the European parties, especially the Workers Party of England, to support the “national pact” (*misak-ı milli*) of Turkish nationalists in the peace treaties.<sup>80</sup>

Turkey gained a special importance in the international policy of Soviet Russia from the winter of 1920 until the Peace Treaty of Lausanne. Comintern has never stopped suspecting the intentions of Mustafa Kemal and of the Turkish nationalists led by him in the social revolution. On the other hand, with the treaty in March 1921, Soviet Russia was more concerned about its relations with the nationalist government in Ankara and the force represented by the Turkish

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<sup>79</sup> Carr, p. 362.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., pp. 445-447.

communists in Anatolia or in Istanbul was not enough to take into consideration. After the unsuccessful attempts of the CPT in Baku to interfere in the National Struggle, Comintern was convinced that the Turkish communist movement would not have an important effect on the National Struggle in Turkey. So Comintern, by the Third Congress, did nothing but advise the Turkish communists to support the National Struggle in Anatolia and meanwhile keep their independent organization.<sup>81</sup> The policy of Comintern did not change until the expectations of Soviet Russia about the Nationalist Government of Turkey were defeated during the peace negotiations in Lausanne.

The resolutions of the Second Congress on the national movements of the East were adopted by the Communist Party of Turkey founded in Baku, and the Party made attempts to apply these principles to practice.<sup>82</sup> But it took for a while for the communists in Istanbul and especially for Şefik Hüsnü to rationalize these resolutions and put them into practice. Until the victory of the national movement in Anatolia, in fact until the abolition of the Sultanate, Şefik Hüsnü and the *Aydınlik* circle did not take a definitive attitude to support the national government in Ankara, nor did they make any attempt to gain ground outside Istanbul. In this period, Şefik Hüsnü discussed the resolutions of the Second congress and analyzed them in the light of his previous Marxist formation.

There is no exact information on how and when the Istanbul group and Şefik Hüsnü were informed about the resolutions of the Second Congress on the

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p. 446.

<sup>82</sup> Demirel, p. 19. At the first congress of the CPT held in Baku, following the decision of the Second Congress of Comintern to support the nationalist movements against imperialism it was decided to support the nationalist movement in Anatolia.

national movements. As has already been mentioned, the group sent two “comrades” to the Second Congress and these two attended to the Baku Congress and the First Congress of the Communist Party of Turkey and took part in the mission sent to the country at the beginning of 1921. But they failed to return to Istanbul and there was no sign that the group of Istanbul had any news from these two persons during their stay in Baku. But Şefik Hüsnü was most probably aware of the decisions of the Second Congress on the Eastern communist parties since at least the winter of 1920, since his visit to France<sup>83</sup>. But these resolutions of the Second Congress neither were welcomed enthusiastically nor immediately applied by Şefik Hüsnü and his comrades in Istanbul.

On the contrary, if we take into consideration the discussions in the second congress, about the thesis of Lenin on the “national question”, Şefik Hüsnü was closer to the objections brought by Serrati. Şefik Hüsnü was not convinced that the communist movement in Turkey should cooperate with the nationalist movement in Anatolia even solely for tactical reasons. He insisted that the national movement in Anatolia was a bourgeois movement that the communists should not rely on. In a letter he wrote to the Communist International in May 1921, Şefik Hüsnü, referring to the assassination of the members of the Communist Party of Turkey in January 1921, wanted to prove that to cooperate with the nationalist movement in Anatolia was not in the interests of the communists. He believed that the nationalists were not sincere in their affinity with Soviet Russia and they were taking advantage of it for merely pragmatic reasons. And he asked the Communist International to revise its evaluations on the nationalist movement in Anatolia:

The CGI considers it is of primary importance for oriental communism to be accurately fixed on the aims of the nationalist movement of Asia Minor

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<sup>83</sup> See n.56, p. 26.

and on the mentality of its leaders, because of the incalculable consequences it implies and of its repercussions on the workers' and peasants' life. Despite our publications in the press, in particular in *l'Humanité*, this question still couldn't have been sufficiently elucidated. Also, the group considers its duty of coming back once again, here, on this issue, and insists on the eminently bourgeois character of this movement. After a painful experience –of 18 months, it must not exist in Turkey as well as in Russia – and even in other countries of the continent any communist still keeping any doubt on the repugnance and antipathy of the nationalist leaders, for the proletarian dictatorship and the soviet republic. At any moment you can come across one of these revolutionary nationalists who talks something like this: “Soviet Russia!... But we serve of it like a scarecrow against British imperialism. The day we will obtain of this latter the recognition of our right of a minimum existence, we will not be late a moment to kick it at its nice place, at your sacred Federative Republic of Soviets!...”<sup>84</sup>

From the same letter we may deduce that, there were among the group, those who were in favor of the resolution of Comintern to support and collaborate with the nationalist movement in Anatolia. Şefik Hüsnü, referring to these members, wrote the Comintern that “unfortunately, there exist within the CGI some comrades, whose sincerity and loyalty have been proved, who have the tendency –for reasons difficult to understand- to assume that we could collaborate with these said to be nationalists.”<sup>85</sup> Similarly Şefik Hüsnü also criticized the decision taken by Mustafa

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<sup>84</sup> « *En raison des conséquences incalculable qu'il comporte et de ses répercussions sur la vie des ouvriers et paysans, le GCC estime qu'il est d'un intérêt primordial, pour le communisme oriental, d'être exactement fixé, sur les visées du mouvement nationaliste de l'Asie mineur et la mentalité de ses dirigeants. Malgré nos publications dans la presse, notamment dans l'Humanité, cette question ne pourrait pas encore suffisamment élucidée. Aussi le groupe considère-t-il de son devoir de revenir encore une fois, ici, sur ce sujet, et d'insister sur le caractère éminemment bourgeois de ce mouvement. Après une expérience par douloureuse -de 18 mois, il ne doit plus exister tout en Turquie qu'en Russie- et même dans les autres pays du continent aucun communiste gardant encore le moindre doute sur la répugnance et l'antipathie des dirigeants nationalistes, pour la dictature du prolétariat et la république soviétique. On peut rencontrer à chaque instant de ces révolutionnaires nationalistes qui vous tiennent des propos, à peu près comme celui-ci : ' La Russie des Soviets !... Mais nous nous servons comme d'un épouvantail, contre l'impérialisme Anglais. Le jour que nous obtiendrions de ce dernier la reconnaissance de notre droit à un minime d'existence, nous ne tarderions pas d'un seul instant de lui appliquer au bon endroit, un coup de pied, à votre sacrée République fédérative de soviets !...' ».* Şefik Hüsnü, “Rapport du groupe communiste de Cons-ple(sic.) au 3<sup>e</sup> Congrès de l'Internationale Communiste” (31 May 1921), p. 539.

<sup>85</sup> « *Malheureusement il existe dans le sein de GCC certains camarades dont la sincérité et la probité et à toute épreuve, qui ont la tendance,- pour des raison difficile à comprendre- de*

Suphi and his comrades to come back to the country and get involved in the struggle in Anatolia against imperialism:

In fact, when it was discussed in the congress of Eastern Peoples of sending a large mission to Asia Minor, including the principal leaders of the CPT, the sympathetic fraction in which the delegates of the CGI were exerting a preponderant influence, unfortunately supported this proposition, against those who had envisaged the dangers and uselessness.<sup>86</sup>

We may say that the assassination of Mustafa Suphi and his comrades was effective on the distanced attitude of Şefik Hüsnü towards the nationalist movement in Anatolia. This would be followed by the hostile actions of the nationalist government in Ankara against all the communists around: against the Green Army and against the People's Communist Party of Turkey. Because of these experiences, Şefik Hüsnü did not trust the leadership of the National Struggle in Anatolia and insisted remaining in Istanbul under occupation until the end of the National Liberation War.

In June 1921 the group started to publish a review called *Aydınlık*<sup>87</sup>, as a continuation of the review *Kurtuluş*. The mission of the review was defined by Şefik Hüsnü as to provoke “a revolution in the spirits.”<sup>88</sup> The review in the first six months of its publication addressed mostly intellectuals and elaborated mainly

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*supposer que nous pourrions sinon collaborer, du mains travailler côte (sic.) avec ces soit dites de nationaliste. ». Ibid., p. 540.*

<sup>86</sup> « En effet quand il fut question, dans le congrès du peuple d'orient, d'envoyer une nombreuse mission en Asie mineure, avec les principaux chefs du PST, la fraction sympathisante ou les délégués du GCC exerçaient une influence prépondérante, a soutenu malheureusement cette proposition, contre ceux en prévoaient les dangers et l'inutilité. ». Ibid., p. 540.

<sup>87</sup> For further information on the publication of *Aydınlık* see Paul Dumont, “Aux Origines du Mouvement Communiste Turc Le Groupe ‘Clarté’ d’Istanbul”, In *Du Socialisme Ottoman a L’Internationalisme Anatolien* (Istanbul: Les Editions Isis, 1997), pp. 203-221.

<sup>88</sup> Şefik Hüsnü, “Rapport un l’activité du Groupe Communiste de Cons-ple(sic.)” (20 October 1921), TÜSTAV Archives, CD 25A, 31-36, p. 555.

the theoretical questions of Marxism and socialism. Şefik Hüsnü in the first issue of *Aydınlık*,<sup>89</sup> according to this, made a detailed analysis of the classes in Turkey. This article reveals that in the summer of 1921, he still continued to follow the principles of nineteenth century Marxism and was concerned with making the Marxist analysis of the economic and social conditions of the country:

The rules of economy are effective in a necessary manner as the rules of nature; In Turkey also, as everywhere in the world, the corner stone of the society and the economy is private property. It is beyond possibility that we remain untouched by the practical division into classes implied by this principle.<sup>90</sup>

In the article, he analyzed the class division in Turkey as parallel to that existing in the capitalist European countries. According to this analysis, there existed, in the cities and villages, bourgeois and proletarian classes, together with the middle classes as the petit bourgeoisie having the same characteristics with their counterparts in Europe. In the article the proletariat was defined by a wider definition, as all the people remaining except the big and small bourgeoisie. The peasantry, indicated in the Second Congress as the real force of the revolutions in the East by Lenin, was defined as an unconscious mass far from constituting a class and far from being a candidate to accomplish the mission defined by Comintern:

Without any doubt, to say that these desperate people [peasants] constitute a class is a very theoretical opinion today. They are nothing but a primary matter that, one day, under the heavy pressure of their social sufferings, will slip out of their inertia and will take a form.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> The articles that Şefik Hüsnü wrote in *Aydınlık* were translated into contemporary Turkish and were published as a book in 1975. Şefik Hüsnü Deymer, *Türkiye’de Sınıflar*. (Ankara: Ülke Yayınları, 1975).

<sup>90</sup> “İktisat kanunları, tabiat kanunları kadar zaruri bir tarzda müessirdirler; Türkiye’de de cemiyet ve iktisadiyatın temel taşı, dünyanın her tarafında olduğu gibi ferdi temellüktür. Bu esastan doğan sınıflara inkısam-ı amelîyesinden müstesna olarak bizim masun kalmış olmamıza imkan tasavvur olunamaz.”. Şefik Hüsnü, “Türkiye’de içtimai sınıflar”, *Aydınlık*, 1 (1 June 1921), p. 10.

<sup>91</sup> “Hiç şüphe yok ki henüz bu biçareler hakkında bir sınıftan bahs etmek, pek nazari bir telakkidir. Bunlar bir gün ancak içtimai ıstırapların kamçısını yiye yiye uyusukluğundan sıyrılacak, bir şekil

And as was valid in Europe, the city workers would be the vanguard of these peasants in a social movement with their “perfect organization.” But the only problem in this analysis was the actual situation of the workers who were not yet well enough organized.

As is apparent, in the summer of 1921, the “national question” was not considered by Şefik Hüsnü as it was dealt with Lenin in the Second Congress of the Communist International. Şefik Hüsnü did not take into account the national movement in Anatolia as a revolutionary force against imperialism. He believed that the socialist revolution in Turkey was the possibility of the future the present task of the communists in the country was to get prepared for this future struggle. Therefore, he was rather concerned about the development of objective conditions in the country and gaining ground among the working class and the intellectuals:

In this period the actions of the intellectuals consisting of giving conferences and lessons, writing books are of great utility. This is a work as fertile as planting seeds in the field. And as long as its outcomes are harvested, it is apparent that this will give great spiritual pleasure.<sup>92</sup>

The situation created by the national movement in Anatolia appeared to him as a provisionary and even an exceptional period in the normal course of economic and social development:

Today, in the course of this life and death struggle our country is dealing with, it is possible for everybody to violate temporarily its own cause. But these are ephemeral storms. It remains in repose until they reurge when new occasions are reformed. And this continues so until the social revolution. However, as long as the classes continue their existence within

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*bida edecek bir mevad ibtidasiye yığmından ibarettir. Mütekabil incizablarla bu dağınık parçalar bir kol teşkil ettikleri gün bir sınıftan bahsetmek hakkımız olacaktır.” Ibid., pp. 14-15.*

<sup>92</sup> “*Bu devirde münevverlerin konferanslar, dersler vermek, kitaplar yazmak suretiyle vaki olan faaliyetleri azim faideler temin eder. Bu adeta tarlaya tohum serpmek kadar velud bir iştir. Ve semereleri iktıtaf edildikçe ondan büyük bir zevk-i manevi temin edeceği bedihidir.*”. Şefik Hüsnü, “İçtimai inkılab ve kadınlarımız”, *Aydınlık*, 2 (1 July 1921), p. 40.

societies, the struggle of the mistreated against the beneficiaries will incessantly keep on.<sup>93</sup>

It has to be said that Şefik Hüsnü failed to grasp the political and tactical opportunities that the National Struggle against imperialism was offering to communists, revealed by Lenin. The attitude taken by Şefik Hüsnü was theoretical rather than a political one. But another point has to be added to this evaluation in order to better understand why Şefik Hüsnü took such an attitude during the national liberation years of the country. The communist movement of the period, of which Şefik Hüsnü was the leader, did not possess any mass force neither among the workers nor among the peasants. Therefore the support given to the nationalists by the communists would not be cooperation between two political movements but would remain as individual participation of the communists to the national movement. This could bring the total disappearance of the communist movement within the National Struggle. This means that the directive of Comintern to the Turkish communists, to support the national revolutionary movement while keeping their independence, was maybe not a practical possibility.

In any way, in this period, Şefik Hüsnü did not bring any solution to solve this problem. On the contrary, during the national liberation struggle and until the victory in September, Şefik Hüsnü abstained from taking a definitive attitude towards the national movement in Anatolia. In the articles he wrote until September 1922 he never directly referred to the nationalist movement in Anatolia, or to Soviet Russia or the ideas brought about by Lenin. And he

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<sup>93</sup> “Bu gün memleketimizin meşgul olduğu tarzda büyük hayat ve memet harbleri esnasında, herkesin kendi davasını muvakkaten ihlal etmesi mümkündür. Fakat bunlar geçici fırtınalardır. Yeni sebeplerin hudusunda tekrar başlamak üzere, mübeddil-i sükun olurlar. Ve bu, böylece, içtimai inkılabı kadar, devam eder. Fakat cemiyetler içinde sınıflar baki kaldıkça, mağdurların teneffülüne karşı olan mücadelesi, fasılasız devam eder.” Ibid., p. 40.

continued to deal with the theoretical and intellectual questions of Marxist view and socialism. Even in December 1921, he was writing in the pages of *Aydınlık* a purely theoretical article on Marx's theses on Feuerbach.

On the other hand, by October 1921, Şefik Hüsnü started to consider the new situation that arose after the Second Congress of the Communist International. Most probably Şefik Hüsnü asked himself the question brought about by Lenin in the Second Congress, "Are we to consider as correct the assertion that the capitalist stage of economic development is inevitable for backward nations now on the road to emancipation and among whom a certain advance towards progress is to be seen since the war?"<sup>94</sup> And the search for an answer to this question brought Şefik Hüsnü closer to the evaluations of Lenin. As a result of these considerations he wrote two important articles in *Aydınlık* in the October and November 1921 issues of *Aydınlık* where he discussed the necessity and form of the revolution in Turkey. In the first article, Şefik Hüsnü repeated the idea put forward in the previous articles on the class structure of Turkey: the overwhelming majority of the Turkish population was composed of working people, namely poor workers and poor peasants. But class consciousness had not been developed yet among those poor people. This time, the fact that the objective conditions necessary for a socialist revolution, as predicted by Marx, had not been formed in the country yet incited Şefik Hüsnü to consider new formulations necessary for the peculiar conditions of the country. He rather started to emphasize that Turkey was not a country similar to Europe and the actual world situation was

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<sup>94</sup> Lenin, p. 63.

offering revolutionary opportunities<sup>95</sup>. Here it should be mentioned that rather than the national revolutionary movements of the East, it was the revolutionary situation in the Balkans that excited Şefik Hüsnü more. So a revolution was on the agenda of the country that the communists had to take part for not becoming a colonial country and as a step in the progress. The following article was supposed to provide an answer to this critical question: what would be the form of the revolution in Turkey?

In the next article, in November 1921, Şefik Hüsnü gave clues of the program that would be applied after the revolution. It was a socialist program with all its aspects<sup>96</sup>. But the missing point in his evaluations was how this revolution would be accomplished with the unconscious working masses and a young and forceless communist movement. Here we have to go back to the previous article and remember that he had declared that the revolution that Turkey had to accomplish in order not to be a colonial country could not be a socialist revolution made by the proletariat on his own. Then it should be a revolution based on the national revolutionary movement in Anatolia. But at this point, Şefik Hüsnü's mind was still not clear. It should be said that here was a gap in the thoughts of Şefik Hüsnü in this period. He was leaving his insistence on the formation of the objective economic circumstances for the socialist revolution and was convinced that the communists should take advantage of the actual situation for revolutionary action. But most probably, he was not easy with the implications of this thought: to support and collaborate with the nationalist movement in Anatolia. Thus until

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<sup>95</sup> Şefik Hüsnü, "Türkiyede inkılabın lüzumu"(26 August 1921), In *Türkiye ve içtimai inkılap* (İstanbul: Aydınlık Külliyatı, 1922), pp. 40-51.

<sup>96</sup> Şefik Hüsnü, "Türkiyede inkılabın şekli" (27 October 1921), In *Türkiye ve içtimai inkılap* (İstanbul: Aydınlık Külliyatı, 1922), pp. 52-62.

the victory of the nationalists he kept his attitude of not referring directly to the nationalist movement in Anatolia.

Between December 1921 and July 1922 there was an interruption in the publication of *Aydınlık*. When in July 1922, the review restarted its publication it seems that there was no change in the attitude of Şefik Hüsnü. He wrote for the July issue of *Aydınlık* in the decisive days of the National Liberation War in Anatolia, an article on art, comparing its perception by the people and elites. The first article written by Şefik Hüsnü directly referring to the National Liberation War in Anatolia and its leadership was on the victory of the liberation war in the September issue of *Aydınlık*. The article, which reflects the still doubtful attitude of Şefik Hüsnü towards the leadership of the National Struggle, ended with a wish that the liberation war would be followed by the giving of rights to the worker and peasant class. That was not the victory of the National Struggle but the following steps of the national government in Ankara that created excitement in Şefik Hüsnü's thoughts and pushed him to take an attitude more compatible with the resolutions of the Second Congress of the Communist International.

CHAPTER FOUR  
THE QUESTION OF COLLABORATION WITH NATIONAL  
REVOLUTIONARIES

In September 1922, the decisive battle was won in the Turkish National Liberation War against the invading Greek troops in Anatolia. The Turkish nationalists were victorious. After the military victory, almost everybody was waiting for the next step of the nationalist government in Ankara. What would happen to the sultanate and what would be the form of the new government? These issues had been discussed during the liberation struggle. But the unity of the nationalist movement against the foreign invasion was an overwhelming question in that period and sides were not openly taken against the sultanate or for a probable republic after the liberation. But since the victory had been gained by the nationalist government in Ankara -and this happened to be done despite the hostile attitude of the sultan towards the nationalists, the question of the day was what would happen to the sultanate. The discussions on this issue have been flamed right after the victory in September and the sides started to be clearer.

In these discussions on the fate of the sultanate, Şefik Hüsnü openly took side with those Turkish nationalists in favor of the abolition of the sultanate and defended them against those who were in favor of the maintenance of the ancient

regime in Istanbul. The arrival of a prominent nationalist leader, Refet Pasha, in the capital of the Empire and his speeches in the city indicating that the ancient regime would not be preserved, provoked the supporters of the sultanate. In the aftermath of the liberation war, the monarchist reaction and opposition to the Ankara Government was especially strong among the intelligentsia and state officers in Istanbul. In this atmosphere, Şefik Hüsnü wrote an article in *Aydınlık* against the conservative opposition and defended the intentions of the Ankara Government on the abolition of the sultanate. This was one of the first articles of Şefik Hüsnü where he directly referred to the Turkish nationalists and gave his support to the government in Ankara. In the article, Şefik Hüsnü attacked particularly Lütü Fikri, the president of the Istanbul bar, defending, in the Istanbul press, the maintenance of the sultanate and the caliphate posts.

On the occasion of the disputes on the fate of the sultanate, Şefik Hüsnü declared his support to the nationalist government as follows: “We have to admit that these revolutionary attempts, which we wish to be sincere, are a great step forward compared to the present government. And we consider as a duty of conscience to defend it against its conservative and traditionalist critiques.<sup>97</sup>” And right after the abolition of the sultanate, Şefik Hüsnü announced his resolution to support, on the principles mentioned above, the nationalist government by sending a telegram of congratulation to the Grand National Assembly as the secretary of the Workers’ and Peasants’ Socialist Party of Turkey. In this telegram, he ensured the total support of the workers representatives to the national government in their struggle against the reactionaries supporting the monarchy and in their future steps

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<sup>97</sup> “*Samimi olmasını pek temenni ettiğimiz bu inkılab teşebbüslerinin hali hazır idareye nazaran, büyük bir terfi adımı olduğunu itiraf etmek mecburiyetindeyiz. Ve onu muhafazakar ve anenepereşt muarızlarına karşı, müdafaa etmeği bir vicdani vazife telakki ediyoruz.*” Şefik Hüsnü, “Anadoludan gelen fikirler etrafındaki münakaşalar”, *Aydınlık*, 10 (1 November 1922), pp. 265-266.

for the social revolution. The following telegram was also published in the pages of *Aydınlık* together with the response sent by the Grand National Assembly, thanking for the congratulations:

To the Grand National Assembly of Turkey,  
The conscious workers of Istanbul had sincerely applauded the victory that the army of Turkish workers and peasants won, with the aid of the whole world proletariat, against the world imperialism. The political revolution, by replacing the parasitical and tyrannical sovereignty with the sovereignty of the people following the victory pleased them more deeply. It is for this that we blame with hate the reactionary situation observed among the intellectuals in Istanbul; be assured that the whole working class will be together with the revolutionaries to the last, in the struggle for the progress; and hope strongly that in the near future the social revolution relying on the common production and property, which is the only solution for the real emancipation of our workers and peasants, will be established. We congratulate the deputies.  
In the name of Workers' and Peasants' Socialist Party of Turkey  
Doctor Şefik Hüsni<sup>98</sup>

Thus, Şefik Hüsni focused his attention to the intensions of the nationalist government in Ankara with the decision of the abolition of the sultanate. He defined the attempts of the government in Ankara against the ancient regime as a political revolution and stood for this revolution because of its progressive character. Şefik Hüsni argued loyalty to the sultanate among the intelligentsia and state officers of the capital would remain strong after the abolition of the sultanate and the main political issue of the opening period would be the division between those loyal to the sultanate and those who were in favor for a more radical change in the state administration. Therefore, he realized that rather than remain

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<sup>98</sup> “*Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisine*

*İstanbul şuurulu işçileri, Türk işçi ve köylü ordularının, bütün cihan proleteriyasının nazahiretiyle, cihan emperyalizmine karşı kazandıkları zaferi kalplerinden alkışlamışlardı. Zaferi müteakip tufeyliler ve zalimler saltanatı yerine millet saltanatını ikame suretiyle yapılan siyasi inkılab onları daha derinden sevindirdi. Bu münasebetle İstanbul münevverleri arasında müşahede edilen irticai vaziyeti nefretle tekabüh; terakki yolunda yapılacak mücadelede tekmil emekçi sınıfının inkılapçılarla sonuna kadar beraber olacağını temin; ve yakın bir atide işçi ve çiftçilerimizi hakiki kurtuluşa mazhar edecek yegane çare olan müşterek istihsal ve mülkiyete müstenid içtimai inkılabın husul bulacağını kuvveyen ümit ettiğimizi arz ile millet vekillerini tebrik ederiz.*

*Türkiye İşçi ve Çiftçi Sosyalist Partisi namına  
Doktor Şefik Hüsni*”. *Aydınlık*, 11 (10 December 1922) p. 295.

indifferent to the revolutionary attempts of the nationalists by condemning them for having a bourgeois character, what would make sense politically and tactically was to get positioned in this actual conflict and give support to the nationalists in Ankara as long as they were struggling against imperialism and institutions of the ancient regime. This was compatible with the Marxist theory according to which the demolition of the monarchy was a step forward in the historical development. But things would get complicated for Şefik Hüsnü to determine the political attitude of the communists when after the political revolution, a social revolution to establish a new rule would be in question.

Meanwhile, a member of the central committee of the CGI had an interview with the “most efficient nationalist leader” of Istanbul. We do not know this was an official visit from the part of the communists or just a friendly conversation. But the aim of the group was most probably to get information about the intentions of the Ankara government on the working class struggle and communists. In the interview, the nationalist leader assured the member of the group that they were not against communists and that indeed they were sympathetic to socialism. He explained the measures taken against communists as because of the concern of the European states about Bolshevism in the peace negotiations.<sup>99</sup> However, Şefik Hüsnü was doubtful about the sincerity of this declaration, he was assured that violence against communists would not be first on the agenda of the nationalist government. Probably this further convinced him of the accuracy of his supportive attitude towards the nationalist government and

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<sup>99</sup> Şefik Hüsnü, Letter to the Presidium of the Communist International (22 January 1923), TÜSTAV Archives, CD 25b, 32-36, pp. 489-490. Most probably this person was Refet Pasha. At that time the only representative of Ankara government in Istanbul was Refet Pasha. Stefanos Yerasimos, *Az gelişmişlik Sürecinde Türkiye*, III vol. (İstanbul: Gözlem Yayınları, 1976), vol. III, p. 1243.

incited him to leave his previously distanced and very prudent stand towards the nationalists.

Another development that acted on his change of attitude towards the Turkish nationalists was the new shape the relationship between the Communist Group of Istanbul and the Communist International took. It seems that Comintern started to consider the Communist Group of Istanbul seriously by the first half of 1922. After the unsuccessful attempt of the leaders of the Communist Party of Turkey, found in Baku, to reach Anatolia, which ended with their assassination, the relation of Comintern with Turkish communists passed through an ambiguous period. In that period, there were two major communist groups in Turkey, independent from each other and differing in their political and tactical principles as well as in their locations. These were the group in Istanbul and the People's Communist Party of Turkey in Ankara. During the National Struggle years Comintern kept its contact with both of these groups. Finally, some months before the Fourth Congress of Comintern in December 1922, the CGI has been charged to found a bureau of organization in Turkey related to Comintern and was told to centralize all the communist groups in the country, first of all the communists left in Ankara after the arrest to which they had been subjected to.<sup>100</sup> This new position of the CGI, namely their becoming the Communist Party of Turkey<sup>101</sup>, also had political implications. In the Fourth Congress, the previous directive of Comintern to give support to the Turkish nationalists was repeated this time to the

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<sup>100</sup> Şefik Hüsnü, Letter to the Presidium of the Communist International, pp. 495-497.

<sup>101</sup> By April 1923 Şefik Hüsnü started to sign the letters he has sent to Comintern as the "General Secretary of Organization Bureau of Communist Party of Turkey and of Communist Group of Istanbul" and by November he just signed as "General Secretary of Organization Bureau of Communist Party of Turkey". And by December of this year the letters of Şefik Hüsnü started to bear the stamp of the party.

delegate of the CGI.<sup>102</sup> As also expressed in the previous chapter, during the national liberation struggle years, Şefik Hüsnü was not totally convinced of this tactic adopted in the Second Congress of Comintern and discussed its possibility and usefulness. With this establishment of closer relations with Comintern and together with the above-mentioned developments in the country's politics, he ended up by further taking into account the peculiar conditions of the country and having a more definite attitude in giving support to the nationalist movement in Ankara.

However, in his first articles in this period, he kept mentioning the bourgeois democratic character of the revolution attempted by the Ankara government. The ideas put forward by Refet Pasha in his visit to Istanbul were defined as the principles of a bourgeois revolution. "The Anatolian Revolution was far from being satisfactory for those who believe that the only way of emancipation of this nation was a radical revolution."<sup>103</sup> And many issues would remain unsettled for the moment. The real emancipation of the nation was, of course, the revolution that would be accomplished by the working class of the country and the establishment of the socialist program, according to Şefik Hüsnü. But this was not possible at the moment because of the actual undeveloped state of the economic and social situation of the country.

On the other hand, in the same period, it is observed that the political thinking of Şefik Hüsnü started to develop in a different way. He soon realized that the new political situation in the country could provide opportunities for the communist movement and bring about a more suitable situation for the struggle of socialism, without having to wait for the development of the objective

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<sup>102</sup> Carr, p. 446.

<sup>103</sup> Şefik Hüsnü, "Anadoludan gelen fikirler etrafındaki münakaşalar", p. 265.

circumstances. As we have seen, this new situation incited him to adopt a political tactic based on supporting the nationalist government in its political revolution. The other side of this tactic was to force the nationalists to take more radical measures to establish a system more suitable to the workers and peasants of the country. This tactic had necessarily implications on Şefik Hüsnü's evaluations about the nationalist government. The emphasis on the bourgeois character of the Turkish nationalists and on the bourgeois-democratic character of the revolution taking place started to leave its place to the emphasis on the anti-imperialist and progressive character of the measures taken by the nationalists. The opportunities of the actual "particular conditions of the country" were henceforward the major concern of Şefik Hüsnü. In this sense, he put forward two points as the advantages of the new period: the obstacles to establish a capitalist system in the country in short time and existence of some persons among the nationalist leaders closer to socialist principles.

Şefik Hüsnü evaluated the actual political and class situation of the country as not possible for the immediate establishment of a capitalist system. This had two reasons. First, the nationalist movement in Turkey had gained the independence of the country fighting against imperialism. And the imperialist countries would still be a threat for the independence of the country after the settlement of peace. In the actual situation of the world divided into two camps, capitalist and socialist, Şefik Hüsnü thought that the only possible way for Turkey to keep its independence from imperialism would be to side with the camp of Soviet Russia.

The second reason was based on the economic situation of the country and that of the classes. In that period, a big bourgeois class did not exist on which the

nationalist leadership in Ankara could rely on in their politics and that could be the pioneering force of development of the capitalist system in the country. The Turkish bourgeoisie might not become a candidate to do so in a short time. And the leadership of the national government in Ankara was composed of military officers and bureaucrats who were not organically bourgeois. The insistence of Mustafa Kemal and the nationalists on the political and later the economic independence of the country encouraged Şefik Hüsnü in the thought that the revolutionary nationalists of Turkey would have to take a more radical attitude than he expected. Hence, he wrote the following lines, which seem to contradict his previous observations on the bourgeois character of the nationalists: “It is not likely that the Turkish equivalent of the European bourgeois, whose intellects were not as callous as their counterparts in Europe, would become the volunteer guards of capitalism.”<sup>104</sup>

In the period between the abolition of the sultanate and the proclamation of the Republic, following his new orientation in his political thoughts, Şefik Hüsnü pointed out two great opportunities for the working class of Turkey together with the communist movement to prove that they were decided to “directly interfere with the future of the nation”,<sup>105</sup> to get involved in the political struggle: The Economic Congress of Izmir and the Elections to the Grand National Assembly in 1923.

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<sup>104</sup> “Kaşarlanmış Avrupai bir burjuva zihniyeti taşımayan Türk muadillerinin, gönüllü olarak, sermayedarlık muhafızlığı etmeleri müstebiddir”. Şefik Hüsnü, “Hakiki inkılaba doğru”, *Aydınlık*, 11 (10 December 1922), p. 278.

<sup>105</sup> Şefik Hüsnü, “İktisat kongresinden sonra ‘umumi intihabat arefesinde’”, *Aydınlık*, 14 (April 1923), p. 354.

The Economic Congress of Izmir took place in February and March of 1923, while the peace settlements in Lausanne were interrupted. The timing of the congress together with its many other aspects gave it a symbolic meaning rather than a practical one.<sup>106</sup> Messages were given at the congress, both to the European states and to the capital owners inside. Connected with the interruption of the peace settlements in Lausanne on the issue of the capitulations, the opening speech of Musatafa Kemal put an emphasis on the economic independence of Turkey. He stated that they were not against foreign capital, but would not also let the foreigners keep their previous privileged position in the Turkish economy.<sup>107</sup> The speech of the Minister of Economy, Mahmut Esat, revealed the message that Turkey would not follow a liberal economic policy. He defined the economic way that would be followed as “the New Turkish Economic School,” which meant that the new economy of the country would be partly *étatiste*.<sup>108</sup>

Participation in the congress was designated according to professions and the representatives were determined by the officials. The announcement of the congress was made in the newspaper to the peasants, merchants, industrial owners and workers as well as to the economic enterprises such as the companies, banks, and the stock exchange.<sup>109</sup> The representatives were gathered in groups of peasants, merchants, industry and workers and the demands were presented at the congress in the name of these groups. By this aspect, the Congress seemed to attribute an importance to the demands of the workers as a class in the economic

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<sup>106</sup> Korkut Boratav, *Türkiye İktisat Tarihi 1908-2002* (İstanbul: İmge Kitabevi Yayınları, 2004), p. 45.

<sup>107</sup> Tefik Çavdar, *Türkiye Ekonomisi Tarihi 1900-1960* (İstanbul: İmge Kitabevi Yayınları, 2003), pp. 152-153.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 153.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 149. Quoted from the announcement published in journal *Vakit* dated 5 Ocak 1923.

policy of the country that would be followed after the peace. On the other hand, it has to be mentioned that, in the period following the congress, the demands of these groups mainly were taken into account, except for the demands of the workers' group.<sup>110</sup>

Şefik Hüsnü personally participated in the Economic Congress of Izmir. He arrived in Izmir the day the plenary sessions of the congress started and took part in the congress as a representative of a worker confederation of Istanbul. In fact, apart from Şefik Hüsnü, two members of the CGI participated in the congress and had distributed, before his arrival, among the workers group a pamphlet that had been prepared by Şefik Hüsnü on the demands of the workers at the congress. Since the other representatives of the workers group did not have much preliminary preparation, the pamphlet presented by the Istanbul communists was as the core of the final draft of the workers' group demands presented to the congress.

Şefik Hüsnü attributed too much importance to this economic congress from the point of view of the economic and political struggle of the working class. His suggestions to the workers' group, which became the core of the demands of the workers, were twofold: on the rights and economic conditions of the workers and on the economic policy of the state. He believed that, on the one hand they had to force the government to adopt an economic policy for the sake of the working masses of the country; on the other hand, to give the workers their basic rights in their economic struggle, in order to get them the best conditions for their class struggle:

The worker had two thoughts: first of all, he was convinced that they had to get equipped in such a way to be able to defend his legitimate

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<sup>110</sup> Yahya S. Tezel, *Cumhuriyet Döneminin İktisadi Tarihi 1923-1950* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2002), p. 152.

rights against the robbery of the capitalists, feeling that it will become more intense and merciless as long as the economy of the country develops. At the same time, he has realized instinctively that the battle was led from Anatolia, has been given against the Western capitalism's invasion ambitions for his own survival and for the defense of his own right to development. Today, his first duty was to assist and watch to make accept word for word the National Pact and he could only properly assist if he had a strong organization.<sup>111</sup>

The political and economic independence of the country were two of the major concerns of Şefik Hüsnü in the period and he believed them to be inseparable. It would be foolish to “accept economic slavery by its own will after having let too much blood flow to defend the political independence.”<sup>112</sup> But as was also apparent at the Economic Congress of Izmir, Turkey did not have enough sources to build its own industry. That is why Şefik Hüsnü recommended the solution applied in Soviet Russia in order to develop the industrial production in a backward country: State capitalism. The needed industrial establishment on the natural sources of the country might be provided by foreign capitalists, but only for a limited time and this to be done only by the state and not by private enterprise, as had been actually the case in Russia. Thus Şefik Hüsnü suggested an economic policy based on state monopoly on industrial production and foreign trade.

If we are really determined to develop our economy, to raise our industry, to produce to such an extent to finish with the need of manufacture importing from abroad, we have to keep in mind that we have to enter into this tremendous enterprise having merely in our hands the natural sources

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<sup>111</sup> “Amelenin iki düşünceci var idi: o, her şeyden evvel, memleketin iktisadiyatı inkişaf ettikçe daha şiddetli, ve bi aman olacağını iyice hissettiği sermayedar soyuculuğuna karşı, meşru haklarını müdafaa edebilecek surette mücehhez bulunmak lüzumuna kani bulunuyordu. Aynı zamanda bir sevk-i tabii ile anlamıştı ki Anadolu’dan idare edilen muharebe, garb sermayedarlığının istila emellerine karşı bizzat kendisinin yaşamak, müstakillen inkişaf hakkını müdafa için yapıyordu. Bu gün için her şeyden akdem vazifesi, misak-ı millinin harfi harfine kabul ettirilmesine müzaheret ve nezaret etmekte ve bu müzahereti ancak pek kuvvetli bir teşkilata malik bulunursa, layıkıyla ifa edebilecekti.”. Şefik Hüsnü, “Memleketimizde amele sınıfının vaziyeti”, *Aydınlık*, 13 (10 February 1923), p. 324.

<sup>112</sup> Şefik Hüsnü, “İktisat kongresinde işçi ve köylü sınıfının yeri”, *Aydınlık*, 13 (10 February 1923), p. 334.

of our land and the work capacity of our people. In order to modernize our country and to make it prosperous, we have to come with the international capital to such an agreement in which we will almost uniquely represent the labor. If we are not prudent enough and do not depart from this point of view, we may, without noticing, face the risk selling the nation to foreign capitalists in the agreements we will sign. Because of this, for a long time, we insist that the Turkish state be a laborers' state.<sup>113</sup>

The importance attributed by Şefik Hüsnü to this economic congress in the political struggle of the workers and their ability to be efficient in the economic policy of the country manifested itself in his evaluations after the congress. The ideas put forward by Mustafa Kemal and Mahmut Esat in the congress had probably incited these evaluations. The emphasis given to the economic independence of the country and the impossibility of following a totally liberal policy encouraged him in his evaluations of "state capitalism." He became satisfied both by the solutions of the congress and by the work done in the workers' group. He expressed this satisfaction in the pages of *Aydınlık* as follows:

To tell the truth, the working class passes through a test. The result of this test will reveal whether or not it will be able to take part, personally and actively, in the state affairs.

Everyone has to confess without hesitation: our workers have successfully passed the first part of this difficult test. The radical and fruitful activity of the workers' group at the economic congress proved that the laboring class has the virtue and attributes allowing it occupying the same respected level as the other classes.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> "Eğer cidden iktisadiyatımızı inkişaf ettirmek, sanayimizi yükseltmek, hariçten mamul eşya ithal etmek ihtiyacından vareste kalacak derecede vasi istihsalatta bulunmak azminde isek, bu muazzam teşebbüsata, elimizde topraklarımızın sakladığı, menbaa-ı tabiiye ile, halkımızın iş kabiliyetinden başka hiç bir şey bulunmadan girişmek ıztırarında bulunduğumuzu, bir an bile akıldan çıkarmamalıyız. Memleketimizi asrileştirmek, bir mamureye kalb etmek için, beynelmilel sermaye ile öyle bir şirket akdetmeye mecburuz ki onda biz hemen münhasıran sayı temsil edeceğiz. Kafi derecede tedbirli davranmaz ve bu nokta-i nazardan hareket etmezsek, imzalayacağımız mukavelenamelerde, farkına varmaksızın, milleti, ecnebi sermayedarlara satmak tehlikesine maruz kalacağız. Bu mülahazata mebnidir ki biz öteden beri Türk devletinin bir erbab-ı mesai devleti olması lüzumunda ısrar etmekteyiz." Ibid., p. 333.

<sup>114</sup> "Açıkçası, işçi sınıfı bir imtihan geçiriyor. Bu imtihanın neticesine göre, devlet işlerine bizzat ve bilfiil iştirak edip edemeyeceği anlaşılacaktır. Herkesin bilatereddüü itiraf etmesi lazım: bu güç imtihanın birinci kısmını, işçilerimiz büyük bir muvaffakiyetle geçirdiler. Amele grubunun iktisat kongresindeki cezri ve bereketli faaliyeti, emekçi sınıfın diğer sınıflar yanında ve aynı seviyede muhterem bir mevki işgal etmesini mümkün kılan evsaf ve meziyetlere malik bulunduğu şüphe bırakmamıştır." Şefik Hüsnü, "İktisat kongresinden sonra 'umumi intihabat arefesinde'", p. 354.

He also made the following evaluation in a report he wrote to the ECCI on the work of the Istanbul communists at the congress:

This was a magnificent occasion for developing our anti-capitalist doctrine and our ideas on a government of an economic management based on the defense of the workers' interests, against the domination of the foreign capital and its indigenous agents.<sup>115</sup>

In April 1923, the first Grand National Assembly, which had led the Turkish National Liberation War, prepared the first constitution of Ankara government and taken the decision of to abolish the sultanate dissolved itself and called for general elections. This was a sudden decision and the country was on the eve of important events such as the peace treaty in Lausanne and the proclamation of the Republic. No other political current had time to get prepared for the elections except the nationalists lead by Mustafa Kemal. So the results of the elections were as expected by him and the new Assembly was almost totally composed of persons known at that time as the first group in the first GNA.

The Workers and Peasant Socialist Party of Turkey, of which Şefik Hüsni was the general secretary, did not have a candidate for the elections of 1923. In the pages of *Aydınlık*, Şefik Hüsni simply advised the workers to give their votes to those candidates supporting a social revolution and respecting the rights of the working people.<sup>116</sup> He was also concerned that the elections take place in a democratic atmosphere, without any intervention of the official posts.

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<sup>115</sup> “C’était une occasion magnifique pour développer notre doctrine anti-capitaliste et nos idées d’un gouvernement de gestion économique basé sur la défense des intérêts des travailleurs, contre la domination du capital étranger et ses agents indigènes .». Şefik Hüsni, Letter to ECCI (12 April 1923), TÜSTAV Archives, CD 25b, 32-36, p. 392.

<sup>116</sup> Şefik Hüsni, “İntihabat ve yosul ve orta halli sınıflar”, *Aydınlık*, 15 (May 1923), p. 384.

Right after the elections, in May 1923, Şefik Hüsnü formulated more clearly the collaboration of communist movement and revolutionary nationalists in the near future of the country:

In this country, from now on, we can only define three kinds of political currents: 1. The current represented by those who have made today's revolution and who are determined to keep it alive; 2. The reactionary current, which gathers around those who are devoted to the traditions remaining from feudalism and to the Ottoman dynasty; 3. The socialist current, which aims at deepening, developing our revolution to the advantage of the worker and peasant masses and middle classes and at transforming it to a social revolution bearing on common property. The first and the third political currents may work hand in hand for a long time in order to transport the gained rights to the field of activity and application; and if the reaction creates a threatening situation taking advantage of any opportunity, the supporters of the political and social revolution, together with the overwhelming majority of the people, will act against the dark forces as a whole.<sup>117</sup>

It has to be pointed out that, Şefik Hüsnü had further developed the policy of supporting the revolutionary nationalists in the political revolution to collaborating with them in the social revolution, which means in the building of the new system in the country. After the sultanate was abolished, the nationalist leadership in Ankara, meaning the Grand National Assembly, did not take definite action to determine the new rule that would be established in the country, and this indefiniteness continued after even the peace had been settled in Lausanne.<sup>118</sup> Bourgeois ideology and liberal economic policies also were not openly defended by the nationalists. Şefik Hüsnü interpreted this situation in a very optimistic way

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<sup>117</sup> “Bu memlekette bundan sonra ancak üç türlü siyasi cereyan kabili-i tasvirdir. 1. Bu günkü inkılabı yapan ve yaşatmağa azim etmiş olanların temsil ettiği cereyan; 2. Derebeylik bakayası olan ananelere ve hanedan-ı al-i osmana merbut olanları etrafında toplayan irticakar cereyan; 3. Fakir işçi ve köylü kitleleri ve orta halli sınıflar leyhine inkılabımızı derinleştirmek, inkişaf ettirmek ve onu müşterek mülkiyete müstenid bir içtimai inkılabı müntehi kılmak gayesini takip eden sosyalist cereyanı. Müktesib hukuku, faaliyet ve tatbikat sahasına isal etmek için, birinci ve üçüncü siyaset uzun müddet elele hareket edebilecek; ve herhangi bir fırsattan bilistifade irticai tehditkar bir vaziyet aldığı zamanlarda siyasi ve içtimai inkılabı taraftarları, milletin ekseriyet-i kahiresiyle beraber, bir tek vücud gibi kara kuvvetlerin karşısına çıkacaklardır.” Ibid., p. 383.

<sup>118</sup> Yerasimos, pp. 1236-1238.

and genuinely believed that Turkey could become a laborer's state with the intervention of the working class in country's politics. This presumption of Şefik Hüsnü on the possibility of collaboration with the Turkish nationalists in the first years of the building of the new Turkey remained a problematic issue during the whole history of the left movement in Turkey. This attitude would also be criticized in the coming months by Comintern as opportunism and legal Marxism.

The possibility to collaborate with the nationalists not only in the political revolution but also in the building of the new system incited Şefik Hüsnü to further develop his thesis on the peculiar conditions of Turkey as a country struggling against imperialism. In the article that Şefik Hüsnü wrote in the July 1923 issue of *Aydınlık*, "Socialist Currents and Turkey," he put forward the thesis that Turkey had a peculiar class structure that rendered the strategy and principles of the socialist revolution for the developed capitalist countries invalid. In the industrially developed European countries, tendencies that aimed at ameliorating the situation of the poor classes at the heart of capitalist society were reformist attitudes that could not be accepted by the communists:

The claim of the communists is that it is not possible within bourgeois society to elevate the standard of the people belonging to the poor classes, to gain them an appropriate consciousness, to make them capable of fulfilling the circumstances they need, in short to prepare the social conditions of the revolution. To establish reforms for repairing the defects of the bourgeois state machine is to help the hated government system to continue its existence. In fact privileged classes exert such oppression on the deprived classes that even if the evolution of capitalism necessitates the downfall of capitalism, like a ripe fruit, in the face of the explicitness, we can not say that they will not be obstinate to keep their position relying on the material means lying below.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> "Komünistlerin iddiasına göre, burjuva cemiyeti içinde yoksul sınıflara mensup efradın seviyesini yükseltmek, onları layığıyla şuurlandırmak, kendilerine terettüp eden vaziyeti ifaya muktedir kılmak, bir kelime ile inkılabın içtimai şartlarını ihzar etmek imkan haricindedir. Burjuva devlet makinesinin bozukluklarını tamir etmek için ıslahat tesislerine girişmek menfur bir şekli idarenin devamına yardım etmektir. Esasen mümtaz sınıflar mahrum sınıfları, öyle ezgin bir halde

But this evaluation valid for countries where capitalism and bourgeois and proletarian classes were developed enough was not applicable for the actual situation of Turkey. Şefik Hüsnü pretended that the social revolution in Turkey should have a peculiar strategy. The industry of the country was still backward and class struggle was far from being developed enough. The local bourgeoisie did not have an influence on the economy; those who possessed the capital were non-Turks.

Another point that incited Şefik Hüsnü to develop this thesis was the situation of the communist movement in Turkey. The socialist party did not have “a brilliant past” which would able it to seize power regardless of whether the economic conditions developed enough or not. Therefore to insist on the application of the pure theory would be an inconsequential and useless act. Şefik Hüsnü rather proposed to take a realistic position based on the actual situation of the country and on the actual spiritual situation of the people. He has put forward that the actual struggle in Turkey was not an internal class struggle but the struggle of the whole nation, being almost totally in a proletarian position, against the European capitalist forces, that constituted the biggest threat for the moment. So the nation of working people had to struggle against foreign capitalism “as a whole.”<sup>120</sup> The lack of the national bourgeoisie strong enough to have an influence

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*tutarlar ki sermayedarlığın tekamülü, olgun bir meyva gibi burjuvazinin sükutunu zaruri kılsa bile, bedahete rağmen onun, altta bulunan maddi vasıtalara güvenerek mevkiini muhafaza etmekte taannüd etmemesi gayrı kabili tasvirdir.”. Şefik Hüsnü, “Sosyalizm cereyanları ve Türkiye”, *Aydınlık*, 16 (June 1923), p. 413.*

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, p.414. This idea was not peculiar to Şefik Hüsnü or socialists at that period. For example Falih Rıfki Atay wrote in May 1922, on the occasion of May day celebrations in Istanbul, that a Turkish bourgeois class did not exist in the country and that “toil was a property common to the whole nation, including artisans, peasants, merchants and urbans”. Atay, Falih Rıfki. “1 Mayıs” In *Eski Saat* (Ankara: T.C. Kültür Bakanlığı, 1998), pp. 86-87.

on the nationalists was a great advantage for the communists to affect the policies of the government. If the government would see that the majority of the nation was working people it might act accordingly and take the guidance of the economy in the hands of the state. And according to Şefik Hüsnü, there existed persons within the government that might see this truth.

It is not the case that classes and a class struggle do not exist in Turkey. However, because the capitalist bourgeoisie is a very small and feeble minority and, on the other hand, the workers and peasants class is an enormous majority, the class struggle takes place between the foreign capitalists and the indigenous notables and wealthy who are their satellites and in most of the cases it is manifested as a National Struggle. Until today, the individual dynastic governments had always supported the side of the capitalists – namely of the enemies of the nation in this struggle. That is how it provided the necessary source for the palace. From now on, the people’s government which takes its power from the sovereignty of nation should support the side of the labor –namely of the nation and become a work and worker government. Among the high officials of the state there are persons who are inclined to act according to Marxist principles such as the ministers of economy and internal affairs and this makes us assume that our government will not be late to follow these principles. We want this politics to become clearer and a more intimate and mutual feeling of confidence to develop between the workers and peasant class and governmental institutions and offices which will be guided in their activity by the interests of the laboring masses.<sup>121</sup>

A similar evaluation was made by the leader of nationalists, Mustafa Kemal, in the same period, that the Turkish people were not composed of classes, but were a “people” as a whole. He put forward that since industry was not

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<sup>121</sup> “Türkiye’de sınıflar ve bir sınıf mücadelesi yok değildir. Yalnız sermayedar burjuvazi sınıfı pek küçük ve zayıf bir ekalliyet ve işçi ve köylü sınıfı ise muazzam bir ekseriyet teşkil ettiği cihetle sınıf mücadelesi, yabancı sermayedarlar ve bunların peykler vaziyetinde kalan yerli eşraf ve ashâbı servet arasında cereyan eder ve ekser ahvalde bir milli mücadele şeklini alır. Şimdiye kadar ferdi hanedan hükümetleri bu mücadelede daima sermayedarların –yani millet düşmanlarının tarafını iltizam etmişti. Bu sayede saray ve konak lazım olan menbaı temin ediyordu. Bundan sonra hükümeti milliyeden iktidar kuvvetini alan halk hükümeti sayın –yani milletin tarafını iltizam etmeli bir iş ve işçi hükümeti olmalıdır.

Ricali devlet arasında, iktisat ve muavenet-i içtimaiye vekilleri gibi marksist bir zihniyetle hareket etmeye mütemayil görünen şahsiyetlerin bulunması, hükümetimizin bu yola girmekte tevhür etmeyeceğini farz ettirmektedir.

Biz istiyoruz ki bu siyaset daha ziyade bir vuzuh-u kesb etsin, ve işçi ve köylü sınıflarıyla çalışan kitleler menafini rehber-i hareket ittihaz edecek hükümeti müessesat ve makamatı arasında daha samimi ve müteakabil bir hissi itimad hasıl olsun.”. Şefik Hüsnü, “Sosyalizm cereyanları ve Türkiye”, p. 415.

developed in the country, there did not exist a proletariat in Turkey and a bourgeoisie as distinct classes. He also pointed out the fact that Turkey was face to face with the exploitation of the foreigners. And at the foundation of the People's Party, he pretended that although in other countries political parties were representatives of the classes this should not be the case in Turkey and that the People's Party would represent the interests of the whole nation, which was not splited into classes.<sup>122</sup>

These two very similar evaluations –one made by the leader of the communists and the other by the leader of the nationalists that Turkey had a peculiar class structure that would enable it to follow a distinct economic development path, were perhaps the initial formulations of the ideology of a third way of development, a way of development neither capitalist nor socialist.<sup>123</sup> But there was an essential difference in the direction that these two similar evaluations pointed out and what they meant for their owners. In this distinct way of development, Şefik Hüsnü was seeing the possibility for Turkey to become a socialist country, while Mustafa Kemal saw the possibility to becoming a capitalist country without being a semi-colony of imperialism. And this difference of intention would reveal itself shortly after the proclamation of the republic and incite Şefik Hüsnü to revise his strategy based on collaborate with the nationalists.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Yerasimos, pp. 1251-1253.

<sup>123</sup> The ideology of third way of development would become a popular issue national movements gaining speed in colonial countries after the Second World War.

<sup>124</sup> But this evaluation also opened the way for the future split of the communist movement and for the participation of some prominent cadres like Vedat Nedim and Şevket Süreyya to the rang of Kemalists after 1927. Tunçay, p. 184.

Meanwhile the Communist Group of Istanbul received the first stroke from the nationalist government in May 1923. Because of a declaration distributed on the occasion of May First, many members of the group, Şefik Hüsnü included, were arrested and prosecuted according to the Treason Law (*Hıyanet-i Vataniye Kanunu*). In a short time, they were released due to a loop hole in the legislation, but the prosecution restarted in August.<sup>125</sup> The prosecution of the communists did not change the supportive attitude of Şefik Hüsnü towards the nationalist government and was defined by him as an obtrusive act of the police. He even evaluated the trial as a great opportunity for the communists to make propaganda.<sup>126</sup> This only incited Şefik Hüsnü to define as of the most urgent tasks of the newly elected GNA to take steps to democratize the old legislation pending from the Ottoman Empire and to accomplish the “liquidation of the negative.”<sup>127</sup> On this occasion, the GNA would also prove which side it would take, the side of the wealthy minority or the side of the working majority.

On 24 July the peace negotiations ended at Lausanne and the peace treaty was signed. Şefik Hüsnü was not totally satisfied with the treaty. In the pages of *Aydınlık* he wrote “if we remember the brilliant successes and the last victory of the people by the force of arms, it is hard to prove that the peace that has been signed is the best possible agreement that could have been reached.” He criticized that the questions of land predominated the economic and financial problems

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<sup>125</sup> Tunçay, pp. 176, 179-182.

<sup>126</sup> “The prosecution of the communists aroused the interest of the public opinion in Istanbul. It became an issue of freedom of opinion for the intellectuals. The majority of Istanbul press has taken side with the communists in the name of the freedom of opinion. The prosecution was watched by a crowded audience. The professors of the law faculty took charge of the defense of the communists”. Şefik Hüsnü, Letter to ECCI (15 November 1923), TÜSTAV Archives, CD 25b, 32-36, p. 440.

<sup>127</sup> Şefik Hüsnü, “Yeni Millet Meclisinden halk ne bekliyor?”, *Aydınlık*, 17 (August 1923), p. 435.

during peace negotiations<sup>128</sup>. But these criticisms were made in a reconcilable tone and the fact that a peace treaty recognizing the independence of the country had been signed was more important to him. He declared that the peace was opening a new era in front of the country and that the main point of discussion should be the reformation of the country's social and economic circumstances. That is why he wrote succeeding articles in *Aydınlık* entitled "What People Expect from the New National Assembly"<sup>129</sup> and "The Question of Social Reform"<sup>130</sup> in which he listed the tasks the new GNA should accomplish in this new era.

In the first article he discussed the issue of the democratization of the country in order to allow the people to get organized freely, as mentioned above. He proposed that the working people should be organized appropriately to get prepared for the economic development of the country. The workers should be organized in syndicates and these syndicates should possess wide authority in the workplaces; the unions of peasants should be encouraged to provide them with the appropriate means for agricultural production; and the small shop owners and artisans should have their own cooperatives.

The second article was on the economic development of the country. Şefik Hüsnü criticized in this article the ongoing reform attempts restricted to the arrangement of laws as being utopian. He pointed out the illusion of the reformation of society by making modernist arrangements in the fields of education, religion and civil law. His criticism was based on the Marxist assumption that the superstructure could not be changed without changing the

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<sup>128</sup> "Mütecavizlere karşı, millet efradının silah kuvvetiyle, elde ettikleri parlak muvaffakiyetler ve son zafer göz önüne getirilecek olursa, imza edilen sulhun, elde edilmesi mümkün olan müsalahaların en mükemmeli olduğunu isbat etmek biraz güç bir iştir.". Ibid., p. 434.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., pp. 434-437.

<sup>130</sup> Şefik Hüsnü, "İçtimai ıslahat meselesi", *Aydınlık*, 20 (February 1924), pp. 529-532.

economic structure. The superstructure could not be changed just by the force of law; the construction of a building should be started at its foundation not at its roof.<sup>131</sup> That is why, the first task of the GNA was to get rid of the feudal forms of the actual economy and the circumstances resembling the medieval ages and work for the economic development of the country.

Şefik Hüsnü pointed out that there were two ways of doing this. One way was to let private property be free and to wait for the development of capitalism on its own. But this way would end up making Turkey in a short time the colony of the foreign monopolies and cause it to lose its independence. The other way was the establishment of state capitalism, as was the case in Soviet Russia. The economic development of the country without losing its political independence could only be provided in this way, according to Şefik Hüsnü. In this way, there would still be a need for foreign capital, but the economy would be guided and planned by the state. And the first steps to take would be the establishment of a state monopoly on foreign trade and the electrification of the country. After these, the need for social reforms would necessarily follow.

On the other hand, by October 1923, the hopes that Şefik Hüsnü possessed for a “people’s government” started to fail with the following activities of the National Assembly which revealed that they did not intend to take radical economic measures for the sake of the working classes. In the “new period” after the signing of the peace treaty the optimistic and constructive attitude of Şefik Hüsnü would gradually leave its place to a more critical attitude towards the attempts of the nationalists. He started his article in *Aydınlık*’s October issue by warning that the “the principles indicated by the people revolution were under a

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid., p.531.

great threat.”<sup>132</sup> The Second GNA was deprived of the revolutionary spirit that was bared by the first and it was “falling dawn from the outposts of the revolution.” Two issues were the cause of this criticism: first was the hostile attitude that the government took against the strike waves of the workers in the second half of 1923, together with the withdrawal of the labor law from the parliament. These were accompanied by the sending away of some radical personages from critical posts such as the Minister of Economy, who was acting according to Marxist principles, as Şefik Hüsnü had defined before.<sup>133</sup> And the second was the discussion in the GNA on reformulating the form of the state machine.

The discussions around the proclamation of the Republic were not welcomed by Şefik Hüsnü because of their implications as changes on the first constitution of the Ankara government, *Teşkilat-ı Esasi*. The principles of the nationalist revolution: “the abolition of the personal sovereignty, the possession of the sovereignty unconditionally by the nation and the gathering of the whole rights and duties of the state in the Grand National Assembly without the confirmation of a superior post” were defined by Şefik Hüsnü as essential to the “people’s government” and above all discussion<sup>134</sup>. But in October 1923, the second Grand National Assembly started to discuss the new governmental form of the republic and intended to violate the previous principle on the unity of the executive and legislative duties of the assembly. Şefik Hüsnü claimed that these changes would

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<sup>132</sup> Şefik Hüsnü, “İnkılap esasatının tadili”, *Aydınlık*, 18 (October 1923), p. 458.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 459.

<sup>134</sup> “Şahsi sultan hakimiyetinin ilgası, hakimiyetin bila kayıt ve şart millet efradına aidiyeti ve Büyük Millet Meclisinin, bütüin devlet hukuk ve vezâifini, ma-fevk bir makamın tasdikine lüzum olmaksızın, sinesinde cem etmesi. Millet in bu pek kıymetli hukuk-u müktesebeti her türlü siyasi münakaşanın fevkinde kalmak şartıyla her türlü siyasi mücadelelere cevaz verilebilir.”. Şefik Hüsnü, “İktisat kongresinden Sonra ‘umumi intihabat arefesinde’”, p. 356.

alienate the people from the state machine. The establishment of the position of a president of the state and the constitution of a council of ministers were declared as unacceptable by Şefik Hüsnü. These would make the country similar to those republics in Europe and America which were “nothing but kingdom without dynasties” and were “only governments suitable for the sovereignty of the bourgeoisie.”<sup>135</sup> Instead, Şefik Hüsnü’s suggestion on the new form of the government was that the deputies at the parliament should be elected directly by the people, there should be elections each two years, that the powers of legislation and of execution should be on the parliament, there should not be a post of president of the state and that this responsibility should be taken by a president of the parliament elected each year. If these principles were granted, the new state could be called a republic, but “the People’s Republic of Turkey.”<sup>136</sup>

Until May 1924, these criticisms of Şefik Hüsnü of the Grand National Assembly were made in a moderate tone and with the hopes that there was still a possibility of shifting the way of the nationalists from capitalism to socialism. Şefik Hüsnü believed that this was a crucial period to increase the propaganda for a people government and defined vital importance of the period to the Communist International in November 1923 as “to remain silent in this atmosphere would be a crime.”<sup>137</sup> Therefore the publication work was given more weight and a weekly journal has been brought out, named *Vazife*. In this journal, which was published

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<sup>135</sup> Şefik Hüsnü, “İnkılap esasatının tadili”, p. 459.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 459.

<sup>137</sup> Letter to ECCI (15 November 1923), p. 442.

during two months –November and December of 1923,<sup>138</sup> Şefik Hüsnü dealt with current political events and tried to interfere to the “defaults” of the GNA. In this journal he discussed once more the questions of the unity of the legislative and executive powers, and of the waning of the revolutionary spirit in the second GNA, of the necessity of establishment of the state’s monopoly on foreign trade as the urgent issues that the “people’s government” had to settle down in order to continue its revolutionary attitude for the sake of the working people of the country.

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<sup>138</sup> Mete Tunçay has published the four articles that Şefik Hüsnü had written in *Vazife* within the 6 issues that he found at the GNAT Library. Tunçay, pp. 515-520. Probably these are the almost all the issues published since in his letter dated 15 November 1923 Şefik Hüsnü informed that *Vazife* had been published since more than one month and in 23 December 1923 he has noted that they had to stop the publication of *Vazife* because of lack of money. Şefik Hüsnü, Letter to ECCI (23 December 1923) TÜSTAV Archives, CD 25b, 32-36 p. 460.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### “WHAT THE WORKING CLASS THINKS ABOUT THE REPUBLIC?”

We have previously seen that Şefik Hüsni’s first evaluations, as a socialist, aimed at introducing scientific socialism and Marxist principles of analysis on the social and economic conditions of Turkey. By this aspect these were rather theoretical evaluations and ideological inputs. When Şefik Hüsni and the Communist Group of Istanbul established closer relations with Comintern and Soviet Russia, he also started to consider the theses evaluated by Lenin in the light of the uneven development of capitalism and the revolution in Russia. These incited Şefik Hüsni to make more political evaluations related to the revolutionary national movement that liberated the country from imperialist invasion. The decision taken at the Second Congress of Comintern to support the nationalist movements in countries suffering from imperialist aggression, like Turkey, were considered by Şefik Hüsni during the last year of the liberation war in Anatolia and were put into practice right after the victory.

The “political revolution” of the nationalists after the victory and the radical measures taken by them against the ancient regime incited Şefik Hüsni to further consider the peculiar conditions of the country as was explained in the previous chapter. He was optimistic about the intentions of the nationalist

leadership -that consisted of keeping the independence of the country and following an étatiste economic policy, and believed that the objective conditions could force them to incline towards a socialist system and ally with Soviet Russia. Therefore, he formulated the actual struggle of the moment as the struggle of the whole nation, being almost totally composed of working masses, against the foreign capitalists. Under these conditions working class could cooperate with the national revolutionaries in order to develop the “political revolution” into a “social revolution”.

However, some developments in the internal and external policy of the nationalists cut short the optimistic evaluations of Şefik Hüsnü of the nationalist government. The hostile attitude of the government towards the worker organizations and movements inside the country and its inclination to ally with the European countries rather than with Soviet Russia in the peace negotiations at Lausanne forced him to take a more critical attitude towards the government. The proclamation of the republic was rather a disappointment for Şefik Hüsnü since he realized that this had nothing to do with the “People’s Republic of Turkey” as was his suggestion.

By May 1924, the tone and focus of Şefik Hüsnü’s articles in *Aydınlık* review changed. Until the closing of the review as a result of the implementation of Law on the Maintenance of Order (*Takrir-i Sükun Kanunu*) in February 1925, he did not take an attitude totally against the government. But the internal class struggle and the independent political movement of the working class were henceforward emphasized in his writings. After May 1924, in his articles Şefik Hüsnü mostly gave space to the evaluations on the development of capitalism in

Turkey since the proclamation of the constitution in 1908 and to the analysis of the actual politics according to its class base. These were accompanied by an account of the previous one and a half year since the political revolution of the nationalists and, as will be seen with a reevaluation and alterations according to the new situation. In this period, he formulated his basic thoughts on the economic and social development of the country as a minimum program of the party and as the immediate demands of the working class from the government of the republic. And he put forward that the immediate task of the working class was to force the government to realize this program.

In the May issue of *Aydınlık*, Şefik Hüsnü wrote an article entitled “What the Working Class Thinks about the Republic,”<sup>139</sup> which in fact revealed the shift in his optimistic and supportive attitude towards the nationalist government. The article included a self-criticism of his evaluations in the previous eighteen months which had been too utopian about the intentions of the Turkish nationalists in power. He indirectly described this optimism as:

The working class of our country was hopeful that a happy era would be opened for them with the populist revolution. Some were carried too far away by their dream on this issue. There were many who believed the legend of “social accord” which was told would be realized with the coalescence and compromise of diverse classes.

(...)

In truth, at first, we largely credited the governors of the republic with taking into account that some idealist leaders whose political principles and class qualifications had not become clear yet had succeeded the liberation struggle and that they had guided a political revolution of which the value could not be denied.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Şefik Hüsnü, “Amele sınıfı cumhuriyet hakkında ne düşünüyor?” *Aydınlık*, 21 (May 1924), pp. 537-540.

<sup>140</sup> “Memleketimizin işçi sınıfı, halkçı inkılabıyla, kendisi için mesut bir devrenin açılacağını ümid ediyordu. Bazıları bu hususta, büyük hayalata kapılmışlardı. Muhtelif sınıfların bir arada kaynaşması ve uzlaşmasıyla tahakkuk edeceğinden bahis olunan “ahenk-i içtimai” efsanesine inananlar çoktu.” *Ibid.*, p. 537.

The enthusiasm that the Economic Congress of Izmir and its étatiste declarations created in Şefik Hüsnü left their place to the belief that the actual government's real intention was to establish a capitalist system in the country and become allied with European capitalism. Different from his previous evaluations that the nationalist leadership was unlikely to be "the guards of capitalism" in the country, in the article mentioned above, Şefik Hüsnü stated that the governmental party was based on the petit-bourgeois class of Anatolia in the way of developing and enriching. This class composition of the People's Party was the proof that the government could not continue to make radical changes in the way for the social revolution and was forced to take a conservative attitude:

Waiting for the solution of the workers' question and the accomplishment of the social revolution from the goodwill of our new governors is equal to renouncing these goals. This is not a question of goodwill. Even if some persons are convinced by pointing continually at what is needed to accomplish for the sake of the nation, the aim can not be reached. Because, those who possess the power today are the representatives of a class which has definite interests different from and contrary to those of the workers. In the way of reforms, always they are condemned to hesitate and pause at halfway from the necessity of the defense of these interests<sup>141</sup>.

Şefik Hüsnü finally named the revolution taking place in the country as a bourgeois revolution, but as not having reached completion yet. He put forward that the Turkish bourgeoisie was divided into two political wings: the conservative wing represented by the big bourgeoisie of the main cities and the nationalist wing

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*"Fihakika biz mebdede henüz siyasi akideleri ve sınıfı vasıfları tebellur etmemiş bazı mefkureci rehberlerin istiklal mücadelesini muvaffakiyetle başardıklarını ve kıymet-i vahametini gayrı kabil inkar bir siyasi inkılaba delalet ettiklerini nazarı dikkate alarak, cumhuriyet ricalimize geniş bir kredi açmıştk.." Ibid, p. 538-539.*

<sup>141</sup> *"Amele meselesinin hallini ve içtimai inkılabin husulünü yeni hükümet adamlarımızın hüsnü niyetinden beklemek, bu gayelerden feragat etmekle müsavidir. Bu bir hüsnü niyet meselesi değildir. Mütemadiyen onlara milletin selameti için yapılması icap eden şeyleri göstermekle, bir kaç şahsiyet ikna edilse, bile yine maksat elde edilemez. Zira bu gün iktidarda bulunanlar, ameleninkilerden ayrı ve onlarınkine zıt muayyen menfaatlere malik bir sınıfın mümessilleridir. Islahatçılık yolunda, daima o menfaatlerin müdaafaası zaruretiyle, kararsızlık göstermeye ve yarı yolda tevakkuf etmeğe mahkûmdurlar." Ibid., p. 538.*

supported by the petit-bourgeoisie of Anatolia. And in the actual period the interests of these two wings of the Turkish bourgeoisie were in conflict as well as their political aspirations. That was the reason of the actual struggle taking place between the ex-Unionists and the People's Party and, as a matter of fact, this was a "family quarrel within the Turkish bourgeois"<sup>142</sup> class. Although the working class had to struggle against this "family" as a whole, it could not totally ignore this quarrel because of its political implications for the fate of the country:

From the point of view of social revolution, the essential character of this covertly warming up quarrel is similar to what a quarrel between two slave owners meant for the slaves at the age of slavery. We are witnessing a family quarrel such as the squabble between brothers who are in conflict because of the partition of inheritance or revenue. But since as the outcome our skin – the values which would be created at the expense of workers' blood and sweat- is in question, we should carefully watch this struggle; we should deduce from it the conclusions for our emancipation.<sup>143</sup>

This incited Şefik Hüsni to focus on and deepen his evaluations on the economic and social development of the Turkish bourgeoisie. He drew the above mentioned political split back to 1908, the beginning of the "revolutionary era" in the Ottoman Empire. He claimed that: "All the history of Turkey, since the proclamation of the constitution in 1908, reflects the occurrences of the struggle of the laborious petit bourgeoisie, pregnant to a capitalist bourgeoisie, against the

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<sup>142</sup> Şefik Hüsni, "Türk burjuvazisinin aile kavgaları" *Aydınlık*, 22 (June 1924), pp. 562-565.

<sup>143</sup> "Esaret devrinde iki esirci arasındaki kavga, bizzat esirler için ne ise, için için kaynayan bu cidal de, amele ve içtimai inkılab nokta-i nazarından aynı mahiyettedir. Miras veya irad taksimi hususunda aralarında ihtilaf zuhur eden kardeşlerin münazaaları kabilinden bir aile kavgası muvacehesinde bulunmaktayız. Fakat netice itibariyle bizim postumuz –çalışanların, kanları, terleri pahasına yaratacakları kıymetler- mevzuu bahis olduğu için, bu mücadeleyi dikkatle takip etmeli; ondan azadlığımıza yarayacak neticeleri çıkarmalıyız." Ibid., p. 563.

restraints brought at its development, first by the autocracy of Abdülhamit, afterwards by the monarchy in general.”<sup>144</sup>

Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), in the years it was at power, became the representative of the big bourgeoisie of the cities and its interests became linked to the European capitalist states. That is why the leaders of the Unionists took the initiative to enter the World War One allied to an imperialist camp, whereas the petit bourgeois elements in the party insisted that the Ottoman Empire remain neutral in the war. In the aftermath of the World War One the two wings of the bourgeoisie continued to take opposite sides. The interests of the petit bourgeoisie lay in the liberation of the country from the imperialist’s invasion whereas the big bourgeoisie sought to keep their good relations with the Entente powers.<sup>145</sup> And after the victory and in the Republic, the big bourgeoisie started to represent the conservative opposition. In fact the big bourgeois were personally modernized individuals, but their interests lay in maintaining the ancient regime as it had been before the war. They could agree on scarifying the actual sultan but could not accept the abolition of the sultanate and caliphate. As their interests were the same as those of the European capitalists their intention was to ensure that the people of Anatolia remained ignorant and submitted to the authority of the sultan:

The sultanate and reaction party, which has been composed of parasite elements such as the *ulema* [Muslim theologians and scholars] and vagrant intellectuals until today, that way arises again on a much solid economic base than before in the hands of a class which grasped its interests. The era when the reaction was represented by weak, senile, untrustworthy viziers in power is over. With the adoption of the reaction’s program by the most

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<sup>144</sup> “*Toute l’histoire de la Turquie, depuis la proclamation de la constitution en 1908, reflète les péripéties de la lutte de la petite bourgeoisie laborieuse, en gestation d’une bourgeoisie capitaliste, contre les entraves apportées a son développement, d’abord par l’autocratie d’Abdoul-Hamid, ensuite par la monarchie en général.*” Şefik Hüsnü, “La Politique interieure de la Turquie” (19 May 1924), TÜSTAV Archives, CD 25b, 32-36, p. 647.

<sup>145</sup> According to Şefik Hüsnü, they did not totally deny the National Struggle in Anatolia and some of them (Fethi Okyar, Rauf Orbay, Kara Vasıf, etc.) joined the nationalists. *Ibid.*, p. 648.

developed wing of the bourgeoisie, we have entered into the last phase of the long struggle between the reactionaries and revolutionaries.<sup>146</sup>

And, according to Şefik Hüsnü, the Progressive Republican Party (*Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Fırkası*) found by Kazım Karabekir, Rauf Orbay and Ali Fuat Cebesoy in October 1924 represented the interests of the rich bourgeoisie of the cities closely related to the European capitalists. Although this party seemed to defend the principles of the Republic, the economic program of the party advocated a liberal market economy. And Şefik Hüsnü declared that with the foundation of this party the era of Turkish capitalism started where “the bourgeois parties appeared before the people with borrowed programs and masking their faces.”<sup>147</sup> It was now time to speak of the relation between the political parties and the classes.

The People’s Party, which was the continuation of *Müdafaai Hukuk*, had emerged within the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), representing the interests of the petit-bourgeoisie in Anatolia. Şefik Hüsnü explained the classes from which this party received support as follows:

There are three main classes in Anatolia: 1) The *ağas* (landowners), *bey*s (notables) and *şeyhs* (tribal leaders) and their men still living in medieval despotism; 2) the merchant and artisan class in towns, whose importance increases day by day; 3) the class of poor and middle peasants and toilers. Today, the government and People’s Party take their strength from the first two of these classes. They also endeavor not to lose the favor of the third class and to assure its neutrality.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> “Şimdiye kadar saray mensupları, ulema ve bazı serseri münevverler gibi tufeyli anasırlardan tereküb eden saltanat ve irtica partisi, bu sayede menfaatini medruk açık göz bir sınıf erkanının elinde eskisinden daha pek çok sağlam bir iktisadi temel üzerinde hortluyor. Artık irticaın, iktidar makamında cılız, matuh, seciyesiz vezirler tarafından temsil edildiği devirlerden uzaktayız. Burjuvazinin en metruki cenahı tarafından irtica programının benimsenmesiyle, mürtecilerle inkılabçılar arasındaki uzun mücadelenin son safhasına dahil olmuş bulunuyoruz.”. Ibid. , p. 563.

<sup>147</sup> Şefik Hüsnü, “Memleketimizde sisyasi fırkalarla sınıflar arasındaki münasebet” *Aydınlık*, 28 (December 1924), p. 721.

<sup>148</sup> “Anadolu’da ahali başlıca üç sınıfa ayrılır: 1) Karun-u vasti mütegalib hayatı süren ağalar, beyler, şıhlar ve tevabı, 2) Gittikçe ehemmiyetleri artan kasabalı tüccar ve zanaatkarlar sınıfı, 3) Yoksul ve orta halli köylüler ve rençberler sınıfı. Bu günkü hükümet ve Halk Fırkası ilk iki sınıftan

Economically the interests of this petit bourgeois class of Anatolia were in conflict with the intervention of European capitalism in the country and this young bourgeois class gave their support to the Turkish nationalist movement headed by army officers such as Mustafa Kemal. Now, under the republican government, this petit bourgeoisie of Anatolia had its own ways of getting wealthier and accumulating capital. And to succeed at this, it would have no choice but take advantage of the internal market, since it was not possible for them to compete with the European bourgeoisie at the international market. Therefore they would implement a harder exploitation of the peasants and workers of the country. What had happened to the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) after 1908 was now valid for this young bourgeoisie. As it was getting wealthier, it would have to ally with the European capitalists and move away from its nationalist and revolutionary aspirations. These developments meant that Turkish capitalism had entered in a normal way of development.<sup>149</sup> And if no extraordinary events had happened, like the restoration of the monarchy or a civil war, the Turkish capitalism would have continued in this normal way. According to Şefik Hüsnü, the Turkish bourgeoisie had terminated its evolution phase with incredible speed. The struggle against religion and feudalism had been almost terminated and he predicted that in a short time the government would turn its forces against the proletariat.<sup>150</sup> Therefore, from that point on, the bourgeoisie would accomplish its progressivism and revolutionary mission and this finally would bring the

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*kuvvet almaktadır. Üçüncü sınıfın da teveccühünü kaybetmemeğe ve bi taraflılığını temin etmeğe gayret etmektedir.”. Ibid., p. 723.*

<sup>149</sup> Şefik Hüsnü, “Situation économique et sociale de la Turquie” (19 May 1924), TÜSTAV Archives, CD 25b, 32-36, p.766.

<sup>150</sup> In fact this prediction would be realized in March 1925, much earlier than Şefik Hüsnü expected.

proletariat to play its own historical mission, to attempt the power to build socialism. Under these circumstances the CPT should only criticize and unmask them before the working classes.

Through the same objective conditions, the bourgeoisie, before getting out of its infantile period, having executed almost all of its social tasks, has already reached the phase of struggle against the proletariat and of compromise with the foreign capital. In this monstrous posture, having almost terminated its progressive and revolutionary role, it deserves merely on behalf of the CPT, to be criticized and unmasked in front of the proletariat.<sup>151</sup>

However, this was a family quarrel, which meant that it took place within the two wings of the bourgeois class, that because of its political implications had to be watched and considered by the communists and the working class. In the era of bourgeoisie's political struggle of power against feudalism, Marx attributed revolutionary and progressive qualities to the bourgeoisie, but in the era of imperialism these qualities were passed to the younger and smaller elements of this class. In the actual situation the big bourgeoisie's interests necessitated that it cared about guarding the ancient regime, monarchical institutions. That was why the mission of abolishing the ancient regime passed to the petit-bourgeoisie in backward countries like Turkey.<sup>152</sup> The political accomplishments of the Turkish bourgeoisie after the World War One, the liberation of the country and the abolition of the sultanate and caliphate, are considered steps forward for the social development of the country and for the political development of the working class. Therefore, one duty of the working class was to guard these acquisitions if these

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<sup>151</sup> *“Par suite des mêmes conditions objectives, la bourgeoisie ayant exécuté, avant de sortir de sa période d'enfance presque toutes ses tâches sociales, elle est déjà arrivée à la phase des luttes contre le prolétariat, et de compromis avec le capital étranger. Dans cette posture monstrueuse, ayant presque achevé son rôle progressiste et révolutionnaire, elle mérite de la part du P.C.T. seulement d'être critiquée et démasquée devant le prolétariat”* Şefik Hüsnü, “Situation économique et sociale de la Turquie”, p. 772.

<sup>152</sup> Şefik Hüsnü, “La politique intérieure de la Turquie”, p. 649.

were threatened by the reactionaries. And if this threat was to become a concrete reality, the working class should not hesitate to collaborate with the young bourgeoisie of Anatolia.

Şefik Hüsnü always suspected that the Unionists might attempt a coup d'état. That is why cooperation with the nationalists against reactionary opposition remained a possibility until February 1925. This could also help the organization of the workers and peasants and open the way for the revolution. If the Unionists succeeded at a coup d'état, the CPT should make a provisional alliance with the nationalists and take advantage of their legitimacy, as was the case in the Bulgaria when Communist Party of Bulgaria (CPB) had collaborated with the agrarians.<sup>153</sup> On the other hand, in between the crises the party should keep its neutral position and strengthen among the workers the feeling that what they were witnessing was a family quarrel in which both side were equally the class enemy of the workers.

Every time the situation will become crucial, the CPT will have to give the government its aid and the support of the proletariat, in return for the acceptance of certain clauses of our minimum program which will favor the organization of the working class and of peasants and will render it more suitable to act in the way of communist revolution. In between the crises, it would be most suitable that the party remains in a waiting position and develop among the workers the feeling that they attend at a family quarrel of which the opponents are equally class enemies.<sup>154</sup>

At that period the Communist Group of Istanbul, which had now become the Communist Party of Turkey, issued a minimum program which contained the “principal articles of immediate demands, around which the CPT should lead its

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid., pp. 651-652.

<sup>154</sup> “Chaque fois que la situation deviendrait critique, le P.C.T devait rendre (au gouvernement) son concours et l'appui du prolétariat, moyennant l'acceptation de certaine clause de notre programme minimum ce qui favoriserait l'organisation de la classe ouvrière et paysanne et la rendrait plus apte a agir dans le sens de la révolution communiste. Dans l'intervalle des crises, il conviendrait mieux que la partie reste dans l'expectatif et développe chez les travailleurs le sentiment qu'ils assistent à une querelle de famille dont les antagonistes sont également ennemis de classe ». Ibid., pp. 651-652.

agitation, under the bourgeois republic,”<sup>155</sup> written most probably by Şefik Hüsnü himself, to be presented at the Fifth Congress of Comintern. The program of thirty-eight articles included demands in the areas of politics, economy and work circumstances. In the political part of the program, there were demands pertaining to the elections and governmental system, the general vote with proportional representation and the unity of legislative and executive powers in the Grand National Assembly, on the rights of women, on the freedom of organization, on the transformation of the army to national militia, on free education and on the secularization of the state and of the education. The demands also included the establishment of a political and economic alliance with Soviet Russia and of a front with the oppressed peoples of the East against imperialism. The economic demands were the abolition of taxes, especially indirect ones, on the workers, the abolition of the private monopolies and the nationalization of the railways, banks, mines and transportation, the establishment of state monopoly on industry and foreign trade and land reform based on expropriation of the non-cultivated land and its distribution to poor peasants. The last part of the minimum program was on the rights of workers, such as an eight hours work day and social assurance.<sup>156</sup>

The task of the working class was to exert pressure on the government for the realization of this program. The abolition of the caliphate was one such issue. According to Şefik Hüsnü, the government had to make concessions in front of the reactionary opposition on this subject because of the lack of the pressure of the working class. From now on, the working class should act as a class with its own political aims in order to force the revolutionary nationalists to take more radical

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<sup>155</sup> Şefik Hüsnü, “Programme minimum provisoir fixé par le P. C. T.” (11 June 1924), TÜSTAV Archives, CD 25b, 32-36, p.774. See appendix B.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., pp. 774-776.

steps. This was no more to cooperate with the nationalists in the building of the country, but to apply pressure on them for the democratization of the country to pave the way for a proletarian revolution. So the urgent democratic demands of the working class were a work law to guard the rights of the workers and the authorization for the unions and the confederation of unions.

In his articles in *Aydınlık*, until the closing of the review, Şefik Hüsnü presented the demands of the minimum program. One of the most important and urgent articles was the state monopoly on the natural sources, industry and foreign trade. This was an issue brought about by Şefik Hüsnü on every occasion since the abolition of the sultanate. This was a vital necessity for not falling once more under the hegemony of the imperialist states while becoming economically developed. This demand was also applicable on behalf of the nationalist leadership, which was insistent on the independence of the country won by military struggle. Therefore from both the national and proletarian points of view, the state monopoly was a necessity. At this point, Şefik Hüsnü, also mentioned that it would be too utopist to believe that the actual “populist government” would put into practice a state monopoly as desired by the communists. But, according to him, it could carry out monopolies on the critical sectors of economy to protect these sectors from the big and foreign bourgeoisie. Already the government had taken the decision to abolish the tobacco monopoly of the foreign capital and that could be broadened to the other sectors of the economy:

We ask the middle classes who still keep the sovereignty of our country to take the monopoly in its broadest sense, to supervise the most vital sectors of our economy and to work for the management and development of these with the spirit of an industrialist, a merchant, in order to prevent the big individual capital to increase and the foreign capital to dominate the situation.

If our wealth sources are managed by the state as the common wealth of the nation, the invasion will of European capitalism could be stopped; and

further the interests of the large masses of the people inside would be satisfied. Since the state monopoly, as we have explained, will not be restricted to items such as tobacco, grain alcohol, etc. and will include the railways, forest and mine companies, the foreign trade, the possibility of our indigenous bourgeoisie becoming big bourgeoisie will gradually decrease as is necessary. The working masses of people, who will tend to establish their real sovereignty, as long as they will develop and get organized, will have to face, if these economic circumstances become realized, a bourgeois class composed not of individual capitalists, but of elements which keep in their hands the economy of the state. And we assume that it will be easier to deal with them.<sup>157</sup>

Şefik Hüsnü also felt it necessary to justify this demand from the point of view of the socialist struggle. Since the governmental party of the republic was a bourgeois party, did it make any sense to ask it to establish a state monopoly on economy? Was it not a reformist policy? Or did it make any difference that the poor people of Turkey were exploited by either the foreign and indigenous capitalists or by a monopoly of the bourgeois state? At this point, Şefik Hüsnü showed that he did not understand the struggle of socialism as only a theoretical necessity, but conceived of it as a real political struggle, and that he believed that the socialist revolution in Turkey was a real possibility. As put forward in the above quotation, he believed that when the proletariat would be able to control the power, it would be much easier to get rid of a bourgeois class handling the state economy. But most importantly, he predicted that to allow a free market in Turkey

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<sup>157</sup> “Biz henüz memleketimizde hâkimiyetini elde tutan orta sınıflardan; büyük ferdi sermayenin türemesine ve ecnebi sermayesinin vaziyete hâkim olmasına mani olmak için, inhisarcılığı en geniş manasında alarak, iktisadiyatımızın en can alacak kısımlarına vaziyet etmelerini ve bunları bir fabrikatör bir tüccar zihniyetiyle işletmeğe ve inkişaf ettirmeğe gayret etmelerini, talep ediyoruz. Servet menbaalarımız, milletin müşterek-i mali olarak devlet tarafından işletildiği takdirde, bu suretle Avrupa sermayedarlığının istila ihtiyaçlarına karşı sed çekildikten ma-ada; geniş halk kitlelerinin dahili menfaatleri de kısmen tatmin edilmiş olacaktır. Çünkü devlet inhisarı, izzah ettiğimiz üzere, tütün, ispirto, vesaire gibi mevadda münhasır kalmayıp, şimendiferlere, orman ve maden işletmelerine, ticaret-i hariciyeye ilh... teşmil edileceği cihetle, yerli burjuvazimizin büyük sermayedar vaziyetine erişmesi imkanları tedricen, gereği gibi azalacaktır. İnkişaf ettiği ve teşkilatlandığı nisbette, fiili hâkimiyetini tesis etmeğe temayül edecek olan çalışan halk kitleleri, bu iktisadi şerait tahakkuk edecek olursa, karşularında, ferdi sermayedarlardan değil, devlet iksidiyatını elinde tutan anasırdan mürekkep bir burjuvazi sınıfı bulacaktır. Ve biz bununla hesaplaşmanın daha kolay olacağını zannediyoruz”. Şefik Hüsnü, “Devlet inhisarına niçin taraftarız?” *Aydınlık*, 25 (September 1924), p. 643.

would be to offer the means of the country to the imperialists, who were seeking to solve the crises of capitalism by exploiting backward countries. In his words it would be to “blow out from our own lungs life” to imperialism.<sup>158</sup>

In this period, Şefik Hüsnü was also more concerned about the role of the peasants in the social movement. He did not change his previous conviction about the Turkish peasantry that it was so unconscious and unorganized that it was a far possibility that the peasantry could create a movement in Turkey:

In the last five years many social movements have taken place in Turkey. The working class has also participated in these movements as an unconscious element. However the Turkish peasantry has not even moved until today. All the events, all the revolutions have taken place without our peasant class –the only solid reliable force in our society, has knew about or has assisted in these.<sup>159</sup>

However, he believed that the socialist struggle should take it into consideration because of its largeness as a mass and because Turkey was, in the last analysis, a country based on agriculture. Therefore land reform was put forward in the minimum program of the CPT and Şefik Hüsnü asked for the realization of the slogan “the expropriation of all farms in the Eastern provinces, Thrace and Izmir and partitioning of these to landless peasants or those without enough land”<sup>160</sup> many times in the pages of *Aydınlık*. On the other hand, although the peasantry was an important quantity it could not be the masses on which the

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<sup>158</sup> Ibid., pp. 642-643.

<sup>159</sup> “Son on beş sene zarfında Türkiye’de bir çok içtimai hareketler oldu. Bu hareketlere gafil bir unsur olarak işçi sınıfı da bazen katıldı. Fakat Türk köylüsü bu güne kadar yerinden bile kıpırdamadı. Bütün vakayı, bütün inkılablar, cemiyetimizin yegane sağlam istinad-ı kani olan köylü sınıfının malumatı ve müzaheretini haricinde cereyan etti.”. Şefik Hüsnü, “Türk köylüsünün kurtuluşu” *Aydınlık*, 29 (January 1925), p. 775.

<sup>160</sup> “Vilayet-i şarki, Trakya ve İzmir’deki bütün çiftliklerin bilabedel istimlakı ve toprağı olmayan veya az gelen yoksul köylülere taksimi”. Şefik Hüsnü, “Teşrinisani inkılâbı ve Türkiye” *Aydınlık*, 27 (October 1924), 27 Kasım p. 708; also in Şefik Hüsnü, “Türk köylüsünün kurtuluşu” *Aydınlık*, 29 (January 1925), p. 777.

socialist movement would rely. Only under the leadership of the well-organized urban proletariat, the peasantry would have a role in the socialist revolution:

The peasant class is much dispersed. It is deprived of educational means. It is hard for it to come together and take action...Because of these unfavorable circumstances the organization of our workers will be weak at first, although it will carry an importance in respect to its quantity; it will not be able to act as its own. Whereas the situation of the urban workers is very favorable to become conscious, unite and take actions, since the aims and interests are unique, our peasants shall accept the guidance of worker organizations and if finally they do not want to remain as slaves, they have to join the workers to fight against the class of parasites.<sup>161</sup>

We may say that the demands put forward in the minimum program of the party were more or less the principles that Şefik Hüsni had been defending since 1921 in *Aydınlık*, as the requirements for the development of the country, its independence and the development of proletarian struggle. However, the article in May 1924 issue of *Aydınlık* revealed a change in how these principles were to be defended, or put into practice, namely a change in tactics. The fact that a minimum program has been issued was an important development in the communist movement. First of all this was a sign of maturity of the movement in the sense that it was offering definite political aims before the working class to struggle for. Second the revolutionary strategy put forward by Şefik Hüsni was henceforward a gradual revolution, the accomplishment of bourgeois democracy in the country was a phase of this revolution that the working class should force with its own political struggle.

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<sup>161</sup> “Köylü sınıfı çok dağınıktır. Terbiyevi vesaitten mahrumdur. Toplanması, harekete geçmesi çok güçtür. (...) Bu gayr müsait şeraite mebni köylülerimizin teşkilatı ilk zamanlar zayıf olacak, kemmiyyet itibariyle bir ehemmiyet ihraz etse bile, kendi başına bir iş görmek kabiliyetine malik bulunmayacaktır. Halbuki şehir işçilerinin vaziyeti bilakis tenevvür etmelerine, birleşmelerine, harekete geçmelerine fevkalade elverişlidir. Gayeler ve menfaatler heman birbirinin aynı olduğu için, köylülerimiz işçi cemiyetlerinin rehberliğini ve pisedarlığını kabul etmeli, ali nihaye esir vaziyetinde kalmak istemezlerse, onlarla müttehidten tufeyliler sınıfına karşı mücadeleye girişmelidirler.”. Ibid., p. 777.

Why this tactical change happened so suddenly in May 1924? The answer lay in the relationship of Şefik Hüsnü and the Istanbul communists with the Communist International. At the beginning of 1924, the group was severely criticized by Comintern. Probably in February or March 1924, a person from Russia<sup>162</sup> informed the group that Comintern was accusing them of “opportunism and exerting a kind of legal Marxism.” The object of criticism was the previous articles written in *Aydınlık* review which put forward that communists could cooperate with the nationalist government for the realization of a social revolution. In the Fifth Congress of Comintern, the report on the National and Colonial Question openly stated the accusations of Comintern of the Communist Group of Istanbul, brought in since the first months of 1924. The attitude of the Communist Group of Istanbul was called in this report a tactical mistake. The mistake was to “advocate the class collaboration of the proletariat with the bourgeoisie” and that way exerting a tendency similar to that of the Legal Marxists in Russia before the Bolshevik Revolution. The report would also mention that the party had “corrected its attitude” after the warning of Comintern.<sup>163</sup>

In fact, Şefik Hüsnü was supporting the collaboration of the proletariat with the national revolutionaries in Turkey. But, as we have seen above, during its second congress, it was Comintern itself which took the decision to support the national revolutionary movements in Eastern countries whether they were of bourgeois-democratic origin or not and consequently no longer called them as bourgeois. These nationalist movements were revolutionary as long as they were

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<sup>162</sup> This person is referred to as comrade M in the letter of Şefik Hüsnü. Şefik Hüsnü, Letter to ECCI (15 April 1924), TÜSTAV Archives, CD 25b, 32-36, p. 698.

<sup>163</sup> Bursalı, Fatma, trans. *Türkiye Komünist ve İşçi Hareketi* (İstanbul : Aydınlık Yayınları, 1979), p. 120 and Bilal Şen, *Cumhuriyetin İlk Yılarında TKP ve Komintern İlişkileri* (İstanbul: Küreyel Yayınları, 1998), p. 30.

fighting against the interests of European imperialism in the East, for the sake of the world revolution and also for the sake of the survival of Soviet Russia as a socialist state. However the peace treaty of Lausanne, signed in August 1923, was far from satisfactory for Soviet Russia<sup>164</sup> and the attitude of the Turkish nationalists, who were favoring the European countries rather than Russia during the peace negotiations, caused Comintern to revise its attitude towards the government of Turkey.

On the other hand, a difference existed in how Şefik Hüsni implemented the tactic advised by Comintern on the peculiar conditions of Turkey. The problematic point in Şefik Hüsni's tactic, according to Comintern, could be that he further developed the support given to the revolutionary nationalists in the "political revolution" against imperialism and against the ancient regime to collaboration with the latter in the "social revolution". While advising to the Turkish communists that they should support the national revolutionaries in the struggle against imperialism, Comintern also mentioned that the social and economic aims of the communists and nationalists were not the same and that communists should give their own political struggle after the emancipation of the country in order to fulfill their own political aims. It seems that Şefik Hüsni while following the decisions of the second congress on the "national question" was too much focused on the probability that the nationalists could be inclined to a socialist system and neglected the independent political struggle of the working class. But as the report of the Fourth Congress had pointed out, Şefik Hüsni realized this "deficiency" in his tactic and made the "necessary corrections" by May 1924.

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<sup>164</sup> George Harris, 2000, p. 59.

There was also another reason behind this criticism and this was the tendency of Şefik Hüsnü to act independently in his relations with Comintern. The relationship between the communists in Istanbul and Şefik Hüsnü as their leader and Comintern's organs was problematic during the whole period of 1920-1925. The letters of Şefik Hüsnü were not responded to regularly and the demands of the group were not taken into account. On the other hand, the group, especially Şefik Hüsnü, objected to the instructions or evaluations of Comintern or its respective organs on the situation of Turkey and on the tasks of the communists, several times, arguing that these were not compatible with the actual situation in Turkey. He was not satisfied with taking directives from Comintern on internal questions. He was convinced that the members of the group were equipped well enough with Marxist theory to evaluate the actual conditions of the country and deduce their own strategy and tactics from this. He was further convinced that they were in a better position to rightly evaluate the situation. Thus he suggested to Comintern in November 1923 to reduce their relationship to a minimum level and asked it to write them only in crucial circumstances and send directives only on vital questions.

On the rest, Şefik Hüsnü wanted Comintern to rely on the decisions and evaluations of the communists in Turkey. For the sake of the tactic adopted in that period, it was vital that the party remained as “an organization proper to the country in any case.” The nationalists were very sensitive and intolerable on this issue: “They do not like communists but they will not forgive communists taking advice from Comintern.”<sup>165</sup> So as in the prosecution of May 1923, the communists denied that they received instructions from Comintern on the internal

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<sup>165</sup> Şefik Hüsnü, Letter to ECCI (15 November 1923), TÜSTAV Archives, CD 25b, 32-36, p. 419 (second copy of the letter).

affairs. And not to give credit to these accusations, Şefik Hüsnü asked to suspend the relationship. He also wanted the party not to get involved directly in the contact issue.

In that period, Şefik Hüsnü also believed that there was a problem in confidence on the part of the Comintern towards the Istanbul Communists. The group had a pending demand from Comintern since the beginning of 1921. Şefik Hüsnü was convinced that a daily newspaper published in Istanbul especially for workers, but also for the intellectuals of the city, was a necessity for the communists. He expressed this demand in almost every letter to Comintern, since the very first ones. A project of such a scale could not be realized without the material support of Comintern. But he did not receive any response until the end of 1923, which convinced him that there was a problem of confidence in their relation with Comintern. He expressed this in a very dramatic way in a letter he wrote in November of that year:

Either we possess your complete confidence, after these four years of experience of affiliation with the International; therefore you must, with no more procrastination, send us what we need so that we may put ourselves immediately in activity. Or we are not honored by this confidence and in this case there is no reason for you to continue to be interested in our work. In any case, our organization thinks that to occupy a place in the press of Constantinople is an urgent task for the communists.<sup>166</sup>

The issue of publishing a daily newspaper in Istanbul of such an importance for Şefik Hüsnü had not been considered of importance by Comintern and even left without any response. Probably, the Executive Committee of Comintern did not

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<sup>166</sup> “*Ou bien nous jouissons de votre pleine confiance, après cette expérience de quatre années d’affiliation à l’Internationale et alors vous deviez, sans plus de temporisation, nous envoyer ce dont nous avons besoin, afin de nous permettre nous mettre tout de suite en activité. Ou bien nous ne sommes pas honorés de cette confiance et dans ce cas il n’y a aucune raison pour que vous continuiez à vous intéresser à notre travail. Quoiqu’il arrive notre organisation est d’avis qu’il est urgent pour les communistes d’occuper une place dans la presse de Constantinople.* ». Ibid., p. 417.

see necessary to spend money to this journal that would reach at a limited amount of workers in Istanbul. On the other hand publication work has been given a great importance by Şefik Hüsnü in political and ideological struggle. For the Communist Group of Istanbul there was always difficulty to finance the publications they already had but they insisted on these publications as long as they could afford. This difference of point of view on the necessities of local struggle of the communists was inevitable in a kind of organization as Comintern was. Comintern was the central organization of the world revolution and the communist parties in singular countries were the branches of it. This meant that the priorities of Comintern were at some points different from those of the revolutionary struggle in each singular country. The issue of publication of a daily journal was an example of this difference of priority which was one of the sources of above mentioned disharmony between Comintern and Turkish Communists. The fact that the priorities of Comintern could differ from those of the internal struggle in each country would continue to be a problematic issue during its entire history.

As a response to the criticism of Comintern, Şefik Hüsnü, in the first place accused the translator of the articles of not translating the essence of the documents. He defended the articles written in *Aydınlık* as follows:

Our publications are always imbued with a pure communist intellect. Only, to make them easy to digest by the nationalists and avoid their lightning, we had the habit, in the exposition of our ideas, of using some detours and a special tendency. Without this, judiciary and detective pursuits impeded our march at every step. We suppose that the person charged with the translation of the samples of the writings of our contributors must have reproduced faithfully the formal details, and in doing this, neglected the disengaging intellect which constituted its center of gravity.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> “Nos publications furent toujours imprégnées d’un pur esprit communiste. Seulement pour les faire digérer par les nationalistes et éviter leurs foudres, nous avions l’habitude, dans l’exposé de

On the other hand, Şefik Hüsnü assured Comintern that they were willing to be subject to the instructions of the Comintern in discipline. After all, this was not reasonable for a young and weak communist movement like Turkey to lose the support of Comintern. Thus, Şefik Hüsnü explained the attitude in the pages of *Aydınlık* by “some detours and a special tendency” for not irritating the nationalist government. Right after receiving the critics from Comintern, Şefik Hüsnü wrote the above-mentioned article in *Aydınlık* as a self-criticism of the extreme points of the attitude in the previous articles and also as an explanation of it. The criticism of Comintern was referred to in the article as: “Some of those who send us letters criticize even our publications about the government of the Republic. They claim the assumption that the class which took the power could deepen our revolution by radical actions in favor of the working and poor classes are too much optimism.” As a response, the class basis of the People’s Party was especially emphasized in the article and the collaboration with the nationalist government became out of question.<sup>168</sup>

However, relations with Comintern did not improve until Şefik Hüsnü went abroad in April 1925. In June 1924, Şefik Hüsnü was personally invited by the Executive Committee of the Communist International to participate in the Fifth Congress. Şefik Hüsnü replied by refusing the invitation of Comintern, saying it

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*nos idées, d’employer certains détours et une tournure spéciale. Sans cela des traces judiciaires et policières entraveraient à chaque pas notre marche. Nous supposons que celui qui fut chargé de traduire des échantillons des écrits de nos collaborateurs a du reproduire fidèlement les détails formels, tout en négligeant l’esprit qui s’en dégage et en constituât le centre de gravité. »* Şefik Hüsnü, Letter to ECCI (15 April 1924), TÜSTAV Archives, CD 25b, 32-36, p. 698.

<sup>168</sup> “Bize mektup gönderenlerden bazıları, bizim cumhuriyet hükümeti hakkındaki neşriyatımızı bile tenkid ediyorlar. Bunlarda, iktidar makamını ele almış olan sınıfın, inkılabımızı amele ve yoksul sınıflar lehinde, cüzri icraat ile derinleştirebileceğini farz etmek, fazla nikbinlik olduğu iddia olunuyor.”. Şefik Hüsnü, “Amele sınıfı cumhuriyet hakkında ne düşünüyor?” *Aydınlık*, 21 (May 1924), p.538.

would not be convenient to leave Istanbul at that moment. He put forward many reasons for not participating personally in the congress, but the main reason seems that he still did not want to be perceived as being in relation with Comintern and still was concerned about being accused of being in relation with Russia. He openly stated this concern by saying that if he went to Moscow, and there was no way that this could happen without the authorities knowing, when he returned it would be said that he had sold out to the International and was working for the Russians in Turkey.<sup>169</sup>

Meanwhile, on 12 July 1924, right before the Fifth Congress, Şefik Hüsnü wrote a personal letter to Kolaroff, the leader of the Communist Party of Bulgaria and the President of the Balkan Federation, communicating to him the complaints of the Communist Party of Turkey about the leaders of the Near-East Bureau of Comintern.<sup>170</sup> In the letter, Şefik Hüsnü complained about the imperfection of the relations between the Communists in Istanbul and the Communist International despite all of the attempts made by the communists in Turkey to improve it. He blamed the Near East Bureau of Comintern, responsible for providing the relations between the communists in Turkey and the Executive Committee of Comintern for this dissonance.

The CPT since its foundation has suffered from the imperfection of its communication with the CI. All the efforts displayed by it to cure this have remained ineffective until now. The fault belongs entirely to the Near-East Bureau of the EC. A whole series of events have proved abundantly that the leaders of this organ of the CI are very below their task. As a result of their carelessness, our party has almost never been supported by the International, neither materially nor morally.

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<sup>169</sup> Şefik Hüsnü, Letter to the Presidium of CI (15 June 1924), TÜSTAV Archives, CD 25b, 32–36, pp. 638a–639.

<sup>170</sup> Şefik Hüsnü, Letter to Kolaroff (12 July 1924), TÜSTAV Archives, CD 25b, 32–36, P. 654–655. See Appendix B.

All the CPT has produced until that day, in the organization and propaganda domains owe solely to the devotion and skill of its own militants. Because of the perpetual deficiency of the Near-East Bureau, we have almost never received intelligent and useful directives. But this can not continue in this way indefinitely. The extension acquired by the communist movement in Turkey makes us feel more than ever the cost of the International's support.<sup>171</sup>

In these complaints, Şefik Hüsnü directly accused the director of the Near-East Bureau of Comintern, Briquet, and asked for his dismissal and the reorganization of the Near East Bureau. This request of Şefik Hüsnü was firmly refused by Comintern.<sup>172</sup>

In February 1925, the reactionary *Şeyh Sait* insurrection in the Eastern region of the country gave the opportunity to the government to take extraordinary measures against opposition and the government also took advantage of this situation to suppress the communist movement which was not really causing a threat at that period. *Aydınlık* and another journal<sup>173</sup> of the Communist Group of Istanbul were closed by the government together with reactionary journals and reviews in 12 March 1925, as an application of the Law of Maintenance of Order

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<sup>171</sup> “*Le PCT depuis sa fondation souffre de la défectuosité de ses rapports avec le CE. Tous les efforts déployés par lui pour y remédier restèrent jusqu’ici sans résultat. La faute en incombe entièrement au bureau de proche-Orient(sic.) du CE. Toute une série de faits prouve surabondamment que les dirigeants de cet organe de l’IC sont très au-dessous de leur tâche. Par suite de leur incurie, notre parti n’a presque pas été soutenu, par l’Internationale ni matériellement ni moralement.*

*Tout ce que le PCT a réalisé jusqu’à ce jour, dans les domaines d’organisation et de propagande est du uniquement au dévouement et à l’habileté de ses propres militants. A cause de la carence continuelle du bureau de proche-Orient(sic.) nous n’avons presque jamais reçu de directifs intelligent et utiles. Mais cela ne saurait durer ainsi indéfiniment. L’extension que prend le mouvement communiste en Turquie nous fait sentir plus que jamais le prix de l’appui de l’internationale.* » Ibid., p. 654.

<sup>172</sup> Bilal Şen, pp. 30, 95.

<sup>173</sup> *Orak Çekiç* was a weekly journal addressing to workers that the CGI started to publish in 21 January 1925 and 7 issues were published until the closing of the review in March 1925.

(*Takrir-i Sükun Kanunu*)<sup>174</sup>. By this way, Şefik Hüsnü who wrote articles in *Aydınlık*, pointing at the threat that reactionaries constituted against the political revolution and proposing the collaboration of the communists with the revolutionary nationalists against this threat received an ironical response from the government. This, of course, put end to the political tactics Şefik Hüsnü was developing between the years 1922-1925. This irony of history was a response to the discussions of the communists on whether to support or not the revolutionary nationalists in Turkey: the government had no intention to allow the communists to become a political component in Turkey in any way.

After the closing of *Aydınlık*, Şefik Hüsnü went to Berlin and that way he avoided to be involved in the arrests in May which covered almost all the communists in Istanbul. In a letter he wrote to Comintern from Berlin after the prosecutions, he expressed his astonishment about the stroke of the government as follows:

This was a scandal to see on the same decree, besides the clerical and reactionary journals, the names of the communist publications. Further, these latter had advocated for the repression of the Kurdish insurrection without mercy and had promised to the government the support of the communists in all their efforts for the liquidation of feudalism.<sup>175</sup>

The prosecution of the communists in May 1925 closed a period of the communist movement in Turkey which was rich of publications and of vigorous political discussions and tactics. After this period, as Mete Tunçay named it, a

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<sup>174</sup> Tunçay, p. 202.

<sup>175</sup> “*C’était un scandale de voir sur le même décret, à côté des journaux cléricaux et réactionnaires, les noms des publications des communistes. D’autant plus que ces dernières avaient préconisé la répression impitoyable de l’insurrection kurde, et promis au gouvernement l’appui des communistes dans tous ses efforts en vue de liquider le féodalisme.*». Şefik Hüsnü, “Rapport sur l’activité et les perspectives du P.C.T.” (14 November 1925), TÜSTAV Archives, CD 26, 33-36 p. 142.

silence would reign in the left movement in Turkey about the country's politics.<sup>176</sup> Şefik Hüsnü remained in Berlin until 1927, when he returned back to the country and get arrested. By the end of this period, the history of the communist movement in Turkey would be continuously ceased and weaken by splits within and by oppression of the government for decades.

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<sup>176</sup> Tunçay, p. 202.

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSION

Two major periods could be discerned in the theoretical and political views of Şefik Hüsnü between the years 1919 and 1925. Until the autumn of 1922, Şefik Hüsnü was a Marxist in a backward country, who was focused on the development of the objective conditions in his country favorable for the socialist revolution. A definitive change occurred in the theoretical and political thinking of Şefik Hüsnü when he considered the political developments after the victory of the National Liberation War under the light of the thesis of Lenin on the “national question”. To get acquainted with Lenin’s contribution to the Marxist theory of revolution incited Şefik Hüsnü to believe on the actuality of the revolution in Turkey. This opened the period of 1922-1925 where Şefik Hüsnü manifested a creative and vigorous political and tactical activity.

In 1919, when Şefik Hüsnü considered the present circumstances in the country, he believed that the development of the proletariat together with the development of capitalism was a necessary phase for the socialist struggle and concluded that a revolution was not possible in the near future. In this first period he evaluated the leadership of the national movement in Anatolia as of bourgeois character and claimed that these nationalists were neither sympathetic to the communists in the country nor to the socialist system that has been found in Soviet

Russia. Until the end of the National Liberation War it may be said that his look of Şefik Hüsnü at the national movement in Anatolia was too much cold-blooded for a revolutionary. Perhaps, the judgments of Şefik Hüsnü about the leadership of the national movement were right but however young and weak, for the communist movement, to neglect the “national question” so burning at the period, would mean a suicide in the political sense. The final phase that capitalism had reached in the twentieth century, imperialism, revealed that the backward countries would not follow a development path similar to the development of capitalism in Europe. The conflicts in these backward countries appeared in different ways. There existed in these countries a class conflict but the main question of the day was the liberation struggle against imperialism. Şefik Hüsnü has realized this lately, in the autumn of 1922.

During 1922, it can be observed that Şefik Hüsnü started to take into account the thesis of Lenin on the “national question” and on the strategy of socialist revolution in the backward countries and out of Marxist became a Marxist-Leninist. This was partly due to the form that the relation between Comintern and Communist Group of Istanbul took in the middle of 1922. By that time, Comintern took the CGI more seriously as the center of the communist movement in Turkey and started to give directives to Istanbul communists.

However, Şefik Hüsnü was a kind of person who first trusted at his own reasoning. An internal development rather incited Şefik Hüsnü to conclude in the end of 1922 that the thesis of Lenin should be the directing principles in the present conditions of the communist movement in the country. The breaking point in Şefik Hüsnü’s evaluations was the new situation that arose when the discussion about the abolishment of the sultanate became a burning issue in the

country. The abolition of the sultanate, the “political revolution” of the nationalists as Şefik Hüsnü has called it, redefined the political struggle in the country and the two opposing sides were the revolutionaries against the sultanate and conservators for the maintenance of the sultanate. In this political opposition Şefik Hüsnü had taken side with the revolutionaries against the reactionaries and did not change this attitude until ironically, the government suppressed the communist movement together with the reactionaries in the March of 1925, by the Law of Maintenance of Order (*Takrir-i Sükun Kanunu*).

From the abolition of the Sultanate until May 1924, Şefik Hüsnü discussed the possibility of a “social revolution” accomplished by the revolutionary nationalists in the country. The decision to support the revolutionary nationalists in the struggle against imperialism and ancient regime has become a possibility to make an alliance with them for the “social revolution”. In this period Şefik Hüsnü had even the thought that because of the actual circumstances in the country, the nationalist government could end by establishing a socialist rule. This was the most optimistic attitude of Şefik Hüsnü towards the nationalist government. Şefik Hüsnü over read the peculiar conditions of Turkey as a backward country while trying determine politics of the communist movement deprived of any mass support. But this optimistic attitude did not last for long and the warning of Comintern on this issue put an end to this utopic prediction of Şefik Hüsnü. By that time he would return to make evaluations on the political issues based on the class conflict inside the country.

The establishment of the Communist International after the socialist Revolution in Russia had a great effect on the socialism movements in several countries. Comintern played an important role also in the history of the

Communist Party of Turkey. However there was a disharmony in the relationship between Comintern and Istanbul communists in the period between 1919-1925. This disharmony aroused from the difference of point of view on the singular problems concerning the internal questions in Turkey. Comintern was determining its policy considering the benefits of the world revolution whereas the prior concern of Şefik Hüsnü was the immediate needs of the communist movement in Turkey. There was of course a difference between evaluating the circumstances of a country from outside and from within that country. That is why Şefik Hüsnü objected several times the resolutions of Comintern on the Turkish communists until his going in Berlin in May 1925. It has to be mentioned that during his stay in Berlin, Şefik Hüsnü's evaluations on the immediate tasks of the communists in Turkey became closer to those of Comintern.

APPENDIX A

LETTER OF ŞEFİK HÜSNÜ TO KOLAROFF IN 12 JULY 1924

Au camarade Kolaroff (Personnel)

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Cher camarade,

N'auriez vous pas quelques minutes à me consacrer. Ce serait pour une œuvre éminemment utile au point de vue de l'influence de l'internationale dans le proche-Orient. Mes camarades du C.C. du P.C.T. m'ont demandé de mettre à profit mes relations personnelles avec vous, pour vous prier de nous prêter votre concours pour nous débarrasser d'un mal, dont nous souffrons déjà depuis trop longtemps. En effet quand vous saurez de quoi il s'agit, vous verrez vous même que, sans la grande autorité dont vous jouissez nous serions impuissants d'en venir à bout, par nos propres moyens. Comme chef de notre parti bulgare et de la fédération balkanique, et grâce à votre longue expérience, vous connaissez mieux que personne la situation dans nos pays. Et quand je vous surais exposé de quoi il tourne je suis persuadé que vous vous rangerez immédiatement à notre point de vue et vous n'hésitez pas à nous soutenir de toute votre autorité.

En quelques mots, posons la question : Le P.C.T. depuis sa fondation souffre de la défectuosité de ses rapports avec le C.E. Tous les efforts déployés par lui pour y remédier restèrent jusqu'ici sans résultat. La faute en incombe entièrement au bureau du proche-Orient du C.E. Toute une série de faits prouve surabondamment que les dirigeants de cet organe sont très au-dessous de leur tâche. Par suite de leur incurie, notre parti n'a presque pas été soutenu, par l'Internationale matériellement ni moralement.

Tout ce que le P.C.T. a réalisé jusqu'à ce jour, dans les domaines d'organisation et de propagande est dû uniquement au dévouement et à l'habileté de ses propres militants. A cause de la carence continuelle du bureau de proche-Orient nous n'avons presque jamais reçu de directives intelligentes et utiles. Toujours nous nous sommes tirés d'affaire, par nos propres moyens. Mais cela ne saurait durer ainsi indéfiniment. L'extension que prend le mouvement communiste en Turquie nous fait sentir plus que jamais le prix de l'appui de l'internationale. Si à la tête de l'organe susmentionné, au lieu des fonctionnaires aussi incapables que Briquet étaient maintenus, ce serait à désespérer de voir l'internationale travailler utilement dans nos pays d'Orient. Pour cela il faut de la méthode, de la science et une vision réaliste de la situation sociale et politique. Et les camarades auxquels nous faisons allusion sont bien loin de posséder toutes ces qualités. Jamais que nous sommes arrivés à une période de notre activité, où le concours de l'internationale nous est absolument indispensable. Nous demandons dès maintenant qu'on entreprenne sans plus tarder la réorganisation de ce pauvre bureau de proche-Orient.

Mais avant de dire quelle est notre proposition concernant cette question, je dois citer un certain nombre de faits caractéristiques à l'appui de notre assertion.

- 1. L'unique document du C.E. qui nous parvient à des intervalles plus ou moins longs, c'est un questionnaire - toujours le même sur la situation du pays, étant donné que les questions concernant la Turquie sont étudiées sous tous les angles et avec détails, dans nos multiples rapports, qui sont conservés au B.P.O. *Ant/fait/que/les/representants/* nous devons conclure que ces rapports ne sont pas soigneusement étudiés.
- 2. Des questions d'une si grande importance, au point de vue de la révolution sociale, sont agitées à Constantinople que l'internationale devrait se faire représenter ici, par un camarade de premier ordre. Mais la négligence et l'indolence des camarades responsables au B.P.O. ont fait que les représentants du C.E. auprès de notre parti étaient jusqu'à ce jour des camarades de dixième ordre, qui ne pouvaient malgré toute leur bonne volonté répondre aux exigences de la situation. Ces camarades ne possédaient pas les connaissances et l'intelligence indispensables pour pouvoir embrasser dans une vue d'ensemble les conditions sociales du pays et en déduire les directives appropriées à la politique du parti. La responsabilité de cette situation lamentable

incombe entièrement au B.P.O.

3. La question de la création d'un journal ouvrier à Constantinople est déjà discutée avec l'internationale depuis près de trois ans. A certains moments nous avons reçu des assurances formelles qu'en nous soutiendrait dans la réalisation de notre projet. Mais grâce à l'hésitation, l'indécision et les tergiversations du B.P.O., encore aujourd'hui cette question reste en suspens. De ce fait nous perdons de belles occasions pour faire entendre à l'opinion publique la voix du marxisme révolutionnaire.

4. Dernièrement un document nous est parvenu qui portait l'en-tête prétentieuse "thèse sur le travail du P.C.T." C'est une composition ridicule et digne d'un élève marxiste encore insuffisamment instruit. Les camarades auxquels nous avons cru devoir le communiquer, ne purent s'empêcher d'en rire. Heureusement que ce n'était qu'un projet. De tels faits ne sont pas de nature à consolider l'autorité de l'I.C. dans les pays d'Orient.

5. On s'est occupé bien de fois de régler la question de liaison entre Constantinople et les principaux points du Proche-Orient. Malheureusement cette question vitale, encore aujourd'hui, est loin d'avoir reçu une solution satisfaisante. Il est temps de régler sérieusement et une fois pour toutes cette affaire négligée.

6. Généralement les agents diplomatiques et consulaires de l'U.R.S.S. sont très mal renseignés sur la Turquie. Cela provient de cela qu'ils puisent leur documentation dans les milieux bourgeois ils ignorent même l'existence du P.C.T. tandis qu'il entre dans les attributions du B.P.O. d'organiser une liaison entre le parti et ces agences, afin que ces derniers puissent se préserver d'être induit en erreur.

Je ne veux pas allonger démesurément cette énumération. Je crois que ces exemples suffisent pour vous donner une idée approximative sur l'activité du B.P.O.

Vous voyez par vous-même, d'après cet exposé, dans quel sens vous pourriez efficacement nous aider. Il s'agit avant tout de réorganiser de façon fond en comble, le B.P.O. du C.B. Tous les fauteurs de ce dernier doivent en être éloignés. Nous proposons que la direction des affaires du Proche-Orient soient confiées à un collège composé au moins de trois membres, dont un camarade turc désigné par le P.C.T. Un camarade russe et un représentant de la Fédération balcanique collaboreraient avec lui. Un tel collège aurait toutes les compétences indispensables pour diriger convenablement et coordonner l'activité communiste dans le Proche-Orient.

En second lieu vous pourriez nous être utile pour faire résoudre par votre intervention, solutionner favorablement cette éternelle question du journal. Je vous prie de consulter sur ce sujet le dossier au B.P.O. ou vous trouveriez toutes sortes de renseignements intéressants sur cette question. Il y a un besoin urgent de créer immédiatement à Constantinople un quotidien de tendances communistes. La question ouvrière gagne chaque jour une activité plus grande et de jour en jour notre influence grandit sur la classe ouvrière. Pour attiser le feu de l'enthousiasme, la publication d'un journal est indispensable.

Un troisième point qui mérite que vous vous en occupiez personnellement, c'est la question de liaison. Sur celle-ci aussi nous avions envoyé des projets détaillés. Il faut absolument qu'au moins deux camarades retribués soient préposés à ce service. Nos délégués au cinquième congrès ont des instructions concrètes sur ces questions. J'espère bien que vous aurez la bonté de vous entretenir avec eux, et de les guider dans leurs démarches auprès du présidium du C.N.

Persuadé que ma démarche recevrait un bon accueil auprès de vous, je vous remercie d'avance et vous envoie des salutations communistes très affectueuses.

6/12/VIII/1921

*O. Maslov*

APPENDIX B

THE MINIMUM PROGRAM OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF TURKEY

Programme minimum prévisoir fixé par le P.C.T.

Les principaux articles des revendications immédiates, autour desquels le P.C.T. doit mener son agitation, sous la république bourgeoise, sont les suivants:

Partie politique

- 1: La grande assemblée nationale doit jouir à la fois du pouvoir législatif et exécutif.
- 2: Elle doit être renouvelée, chaque deux ans, par le suffrage universel.
- 3: Etablissement du suffrage universel, pour toutes les élections (municipalités, conseils généraux, jury etc...); avec représentation proportionnelle.
- 4: Droit d'initiative populaire (référéndum)
- 5: Admission des femmes à toutes les fonctions publiques, dans les mêmes conditions que les hommes.
- 6: Liberté complète de la presse, des réunions et des associations; la reconnaissance, au travailleurs de toute catégories et au fonctionnaires de l'état du droit absolu de former des syndicats, des unions professionnelles, des partis politiques, et d'entrer dans les organisations internationales.
- 7: Séparation complète de la religion et de l'état, nationalisation des biens appartenant aux fondations pieuses.
- 8: Lutte acharnée contre les derniers vestiges de monarchie et du féodalisme dans les villes et les campagnes.
- 9: Abrogation de toutes les lois qui établissent et sanctionnent l'inégalité civile des femmes et des enfants naturels.
- 10: Remplacement des armées permanentes par le système des milices nationales. L'armement général du peuple. Réduction du temps au service militaire. Le temps sera consacré en partie à l'éducation sociale et politique des jeunes.
- 11: Liquidation immédiate de la dette publique.
- 12: Alliance économique et politique avec l'U.R.S.S.
- 13: Constitution d'un front unique des peuples opprimés de l'Orient, contre l'impérialisme.
- 14: Adoption du système d'école unique du travail, obligation et gratuité de l'enseignement pour tous les enfants des deux sexes jusqu'à l'âge de 17 ans. Education professionnelle des apprentis dans toutes les branches de production.
- 15: Laïcisation complète de l'école.
- 16: L'entretien des enfants nécessiteux aux frais de l'état.

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10: Partie économique

10a: Abolition de tous les impôts, surtout des contributions indirectes, qui aggravant la cherté de la vie constituent une charge intolérable pour les travailleurs des villes et des campagnes et pour les couches pauvres de la société en général. Leur remplacement par un impôt unique, global et progressif sur les revenus dépassant 300 livres par an

17: Impôt progressif sur les successions basé à la fois sur l'importance de l'héritage et sur le degré de parenté.

18: Abolition de la régie de tabac et de tous les monopoles privés. Nationalisation des chemins de fer, des banques, des mines, des transports etc.

19: Institution du monopole d'état sur toutes les exploitations industrielles de quelque importance et sur le commerce extérieur.

20: Municipalisation des services publics et de la fabrication des produits de première nécessité (boulangerie, minoterie, boucherie, pharmacie, eau, éclairage, habitation à bon marché).

21: Expropriation de toutes les terres non cultivées par leurs propriétaires sans aucune indemnité et leur exploitation par l'état; distribution de terres aux paysans pauvres.

22: Organisation par l'état, d'un service public de placement pour les travailleurs, en collaboration avec les associations ouvrières.

23: Elaboration des lois protégeant la santé des travailleurs et l'hygiène publique.

Protection du travail

24: Limitation légale de la journée du travail, à huit heures. Repos hebdomadaire payé.

25: Paiement des salaires pour les jours fériés et le premier Mai. Entretien des chômeurs au frais de l'état.

26: Repos payé annuel de quinze jours.

27: Interdiction de faire travailler les enfants âgés de moins de quatorze ans. Système de demi-journée de travail pour les adolescents et combinaison de travail productif avec leur instruction.

28: Congés pour les femmes enceintes, six semaines avant et après l'accouchement.

29: Interdiction du travail de nuit pour les femmes et les enfants.

30: Fixation d'un taux de salaire minimum par des commissions composées de représentants des municipalités et des associations ouvrières, dans chaque localité.

31: Augmentation des pensions des retraités dans la même proportion que le coût de la vie.

32: La surveillance des ateliers, manufactures, fabriques, mines, chantiers, sociétés commerciales, au point des vues des conditions de travail, d'hygiène. Cette surveillance sera exercée conjointement par les inspecteurs de l'état et par des délégués ouvriers.

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- 33: L'état doit obliger les patrons de ~~laisser~~ constituer dans chaque entreprise des comités, d'usine, qui auront pour fonction de surveiller les conditions du travail, fixés par les lois et auront le droit d'intervenir dans toutes les questions du travail.
- 34: Institution par l'état d'un système d'assurance sociale pour le travail de toutes catégories, contre les risques de maladie, d'accidents et de chômage.
- 35: Obligation des patrons dans chaque entreprise industrielle, commerciale, et agricole, de constituer un fond de retraite sans prélèvement ~~sur~~ sur les salaires.
- 36: Participation des travailleurs au contrôle et au fonctionnement du service d'assurance.
- 37: L'assistance médicale et pharmaceutique aux travailleurs et à tous les nécessiteux.
- 38: Fondation sur une grande échelle d'hospices, <sup>orph.</sup> orphelins, maisons de repos, sanatoria, maternités, communaux et nationaux.

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